

# Denormalizing a Historical Problem: Teen Pregnancy, Policy, and Public Health Action

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**Objective:** To explore the impact of teen-adult sexual relationships as a public health threat and the effectiveness of statutory rape laws in protecting adolescent children. **Methods:** A comprehensive review of current literature surrounding child abuse, teen pregnancy, and statutory rape was conducted. **Results:** Of one million teen girls who become pregnant each year, two-thirds may be the victims of statutory

rape. Current laws appear to marginalize the severity of teen-adult sexual relationships, compromising the health and safety of adolescent children. **Conclusions:** Public health recommendations which include public policy change and enforcement, education, and community empowerment are offered.

**Key words:** child sexual abuse, statutory rape, public policy

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