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Studi Kualitatif Pengalaman *Extended Family* dalam Pengasuhan Anak pada Pasangan Usia Remaja

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Abstract. *The unpreparedness of adolescent couples to assume parental responsibilities often results in inappropriate parenting practices, including physical, psychological, and sexual violence. Most adolescent couples live with an extended family who are involved in childcare. To explore in depth the experiences of extended family in supporting childcare among adolescent couples. This qualitative study employed a phenomenological approach. Informants were selected using purposive sampling. Data triangulation was conducted using three sources: extended family members, adolescent couples, and midwives. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Five themes emerged from the study. First, extended family members had comprehensive knowledge regarding childcare for adolescent couples. Second, extended family members had perceptions and expectations regarding childcare practices among adolescent couples. Third, extended family members served as significant others for adolescent couples during the perinatal period. Fourth, the involvement of extended family in health services included assisting with childcare and providing education regarding parenting practices. However, differences in parenting approaches between extended family members and adolescent couples were also identified, which influenced decision-making. Fifth, extended family members demonstrated knowledge and skills related to simple developmental monitoring, modern parenting practices, and the initial management of illness in infants and toddlers. Differences in parenting practices between extended family members and adolescent couples require support from healthcare professionals to provide appropriate education on childcare according to the child's developmental stage. Adolescent couples are expected to develop greater maturity and responsibility in caring for their children.*
Keywords: *extended family; adolescent couples; parenting practices; growth and development*

Abstrak. Ketidaksiapan pasangan usia remaja menjadi orangtua seringkali berdampak pada pengasuhan anak yang menyimpang berupa kekerasan fisik, kekerasan psikologis dan kekerasan seksual. Sebagian besar pasangan usia remaja tinggal bersama *extended family* yang terlibat dalam pengasuhan. Mendapatkan gambaran secara mendalam pengalaman *extended family* dalam mendukung pengasuhan anak pada pasangan usia remaja. Penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Informan dalam penelitian dipilih menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling*. Triangulasi data penelitian dengan menggunakan tiga sumber yakni dari *extended family,* pasangan usia remaja dan bidan. Teknik pengumpulan data dengan wawancara mendalam dan FGD. Penelitian ini memperoleh 5 tema yaitu pengetahuan *extended family* tentang pengasuhan anak pasangan usia remaja sudah komprehesif, persepsi dan harapan *extended family* terhadap pengasuhan anak pada pasangan usia remaja, *extended family* adalah *significan others* bagi pasangan usia remaja di masa perinatal, keterlibatan *extended family* dalam pelayanan kesehatan adalah

membantu dalam pengasuhan anak, memberi edukasi terkait pola asuh anak meskipun juga ditemukan ada perbedaan dengan pasangan usia remaja terkait pola pengasauhan anak sehingga mempengaruhi pengambilan keputusan. Tema kelima, *extended family* cara deteksi tumbuh kembang sederhana anak, pola asuh *modern* dan penanganan awal bayi balita sakit. Perbedaan pola asuh *extended family* dan pasangan remaja memerlukan dukungan tenaga kesehatan dalam memberikan edukasi yang tepat pada pengasuhan anak sesuai dengan usia anak. Pasangan remaja diharapkan untuk lebih dewasa dan bertanggung jawab dalam mengasuh anak.
Kata kunci: *extended family; pasangan remaja; pola asuh; tumbuh kembang*

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Introduction

Adolescent marriage remains an important social and public health concern because it places adolescents in adult roles before they have fully developed the psychological, social, educational, and economic resources required for family life. In Indonesia, Law Number 16 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 establishes 19 years as the minimum legal age of marriage for both women and men. Nevertheless, child marriage continues to occur, particularly in contexts characterized by poverty, limited educational opportunities, cultural norms, family expectations, and gender-related beliefs (UNICEF Indonesia, 2020; UNICEF, 2022). The decision to marry at a young age may also be influenced by parental pressure, social expectations, and adolescents' perceptions that marriage is an appropriate solution to family or relationship circumstances (Noor, 2022; Tampubolon, 2021). Thus, adolescent marriage should not be understood solely as an individual decision but as a phenomenon shaped by interactions between individual, family, cultural, and socioeconomic factors.

Marriage during adolescence may create a complex developmental transition because individuals are simultaneously expected to fulfill the roles of spouse and parent while continuing to navigate the developmental tasks of adolescence. The transition to parenthood requires adjustment to new responsibilities, development of parenting competencies, and changes in interpersonal relationships within the family system. Previous research has shown that adolescent parents may experience challenges related to parenting competence, psychological adjustment, economic conditions, and limited experience in caring for children (Woods et al., 2014; Toomey et al., 2013). Similarly, an integrative review found that successful

transition to motherhood among adolescents is associated with psychological well-being, childcare abilities, education, economic conditions, healthcare services, and social support (Chilman et al., 2019). These findings suggest that adolescent parents require not only individual preparation but also a supportive social and family environment during the transition to parenthood.

Family support is particularly important because adolescent parents may still depend on their parents or other relatives for emotional, instrumental, informational, and financial assistance. Social support from family members can provide practical resources for childcare and may strengthen adolescent parents' confidence in performing their parental roles (Toomey et al., 2013; Woods et al., 2014). Previous research has also demonstrated that family and partner support are associated with better adjustment during the transition to adolescent parenthood, although different sources of support may contribute to different aspects of adjustment (Unger & Wandersman, 1988; Dormire et al., 1989). In this context, the *extended family* can become an important social resource because grandparents, parents, siblings, and other relatives may directly participate in childcare and household activities. Therefore, the presence of an *extended family* may help adolescent couples manage the practical and psychological demands associated with early parenthood.

The role of the *extended family* is particularly evident in Indonesian families, where intergenerational living and family involvement in childcare may remain important components of family life. A qualitative study of Indonesian adolescent mothers living with their extended families found that family members provided psychological support, assistance with infant care, shared knowledge, and shared childcare responsibilities (Erfina et al., 2022). Similar findings indicate that social and emotional support from family members can contribute to adolescent mothers' adjustment and ability to perform parenting responsibilities (Dayaningsih et al., 2020; Chilman et al., 2019). The involvement of family members can therefore reduce some of the burdens experienced by adolescent parents, particularly when they have limited parenting experience or financial independence. However, the meaning and experience of such support may differ among families depending on family relationships, cultural values, expectations, and patterns of communication.

Although *extended family* involvement can provide substantial support, living and raising children within a multigenerational family may also create challenges. Differences in

parenting knowledge, beliefs, expectations, and childcare practices may lead to disagreements between adolescent parents and older family members. Research on intergenerational childcare emphasizes that grandparents and other extended family members can provide important assistance to parents, but their involvement may also affect family dynamics and require clear boundaries regarding parenting responsibilities and decision-making (Sanders et al., 2017; Fergusson et al., 2008). In adolescent families, these challenges may be more pronounced because young parents may still be developing their own parenting identity and may have limited authority within the wider family system. Consequently, family involvement should be viewed not only as a source of support but also as an interpersonal process involving negotiation, communication, authority, and parental autonomy.

Cultural beliefs and gender roles may further shape how childcare responsibilities are distributed within adolescent couples and their *extended families*. Cultural norms can influence expectations concerning who should provide financial support, who should perform domestic work, and who should assume primary responsibility for childcare. In many contexts, women continue to be associated with domestic and caregiving responsibilities, whereas men are expected to fulfill the role of economic provider, creating a gendered division of family responsibilities (Ratnaningrum, 2024; UNICEF, 2020). When adolescent couples live with parents or other relatives, these expectations may interact with existing family practices and potentially influence the young couple's autonomy in making decisions about their children. Understanding these gender and cultural dimensions is therefore important for explaining how childcare responsibilities are negotiated within *extended families*.

Communication and cooperation between generations are also central to the experience of childcare in an *extended family*. Adolescent couples and older family members may possess different understandings regarding appropriate childcare practices, including feeding, hygiene, health care, discipline, sleep patterns, and responses to children's developmental needs. Such differences do not necessarily result in conflict because family members may negotiate and adapt their practices through communication and shared experiences; however, inadequate communication may create tension when one generation perceives its parenting practices as more appropriate than those of another (Sanders et al., 2017; Fergusson et al., 2008). Previous research involving Indonesian adolescent mothers similarly identified differences between young mothers and extended family members

concerning childcare knowledge and practices, while extended family members simultaneously served as important sources of assistance and guidance (Erfina et al., 2022). Thus, the interaction between adolescent couples and their extended families needs to be explored from both perspectives of support and potential tension.

Previous studies have provided valuable information regarding adolescent motherhood, social support, and the role of family members in childcare. However, much of the existing literature has focused on adolescent mothers rather than adolescent couples as a family unit, while studies specifically exploring how adolescent couples experience childcare within *extended family* settings remain limited. Qualitative research is particularly relevant for this issue because the involvement of extended family cannot be adequately understood only through measurable levels of support; it requires an exploration of how adolescent couples interpret family assistance, negotiate responsibilities, experience differences in parenting practices, and construct their roles as parents within the family system (Erfina et al., 2022; Woods et al., 2014). Exploring these experiences can reveal both supportive and challenging dimensions that may not be captured through quantitative approaches. This qualitative perspective is important for developing family-centered interventions that consider the needs of adolescent couples as well as the extended family members who are directly involved in childcare.

The local context further demonstrates the importance of examining this phenomenon. Based on a preliminary study conducted by the researchers at Saptosari Community Health Center, Gunungkidul, the largest number of adolescent couples in the area in 2023 was identified in Kanigoro Village, with seven adolescent couples. Of these seven couples, approximately 72% were reported to live with their *extended families*, while the remaining couples had migrated to urban areas. This preliminary finding indicates that living with an *extended family* represents a common family arrangement among adolescent couples in the study area and may influence how childcare responsibilities are carried out. The local context is particularly important because family practices and expectations may differ according to cultural, social, and community characteristics, meaning that findings from other settings cannot necessarily be directly generalized to adolescent couples in Gunungkidul.

Based on the aforementioned context, this study aims to explore the experiences of *extended family* involvement in childcare among adolescent couples in Kanigoro Village,

Gunungkidul. Specifically, this study seeks to understand how adolescent couples experience emotional, informational, instrumental, and practical support from extended family members, how childcare and household responsibilities are distributed, how communication and cooperation occur between generations, and what challenges emerge from differences in parenting practices and expectations. Exploring these experiences is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dual role of the *extended family* as both a source of support and a potential source of challenges during the transition to parenthood. The findings may provide an empirical basis for developing family-centered parenting education and community health interventions that involve adolescent couples, extended family members, and health professionals in supporting optimal child development and strengthening young families.

Method

The study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of 'Aisyiyah University Yogyakarta under permit No.3657/KEP-UNISA/V/2024. Method in study This is study qualitative with a phenomenological approach. Study qualitative is study Which conduct analysis and interpretation of texts and *interview results* with the aim of finding meaning from a phenomenon, incident, activity social, attitude trust, perception, thinking person in a way individual and also group (Sugiyono, 2020).

Sample selection was carried out using the *purposive sampling technique.* Informants on study This is *extended family* namely parents or family members who live in the same house as a married couple of teenage age who have children, married couples of teenage age and health workers, namely midwives. Midwives are used as informants to strengthen information related to good and correct parenting patterns so that they can be used as support for teenage couples and extended families.

This study used interview techniques (*in-depth interviews*) and FGD guidelines because we wanted to find out the understanding of *extended families* in child care in teenage couples. Interview *in-depth The interview* was conducted by testing the interview guidelines through *a pilot interview.* This research conducted data analysis using a *thematic analysis approach*.

Results

This study took participants by purposive sampling, the criteria for these participants were selected based on teenage couples who have children under 2 years old and live in one house with an extended family in Gunungkidul Regency. The determination of participants in this qualitative study was not based on the number but on the adequacy and suitability until data saturation was achieved. The number of participants obtained until data saturation was 8 in-depth interview participants and 3 FGD participants.

Table 1. Characteristics of Teenage Couples

Code	Age	Work	last education	KTD/ No	Age Marry	Age child	Place stay
PUR 1	19 years old	housewife	junior high school	Yes	17 years	13 Months	Parent
PUR 2	20 years	housewife	junior high school	Yes	18 years	18 Months	Parent
PUR 3	17 years	housewife	junior high school	Yes	17 years	5 months	Parent
PUR 4	20 years	housewife	junior high school	Yes	18 years	16 Months	Parent

Source : Primary Data, 2024

Table 1Characteristics *Extended Family*

Code	Age	Work	last education	Age Marry	Age child
EF 5	41 Years	housewife	junior high school	20 years	19 years old
EF 6	43 Years	housewife	junior high school	24 years old	20 years
EF 7	40 Years	housewife	sd	23 years	17 years
EF 8	40 Years	housewife	junior high school	23 years	20 years

Source : Primary Data, 2024

Table 3. Characteristics of Midwives

No	Initials of Name	Age	Position	Last education	Length of work	Place Work
1	Midwife IM	35 years	Head KIA Room	Midwife Profession	10 years	Health Center Saptosari
2	AC Midwife	28 years old	Implementing midwife	D-III Midwifery	6 years	Health Center Saptosari
3	Midwife LI	38 years old	Head KIA Room	Midwife Profession	13 years old	Health Center Wonosari

Source : Primary Data, 2024

The process of determining the theme begins with the compilation of interview results in text form, the transcript is read repeatedly by the researcher to find meaningful words according to the research objectives. The researcher then codes the meaning, groups it into categories and sub-themes, and in the final stage formulates the theme. The results of the sub-themes and themes can be seen in the following image:

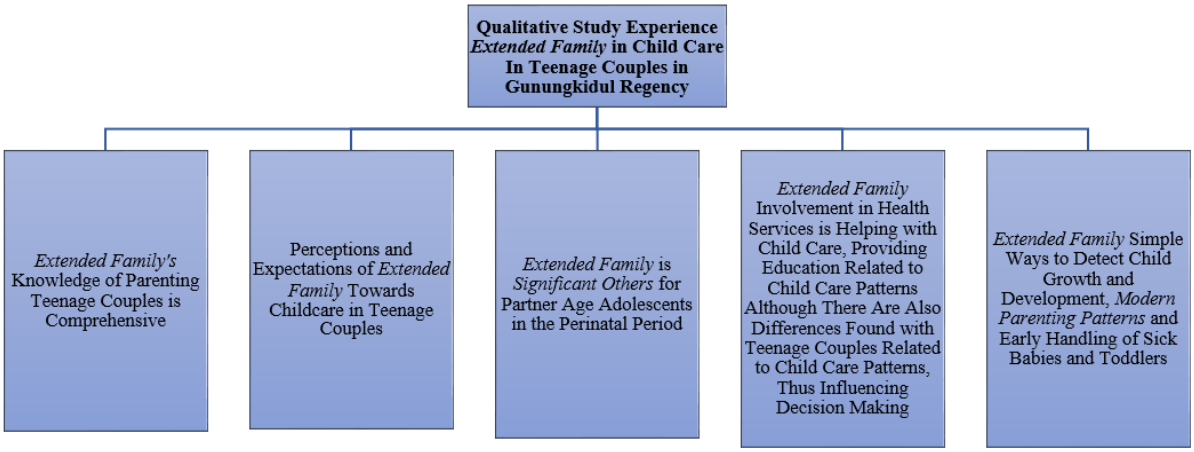


Figure 1. Main Research Themes

Extended Family's Knowledge of Parenting Teenage Couples is Comprehensive

Based on expression the informant who explained about need physique seen from nutrition and nutrition balanced in children , needs psychological child namely guard children's mental health , for spiritual needs namely guide children on religious values such as to pronounce regards moment go out enter home , prayer before and after eat , and pray before and wake up sleep and needs social child to teach child For socialize . Here expression informant :

"…they taught me how to socialize, sis, the important thing is, later you won't be unable to make friends if you meet new friends when you go to school" ***(PUR 1)***

"…often take your child to religious activities, listen to people studying the Koran, teach them to greet you when entering the house, then teach your child to pray before eating after eating, before going to bed and when waking up" ***(EF 5)***

This study is in line with research in Sweden that social support through social activities makes children more active in expressing themselves and playing (Bäckström et al., 2021). In fulfilling physical support, this study is not in line with previous studies that can

provide opportunities for toddlers to choose the foods they like that do not pay attention to nutritional status (Nerawati et al., 2023).

Perceptions and Expectations of *Extended Family* Towards Childcare in Teenage Couples

Based on the informant's expression, it shows that teenage couples have difficulty concentrating due to lack of understanding and questions given. The extended family considers them overwhelmed and unprepared to raise children. Division of roles and responsible education can help more mature couples and be a good example for their children. The following is the informant's expression:

"there are so many" ma'am, That teenage couple have difficulty concentrating, it's hard understand that we explain. Ask over and over again. Well but visit next time not reallydone ***" (Mid 11)***

"…very influential ma'am. Possible if No There issupport from we, theyPossible I'm overwhelmed, sis momong child small which is still minimal experience" ***(EF 6)***

"Yes more mature, more hard work, andmust Can educate his son became good boy.As husband Also must firm no may be silent- silent no, yeah must not quite enoughanswer The same wife and child" ***(EF 5)***

Parental education also needs attention because the family environment is the first environment for children to obtain education and also the most important. also stated that the role of parents in early marriage that occurs is due to parental knowledge that is connected to their level of education (Gunawan et al., 2023). As research in America, grandparents play an important role in raising grandchildren to be more independent and increasing their grandchildren's social activities (Xu, 2019). The family system determines the roles, relationships, communication patterns, and authority between family members (Aubel *et al*., 2021).

Teenage mothers are still very vulnerable to mental health disorders, making it a challenge as parents and an important task for health professionals working in postnatal care. Being born to a vulnerable mother can have a wide impact on a child's development and poses a risk of impaired cognitive performance, behavioral disorders, and mental problems that can continue into late childhood and adolescence (Ejlertsen et al., 2022).

Extended Family is Significant Others for Partner Age Adolescents in the Perinatal Period

Based on the informants' statements, this study shows that the extended family plays an important role in raising adolescent children, by providing physical, psychological,

financial, and emotional support. They assess the child's growth, provide healthy food, and ensure immunization. Financial assistance is given to help adolescent couples meet their needs, especially when they are short of funds. The extended family also teaches religious values to children, socializes, and accompanies grandchildren. Exclusive breastfeeding is not always successful due to pressure from neighbors and interference from the extended family. The following are the statements of informants:

"Very support mba,as much as possible Possible breast milk until 6 month even though yes my breast milk a little bit sis time that" ***(PUR 1)***

" When I failed to exclusively breastfeed, I was stressed because I was in early pregnancy, after giving birth, the neighbors' gossip was on my mind and I was lazy to eat so I stopped breastfeeding, so when I was 3 months old, I was helped by formula milk from my mother... " ***(PUR 2)***

"…must (help) *ma'am, because they are still highly emotional all of them, le must dress up slowly and over and over again ben iso accepted Miss And think"* ***(EF 8)***

Physical health needs, *extended families* also educate children from teenage couples to learn about religious teachings because basically the family is the first place for someone to learn about morals and religion (Cultivation *et al*., 2019). Being a responsible father and the family's willingness to work together to provide for children's needs even though financial support from grandparents is greater but must train the role of teenage fathers better (Neuman *et al*., 2019)

This study is also in line with research conducted by Ngewa (2019) which states that there are several psychological impacts experienced by adolescents from pregnancy, childbirth, to separation from a partner, namely feelings of anxiety, shame, stress, and emotional instability.

Extended Family **Involvement in Health Services is Helping with Child Care, Providing Education Related to Child Care Patterns Although There Are Also Differences Found with Teenage Couples Related to Child Care Patterns, Thus Influencing Decision Making**

Based on the informant's expression, it shows that the involvement of the extended family in health services, including pregnancy check-ups and visits, can be beneficial, but can also pose challenges due to over-indulgence and decision-making intervention. The following is the informant's expression:

"...supporthusband And parent and join help look after House stairs .. deliver check pregnant on a regular basis, ensuringdrink medicine..." (***PUR 2)***

"Method to care for child ma'am, because my parents really spoil me child I'm afraid I won't be able to do it tomorrow when I grow up . independent." ***(PUR 4)***

The results of this study also show support from *extended families* in health services. One of them is being involved in ANC visits, childbirth, postpartum to immunization schedules for infants and toddlers. One of the family's attitudes is to support each other in caring for and nurturing children in the social environment of the extended family (Susyanti *et al.*, 2022).

The diversity of parenting patterns provided by parents such as several types of parenting patterns can cause different levels of child independence (Marlina and Prayitno, 2021). Therefore, it is important to support *extended families* in health services to provide some information related to child growth and development and help adolescent couples understand the explanations of health workers during counseling. The importance of increasing critical thinking to make plans in child care so as not to harm children and mothers (Ofori *et al.*, 2020).

Decisions in childcare tend to be coercive, binding, harsh and do not provide opportunities for children to speak, resulting in children growing into individuals who experience many problems within themselves, ranging from personality, emotional, behavioral problems, to problems with learning patterns and children's academic abilities at school (Ilham, 2020).

Extended Family Simple Ways to Detect Child Growth and Development, *Modern Parenting Patterns* and Early Handling of Sick Babies and Toddlers

Health workers provide education to extended families about child growth and development, helping them read charts during immunization visits. They also increase knowledge about proper child care, educate them about early management of sick toddlers and refer them to the nearest health facility. Here is what the informant said:

"…education about how to parenting that's right How in today's eraI'm afraid I apply the era I Formerly afraid of being wrong while there is time my grandson is still 5 months old" ***(EF 7)***

"… knowledge is also needed, sis, to update the current parenting methods so that they are not the same as parenting methods in the past." ***(PUR 2)***

"..then about the first aid for sick children, and what is the correct way to parent now?" ***(Bdn 11)***

The results of this study found that there is a need for education from health workers for *extended families* . Based on interview informant disclose that involvement in to care for

child more dominant done *extended family* (grandmother). So that important given education related skills nurturing and capable evaluate grow flower child simple one of them with see notes medical at KIA such as weight and height as well development motor child . The midwife gave counseling moment visit pregnancy as well as immunization . The midwife provides education related pattern foster child with using leaflets or sheet come back as well as guide partner teenager evaluate development child simple through KIA book.

Poor parenting patterns Good with both busy parents Work so that child entrusted with parents No capable monitor direct pattern foster children that impact growth and development her child (Safitri & Warsiti , 2021).

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the *extended family* plays an important role in child-rearing among adolescent couples. The *extended family* not only assists in meeting children's needs but also provides emotional, financial, informational, and practical support to adolescent couples. This condition suggests that adolescent couples continue to require family support because the transition to parenthood occurs simultaneously with their developmental transition toward individual independence.

The *extended family* in this study demonstrated relatively adequate knowledge of child-rearing, including children's physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs. The *extended family* also expressed expectations that adolescent couples would be able to fulfill their roles and responsibilities as parents. This finding is consistent with Gunawan et al. (2023), who reported that families can provide informational, financial, practical, and emotional support during adolescents' transition to parenthood.

The *extended family* also serves as *significant others*, particularly during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. Support is provided through accompanying adolescent couples to healthcare facilities, assisting with childcare, providing advice, and participating in decision-making. These findings suggest that family involvement can serve as an important source of strength for adolescent couples as they navigate their roles as parents.

Xu (2019) similarly found that grandmothers' support for adolescent mothers can strengthen mothers' confidence in performing their parenting roles, particularly when such support allows adolescent mothers to maintain a degree of autonomy. However, the present

study also indicates that the involvement of the *extended family* does not always have positive consequences. Differences in parenting practices between extended family members and adolescent couples may lead to disagreements and influence parenting-related decision-making. Excessive involvement by the *extended family* may limit adolescent couples' opportunities to develop independence and make decisions as parents. This finding is consistent with Park et al. (2023), who reported that family support for adolescent parents may become a source of conflict when the need for assistance intersects with adolescents' need for autonomy.

The involvement of the *extended family* in healthcare services also has both supportive and challenging aspects. On the one hand, family members can help adolescent couples understand health-related information and support the implementation of childcare practices. On the other hand, differences in understanding of parenting practices may lead to family interventions that are not fully aligned with children's needs. In this study, such differences were observed particularly in relation to breastfeeding practices and approaches to interacting with and caring for children.

The findings further indicate that support from the *extended family* should be directed toward strengthening adolescent couples' parenting capacity rather than replacing their roles as parents. The study also found that *extended family* members would benefit from further education regarding the early detection of child growth and development, contemporary parenting practices, and the initial management of illness in infants and young children. This finding highlights the importance of healthcare professionals providing education not only to adolescent couples but also to family members who are directly involved in childcare. Providing education collectively may help establish a shared understanding of appropriate parenting practices and reduce conflicts in parenting-related decision-making.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the *extended family* represents an important source of support while also having the potential to become a source of conflict in child-rearing among adolescent couples. Therefore, a family-centered parenting approach involving adolescent couples, extended family members, and healthcare professionals is needed. Such an approach may help preserve the benefits of family support while providing adolescent couples with sufficient opportunities to develop as independent and responsible parents.

Conclusion

The suggestion from this study is that the role of the extended family is to provide appropriate parenting patterns based on the age and developmental stage of the child, fostering independence and social maturity. Health workers should evaluate the parenting patterns of adolescent couples during health visits, and parenting training should be prioritized for adolescent couples who experience extramarital pregnancies. Knowledge partner teenager about family big covers need physical , social , psychological , and spiritual. They emphasize responsible parenting responsibility and involvement in perinatal period . However , the differences opinion can hinder service Health . Family big need education about parenting child , pattern modern parenting , and care early For sick babies and toddlers .

Suggestions

Adolescent couples are expected to increase their independence and responsibility in childcare, while the *extended family* is expected to provide support without taking over the parents' role. Health professionals, particularly midwives, need to provide ongoing education to adolescent couples and their extended families regarding age-appropriate parenting practices and child growth and development to promote optimal childcare.

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