



Scoping Review

Fatherhood Experiences in Adolescent Fathers

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A B S T R A C T

Background: Fathers, especially adolescent fathers, need support to face their new roles so that these roles can be carried out effectively. Without support, the mental health of the child, the mother, and even the father himself may be negatively impacted, as well as the child's growth, development, and the child's social adaptation abilities.

Aims: To review and map scientific evidence about the experience of fatherhood in adolescent fathers

Method: The design used in this research is a scoping review guided by the PRISMA-ScR checklist and uses the PICO framework.

Results: Based on the 8 articles included in this scoping review, 3 themes were produced, namely the impact (change) of becoming a father at a teenage age, factors causing becoming a father at a teenage age, obstacles to becoming a father at a teenage age.

Conclusion: Adolescent fatherhood is a shocking experience, and the unpreparedness and lack of information that adolescent fathers face can make them confused about their new role.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood characterized by significant physical, psychological, social and cognitive changes [1]. Adolescents who experience poor self-identity lose direction and develop deviant behavior [2]. Teenage marriage is a persistent issue affecting adolescents worldwide. 115 million boys globally marry before the age of 18 [3]. The prevalence of adolescent male marriage in Indonesia in the period 2015 - 2018 showed about 1 in 100 males (1.06%) married before the age of 18. This prevalence increased slightly by 0.33% compared to 0.73% in 2015 [4].

A review of the evidence on marriage by adolescent male is still lacking compared to adolescent female for several reasons [5]. This is due to the perception that adolescent male face fewer risks and consequences after marriage than adolescent female [6]. Factors that lead to adolescent fatherhood are poverty, low education, early sexual initiation, promiscuity and unwanted partner pregnancy [7]. Another factor is that some adolescent who are already employed and earning money so they decide to marry and have children at a young age [8].

The results of previous research stated that adolescent fatherhood can lead to a positive change in behavior due to the sense of responsibility. The adolescent fathers also experience positive changes in behavior therefore they avoid engaging in negative behaviors [9]. Other studies have also mentioned that the experience of fatherhood can be stressful for immature adolescents due to the emotional challenges associated with adjusting to new roles [10].

Fathers, especially adolescent fathers, need support to deal with their new role in order to fulfill it more effectively [11]. The lack of support for a father can have a significant impact on the mental health of the child, mother, and father himself, as well as the child’s growth and social adaptability [12]. Based on this goal, the researchers chose this scoping review method because it is most suitable for mapping a topic based on existing literature [13]. The review question in this study is how is the experience of fatherhood in men who become fathers in adolescence?

METHOD

This study aims to provide recommendations for improving health services, particularly in midwifery. The authors in this study consisted of two authors from the same educational institution. The study utilized a scoping review research design, which is a method that employs scientific evidence to conduct broader research with the goal of identifying knowledge gaps, scoping the literature, clarifying concepts, and investigating research conduct [14]. This scoping review was prepared following the guidelines of the PRISMA-ScR checklist. The checklist aims to improve the quality and transparency of research, ensuring clear, and detailed reporting [15]. The steps for conducting this scoping review follow the framework developed by Arksey and O’Malley. These steps include identifying research questions, identifying relevant studies, selecting studies, charting data, and reporting the results of the review [16].

Identification of Research Question

Both authors of this study used a framework to develop research questions and determine inclusion and exclusion criteria. This facilitated the process of searching and screening relevant articles. The questions were organized for review. The study employ the PICO framework, which stands for Population, Phenomena of Interest, and Context. This framework is used to develop research questions about experiences or phenomena [14].

Table 1 **Framework PICO**

<i>Population</i>	<i>Phenomena of Interest</i>	<i>Context</i>
Adolescent fathers	Fatherhood	Experience Barriers Support Role Expectations Needs

Based on the framework above, the question identified by the authors in this scoping review is how is the experience of fatherhood in men who become fathers in adolescence?

Identification of the Relevant Studies

The authors generated keywords based on the aforementioned framework as follows:

Table 2 Keywords

<i>Population</i>	<i>Phenomena of Interest</i>	<i>Context</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adolescen* Boy OR Teen* Father OR Adolescen* Father OR Young Father OR Child* Groom</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fatherhood* OR Adoelscen* Fatherhood OR Teen* marriage* OR Early Fatherhood</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Experience*</i> • <i>Challenge*</i> • <i>Support</i> • <i>Role*</i> • <i>Hope</i> • <i>Need*</i>

The authors established exclusion and inclusion criteria for the articles to be searched. The inclusion criteria for this study are articles published between 2018 and 2023 that are accessible in full text for free, articles published in English and Indonesian, original research, articles with both quantitative and qualitative studies, and articles that discuss the experiences of fathers who married during adolescence. The study’s exclusion criteria include opinion or review articles, articles with Indonesian or English titles but with content in another language, and articles that only discuss the experience of women who married in adolescence when discussing the experience of marriage in adolescence.

The study conducted a search for relevant articles in three databases: PubMed, Wiley, and Science Direct. Additionally, gray literature was searched using Google Scholar. PubMed was selected due to its accessibility and support for health literature searches. A total of 34 articles and abstracts were found [17]. The Wiley Online Library database was selected due to its vast collection of resources, including 1,600 journals, 22,000 e-books, and 225 references, which facilitates the article search process [18]. Science direct is a database containing complete, high-quality articles that have been reviewed by Elsevier reviewers [19].

Selection of the Studies

The articles were retrieved from the database by conducting a Google search using the designated keywords. The next step involved article elimination, which was facilitated by Rayyan. This tool was used to filter articles based on title, abstract, and full-text reading. The process of finding and filtering articles is described in the PRISMA Flowchart below:

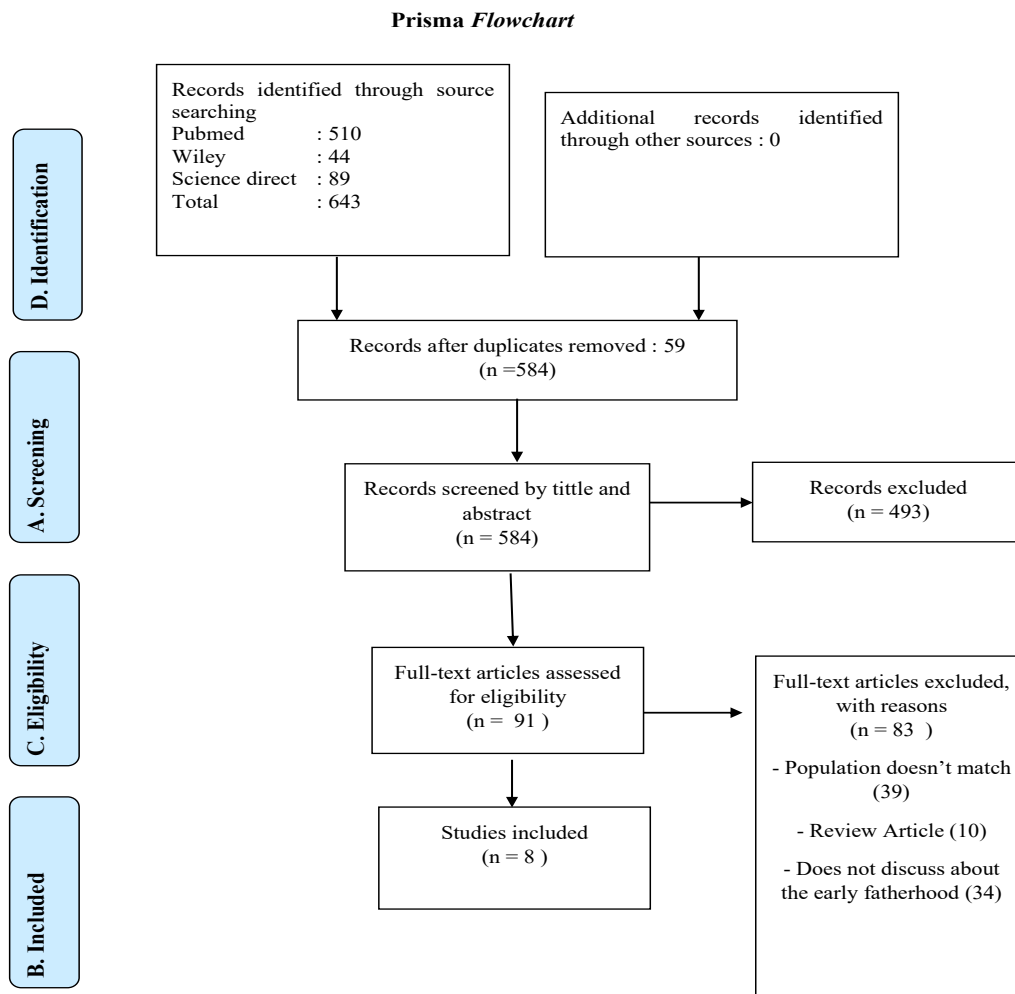


Figure 1. Prisma Flowchart

Charting Data

The authors confirmed 8 articles suitable for inclusion in this study after discussing the screening process. The articles were screened in full text, and any irrelevant articles were excluded. The 8 relevant articles included in this scoping review study are described in the data charting table (Table 1), adopted from the Joana Briggs Institute (JBI) [20]:

Table 3 Charting Data

No	Title/ Authors/Years	Country	Aim	Type of Research	Sampel	Data Collection	Result
1	Growing into teen fatherhood: a grounded theory study [21]	Thailand	To explore teenage fathers' experiences of first-time fatherhood regarding their partner's pregnancy in Thailand.	It is qualitative research using grounded theory design	The sample consisted of 16 adolescent fathers in Chiang Mai, Thailand.	Data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with 16 adolescent fathers, which lasted 45-60 minutes.	The study revealed that the participants did not intend to have children due to fear and stress, as they believed that fatherhood would negatively impact their teenage lives. The participants acknowledged receiving parental support in raising their children. Parenthood also led to positive changes, such as avoiding risky behaviors and developing a sense of responsibility towards their children. Additionally, Thai Buddhism served as a stress coping mechanism for some participants.
2.	Adolescent fathers' experiences in Indonesia: a qualitative study [22]	Indonesia	To understand more deeply from teenage fathers about their marital experiences with unplanned pregnancy	Qualitative research using an exploratory design	The sample consisted of 8 teenage fathers in a health center and independent midwife practice. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling and snowball sampling.	Data was collected through face-to-face interviews in a private room at the health center and independent midwife practice during working hours.	The study found that these adolescent fathers married unplanned. They dropped out of school, lacked support, and lost autonomy in their lives.
3.	' The School Was Closed , So When They Brought Me A Husband I Couldn't Say No ': Exploring the Gendered Experiences of Child Marriage Amongst Adolescent Girls and Boys in Ethiopia [23]	Ethiopia	To explore the drivers and patterns of child marriage among adolescent girls and boys in Ethiopia	Qualitative research	The sample consisted of 190 adolescents, 44 parents and 20 key informants at the community level. The sampling technique used was snowball sampling.	The study employed individual and group semi-structured interviews to collect data. Data collection occurred in late 2017 and early 2018, as well as late 2019 and early 2020. The research was conducted in two zones: Gondar in the Amhara Region and East Hararghe in Oromia.	This study demonstrated that there are various factors that contribute to the initiation of marriage between boys and girls, and both genders face equally unfavorable risks. The factors driving boys' marriages in this study included poverty, dominant masculinity, peer influence, matchmaking parents, loss of a parental figure, and poor quality of education.
4.	Exploring Basotho teenage fathers' experiences of early fatherhood at South African rural high schools [24]	South Africa	To understand the experiences and roles of adolescent fatherhood in the Basotho ethnic group of South Africa	Qualitative research with a multi-case approach	The study sample comprised of four teenage fathers, aged between 17 and 20 years, who were still attending secondary school in a rural district located in Thabo Mofutsanyane in the Free State	Semi-structured interviews lasted for about 20 minutes. Data analysis was thematic.	This research produced two themes that describe the experiences and resilience of teenage fathers: initial fears and resistance to early parenthood, and resilient teenage fathers.

No	Title/ Authors/Years	Country	Aim	Type of Research	Sampel	Data Collection	Result
5.	COVID-19 and the surge of child marriages: A phenomenon in Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia [25]	Indonesia	To examine the reasons for the increase in child marriage in culturally strong communities in West Nusa Tenggara province	Quantitative research with phenomenological approach	province of South Africa. The study employed snowball sampling as the sampling technique. The sample comprised of 23 individuals, including 7 mothers and 3 fathers of adolescents who married early, and 10 adolescent girls and 3 adolescent boys who married early.	Data was collected through in-depth interviews conducted by two postgraduate education students who were proficient in the Lombok local language. The interviews took place in West Lombok and North Lombok.	The study's findings suggested that adolescents may marry early due to the belief that marriage can alleviate the burden of schoolwork, as learning is conducted online during the pandemic. However, this practice is rooted in custom and culture, and parents may not fully comprehend the long-term consequences of early marriage, including economic difficulties and peer pressure.
6.	Adolescent Fathers' perceptions and experiences of fatherhood: A qualitative exploration with Hispanic adolescent fathers [26]	United States of America	To examine and address the research gap on the experiences and perceptions of young Hispanic fathers (aged 16-23)	Quantitative research	The sampling technique used was convenience sampling. The sample totaled 17 adolescent fathers from the Hispanic ethnic group.	Data collection was conducted through a 60-minute interview in a private conference room at the Community Center. The researcher used an audio recorder to record the interview.	The study found that adolescent fathers often come from disadvantaged family backgrounds, experience economic instability, and are influenced by their environment to engage in criminal behavior. Additionally, they lack positive role models in their lives. While some participants acknowledged the challenges of fatherhood during adolescence and unstable circumstances, they also reported that it motivated them to improve their health status and behaviors.
7.	Teen fathers' perceptions and experiences of fatherhood: A qualitative exploration with in-school teen fathers in a rural district in South Africa [9]	South Africa	To explore the experiences and perceptions of adolescent fathers in a village or sub-district in South Africa	Exploratory qualitative research	Purposive sampling was employed as the sampling technique. The study included 25 adolescent fathers who were still in school and aged between 16 and 19 years.	Data collection was conducted through face-to-face, in-depth interviews that were recorded using an audio recorder. The interviews were conducted after school activities were completed in a classroom and lasted for 30 minutes.	This research resulted in 4 themes namely: Adolescent Fatherhood in Action, Transition to Fatherhood, Self-perception of Fatherhood and Parenting Involvement.
8.	Should we care: A qualitative exploration of the factors that influence the decision of early marriage among young men in urban slums of Bangladesh [27]	Bangladesh	To understand the factors that contribute to early marriage among adolescent male sexuality in Bangladesh.	Quantitative research	The study employed snowball sampling as the sampling technique, resulting in a sample of 22 adolescent boys.	In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data, which was then analyzed thematically.	The results of this study found that the factors that influence early marriage among adolescent boys are poverty, early sexual initiation, poverty, lack of education and parents who do not know the impact of early marriage. Another factor is that they consider that marriage is a pride or a sign that they are mature enough to get married.

The articles included in this study are 8 articles. The articles obtained were identified using data charting and then critical appraisal. All 8 selected articles used qualitative research methods and received a grade A, indicating very good quality. The

researchers used the Joana Briggs Institute (JBI) tool to conduct a critical appraisal. This tool was chosen because it is comprehensive and easy to understand. The purpose of the critical appraisal is to assess the quality of the articles identified in the data charting process. The researchers evaluated the article and categorized it into three grades: A (21-30), which is considered very good; B (10-20), which is good; and C (<10), which is not good. Each critical appraisal question was given an assessment score of 0 = No, 1 = Not Applicable, 2 = Unclear, or 3 = Yes. The eight articles assessed in this study were all qualitative research types and received very good results according to the JBI tool.

Table 3 Result of Score Critical Appraisal

<i>No</i>	<i>Author (year)</i>	<i>Score</i>
1.	[21]	26/A
2.	(Astuti Andari et al., 2021)	30/A
3.	(Emirie et al.,2021)	30/A
4.	(Mukuna, 2020)	26/A
5.	(Rahiem,2021)	24/A
6.	(Recto & Lesser,2021)	26/A
7.	(Madiba & Nsiki, 2017)	30/A
8.	(Biswas et al., 2020)	26/A

Result of the Review

Based on the eight articles included in this scoping review, the researchers identified two themes and characteristics of the articles based on the country, research methodology used, and article grade.

a. Thematic

Based on the eight articles, three major themes emerged. The first theme, the impact of becoming a father in adolescence, consists of four sub-themes: difficult transition process, missing out of adolescence, new responsibilities, and social stigma. The second theme is the causal factors of becoming a father in adolescence, which consists of three sub-themes: poverty, family integrity, and unplanned pregnancy of the partner. The third theme of this study pertains to the barriers to fatherhood during adolescence. It consists of two sub-themes: lack of support and lack of information. The author presents the results of the theme analysis in the table below:

Table 4 Theme Analysis

	Theme	Sub Theme
a)	The impact of becoming a father in adolescence	- Difficult transition process - Missing out on adolescence - New responsibilities - Social stigma
b)	The causal factors of becoming a father in adolescence	- Poverty - Family integrity - Unplanned pregnancy of the partner
c)	The barriers to fatherhood during adolescence	- Lack of support - Lack of information

b. Article Characteristics by Country

The scoping review included 8 articles that examined the characteristics of articles based on country development. Of these, 7 articles were from developing countries, including 2 from Indonesia, 1 from Thailand, 1 from Ethiopia, 1 from South Africa, and 1 from Bangladesh. The remaining article was from a developed country, the United States.

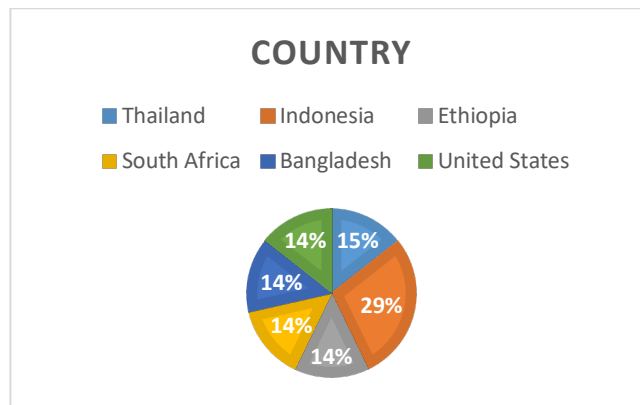


Figure 2 Article Characteristics by Country

c. Article Characteristics by Methodology

All 8 articles in the study utilized qualitative research methodology.



Figure 3 Article Characteristics by Methodology

d. Article Characteristics based on Article Grade

The quality of the articles was assessed using the Joana Briggs Institute’s critical appraisal checklist. All eight articles in this study received a grade A.

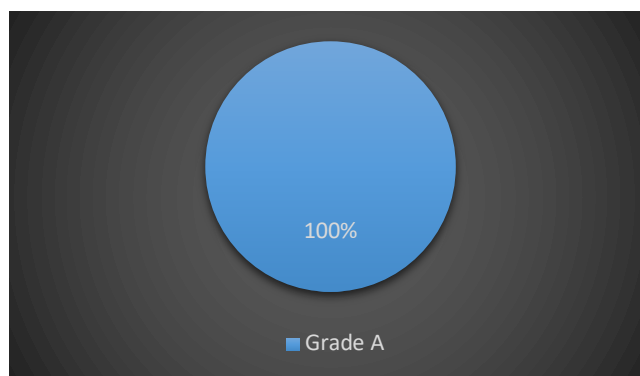


Figure 4 Article Characteristics based on Article Grade

DISCUSSION

This scoping review aims to investigate the experiences of fathers who married during adolescence. The literature review using the scoping review method resulted in three themes: The impact of becoming a father in adolescence, the causal factors of becoming a father in adolescence, and the barriers to fatherhood during adolescence

1. The Impact of Becoming a Father in Adolescence

a. Difficult Process

Going through a difficult process and facing difficult conflicts is one of the impacts experienced by adolescent fathers. Becoming a father is a big change, teenage fathers tend to be afraid because they do not have stable finances as a result of not being able to meet the needs of children and wife so they feel fatherhood is one of the difficult life processes [28]. Adolescents who never expected to become fathers during their teenage years may find it difficult to accept the transition to fatherhood. This is because they may not have received adequate preparation for this new role [21]. Adolescents who experience unplanned marriage and fatherhood at an immature age may lack knowledge of the specific roles and duties of a father [22]. The difficult process means that becoming a father is a new experience, they do not know what to do, especially since adolescents do not have stable emotions, so anxiety and fear of this new role appear [24].

b. Missing out on Adolescent

Adolescence is such an exciting time for making new friends and learning in school. However, sometimes getting married can cause them to lose sight of these enjoyable experiences. [29]. Adolescents who get married are often forced to work to support their children and partners. This prevents them from fully experiencing their youth [24]. These findings are consistent with research conducted in Brazil. Adolescent fathers experience something new, where they have to adapt to a new routine as a father, so that they cannot return to the routine they had before they were fathers [30].

c. New Responsibilities

Adolescents who become fathers are faced with new responsibilities, including caring for their children and spouse, rather than just themselves [21]. Adolescents often face the new responsibility of being the main breadwinner, which may lead them to drop out of school and focus on earning money to provide for their children's needs [31]. The new responsibilities in the lives of adolescent fathers may bring about positive behavioral changes, such as increased awareness of maintaining their health and working harder to meet the needs of their family [9].

d. Social Stigma

Another negative impact experienced by fathers who marry in their teens is stigmatization because having children in their teens is considered inappropriate and shameful [32]. The status of fathers during adolescence can be challenging due to a variety of factors, including their immature age, unstable finances, and relatively low education levels, which can make it difficult for them to secure decent employment. As a result, there can be a negative stigma associated with adolescent fathers [26]. Social stigma can be acquired from various sources, including family, relatives, friends, and even the school environment, such as teachers [24].

2. The Causal Factors of Becoming a Father in Adolescence

a. Poverty

Adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more prone to early marriage and fatherhood [33]. Adolescent fathers represent a vulnerable population with characteristics similar to those of adolescent mothers: lower socioeconomic status, lower levels of education and fewer employment opportunities than their peers who have not yet become fathers [34]. According to Voisin's research, socio-economic factors and poor environment can increase the vulnerability of adolescents to issues such as early marriage and young parenthood [35].

In some cases, parents may arrange marriages for their sons with women who have better economic conditions due to unstable economic conditions. This is done so that the sons can reduce the burden on their parents when married to girls with better economies [23]. Research conducted in Somaliland and Putland suggests that economic hardship is one of the factors that may lead adolescents to choose marriage over remaining idle [36].

b. Family Integrity

Remaja Adolescents who experience the loss of a parent who should be a place to depend on due to divorce or death may choose to start their own families at a young age instead of living with a step-parent [23]. The loss of a parent can have a significant impact on an adolescent's life, causing grief and negative consequences such as increased stress, disrupted learning, and risky behaviors like substance abuse and early sexual activity which can lead boys to be adolescent fathers [37].

c. Pregnancy of the Partner

Unplanned pregnancies can result in adolescent boys becoming fathers and husbands [22]. Unplanned events eventually make male adolescents have a new status as fathers, male adolescents feel surprised, have not been able to accept the presence of a child initially due to an unstable financial situation [21]. Adolescents often struggle with decision-making due to their developing cognitive abilities and tendency towards impulsivity. They may act impulsively due to their high self-regard, often without considering the potential negative consequences [38].

3. The Barriers to Fatherhood during Adolescence

a. Lack of Support

The limited social support from close family members and peers can make the transition to fatherhood difficult for adolescent fathers. This is especially true for those who struggle with emotional control. They need as much support as possible during this significant life change [39]. Adolescent boys grow up in diverse family environments. Some adolescents may lack a father figure and involvement from a young age, which can make it difficult for them to understand the role of fatherhood. [40].

b. Lack of Information

Another barrier to adolescent fatherhood is the lack of sources of information and knowledge about the concept of fatherhood [26]. These findings are in line with a research conducted in America which indicated that adolescent fathers often lack information about fatherhood due to a lack of preparation and seeking out information [41].

CONCLUSION

Based on the review of 8 articles, two major themes emerged: the factors that contribute to adolescent fatherhood and the impact of adolescent fatherhood. The reviewed articles discuss the experiences of adolescent fathers, including their initial reactions upon learning of their impending fatherhood, which is often a difficult process. The articles included in this scoping review do not discuss the needs and expectations of adolescent fathers regarding fatherhood and the support they receive. The results of this review also indicate that family breakdown can lead individuals to become parents at a young age. The study results are expected to be of concern to health policy makers and health workers in both government and private health facilities. They should pay attention to, guide, and support adolescent fathers.

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