

Factors Effecting Depression amongst Adolescent Mothers in South Africa*

Patrick Maredi Mothapo¹, I. M. Ramokgopa², Kathryn Anne Nel³ and Indiran Govender⁴

¹*Department of Psychology, University of Limpopo, Polokwane, South Africa
E-mail: Maredi.Mothapo@ul.ac.za*

²*Lebowakgomo Hospital Limpopo, Polokwane, South Africa
E-mail: mashakgeneramokgopa@gmail.com.*

³*Department of Research Administration and Development,
University of Limpopo, Polokwane, South Africa
E-mail: Kathryn.Nel@ul.ac.za*

⁴*Department of Family Medicine and Primary Health Care,
Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Pretoria, South Africa
E-mail: Indiran.govender@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT Adolescent motherhood is a major challenge throughout the world as they have to deal with, amongst other things, lack of social support and challenges to their mental health. Young mothers can experience poor mother-child-interactions and these young women are at increased risk of future psychopathology. The aim of this study was to investigate the influence age, marital status and social support have on depression amongst adolescent mothers. A cross-sectional survey design was employed. The experimental group consisted of 100 adolescent mothers and the control group of 100 adolescent females who were not mothers, between 15 and 19 years of age. Lack of social support was a significant factor negatively affecting adolescent mothers with them being likely to become depressed ($r = -0.609$, $p < 0.01$). T-test analysis indicated that these mothers experienced depression irrespective of marital status ($t = 1.091$, $df = 98$; $p > 0.05$). Professional counselling should be provided to all adolescent mothers before they return to the school system after giving birth.