

# From School to Home: The Impact of Early Marriage on the Reproductive Health of Adolescent Girls

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## Keywords

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## Abstract

In Indonesia, early marriage is still a big public health issues since it has a big effect on the reproductive, psychological, and social health of adolescent girls. This study uses a literature review method to analyze various studies related to the causes, impacts, and prevention strategies for early marriage. The results of the study show that education plays a major role, with adolescents with upper secondary education having a lower risk of early marriage. Conversely, low parental education levels and poor socioeconomic conditions are the main factors driving this practice. The impacts of early marriage include an increased risk of obstetric complications such as preeclampsia, hemorrhage, and premature birth, as well as psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety due to mental unpreparedness. In addition, early marriage limits access to education and economic opportunities, reinforces the cycle of poverty, and increases the risk of stunting in the next generation. Preventing early marriage requires cross-sectoral interventions involving education, health, and economic empowerment of adolescent girls. With an integrated and culturally sensitive approach, early marriage rates can be reduced so that the reproductive and social well-being of adolescent girls can improve sustainably.

## 1. Introduction

Early marriage remains a problem and an important issue in the field of public health and midwifery in Indonesia. This problem is not only influenced by socio-cultural factors, but also has serious consequences for the reproductive health of adolescent girls. Despite the enactment of Law No. 16 of 2019, the rate of early marriage remains high, especially in rural areas with low levels of education (1). Education is a major factor; the higher the level of education among adolescents, the more likely they are to delay marriage and understand the risks involved. Family economic conditions are also a trigger, as some people view marriage as a solution to financial difficulties (1). Indonesia still ranks high in child marriage rates in Southeast Asia, which contributes to an increase in teenage pregnancies (2). Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs shows a downward trend in the number of marriages under the age of 19: 8,804 couples in 2022, 5,489 couples in 2023, and 4,150 couples in 2024 (3).

Teenage pregnancy carries a higher risk of various obstetric complications such as preeclampsia, bleeding, and premature birth (2). This is related to the immaturity of the reproductive organs, which are not yet anatomically or physiologically ready for pregnancy. In addition, suboptimal nutritional intake, especially iron and folic acid deficiency, can increase the risk of anemia and fetal growth retardation. Social factors such as low economic status and limited access to health services exacerbate the condition, thereby increasing the risk of complications. The combination of these biological and social factors explains the high rates of premature birth, low birth weight, and maternal and neonatal morbidity.

Low levels of education and limited reproductive health knowledge have been identified as major contributors to early marriage (4,5). In addition, early marriage also reduces access to education and employment for women, reinforcing poverty and gender inequality. Children born to adolescent mothers face a higher risk of stunting due to financial limitations and inadequate nutritional knowledge (2,5).

## 2. Method

This study was structured using a literature review method to analyze various relevant findings on early marriage, specifically in relation to adolescent girls' reproductive health. Through this study, it is expected that a comprehensive picture of the impact of early marriage on adolescent girls' reproductive health can be provided.

In this study, the literature used comprises scientific articles and research reports that examine the correlation between risk factors such as education level, socioeconomic conditions, access to reproductive health information, and cultural and religious norms that influence early marriage. This study also highlights

the impact of early marriage on adolescent reproductive health, including the risk of obstetric complications, intimate partner violence, psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety, high rates of maternal morbidity and mortality, and limited access to health services. By integrating various findings from published literature, this study aims to broaden understanding of the impact of early marriage and provide a strong foundation for the development of more effective policies and intervention strategies to protect the reproductive health of adolescent girls.

### 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1. Journal Review Results**

No	Authors and year	Title	Methods	Result
1	Fitria, D., Laksono, A. D., Syahri, I. M., et al., 2024  (Fitria, D., Laksono, A. D., Syahri, I. M., et al., 2024)	<i>Education Role in Preventing Early Marriage among Girls in Indonesia</i>	Quantitative Study (Secondary Data Analysis)	Education is a protective factor; adolescent girls with a high school education or higher have a 70% lower risk of marrying at a young age. Education extends schooling and delays marriage (1).
2	Elnakib, S., et al., 2025  (Elnakib, S., et al., 2025)	<i>Mapping Global Interventions to Mitigate the Harms of Child Marriage</i>	Scoping Review	The most effective prevention programs combine educational, economic, and reproductive health interventions. Long-term evaluation is necessary (6).
3	Siddiqi, M., et al., 2024  (Siddiqi, M., et al., 2024)	<i>Interventions to Address the Health and Well-Being of Married Adolescents: A Systematic Review</i>	Systematic Review	Reproductive education and economic support programs effectively increase knowledge and use of contraception, but long-term impact remains limited (7).
4	Fan, S., et al., 2022  (Fan, S., et al., 2022)	<i>The health consequences of child marriage: a systematic review.</i>	Systematic Review	Early marriage increases the risk of obstetric complications, intimate partner violence, and low access to reproductive health services (8).
5	Nhampoca, J. M., et al., 2024  (Nhampoca, J. M., et al., 2024)	<i>Early marriage, education and mental health: experiences of adolescent girls.</i>	Mixed Method (Quantitative & Qualitative)	Early marriage causes depression and anxiety disorders; education acts as a protective factor (9).
6	Ayuandini, S., et al., 2023  (Ayuandini, S., et al., 2023)	<i>Contemporary pathways to adolescent pregnancy in Indonesia.</i>	Mixed Method	Teenage pregnancy in Indonesia generally occurs in the context of early marriage; socio-cultural factors and religious norms have a significant influence (10).

Early marriage is a social issue that greatly affects the reproductive health and well-being of adolescent girls in Indonesia. Based on the results of a literature review, education plays an important role in reducing the rate of early marriage. Compared to adolescent girls with low levels of education, those with secondary education or higher have a lower risk of early marriage. Thus, education not only serves as a means of acquiring knowledge, but also as a medium of empowerment that can support independent decision-making, including in reproductive rights and marriage (1).

This is in line with the findings of Aladin et al. (2023), which state that Indonesia still has one of the highest rates of child marriage in Southeast Asia, resulting in an increase in teenage pregnancies (2). Teenage pregnancy

can lead to obstetric complications such as preeclampsia, hemorrhage, and premature birth, and contributes to high morbidity and mortality rates among young mothers (2,8). Therefore, preventing early marriage indirectly becomes an important strategy in reducing maternal and infant mortality rates.

In addition to adolescent education, parental education also plays an important role in shaping family decisions regarding early marriage. The results of a study by Putri et al. (2025) show that parents with low levels of education are easily influenced by social norms that view marriage as a form of protection for girls and lack an understanding of the reproductive health risks associated with early marriage (4). This is supported by the findings of Kusnianto et al. (2025), which show that adolescents' level of knowledge about reproductive health is closely related to their attitudes toward early marriage. Adolescents with low knowledge are more likely to approve of or accept such marriages (5). Therefore, efforts to improve reproductive health literacy programs need to be carried out comprehensively, both through school curricula and community programs.

Effective prevention interventions are multisectoral and integrated. Research by Elnakib et al. (2024) emphasizes that a combination of educational, economic, and reproductive health interventions yields the most significant results in reducing the rate of early marriage (6). Education-based interventions can improve adolescents' decision-making skills, while economic support helps reduce the financial pressures that are often the main reason families marry off their children at a young age. Education and social support programs for married adolescents can improve psychological well-being and the use of modern contraception, although the long-term effects still need to be further studied (7).

The impact of early marriage is not only focused on physical aspects, but also on psychological and social aspects. Research by Nhampoca et al. (2024) found that adolescents who marry early are at risk of depression and anxiety disorders due to mental unpreparedness in carrying out their roles as wives and mothers (9). This psychological pressure is compounded by a lack of social support and limited access to counseling and mental health services. Research by Ayuandini et al. (2023) also shows that social and religious norms in some regions of Indonesia still view early marriage as a form of moral resolution, so it is often considered normal (10). This is a major challenge in efforts to change behavior and public policy oriented towards adolescent health.

The socioeconomic impact of early marriage is also very significant. Many adolescent girls drop out of school after marriage, lose opportunities to work, and are at risk of becoming trapped in economic problems such as poverty (1,2). This has an impact on the reproductive health of the next generation, as children of teenage mothers are at higher risk of stunting and developmental disorders due to a lack of nutritional knowledge and family economic preparedness (2,5). Thus, early marriage is not only an individual issue, but also a public health problem that has intergenerational impacts.

Overall, the results of the literature review indicate that preventing early marriage should be a priority in adolescent reproductive health policies. Recommended strategies include improving access to education, enhancing reproductive health literacy programs, empowering families economically, and adopting community approaches that are sensitive to local cultures (1-10). Cross-sector collaboration between the government, educational institutions, health workers, and community leaders is essential to create a social environment that supports adolescent girls in delaying marriage and achieving optimal reproductive well-being.

## 4. Conclusion

Early marriage is a complex issue that affects reproductive, psychological, and socioeconomic health, thereby reducing the well-being of adolescent girls. Based on a review of the literature, education has been shown to be a key factor in reducing the practice of early marriage, as extending schooling can increase knowledge of reproductive health and strengthen adolescent girls' ability to make independent decisions. Conversely, low levels of education can weaken socioeconomic conditions. Strong cultural and religious norms that support early marriage are also factors that encourage this practice, as marriage is often considered a form of moral protection for adolescent girls. However, this view actually contributes to increased health and social risks, such as obstetric complications, domestic violence, and psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety. In addition, adolescents who marry young generally lose the opportunity to continue their education and access adequate reproductive health services, thereby worsening their welfare and limiting their potential to achieve independence in the future.

Efforts to prevent early marriage require a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach. Effective interventions include improving access to formal and non-formal education, strengthening reproductive health literacy, and empowering families economically to reduce the financial pressures that often drive early marriage. In addition, support from the government, educational institutions, health workers, and community leaders is needed to create a social environment that supports adolescent girls in delaying marriage. With an integrated strategy, it is hoped that the rate of early marriage can be reduced, while improving reproductive health and the well-being of the younger generation in a sustainable manner.

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## Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/ or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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