

Background: Abortion is illegal in Uganda. Anybody caught faces the courts of law. However Gulu Referral Hospital has continued to register an increasing number of abortions over the past two years so this has compelled the researcher to find out the factors associated with unsafe abortion among adolescent girls below 18 years receiving Reproductive Health Services at Gulu Referral hospital between September and November 2015.

Method: This was a cross sectional study. A total of 161 respondents participated in the study. Simple random sampling was used to select the required number of teens. Questionnaires were administered to 142 adolescents; Focus Group Discussion was done with 13 respondents while interviews were conducted for 7 key informants who were the health workers. Data collection from the field, quantitative data was cleaned, edited, coded and later entered in SPSS software to generate frequency tables, charts and graphs that was used to interpret the findings.

Results: The study found out that the majority of the teens get information through their friends other than Health workers or parents, and most of them have early sex at the age of 12 years with the peak of ages 15-16, with many people and many times and they say it is good to have sex. The majority of teens preferred to keep the pregnancy to abortion in contrast to the increasing number of abortion. Majority were not on any contraceptive which puts them at high risk of unwanted pregnancy and peer pressure came the leading cause of early sex while others acted out of drug/ substance abuse since it makes them feel good. Most of the adolescents came from poor family back ground, they lacked parental care and guidance and the parents could not afford their fees nor provide basic needs.

Conclusion: Teens get information from friends. Majorities has early sex 12-18years with many people and many times and are not using any contraceptive. Majority also prefer to keep pregnancy than abort. Peer pressure was the leading cause of early sex as majority abuse drug/ substance. Most of them are from poor family background, war torn environment, they lack parental care and guidance as majority cannot provide their basic needs.

Recommendations: From the findings of the study, it can be recommended that girl child should be kept in school, Health educate/ empower the peers to give the right information, Having sex education in school at early age and parents providing sex education and basic needs for the teens would serve as important strategies in eliminating unsafe abortion among the girl child.