

「若年母」の妊娠・出産・育児経験と社会のまなざし：当事者の語りより

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Pregnancy and child care in older teenage mothers: As told through the life stories of the women themselves

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Since the average childbirth age is advancing in modern society, teen-age mothers are increasingly unusual. In this study, we interviewed six "gal moms" (teen mothers with apparent obsessions with superficial concerns) and three student mothers. We conducted qualitative analyses of how they experienced and evaluated pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing.

We found common features in both groups. Since they are young, whether or not their parents supported their pregnancy or childbirth affects them. Their parents often intervene in the child-rearing process, or support their child-rearing efforts. These mothers have almost no friends of the same age who are also mothers. They feel the gaze on them as young mothers. However, they have acquired a new social role and sense of values, met new friends, and have evaluated their lives, which have included early maternity, childbirth, and child-rearing.

There were also differences found between the groups. Since the student mothers were not planning to become pregnant when they did, they did not always welcome their pregnancies, while the gal moms welcomed pregnancy. Moreover, in the case of the gal moms, there were many parents who were opposed their childbirth, therefore they have been without the support of their parents during pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing. The student mothers reported feelings of insufficiency, having failed to become economically independent, in spite of the status of their parents. Thus, the young mothers are following the various and dynamic process. Society has realized that young pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing place these women in a "high-risk" group. This not only bars support in alignment with a need, but can corner them in undesirable situations, too.