

# **Title of Paper: Induced Abortion Among Adolescents And Young People In Yaoundé (Cameroon): A Qualitative Analysis Of The Role Of Relevant Actors**

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This article discusses the reasons that adolescents and young people seek induced abortion and analyzes the roles and responsibilities of the various actors involved. Previous studies confirm the existence of a high number of unmet need for family planning among African women, both regarding birth spacing, delaying pregnancy and limiting the number of pregnancies (Guillaume, 2003; Guttmacher Institute, 2012; Schuster, 2010; Sedgh, Bankole, & Eilers, 2012; Singh et al., 2012). While in the past, sexuality was mostly experienced in the context of marriage but more recently teenagers and young people have integrated so-called “modern values,” and begun experimenting with premarital sex. Despite the new reality of teenagers and young people engaging in sex, there remain strong societal mores condemning premarital sex. This condemnation leads sexuality among the young underground, exposing young people to the risks of unplanned pregnancy and abortion. Young people in these situations are struggling with strong values coming from multiple directions including religious, parental, and social sources.

Due to the legal restrictions on abortion (except in cases of threat to the life of the mother or child, rape or incest), there are many hidden and sometimes unexpected actors who are involved directly or indirectly in the practice. Through in-depth interviews, it is possible to reveal who many of these actors are, as well as their motivations in the practice of abortion. This knowledge can lead to the development of concrete actions to improve the situation. While the causes and consequences of illegal abortion are fairly well documented, there remains a dearth of data on the roles that different actors play in this social phenomenon.

The overall objective of this article is to understand the roles of all actors involved directly or indirectly in the process of clandestine abortion among adolescents and young people in Yaoundé. The article analyzes the role of the environment and social networks in the decision to have an abortion, and helps to elucidate the decision-making process. Finally, this article will propose some policy solutions to improve the situation for young people involved in clandestine abortion.

## **1. Data and methods**

The analyses in this paper are based on original primary data from a qualitative survey in the DEMTREN project entitled "Poverty and unmet needs of adolescents and youth sexual and reproductive health in Central Africa." The data were collected in Yaoundé, Cameroon in 2011 by the Institute of Training and Demographic Research (IFORD). In addition to the latest DHS data of the moment, the project has collected original data through biographical, situational and qualitative surveys in Yaoundé (Cameroon) in 2011 and Brazzaville (Congo) in 2012. This study builds on the qualitative component conducted in Yaoundé. The general objective of qualitative component of DEMTREN project is to contribute to our understanding of the perceptions and attitudes about adolescent and youth sexuality in relation to poverty.

The parts of the interview guide analyzed in this article are those that deal with the assessment of the risk of unplanned pregnancy, the assessment of the effectiveness of contraceptive methods, perception of and attitudes towards clandestine abortion, the experience of unwanted pregnancy, abortion practices and the consequences of abortion.

## **1.1 Sample structure**

The qualitative survey consists of 31 individual in-depth interviews. The sample of individual interviews and consists of: adolescents (15-19 years of age) and parents of children aged 15-24 years old. This sample was stratified by linguistic affiliation (French or English), sex and living standard. Standard of living was stratified into two types:

- Neighborhoods characterized by temporary housing and informal settlements (including the urban slums)
- Neighborhoods characterized by permanent, zoned housing, ranging from modest to high levels of comfort.

## **1.2. Methods of Analysis**

The study uses an inductive qualitative approach based on thematic content analysis and development of typologies (Sawadogo et al., 2012).

### **a) Thematic content analysis**

All of the individual interviews and focus group discussion were subject to a thematic content analysis to understand the roles of all actors involved directly or indirectly in the process of clandestine abortion in adolescents and youth in Yaoundé.

### **b) Development of typologies**

Typologies are used to analyze the ways that the social environment influences the practice of clandestine abortion among adolescents and young girls. With this method, the analyst give describes and names a first typology to the first case. Then, looking at a second case, the analyst decides whether this case can be grouped in with the first or whether a new typology should be created to describe it, and so on (Grémy 1976). Throughout the analysis, it may be necessary to group types, by dividing or changing titles. Each category is defined in relation to the factors that give it meaning (Miles & Huberman, 2003; Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011).

## **2. Expected Results**

These results have the advantage of being from the discourse of adolescents and young people themselves. At this stage of the research, we can draw some preliminary results.

There are both direct and indirect actors involved in the practice of illegal abortion. In the chain of processes leading to abortion, involving multiple actors and action levels allow us to classify them as direct or indirect actors.

Preliminary results show that almost all those around adolescent and young are sometimes accomplices in induced abortion, it is the parents, friends, siblings and sexual partner. The operation is different from one case to another. Sometimes parents are involved indirectly through their disapproval of premarital sex, lack of sex education with their children. Similarly, friends directly involved in providing the means and methods for abortion. At the societal level, the state plays an indirect role because of the restrictive abortion law, which makes it difficult to practice safe abortion.

In-Depth analysis will allow us to know not only the actors but also their means of intervention.

In summary, at the end of this study, the different actors and their roles in the process of abortion will be known

The motivation to get an abortion will also be indicated

**3. Recommendation and implications for programs:**

At this point in the analysis, we cannot yet make strong recommendations for improving the situation, but should be able to do so once the final analysis is complete.