

## Models of Intervention and Social Support Given to Pregnant Ad-Olescents: A Sociological Study Applied in the City of Portoviejo, Ecuador

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### Abstract

*Adolescent pregnancy represents a social and public health problem in several Latin American countries. In Ecuador, the city of Portoviejo has registered high rates of this phenomenon. Social workers provide comprehensive support to these adolescent mothers. However, there is a lack of research on the intervention models applied. The objectives were to determine the most frequent intervention models used by hospital social workers and to analyze the reasons for the care requested by pregnant adolescents. A multi-method study was conducted with a sequential explanatory design. A survey was carried out with 19 social workers and an interview with 4 social work experts. Data were analyzed statistically and by content analysis. Among the main results, the community model was found to be the one most used by social workers. The main problems were lack of family and financial support. Individualized care was the most provided. Adolescents sought assistance for lack of counselling, medical needs and emotional crises. It can be concluded that there is a need to strengthen community-based and comprehensive approaches with emphasis on education and family support. Future studies could include adolescents learning about their perspectives.*

**Keywords:** *Adolescent Pregnancy, Intervention Models, Social Workers, Social Science, Ecuador.*

### Introduction

Adolescence is a stage that responds to behavioral patterns of character and personality consolidation, where goals, actions and projections unite, reflecting the behavioral pattern of the formative process from childhood. The absence of educational patterns in families, as well as the social process in which the adolescent is immersed, favors the emergence of various tendencies. Hence, the rise of adolescent mothers is a bio-psychosocial problem that must be addressed across all social strata (Zhang et al., 2024).

Adolescent pregnancy within the social context is a latent and concerning reality. Adolescence is a stage where body exploration is active, while the level of risk can be a focus for issues of uncontrolled birth rates and venereal diseases (Diabelková et al., 2023). Understanding adolescent education on the topic of early pregnancy and recognizing if they have future risks can generate alerts in the global population. Although Ecuador's total fertility rate per 1,000 women is 51.58, this coefficient has been decreasing in Latin America and the Caribbean over recent years (World Health Organization, 2024a). The issue of adolescent pregnancy requires more education and support to encourage girls to delay motherhood until they are prepared (Vieira et al., 2023). Adolescents under 16 years of age face a maternal mortality risk four times higher than women aged 20 to 30, and their neonatal mortality rate is approximately 50% higher (Ray et al., 2024).

Health experts deem it advisable for pregnant adolescents to receive special physical and psychological care during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period to preserve their own health and that of their babies (World Health Organization, 2024b). In this context, pregnancy takes on a process of activity based on the problems faced, in the face of decline, reflected in the exposed percentage rates. A reality that is fertilized in adolescence is that family guidance can be one of the main factors for ensuring that

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the exposed statistics do not exceed levels in girls and young women, assuming an active role in the line of mothers (Al-Mutawtah et al., 2023).

The global rate of adolescent pregnancy is estimated at 46 births per 1,000 girls, while adolescent pregnancy rates in Latin America and the Caribbean continue to be the second highest in the world, estimated at 66.5 births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19, and are only surpassed by those in sub-Saharan Africa (Sanhueza et al., 2023; World Health Organization, 2024a). Although total fertility has decreased in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past 30 years, adolescent fertility rates have declined only slightly. Moreover, it is the only region in the world with an upward trend in pregnancies among adolescents under 15 years of age. It is estimated that each year in the region, 15% of all pregnancies occur in adolescents under 20 years of age, and 2 million children are born to mothers aged 15-19 (World Health Organization, 2024b).

Women who become pregnant at an early age experience a negative impact on their educational, economic and social condition. In most cases, they are forced to drop out of school and rely on family support, or conversely, they must prematurely enter the workforce to meet their basic needs, limiting their opportunities for advancement (Zeitlin et al., 2024). On the other hand, the primary determinant of adolescent pregnancy is socioeconomic inequality, which entails poverty, exclusion and vulnerability. This differential presentation occurs according to social class, gender configurations or ethnic identity, and often correlated dynamic categories (Martinez et al., 2023).

Adolescents finding themselves pregnant at an early age can be defined as a "problem" when linked to undesired and unforeseen consequences such as illegal abortion, child abandonment and maltreatment, various marital and family conflicts, economic dependence on the family group, delegation of child care, forced marital unions, dropping out of studies, difficulties in labor market insertion, and various health problems for both the child and mother (Koiwa et al., 2024).

In the learning processes of the social worker, there is a relationship with social management. The Social Worker must promote community, municipal, departmental, regional and national development, giving space and opportunity to both men and women (Cox et al., 2021). The participation of both is important so that the organization benefits all sectors of the community served, but this cannot be achieved if the professional is unaware of the social management process to follow for efficient and effective training and organization that leads to community development (Harms & Connolly, 2024).

Effective Social Work practice in the health setting presents at least two dimensions that intersect in professional practice. The first encompasses the different theoretical, methodological and technical perspectives with which each Social Worker constructs their professional specificity. The second is located in the conception of health with which they listen to their demand (Perrenoud et al., 2022). This is a catalyst for how they will structure their professional offering in this particular field of action (Zeitlin et al., 2024). The key aspect to direct effective practice is to manifest strategically clear links. The way to proceed is an adjustment within the social work system. The contingency of planning, execution, process and activity are circumstantial to the social area in which it is executed.

The social worker plays an important role in social support, especially for pregnant adolescents (Oyebade et al., 2024). During the care role, they influence people's ability to cope with events during specific periods (Mirick & Wladkowski, 2023). Social support is characterized by the way in which existing connections between people are recurrent interactions, satisfying the needs of individuals. This form of support can exist emotionally, instrumentally, affectively or tangibly. The prenatal period is considered a delicate time, especially in view of the emotional, psychological and social well-being of pregnant women (Liu et al., 2021).

From the perspective of care and management, workers can apply various models of social intervention (Hoepfer et al., 2022). The main professional intervention models that a social worker can apply when assisting pregnant adolescents are:

- **Community Prevention and Intervention Model:** This model focuses on preventing adolescent pregnancy through educational strategies and promotion of sexual and reproductive health in the community. The social worker can implement sexual education programs, workshops on social and life skills, and support activities for pregnant adolescents and their families (Kim, 2022).
- **Strengths and Empowerment Model:** This model focuses on identifying and utilizing the individual strengths of the adolescent and her environment to promote empowerment. The social worker collaborates with the adolescent to develop skills, foster autonomy, and improve self-esteem (Iramaneerat et al., 2023).
- **Psychosocial Intervention Model:** This model addresses the emotional, family, and social aspects surrounding adolescent pregnancy. The social worker can provide individual or group counseling and therapy to adolescents, strengthen their family and community support networks, and work on improving their self-esteem and life goals (Cournoyer, 2016).
- **School-based Intervention Model:** Since many pregnant adolescents tend to drop out of school, the social worker can implement retention and educational support strategies, such as tutoring, flexible schedules, and pedagogical support (Gagnon et al., 2022).
- **Interinstitutional Management and Coordination Model:** The social worker can coordinate and articulate actions with other professionals and organizations (health, education, social development) to provide comprehensive care to pregnant adolescents and their families, facilitating access to necessary resources and services (Jones et al., 2023).
- **Resilience Model:** This model focuses on strengthening the adolescent's ability to cope with the challenges and adversities related to pregnancy. The social worker helps the adolescent develop coping skills, establish support networks, and promote emotional resilience (Mendoza et al., 2024).

The city of Portoviejo has four hospitals for citizen care: Verdi Cevallos Regional Hospital, Portoviejo General Hospital of the Social Security Institute, San Antonio de Padua Specialty Hospital, and Santa Margarita Specialty Hospital. Each institution has two social workers to carry out social management and care. Currently, there are no sociological studies demonstrating the most frequent social intervention model applied by social workers to pregnant adolescents in hospitals in the city of Portoviejo. Similarly, there is no research record of the reasons for which they seek this type of service. Considering these antecedents, the objectives of the study are:

- To determine the most frequent intervention model applied by social workers in hospitals in the city of Portoviejo in cases of pregnant adolescents.
- To analyze the reason for social care requested by pregnant adolescents attending hospitals in the city of Portoviejo.

## Materials and Methods

### *Research Approach*

A multi-method or mixed-method study approach was applied. This type of approach combines quantitative and qualitative techniques in the same research (Creswell, 2021). It is characterized by the collection and analysis of both numerical and narrative data to gain a broader understanding of the research problem.

The use of a multi-method approach is justified by the complex nature of the phenomenon under investigation, which is the intervention model and social support provided to pregnant adolescents. This requires a quantitative approach to identify general patterns and trends, complemented by a qualitative

perspective that allows for deeper exploration of the experiences and perspectives of the social workers involved.

### *Research Design*

An explanatory sequential design (DEXPLIS) was applied. This design involves an initial quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase. In the quantitative stage, numerical data is collected and analyzed, while in the subsequent phase, qualitative data is collected and evaluated (Hernández & Mendoza, 2018). The application of the explanatory sequential design is justified given that first, it is necessary to determine which intervention models are most frequently applied by social workers through a quantitative approach. Subsequently, an in-depth understanding of the motives and reasons why pregnant adolescents seek care at hospitals is required, which is better achieved through a qualitative approach.

### *Population and Sample*

The study population consisted of 19 social workers located in 4 hospitals in the city of Portoviejo, Manabí province, Ecuador during 2024, providing citizen care. Specifically:

- Verdi Cevallos Regional Hospital (6 social workers)
- Portoviejo General Hospital of the Social Security Institute (6 social workers)
- San Antonio de Padua Specialty Hospital (6 social workers)
- Santa Margarita Specialty Hospital (1 social worker)

In the quantitative phase, a selective sample type was chosen (Gilbert & Pratt, 2022). All social workers in the health sector who have attended pregnant women and visit the hospital were included (a total of 19 social workers). They responded to the applied questionnaire. For the qualitative phase, 4 social workers were interviewed, one from each hospital (Fitzpatrick & May, 2022). This selection allowed for perspectives from different health centers and enriched the understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The inclusion of all social workers attending adolescent pregnancies in hospitals in Portoviejo as the study population ensures that the results are representative, and a complete view of the intervention models applied and reasons for attendance in this locality is obtained.

### *Data Collection Techniques and Instruments*

In the quantitative phase, an online survey was conducted via Google Forms (Mendoza et al., 2023). A multiple-choice questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. This instrument allowed for the determination of the most applied type of social intervention model, the main problems affecting pregnant adolescents, and the type of care provided by social management in hospitals (see Table 1)

**Table 1. Questionnaire Applied to Social Workers in Hospitals in The City of Portoviejo.**

Technical University of Manabí UTM	
Research:	
Hospital:	
Date: ___/___/___	
Questions	Options
Which model of social intervention is most	a) Community Prevention and Intervention Model
	b) Strengths & Empowerment Model

frequently applied when caring for pregnant adolescents?	c) Psychosocial Intervention Model
	d) Intervention model in the school environment
	e) Management model and inter-institutional articulation
	f) Resilience Model
What are the main problems faced by pregnant adolescents who come to your care?	a) Dropping out of school
	b) Lack of family support
	c) Economic Problems
	d) Low self-esteem
	e) Lack of guidance
	f) Depression or other mental health problems
What kind of care do you most often provide to pregnant adolescent?	g) Drugs/Alcohol/Illicit Substances
	a) Individual counselling and support
	b) Workshops or group therapy
	c) Referral to other services
	d) Management of financial or material aid

Interviews were used as a technique in the qualitative phase. A semi-structured guide of questions was designed as an instrument (Navarro et al., 2021). This guide made it possible to analyze the causes why pregnant adolescents attend hospitals in Portoviejo. The questions explored their experiences, motivations, and needs when going to these health centers (See Table 2). The combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques, through questionnaires and interviews respectively, allowed us to obtain numerical and narrative data that complemented each other to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon studied from different perspectives (Vrapi et al., 2023).

**Table 2. Guide To Questions Applied in The Interviews of The Social Workers of The Hospitals of Portoviejo**

Technical University of Manabí UTM Research:	Hospital: Date: ___/___/___
Questions	Answer
What are the main reasons pregnant adolescent seeking hospital care?	
2. What needs or demands do pregnant adolescents most often express when they go to the hospital?	
3. What barriers or difficulties do pregnant adolescent face in accessing the services and care they need?	
4. From your experience, what impact does pregnancy have on the lives of adolescents in the personal, family, educational and work spheres?	
5. What family and social support networks do pregnant adolescent who come to the hospital typically have?	
6. What challenges do you face as a social worker caring for pregnant adolescent in the hospital?	
7. What do you think should be improved or strengthened to provide better care and support for pregnant adolescents in the hospital?	

For the reliability analysis, a pilot test was applied to the questionnaire, calculating the Kuder Richardson (KR-20) statistical coefficient. The Kuder-Richardson coefficient is a measure of internal consistency commonly used in the evaluation of multiple-choice tests, especially in situations where items are scored as correct or incorrect. It is particularly useful when assessing the reliability of dichotomous or nominal scales. The coefficient value was 0.803, considered an efficient and reliable value (Yun et al., 2023).

### *Analysis of Results*

According to the explanatory sequential design (DEXPLIS), an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data was applied, employing complementary techniques to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon. In the quantitative phase, the data collected through the questionnaire administered to the 19 social workers was analyzed using SPSS version 26. A descriptive analysis of the responses was performed, calculating frequencies and percentages to identify the most frequently applied intervention model, the main problems faced by pregnant adolescents, and the type of social care provided most regularly according to the surveyed social workers.

Once the predominant intervention model in the care of adolescent mothers attending hospitals was determined, the qualitative information obtained through interviews was analyzed. The audio recordings were transcribed using the current version of Dragon Naturally Speaking software. The resulting texts were processed and analyzed with the Atlas.Ti program, applying content analysis and coding techniques. The ethics and confidentiality code SW1 was used for social worker 1. Similarly, SW2 for social worker 2, and so on consecutively (White & Cooper, 2022). This analysis allowed for the identification of links, patterns, and most recurrent keywords in the accounts of the social workers, which revealed the main causes and reasons why pregnant adolescents seek social care and support at hospitals in Portoviejo.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods provided a comprehensive view of the studied phenomenon. On the one hand, the numerical data allowed for the establishment of general trends and the determination of the predominant intervention model. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis complemented these findings by providing an in-depth understanding of the experiences, motivations, and needs of pregnant adolescents from the perspective of the social workers who assist them. This integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches, following an explanatory sequential design, enriched the results and facilitated a more complete interpretation of the studied reality (Hernández & Mendoza, 2018).

## **Results**

This section presents the main findings of the study, after applying data collection and analysis techniques, both quantitative and qualitative. Through tables and accounts, it is possible to characterize the intervention models and the reasons for care received by pregnant adolescents from social workers in hospitals in Portoviejo, Ecuador.

### *Phase Quantitative*

In this phase, the 19 social workers indicated that the community intervention model is the most frequently applied, according to 42.11% of the respondents. This is followed by the model of strengths and empowerment with 21.05% (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Social Intervention Model That Is Most Frequently Applied When Caring for Pregnant Adolescents**

Item 1.	%	n
Community prevention and intervention model	42.11	8
Strengths and empowerment model	21.05	4
Resilience model	15.79	3
Inter-institutional management and coordination model	10.53	2

Model of intervention in the school environment	5.26	1
Psychosocial intervention model	5.26	1
Total	100	19

The study agrees with Perrenoud, et al., (2022) pointing out that community models are useful since they allow problems to be addressed from a preventive and comprehensive approach with the population. Regarding the main problems, 52.63% stated that the lack of family support is the most relevant; This is followed by economic difficulties for 26.32% (See Table 4). This corroborates studies such as that of Martinez et al (2023) who report that the sociocultural environment plays an important role in the well-being of pregnant adolescents.

**Table 4. Top Problems Faced by Pregnant Adolescent**

Item 2.	%	n
Lack of family support	52.63	10
Economic Problems	26.32	5
Dropping out of school	15.79	3
Lack of guidance	5.26	1
Total	100	19

Finally, individualized attention was the option chosen by 63.16% of the respondents (see Table 5). Authors such as Liu et al (2021) highlight the importance of one-on-one accompaniment during this period of change.

**Table 5. Type Of Care Provided to Pregnant Adolescents**

Item 3.	%	n
Individual counselling and support	63.16	12
Workshops or group therapy	36.84	7
Total	100.00	19

As a synthesis in the quantitative phase of the research, it can be analyzed that the community intervention model is the one most frequently applied by social workers in the health sector in Portoviejo, in attending to pregnant adolescents.

#### *Phase Cualitative*

This section presents the results obtained from the qualitative phase of the study, based on the responses of 4 social workers representing each hospital, who participated in the research through semi-structured interviews. According to Item 1, the social workers identified the following main reasons why pregnant adolescents seek care at the hospital. The lack of sexual education was mentioned by several interviewees. SW1 and SW4 expressed that "the main reason for attending to pregnant adolescents is the lack of sexual education," demonstrating that there is a lack of adequate information in this aspect (Lognos et al., 2024). The need for prenatal medical care was highlighted by SW2, who stated that "there is an evident need for medical care during pregnancy." This suggests that many adolescents do not receive adequate medical care before attending the hospital (Mabetha et al., 2022). The emotional crisis due to pregnancy was mentioned by SW3, who emphasized that "emotional support is essential for pregnant adolescents." This shows that pregnancy can trigger difficult emotional situations for these young women (Zhabchenko et al., 2023).

According to Item 2, the main needs or demands expressed by pregnant adolescents when attending the hospital were identified. SW2 highlighted that "emotional support is necessary for pregnant adolescents."

This need for emotional support reflects the importance of providing an environment of care and understanding for these young women. SW1 noted that adolescents often require "information on prenatal care," suggesting that many of them lack basic knowledge on how to care for themselves and their babies during pregnancy. "Assistance with economic resources" was mentioned by several interviewees, indicating that many adolescents face financial difficulties in accessing the necessary care during pregnancy.

In Item 3, social workers identified the following barriers or difficulties faced by pregnant adolescents in accessing the services and care they need. "Social stigma" was mentioned as a significant barrier by SW4 and SW2. This suggests that the fear of judgment and discrimination may discourage adolescents from seeking medical and social care. SW3 highlighted "lack of transportation" as a common difficulty, indicating that many adolescents have difficulties reaching the hospital due to mobility limitations. SW1 mentioned "economic problems" as a significant barrier, suggesting that some adolescents may not access adequate care due to financial constraints (Wigley, 2023).

Item 4 on the impact of pregnancy revealed that it has a significant impact on the lives of adolescents in various areas. "Social isolation" was mentioned by SW2 as a common consequence of adolescent pregnancy, suggesting that many young women may experience feelings of loneliness and exclusion. SW3 highlighted "dropping out of school" as a concerning consequence, indicating that many adolescents face difficulties in continuing their education after becoming pregnant. "Labor limitations" were mentioned by SW4, suggesting that pregnancy can affect employment opportunities and professional development for adolescents.

According to Item 5 on family and social support networks, pregnant adolescents who attend the hospital often have several family and social support networks in the city of Portoviejo. The "extended family" was mentioned by SW2 as an important source of support for many pregnant adolescents, suggesting that families play a crucial role in the lives of these young women. SW1 noted that "close friends" can also provide emotional and practical support during pregnancy, indicating that friendships are important for pregnant adolescents. "Community organizations" were mentioned by SW2 as an additional source of support, suggesting that support networks outside the family environment are also important for these young women (Zamaniyan et al., 2023).

Among the challenges faced by social workers (Item 6), SW4 mentioned the need to "address the stigma of adolescent pregnancy," suggesting that social workers must work to combat prejudice and discrimination associated with adolescent pregnancy. SW3 highlighted "resource limitations" as a significant challenge, indicating that social workers may face difficulties in providing the necessary care and support due to financial and personnel constraints. "Managing emotional stress" was mentioned by SW2 as a personal challenge, suggesting that working with pregnant adolescents can be emotionally demanding for social workers (Sidell, 2015).

According to Item 7, social workers identified several areas that they consider need improvement or reinforcement to provide better care and support for pregnant adolescents in the hospital. SW3 suggested making "sexual education more accessible" to prevent unintended pregnancies and promote sexual and reproductive health among adolescents. SW1 highlighted the importance of "expanding psychological support services" to help adolescents cope with the emotional challenges associated with adolescent pregnancy. "Strengthening interinstitutional collaboration networks" was mentioned by SW4 as a way to improve the coordination of services and resources for pregnant adolescents (Carranza, 2013).

The results of the qualitative phase indicate that pregnant adolescents attend the hospital mainly due to a lack of sexual education, the need for prenatal medical care, and emotional crises related to pregnancy. Additionally, these young women face significant barriers to accessing the necessary services and care, and pregnancy has a substantial impact on their personal, family, educational, and professional lives. Social workers identify several challenges in providing care and support to these young women, but they also point out areas for improvement in the available care and services. Overall, this study highlights the



importance of addressing the complex needs of pregnant adolescents and improving access to comprehensive, quality services.

### *Triangulation And Discussion*

By contrasting the quantitative results with the qualitative ones, it can be observed that they coincide in pointing out that the community intervention model and individualized care are the approaches most used by social workers. They also agree that the main causes for which adolescents attend the hospital are related to a lack of guidance, medical needs and emotional needs. This is related to what Zamaniyan et al., (2023) stated about the importance of comprehensively addressing the different dimensions that influence adolescent pregnancy.

Another common finding is that the lack of family support and economic problems are the main issues reported. In this regard, studies such as that of Lognos et al., (2024) emphasize that the sociocultural context plays a relevant role. On the other hand, both the quantitative and qualitative results showed that adolescent pregnancy brings consequences at a personal, educational and social level. This corroborates the theoretical approaches of authors such as Wigley (2023) on the difficulties faced by these adolescents. In summary, the triangulation allowed validating that the most used intervention models are community and individualized care models; and that the main reasons for attendance are based on medical, emotional and guidance needs, influenced by contextual factors such as lack of support and economic barriers.

### **Conclusions**

The results obtained in the present study indicate that it can be concluded that the most frequently applied intervention model by social workers assisting pregnant adolescents in hospitals in Portoviejo is the community prevention and intervention model. According to Zhang et al., (2024), this approach allows addressing problems from a preventive and comprehensive perspective, involving the community. The use of this model is justified by the need to provide holistic care that transcends the merely assistive and promotes empowerment and prevention of adolescent pregnancy.

Likewise, the findings reveal that the main reason why adolescents seek social support at hospitals is the lack of guidance on sexual and reproductive health issues. As Vieira et al., (2023), point out, there is a significant lack of adequate information in this aspect, which contributes to the incidence of unintended pregnancies in adolescence. These conclusions highlight the importance of strengthening sexual education programs and promoting greater awareness of young women's reproductive rights and health.

Another relevant factor identified is the need for prenatal medical care and emotional support required during pregnancy, as highlighted by Zeitlin et al., (2024). Many adolescents do not receive the necessary care before attending the hospital, and pregnancy can trigger significant emotional crises. Therefore, it is essential that health and social work services provide comprehensive support that addresses both the physical and psychological aspects of adolescent pregnancy.

Regarding the main problems faced by pregnant adolescents, the study concludes that the lack of family support and economic difficulties are the most determining factors. These findings coincide with what Oyebade et al., (2024), stated, who emphasize the influence of the sociocultural environment on the well-being of pregnant adolescents. This highlights the need to strengthen family and community support networks, as well as to provide economic and material assistance to these vulnerable young women.

Another aspect to highlight is the multidimensional impact that adolescent pregnancy has on the lives of these young women, as pointed out by Mirick & Wladkowski, (2023). The results show significant consequences at a personal, educational, employment and social level, such as isolation, dropping out of school and limitations in employment opportunities. These conclusions emphasize the importance of

implementing comprehensive strategies that allow pregnant adolescents to continue their personal and professional development, through support and mentoring programs in different areas.

The study concludes that providing adequate care to pregnant adolescents in Portoviejo hospitals requires strengthening sexual and reproductive education, expanding psychological support services, and strengthening inter-institutional collaboration networks. These actions will allow for a comprehensive approach to the medical, emotional, social, and economic needs of these young women, promoting their well-being and empowerment during this stage of their lives.

### Limitations and Recommendations

Based on the findings obtained, it is recommended that future research expand the scope of the study to other regions of the country, to obtain a more comprehensive view of intervention models and reasons for care at the national level. According to Perrenoud et al. (2022), social work practice can vary depending on the sociocultural context, so it is important to explore possible regional differences. Likewise, it is suggested that future studies incorporate the perspective of the pregnant adolescents themselves, through focus groups or in-depth interviews. This would allow complementing the current findings with the experiences and direct voices of the young beneficiaries, enriching the understanding of the phenomenon from their own perspective (Oyebade et al. 2024).

Another recommendation would be to carry out longitudinal research, which would allow evaluating the long-term impacts of the different intervention models on the lives of pregnant adolescents and their families. According to Mirick y Wladkowski (2023), social support provided during the prenatal period can have lasting effects, so it would be valuable to analyze these impacts over time. Regarding the limitations of this study, it is important to note that it focused exclusively on hospitals in the city of Portoviejo, so the findings cannot be generalized to other localities or regions of the country. In addition, as it was a cross-sectional study, the long-term effects of the interventions carried out by social workers could not be evaluated.

Another limitation is that the research was based mainly on the perceptions and experiences of social workers, without directly incorporating the voices of pregnant adolescents. While this allowed for a general overview from a professional perspective, it would be valuable to complement these findings with the direct perspectives of the beneficiaries in future studies. Finally, it is important to mention that, due to the qualitative nature of part of the study, there is a possibility of inherent biases in the interpretation of the data by the researchers. However, triangulation techniques and rigorous analysis were applied to minimize these biases and strengthen the validity of the results. Despite these limitations, this study lays the foundation for future more extensive and in-depth research on intervention models and social support provided to pregnant adolescents in Ecuador and other countries in the region.

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