



## EVIDENCE BRIEF

### Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy in Mozambique: Causes and Impact (2015)



#### Why is it important?

When it comes to preventing adolescent pregnancies, a crucial factor is women's empowerment, especially the ability of young women to request contraception. This study analyzes the magnitude, trends over time, determinants and impacts of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy. It is useful for those wishing to better inform national policy design.

#### Methodology

This study was completed using a secondary data analysis of Mozambican Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) 1997, 2003, 2011; a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2008); Census projections (2007); and administrative data from the Ministry of Education.

#### Key findings

##### Trends

The proportion of girls married and pregnant in their teens decreased slightly between 1997 and 2011. Most provinces saw improvements in their rates of child marriage between 1997 and 2011. Yet due to rapid population growth, the absolute number of girls married as children continues to grow. Two provinces saw statistically significant increases in their rates of pregnancy.

##### Determinants

A large part of the variation in rates of child marriage is explained by religious and regional differences. Girls in female-headed households have a significantly lower probability of getting married before 18 than those in male-headed households. Girls from urban areas are significantly more likely to get pregnant before

the age of 15 years than girls from rural areas.

##### Impact on wellbeing outcomes

Child marriage is associated with a significantly lower likelihood of finishing primary school and starting secondary school. The children of adolescent mothers are significantly more malnourished than children of mothers in other age groups at the national level. The children of adolescent mothers have a higher likelihood of death than the children of mothers in other age groups. Younger mothers are more likely to have a skilled attendant present at the birth of their children, particularly those under 18 years old. Use of skilled birth attendants is best predicted by privilege measures such as household wealth. Girls who married before 18 years old started bearing children earlier than other girls.

#### Conclusion

This study brings evidence that child marriage and adolescent pregnancies are closely related, as the overwhelming majority of adolescent pregnancies happen among girls who have married early. It also highlights the fact that child marriage and adolescent pregnancies have a negative impact on a range of other wellbeing indicators for women (such as completion of primary and secondary education, child malnutrition and child mortality).

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