

Citation

Faith Miller, Naomi Saville, Helen Harris-Fry, Lu Gram. Influence of early marriage and early pregnancy on experiences of pregnancy in South Asia: A thematic synthesis of qualitative studies.. PROSPERO 2022 CRD42022304336 Available from:

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Review question

1. What are experiences of pregnancy like for those married early?
2. What are experiences of pregnancy like for those who become pregnant early?
3. How do early marriage and early pregnancy interact in shaping pregnancy experiences?

Searches

Ovid(MEDLINE), EMBASE, Scopus, Global Index Medicus, CINAHL, PsycINFO and Web of Science will be searched with no language or data restrictions. A mix of search terms, MESH terms, and database specific limiters will be used.

In addition to the systematic search, forward and backward citation searching will be used, to capture resources either citing or being cited by the included literature, respectively.

To capture relevant doctoral theses, the ProQuest Dissertation & Theses Global (PQDT) database will also be searched.

Furthermore, the websites of key organisations undertaking work around early marriage and pregnancy will also be searched for reports, including but not limited to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO), Human Rights Watch, Girls Not Brides, ActionAid, Save the Children, and Tipping Point.

A librarian was consulted in the development of this search strategy.

Types of study to be included

Inclusion:

- Studies which use a qualitative methodology, including mixed-methods studies with a qualitative component.
- All languages (initially - this may need to change if too many results in other languages are identified due to translation costs)

Exclusion:

- Studies with no use of qualitative methodology, or only brief answers to open-ended survey questions.
- Studies involving no primary data collection (e.g. reviews, opinion pieces).

Condition or domain being studied

Experiences of becoming pregnant, being pregnant, or childbirth.

Due to the range of factors affecting these experiences, we expect studies to reflect on a broad range of topics, including, but not limited to, nutrition, psychosocial health, healthcare interaction, and other behaviours.

Participants/population

Inclusion criteria

- Study conducted in South Asian country
- Participants reflecting on first- or second-hand experience of pregnancy planning, pregnancy or childbirth (current or previous).
 - This may include partners, parents/in-laws, healthcare providers, or other stakeholders reflecting upon experiences of pregnancy planning, pregnancy or childbirth (current or previous)
- Participants at the marriage/pregnancy stage of life. N.B. As marriage is the main context for sexual intercourse in South Asia, this will mostly include married girls and women

Exclusion criteria

- Study not conducted in South Asian country
- Participants not reflecting on pregnancy planning/pregnancy/childbirth experience (ie outcome not related to pregnancy)
- Participants not reflecting on age at marriage/pregnancy
- Participants pre marriage/childbearing stage of life
 - This includes exclusion of studies reflecting on the experience of unmarried adolescents outside of the marriage/pregnancy context, e.g. reproductive health education at school

Intervention(s), exposure(s)

Exposure: Marriage or pregnancy at an early age (this may be defined as before the age of 18 years, but may also be referenced in other ways, such as adolescent, young, or 'early' marriage or pregnancy).

Due to the nature of qualitative research, studies will usually not include intervention and control groups, and therefore studies with any reference to how marriage or pregnancy age is affecting experiences of pregnancy will be included. Reference to a comparator group will most likely be implied, and will be coded during data synthesis.

Comparator(s)/control

Comparator: Marriage or pregnancy at a later age.

Again, due to the nature of qualitative research, studies will likely not include reference to both the exposure and comparator groups, however they must include reference to marriage or pregnancy age. The comparison may be implicit.

Context

Studies in South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka).

This may include multi-country studies with some data collected outside of South Asia, in which case only

data collected South Asia will be synthesised.

Main outcome(s)

Experiences of becoming pregnant, being pregnant, or childbirth. Due to the range of factors affecting these experiences, we expect studies to reflect on a broad range of topics, including, but not limited to, nutrition, psychosocial health, healthcare interaction, and other behaviours.

Measures of effect

Using a thematic synthesis approach, all text in the 'findings' or 'results' section will be coded.

Additional outcome(s)

Due to the broad nature of qualitative studies, additional outcomes may be identified which we had not specified in the protocol.

Measures of effect

Using a thematic synthesis approach, all text in the 'findings' or 'results' section will be coded.

Data extraction (selection and coding)

All identified items will be uploaded to EPPI-Reviewer Web and duplicates removed.

5-10% of studies will initially be screened by two authors and any disagreements discussed. After this, titles and abstracts will be screened by one author and any question of eligibility discussed with the other authors.

Full text review will be undertaken simultaneously by one author.

Data will be extracted on the following:

Item characteristics

- Authors
- Title
- Item type
- Name of Journal if published in a Journal
- Year
- Country and region of participants/informants
- Country and region of authors
- Funder

Research

- Research question and/or aims
- Whether study is reflecting on age at marriage
- Whether study is reflecting on age at pregnancy

Methods

- Who were the participants/informants
- Recruitment methods
- Inclusion criteria
- Qualitative methods
- Setting for data collection
- Tools used for data collection
- Topics explored
- Characteristics of data collectors
- Analysis
- Sample size
- Barriers to participation

Findings

- All text reporting results of the item will be extracted for data synthesis
- Strengths and limitations reported

Additional reviewer comments

Risk of bias (quality) assessment

The Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) checklist for qualitative research will be utilised when assessing the quality of the identified literature. This consists of 10 questions which help the reviewer think about:

- Are the results of the study valid? (Section A)
- What are the results? (Section B)
- Will the results help locally? (Section C)

We will also include an additional quality appraisal item which reflects upon the theoretical underpinnings of the study, as proposed by Long et al. (2020).

Due to the diversity in qualitative methods and reporting, papers will not be excluded based on this critical appraisal, however results will be synthesised in order of quality. Codes will only be created from 'high' and 'medium' quality studies. Studies determined to be of lower quality will be coded, however no new codes will be generated from these studies.

Quality appraisal will be undertaken by two authors for the initial 10-20%, with any differences resolved by discussion or consultation with a third author. The remaining 90% of studies will be appraised by one author.

Long, Hannah A., David P. French, and Joanna M. Brooks. "Optimising the value of the critical appraisal skills programme (CASP) tool for quality appraisal in qualitative evidence synthesis."

<https://doi.org/10.1177/2632084320947559>

Strategy for data synthesis

A thematic synthesis approach will be used for data synthesis, as laid out by Thomas and Harden (2008) and summarised by Tong et al. (2012). This approach has three stages: coding the 'results' section of papers line-by-line, organising codes into descriptive themes, and interpreting descriptive themes into analytical themes which offer a new interpretation beyond that of the primary studies.

PDFs will be uploaded to NVivo to aid in the management of qualitative data.

For studies reflecting on a number of exposures, only the results relating to age at marriage and pregnancy will be coded. In the case of mixed-methods studies, only the qualitative results will be coded.

The process of data synthesis will be undertaken individually for qualitative data on age at marriage and age at pregnancy, and a comparison undertaken as a secondary analysis (see below).

Studies will be coded in order of perceived quality.

This approach will enable the review to remain close to the results of primary studies and synthesise findings in a transparent way. Codes and themes will be discussed with the research team.

Findings will be presented in a table as themes, quotations and interpretations.

An additional exploration of whether studies report on both age at marriage and age at pregnancy together, and if so how is this approached, will also be undertaken.

Thomas J, Harden A. Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Med Res Methodol.* 8:45 (2008) doi: 10.1186/1471-2288-8-45

Tong A, Flemming K, McInnes E et al. Enhancing transparency in reporting the synthesis of qualitative research: ENTREQ. *BMC Med Res Methodol* 12:181 (2012). doi: 10.1186/1471-2288-12-181

Analysis of subgroups or subsets

Due to the context-specific drivers and consequences of child marriage, an exploration of how the effects of child marriage on experiences of pregnancy differs by country, wealth, urban/rural environments, and over time will be undertaken.

As a secondary objective, an attempt to disentangle the effects of early marriage from those of early pregnancy will be undertaken. This is in an attempt to understand any factors associated with early marriage which may influence adverse maternal health outcomes independent of age at pregnancy. This will be undertaken in two ways:

1. Identification of studies which reflect on the experiences of pregnancy associated with both early marriage and early pregnancy. A reflection on whether the authors have attempted to disentangle the two exposures will be undertaken. If authors do not reflect upon this themselves, the codes associated with each exposure will be compared as an attempt to disentangle to the two exposures. During this process, the differences and similarities between the two exposures will be coded.
2. A between-study comparison of the codes and themes associated with early marriage with those related to early pregnancy will also be undertaken, exploring whether any of the identified codes or themes are unique to age at marriage. Differences and similarities will be coded.

Findings from these two approaches will be developed into descriptive themes reflecting the differences between these two exposures.

Contact details for further information

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Organisational affiliation of the review

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Type and method of review

Synthesis of qualitative studies, Systematic review

Anticipated or actual start date

07 February 2022

Anticipated completion date

07 February 2023

Funding sources/sponsors

The Medical Research Council provided funding for FM's PhD studentship

Grant number(s)

State the funder, grant or award number and the date of award

Grant number: MR/N013867/1

Conflicts of interest

Language

English

Country

England

Stage of review

Review Ongoing

Subject index terms status

Subject indexing assigned by CRD

Subject index terms

Asia; Female; Humans; Marriage; Pregnancy; Qualitative Research

Date of registration in PROSPERO

10 February 2022

Date of first submission

10 February 2022

Stage of review at time of this submission

Stage	Started	Completed
Preliminary searches	No	No
Piloting of the study selection process	Yes	No
Formal screening of search results against eligibility criteria	No	No
Data extraction	No	No
Risk of bias (quality) assessment	No	No
Data analysis	No	No

The record owner confirms that the information they have supplied for this submission is accurate and complete and they understand that deliberate provision of inaccurate information or omission of data may be construed as scientific misconduct.

The record owner confirms that they will update the status of the review when it is completed and will add publication details in due course.

Versions

10 February 2022