

Main Identity

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Sent: Monday, March 04, 2002 6:51 AM
Subject: Family Planning Clinics cause higher teenage pregnancy rate in Britain - London Daily Telegraph 4 March 2002

Under-age Pill 'not working'

By Nicole Martin

London Daily Telegraph

(Filed: 04/03/2002)

THE Government's commitment to cutting the [high teenage pregnancy rate in Britain](#) by improving young people's access to contraception is "completely wrong and misguided", according to research published today.

A 14-year study conducted in 16 areas found no evidence that family planning services reduced the pregnancy rate among girls under 16.

The findings, published in the *Journal of Health Economics*, is a blow to the Government's advisory group on teenage pregnancies which last year recommended that children wanting to have sexual intercourse before the legal age of consent should be able to receive the Pill and condoms at school.

Today's report found a **higher conception rate in areas where a greater number of girls aged 13 to 15 visited family planning clinics.**

For example, in the North-East, where an average of 45 girls per thousand aged 13-15 visited family planning clinics a year - the highest recorded figure - the conception rate was 11 per 1,000 girls aged 13 to 15, the highest recorded rate.

By contrast, in Oxford, where an average of only 26 girls per thousand aged 13-15 visited family planning clinics a year, the conception rate was 6 per 1,000 girls.

Dr David Paton of Nottingham University Business School, who led the study, said the findings cast serious doubt on the Government's policy of improving family planning services for teenagers.

He said socio-economic factors such as unemployment had a greater influence on the teenage pregnancy rate. He said: "Although family planning may make sexually active teenagers less likely to get pregnant, **it seems that it also encourages others to start having sex.**"

"Some of these will get pregnant through contraceptive failure and, if anything, **the overall effect of expanding family planning services for under-16s has been to increase pregnancies and abortions.**"

Simon Blake, a member of the Government's advisory group on teenage pregnancy and director of the sex education forum, rejected the report.

He said: "All the international evidence shows that good sex education and access to confidential advice on contraception has a positive effect on the rate of teenage pregnancy."

- [1 March 2002: Schoolgirl pregnancies raise safe sex fears](#)
- [1 December 2001: Give out free condoms at schools, says health group](#)
- [24 May 2001: Alarm as pupils claim to have sex on school trips](#)
- [23 March 2001: Schoolgirl pregnancies fall back to 1994 levels](#)
- [8 September 2000: Children of broken homes 'turn to underage sex'](#)