Data Brief—Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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In a world of 1.8 billion young people aged 10 to 24, it is now more important than ever to meet the needs of adolescents, empower them to overcome the challenges they face and work with them hand-in-hand to craft the future they want and deserve.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are a crucial part of adolescents’ lives and require special attention and action.

Yet...

- Girls aged 15-19 years are twice as likely to die during childbirth as their older counterparts.
- 55% of unintended pregnancies among adolescent girls aged 15–19 years end in abortions which tend to be unsafe in LMICs.
- Unsafe abortion is a major contributor to maternal deaths, with 14 unsafe abortions performed for every 100 births across Africa.
- Worldwide, only 1 in 2 adolescent girls and young women aged 15-19 have their demands for family planning satisfied by modern methods.
- Less than half of adolescent girls report making their own informed decisions on healthcare, contraception or say no to sex with their partner.

Every year, in low- and middle-income countries, 21 million girls become pregnant and more than half of them, 12 million, give birth.

Percentage of adolescent girls (15-19) who report that their demand for family planning is satisfied with modern methods (UNICEF, 2021)
Today, more than **2 million adolescents** are living with HIV.

Coupled with HIV, complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the **leading cause of death** of girls 15-19.

Only **10% of young men** and **15% of young women** know their **HIV status**.

**Boys** are **more likely** to have **comprehensive knowledge** of HIV than girls.

**Girls** account for **3 in 4** new HIV infections among adolescents.

What’s getting in the way of adolescent’s sexual and reproductive health and rights?

- Gender inequality and discrimination
- Lack of comprehensive knowledge about menstrual health and sexual and reproductive health
- Stigma, taboos and social restrictions
- Low levels of social autonomy
- Legal restrictions (including restricting access to contraception, abortion, forced early marriage and age of consent)
- Socioeconomic factors
- Inadequate and/or insufficient data on specific populations

What adolescents want and need...

- **Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Menstrual Literacy**
- **Empowering Adolescents to Make Decisions About their Own Lives and Health**
- **Access to SRH Services, Testing and Treatment**
- **Supporting Adolescents’ Sexual Health & Rights**
- **Data and Evidence Focusing on Sexual and Gender Minority Youth**
- **Access to Abortion and Post-Abortion Care**
- **Counselling on Family Planning and Access to Contraception**
REFERENCES


This data brief was created by the Population Council’s GIRL Center in collaboration with African Institute for Development Policy to inform the thematic roundtable discussion on “Adolescent Engagement and Program Integration: The Services We Want vs What We’ve Got” at the Girls Deliver Pre-Conference on Adolescent Girls held in Kigali, Rwanda ahead of the Women Deliver 2023 Conference.