



MWIA CASE STUDIES

NEED FOR SEX EDUCATION

Case 32: Underage phone dating in Japan

Objectives

- To show an example illustrating that lack of knowledge about sex can lead to an unwanted pregnancy
- To show adults can exploit mobile phone dating sites to obtain sex with a child

Narrative Case

** At the end of the case study you can find "Learning points" related to information presented in the narrative case, denoted by numbers in square brackets.*

A 14-year-old girl became pregnant after having sex with a man met through a mobile phone dating site. [1,2]

The girl thought that intense physical exertion engaged in during a club activity at school was the cause of cessation of her menstruation and did not realize that she was pregnant. Her family did not notice anything amiss. [3,4]

Her mother thought that her daughter had a bowel problem, not morning sickness, and brought her to the hospital. At the hospital, the physician failed to notice that the girl was pregnant. By the time it was realized

that the girl was pregnant, she was beyond the upper limit of gestation for an abortion. She had to stop attending high school to give birth to the baby. Her family informed the school that she would be hospitalized, due to illness, until after graduation. The school, however, generously gave her a Graduation Certificate. A district welfare commissioner became aware of the situation and advised the family to consult with a lawyer; the man was accused of having sex with a minor and arrested, and found guilty in court. The baby was adopted and raised by the girl's family. [5]

Learning Points

- [1] In Japan, there are many men having sex with girls met through mobile phone dating sites knowing that the girl is a minor.
- [2] Dating sites were introduced with the i-mode service of mobile phones in 1999, and the Child Prostitution and Child Pornography punishment law was enacted the same year. However, the prevalence of young girls carelessly dating and having sex has not yet improved.
- [3] The high school girl was entirely ignorant of the risk of pregnancy after sex. Young people need to be urgently educated about sex, menstruation and pregnancy in school to prevent such incidences. There is a need for cooperation between schools, health centres and the police.
- [4] Sex education in schools in Japan is insufficient
- [5] Often, sexual violence perpetuated by adult males remains tolerated. It should be categorically repudiated as a matter of social awareness and responsibility.

Background information

Prevalence:

Teenagers giving birth:

1985 17,877 live births

2002 21,401 live births

2007 15,250 live births (1.4% of the total live births; 5 teenagers/1000 total females gave birth; 39 teenagers 15 years old or younger gave birth).

2010 13,546 births (1.2% of the total live births)

Teenage abortions:

1995 26,117 abortions (6.2 teenage abortions/1000 total females)

2001 46,511 abortions (13 teenage abortions/1000 total females)

2007 23,985 abortions (7.8 teenage abortions/1000 total females)

2010 20,650 abortions

2011 20,903 abortions

- After 2002, there was a decrease in teenage abortions. One possible factor was access to birth control pills. However, birth control pill usage was only 3% in women aged 16 to 49 years old in Japan. Another possible factor was support by local government.
- In order to alleviate loneliness and to obtain money, young people including minors are easy prey to sexual predators. Society should protect the rights of boys and girls.

References

- Maternal and child health information. (2009). Responding to young pregnancy, childbirth and childcare. November: No 60. <http://www.humanservices.jp/magazine/vol11/33.pdf>
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