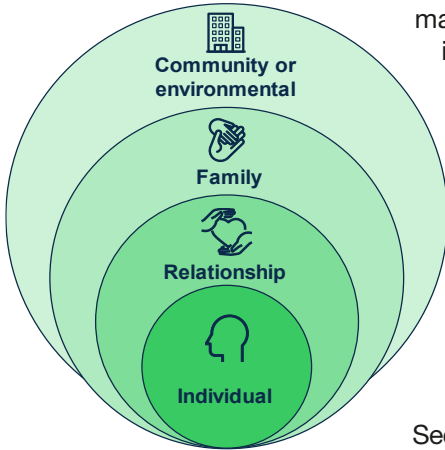


In the United States, many teen parents experience repeat births: in 2018, 15 percent of births to mothers 19 years old or younger were repeat births.¹ Parenthood presents many challenges for teen parents, including difficulty completing schooling, economic insecurity, and stress.^{2,3,4} These challenges can be heightened for mothers who have multiple births during the teen years.^{3,5}



We had two goals in this analysis, both of which can inform intervention providers or developers serving teen parents. First, we sought to identify predictors of repeat pregnancy among teen mothers. We examined predictors related to teen mothers' individual, relationship, family, and community or environmental characteristics. Some of these predictors may be modifiable—meaning a program could change them. Providers or developers could consider addressing predictors of teen pregnancies, particularly modifiable predictors, in their programming. For instance, a program could focus on changing teen mothers' intentions around future sexual activity and pregnancy.

Second, we examined how well we can predict repeat pregnancies using a wide range of predictors. If we could accurately predict repeat pregnancies, providers could identify teen mothers who are most at risk of repeat pregnancy and provide them more targeted support.

Several factors measured 12 to 24 months before a possible repeat pregnancy predicted whether mothers had a repeat teen pregnancy.



Mothers who **had higher resiliency** were **less likely** to have a repeat pregnancy. Higher resiliency meant mothers said they had greater ability to handle challenges and prepare for the future, focus on achieving good and positive things in life, and set goals and create a plan to reach them.



Mothers who **planned to use a long-acting reversible contraceptive method** (LARC), such as an intrauterine device (IUD) or implant, and mothers who **did not plan to have sex** in the next 12 months were **less likely** to have a repeat pregnancy than mothers who planned to have sex but did not plan to use a LARC.

Not all factors that decreased the risk of repeat teen pregnancy could be modifiable; but understanding them can help providers assess risk at the start of programming. Mothers who were older, did not live with a mother figure, and had a parent with an alcohol or drug issue when they were a child were more likely to have a repeat pregnancy.

However, many factors were not related to whether or not mothers had a repeat pregnancy.

Accurately predicting repeat teen pregnancy is difficult.



Despite that fact that we examined 49 possible predictors, nearly all of what influences a repeat pregnancy (92 percent) is explained by other factors that were not measured in this analysis.

Methods

Data for this analysis comes from Mathematica's evaluation of California's Adolescent Family Life Program with Positive Youth Development and includes 1,145 teen mothers who completed a baseline survey at the start of the program and a follow-up survey 12 or 24 months after enrollment.⁶ Mothers who enrolled in the study were mostly Hispanic, and their average age was 17. At enrollment, about half were pregnant and the other half were already parenting. We used logistic regression with 49 predictors measured at program enrollment to predict repeat teen pregnancy within 0 to 24 months when mothers were younger than 21. Important predictors were selected based on backward selection that aims for a balance between model performance and model complexity by removing redundant variables that do not contribute enough to model fit of repeat pregnancy through an iterative process; predictors discussed in this brief were statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Endnotes

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- ³ Partington S.N., D.L. Steber, K.A. Blair, and R.A. Cisler. “Second Births to Teenage Mothers: Risk Factors for Low Birth Weight and Preterm Birth.” *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2009, pp. 101–109.
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- ⁵ Manlove, J., C.L. Mariner, and A.R. Papillo. “Subsequent Fertility Among Teen Mothers: Longitudinal Analyses of Recent National Data.” Washington, DC: Child Trends, March 2004.
- ⁶ Zief, S., A. Langan, J. Walzer, E. Weaver, L. Dragoset, and J. Deke. “Engaging Young Mothers as Partners in Case Management: The Impacts of California’s Adolescent Family Life Program with Positive Youth Development After One Year.” Washington, DC: Office of Population Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020.

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