

Homeless teen mothers: social and psychological aspects

Anne Lise Silveira Scappaticci · Sergio Luis Blay

Received: 29 January 2008 / Accepted: 28 April 2008 / Published online: 4 June 2008
© Springer-Verlag 2008

Abstract

Aims This study proposes to investigate the life contexts and experiences of motherhood among homeless adolescents and their relation with the “uncertainty reduction” theory.

Subjects and Methods A total of 21 teens, living in eight temporary shelters in the city of São Paulo, were intentionally selected. In-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were subsequently conducted. The study was performed by means of qualitative methodology.

Results Six themes emerged in the content analysis with the agreement of judges: “circulation” or domestic instability; incapacity to rely on one’s own parents and relatives; the street as a solution; fear of theft of the child; need for support; motherhood as hope and search for identity.

Conclusion Motherhood acquires the function of giving meaning to existence and opens a window of opportunity for reorganizing their lives around more stable bonds. The results suggest that the reduction in uncertainty could partly explain the relevant role of motherhood in these teens.

Keywords Pregnancy in adolescence · Homeless youth · Mother-child relations · Social psychology

Introduction

The theme of homeless teen mothers is not usually present in specialized literature, particularly as regards its psychological, sociological, and etiological aspects. Besides, one of the difficulties encountered when studying these groups is precisely that of finding and examining people. Researchers in the area of psychology of homeless teen mothers have found that maternity in such context is far from being a uniform process. Rather, it is a complex entity involving, among other things, the familiar, emotional, behavioral, interpersonal, psychological, economic, cultural, and social dimensions (Greene et al. 1999; Bassuk et al. 1998; Weinreb et al. 1998).

Several aspects are potentially related to adolescent motherhood outcomes, so there is a special need to measure these characteristics, which are theoretically and functionally linked to the mental and physical health of young adolescents. Cross-sectional investigations about homeless teen and adult mothers have been carried out in North America (Greene et al. 1999; Bassuk et al. 1998, Weinreb et al. 1998). The findings reveal a population exposed to poverty, lack of social support, substance abuse, mental health problems, physical and sexual violence, and pregnancy, among other findings. A high number of women have been physically or sexually abused during their lifetime. Thus, it comes as no surprise that homeless mothers have three times the normal rate of post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD, 36%), twice the rate of drug and alcohol dependence (41%), and twice the rate of major depressive disorders (45%). These studies also show that many of the young women heading these homeless families now have difficulty establishing themselves as independent adults who successfully hold jobs and have a long-term outlook of dependency on agencies to deal with their

A. L. S. Scappaticci · S. L. Blay
Department of Psychiatry, Federal University of São Paulo,
São Paulo, Brasil

A. L. S. Scappaticci (✉)
Department of Psychiatry, UNIFESP,
R. Botucatu,
740 CEP 04023-900 São Paulo, SP, Brazil
e-mail: annelisescappaticci@yahoo.it

maternity. By comparing a group of teens living in their houses and a group of teens living in shelters, some researchers (Polit et al. 1989) have concluded that a great number of teens in shelters have suffered sexual abuse. Moreover, the fact that a teen has voluntary sexual relations is significantly associated with the number of times she changes shelters. Following other studies, the authors associated sexual abuse with an unstable family life, high risk sexual behavior, lack of use of contraceptives, and pregnancy (Polit et al. 1989). In general, homeless pregnant adolescents are at a higher risk of adverse outcomes than adult women (National Center on Family Homeless 2005; Kidd and Scrimint 2004; Greenblatt and Robertson 1993; Greene et al. 1999).

Previous research

Despite some recent publications, studies examining different dimensions of homeless teen mothers remain scarce. Qualitative studies about homeless or sheltered teen and/or adult mothers have found various themes concerning this issue (Ensign 2001; Banyard 1995; Saewyc 2003; Hanna 2001; Vega and Gutiérrez 1998). The following are among the recurrent themes: lack of family support; the street as an escape from an abusive home, associated with pregnancy, prostitution, and drug abuse; shelters described with ambivalence, involving difficulty in accepting rules and trusting in others; pregnancy becoming an opportunity for positive transformation.

Hanna (2001) and Saewyc (2003), while investigating samples of homeless teen mothers and pregnant teens, found turbulent, unstructured life stories, and the need to find affection. While investigating the survival and adaptation strategies of 64 mothers in a temporary shelter, Banyard (1995) discovered that 39% of them preferred to do things on their own rather than running the risk of another disappointment. Vega and Gutiérrez (1998) argue that street gangs define themselves through the daily practice of sharing resources: human resources (companionship, personal abilities, and materials), clothing, food, stolen goods, and drug consumption. This collective sense is a social commitment, and the street gang replaces the family.

However, qualitative studies published specifically with samples of homeless adolescent mothers are rare. Three metasynthesis studies have tried to put together the information obtained from qualitative methodology. Two studies were carried out by Mikki Meadows-Oliver (2003, 2006), who examined adult and teen mothers living in shelters. Six reciprocal translations of homeless adult mothers, caring for their children in shelters, emerged: on becoming homeless, protective mothering, loss, stress and depression survival strategies, and coping strategies.

Six other reciprocal translations emerged, thus illuminating the experiences of homeless adolescent mothers: being homeless, enduring abuse, lamenting lost years, searching for support, recreating oneself, and seeking a better life. Of the six studies examined (Leppard 1991; Levins 1995; Omolade 1997; Johnson 1999; Hanna 2001; Saewyc 2003), three are Master's theses, along with a doctoral dissertation from which no subsequent publications were located.

A third synthesis was carried out by Donna Clemmens (2003), who studied teen mothers. Five overarching metaphors were found: the reality of motherhood bringing about hardship, living between the worlds of adolescence and motherhood, motherhood as a positively transforming factor, the baby as a stabilizing influence, and the supportive context as a turning point for the future.

A landmark article by Friedman et al. (1994) tried to explain why individuals and couples still have children, even when the economic costs of doing so clearly outweigh the benefits. A theory based solely on economic opportunity costs would always predict that, under modern life conditions, individuals would never have children. This paper used a non-standard value assumption to propose that, in contrast, under the same modern life conditions, uncertainty reduction offers a reason to have children. They argue, "The impetus for parenthood is greatest among those whose alternative pathways for reducing uncertainty are limited or blocked. We claim, for instance, that the impetus to have children among poor African-Americans or other minority young women derives largely from their inability to use stable careers or marriage as uncertainty-reducing strategies. Having a child changes life from uncertain to relatively certain."

The development of this work is designed to study the social and psychological aspects of these homeless pregnant teens on the streets. The study brings contributions to the specialized literature in some aspects. First, it examines how it is possible, in the context of a developing country, to manage motherhood, in terms of its social and psychological aspects. Second, it investigates, within the theoretical context proposed by Friedman et al. (1994), if teen pregnancy among street adolescents, associated with limited economic and family support, can help them to become aware of the structuring of life and to reduce uncertainty.

Methodology

Ethical issues

Considering the extreme vulnerability of the participants, whether in terms of age, housing, or pregnancy, ethical questions received special attention. In addition to submitting the project to be approved by the Ethics Committee at

UNIFESP (Federal University of São Paulo), approval by a guardianship judge was also necessary (Brazil; law no. 8069 from 13 July 1990).

Concept: homelessness

The term “homeless” was adopted, as it considers homeless youths to be withdrawn from their families, but having connections with institutions that provide shelter. This term conforms to those of other researchers (Rosemberg 1993; Noto et al. 1994; Saewyc 2003; Ensign 2001).

Design and sampling

The study design involved a measure of flexibility. Intentional sampling sought out information-rich informants (Patton 1990), following a double sampling technique. The first one was sampling by criteria: through subject age, between 10 and 19 years of age, according to the World Health Organization criteria (OMS 1997), and through the concept of homelessness, that is, teens separated from their families, who live in temporary shelters. Inasmuch as this is a runaway population and subjects are hard to interview (Aptekar 1996), the second technique was the snowball or chain reaction, that is, by recommendation of people who work with this population, or on the recommendation of the teens themselves.

The inclusion criterion required that the subjects were able to explain their family and personal situation (Patton 1990). Subjects with specific problems of language use, mental retardation, psychotic disorders, and acute intoxication by alcohol or drugs were excluded. This evaluation was made by means of an interview, whereas the preliminary psychopathological evaluation was made by one of the authors (ALS).

Eight shelters with differing profiles were intentionally selected. From an administrative perspective, they contemplated governmental and non-governmental institutions, foundations, associations connected with religious institutions, and churches. Concerning their operation, the locations offered day and night activities or only day activities. Furthermore, all of them worked with projects of citizenship and socially vulnerable populations. The size of the sample resulted from the saturation of the themes considered (Patton 1990).

Procedures

Interviews were conducted by an interviewer (ALS) trained by means of pilot studies, supervision, and record quality evaluation. Interviews were recorded with the respondents' consent, transcribed immediately and filed for an audit. Transcripts were checked against the tapes by the researcher

for accuracy. The interviewer maintained a field diary and schedule where socio-demographic data of participants were recorded. The semi-structured interview began with the following open question: “How is it for you to be a mother in your situation?”

There were guidelines with questions that may not have been touched on spontaneously by the teen in the interview: characteristics of different life contexts, period of homeless life, reaction when informed of pregnancy, relationships, and child care (Scappaticci 2006).

Analysis

The theoretical emphasis of this study was the Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), which seeks to construct a theory irreducibly founded on the phenomenon under study. Exhaustive vertical and horizontal readings of the transcripts were carried out to organize categories and subcategories (Miles and Huberman 1994). Throughout the field work, transcripts were investigated and discussed to identify similar themes and explore the reasoning of participants. Hypotheses were formulated, tested against the transcripts, and reformulated when necessary. Final hypotheses were further tested with respondents in subsequent interviews. Analysis continued during fieldwork, when transcripts were further re-assessed and cross-referenced. Data were analyzed by means of the QSR NUD*IST 4.0 Analytical Software.

Agreement of thematic content

In order to increase the internal validity of the study, the categories organized in this study were those on which four trained judges, independently analyzing the content of the five interviews, fully agreed.

Results

From 2002 to 2005, 21 teen mothers between 14 and 19 years of age were interviewed in the city of São Paulo. Sample characteristics are shown on Table 1.

These teens were mostly dark-skinned (14), primiparous (15), Catholic (9), and between 14 and 19 years of age. In terms of level of education, none of them had studied beyond the 8th grade. They came from poor families headed by women, i.e., mother and/or grandmother. As per sample selection criteria, all of the girls had temporary housing in shelters. Fifteen reported having spent a period of their lives on the streets, and 12 had used drugs (marijuana, cocaine, crack). Most partners were missing, not acknowledging fatherhood. A small group of partners who were present mistreated the teen and were involved

Table 1 "Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample"

| Characteristics | Number of subjects (N=21) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Age | |
| 14–15 | 5 |
| 16–17 | 7 |
| 18–19 | 9 |
| Education | |
| 0 | 1 |
| 5–11 | 14 |
| 15 | 6 |
| Ethnicity | |
| Caucasian | 15 |
| Afro-Brazilian | 1 |
| Multi-ethnic | 5 |
| Religion | |
| Catholic or Evangelical | 14 |
| Other | 2 |
| None | 5 |
| Number of children | |
| 1 | 15 |
| 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 1 |

with drugs, three had police records, two were in prison, two had been murdered, and one was the teen's father himself.

Content analysis

Six hypotheses emerged when analyzing the interview content with the agreement of the judges: (1) "circulation" or domestic instability (homelessness was not a new phenomenon); (2) not being able to count on their own parents and relatives; (3) the street as a solution; (4) fear of theft of the child; (5) need of support; (6) maternity as hope, searching for identity.

- (1) *"Circulation" or domestic instability.* The stories of these teens reveal an unstable, nomadic family life with many changes of residence since childhood. Different adults (mother, grandmother, aunt, neighbor) successively took care of the child during childhood, while she was not staying in shelters. Experiences of neglect, family conflicts, separated family members, unknown origin, parents with various partners, half-brothers, violence, and sexual abuse were factors connected with an unstable family and caused the "child circulation" phenomenon (Gregori 1998).

"My life's been like this since I was 7 years old. I left home and stayed at the SOS (a public service that provides temporary shelter for homeless kids and teens). After the SOS, I went to the shelters. And when I got old enough, I began to live on the streets" (case D).

"I'd make a friend, and she'd leave me with that person. So I'd go and live with that person. If they were good, it was all right. But some people I lived with would hit me and force me to do heavy work. Then, when she'd find out I was being mistreated, she'd rush to get me" (case M).

"Circulation", or moving from house to house, something that was present during childhood, appears when the teen becomes aware of her pregnancy. For the teens interviewed, non-acceptance of the pregnancy by relatives and the desire to get off the streets—which becomes an uninviting environment with the approach of birth—set off a search for a place of shelter. The homeless condition starts before arrival at the shelter when they go "couch-surfing" (Saewyc 2003 p. 355), from home to home, places belonging to relatives or acquaintances, as described by Choi and Snider (1999).

"When I was pregnant with his child, I went from home to home, neighbors' places, one week here, another week there. It's not good staying in other people's homes, bothering them" (case B).

- (2) *Not being able to count on one's own parents and relatives.* In the stories of these teens, from early on, there had been no physical and/or emotional support from their families. Four of the teens had suffered sexual abuse, in addition to other types of violence. This element riggers circulation and the search for support.

"I wanted her to have a house, and I'd live with her. She'd be different, you know, the same physically, but inside...she'd be different, not like she was. You know, different like that mother who gives her child whatever he needs: school, living in just one place, not one hour here and the next there" (case M).

"I was really disgusted with my family, nobody wanted to help me, nobody...I had nowhere to stay. I don't have that kind of mother who...She never supported me, never sat down to talk to me, never. After that happened, everything happened" (case I).

- (3) *In light of a painful family life, teens often seek the street as a solution.*

"And why did you run away from home?" "Because of my grandmother's husband, who was always after me (alluding to sexual abuse). It's just that, when I ran away, I did it with a friend of mine, because she had the same problem at home" (case C).

The street was described as a magical place where anything could happen: nobody goes hungry, you can sleep

anywhere, all you have to do is ask, take, or steal. The street gang replaces the family.

“I bought and scrounged for money. I preferred to buy drugs, rather than eat. When I was on drugs, I didn't feel hungry. I slept near the station, where it was sealed off. I slept on the floor with a blanket. Wherever there was space, I'd lie down and sleep” (case S).

“There were lots of older people on the streets, and everyone there helped me, gave me clothes, shoes. They also helped when my teacher asked for a list of school materials and bought these for me. It wasn't my mother, 'cause my mother never bothered with this. I just had to go there. Then, these older people bought things for me. I asked for it, and everything was fine. So, I ran away from home because of this too, not to beg on the streets. But I ended up on the streets...I stayed there to really get out of home” (case R).

The “I” becomes “we” or “everybody,” revealing the intense group interaction on the streets and its rules. The street is associated with drug use and high-risk sexual behavior.

“When it comes to people on the streets, everybody decides. If everybody is together and something happens to just one, they will all help, 'cause nobody is gonna let that one get screwed alone” (case S).

“My brothers knew...They knew I was on drugs and stayed out late on the streets.”-“You sold yourself, why? To buy drugs?”-“It's to take drugs” (case I).

- (4) *Fear of theft of the child.* All the teens associated staying at the shelter with the fear of someone stealing their child.

Motherhood at the shelter is described with ambivalence. It is, at the same time, the only place that gives them shelter and an experience of invasion and harassment. For someone who lived in a context of great instability, it is difficult to establish reliable bonds.

“'Cause there are people who say, you know, that they take children away. I get scared, but they don't know this, right? Until now, the children I have seen here without mothers, they were here 'cause the mothers abandoned them” (case B).

“I didn't run away. I told them, I went there and said I didn't wanna stay anymore 'cause I was afraid they'd take away my baby...” (case P).

I always looked for a shelter to stay, but not to sleep, 'cause my biggest fear is that someone could take my daughter away. You see, she's really cute and enchanting” (case D).

The shelter is described as “suffocating” and “oppressive,” with lots of rules and a lack of privacy. There are constant friction and fights.

“'Cause this isn't like a house, it's not like you're at home. If you wanna do one thing, you can't. You wanna do something else, you can't. You try to go to the streets to take a walk with your child, you can't. So it's very difficult, right? It sure is. 'Cause here there are rules. There are rules here that you don't have in your house. You know, there is a time to get up, a time to eat, and to take a shower here” (case I).

“Everything is harder for us, 'cause we just don't have any support, we don't have anything. Then, we get irritated. We get upset, and we end up swearing at the coordinator, swearing at the technician. But, later on, we calm down” (case S).

- (5) *Search for support.* Incapable of relying on the support of the family, motherhood brings about experiences of loneliness and sets off a search for support.

“There in my shelter I got really close to a girl named L. and called her ‘mother’” (case P).

“Whoever felt sorry for me would take me in. If they didn't, I just stayed out on the streets. Every week I stayed out on the streets, looking for someone to take me in” (case B).

- (6) *Motherhood as a search for identity.* Over time, motherhood becomes a positive fact, a transforming experience that helps the teen to leave both drugs and the streets behind and have a purpose in life. Some girls describe getting closer to their mothers. In addition, motherhood interrupts the abrupt shifts of “circulation” and obliges the teen to seek a stable residence situation. Pregnancy and motherhood emerge as a recovery and rebuilding of more stable relationships.

“So I thought about having a child and give it to someone else. I like him a little. He helped me to lay off drugs, be more careful, and stop picking fights and fooling around. Now, I'm more careful with him” (case F).

“How do I feel as a mother? I feel protected, safe, and also more relieved, 'cause as I'm with my daughter, I know I'm not going back to the way it was before” (case D).

Discussion

Data originated from this study show teenagers with a lifestyle marked by circulation and domestic instability

before their entry into the shelter. The teens interviewed usually come from poor families headed by women, and, as a rule, the father is less present. The family pattern was characterized by the mother having several partners, the circulation of children in several homes, and many changes of residence. These data are comparable to those found in other studies in Brazil, as well as among large poor and homeless populations in the US (Bassuk et al. 1986; Bassuk et al. 1996; Bassuk et al. 1998). As a result, homelessness is nothing new in the lives of these teens, but rather something inherent in their conditions of life.

The teens interviewed left their homes to escape from the negative influence of abusive families. For example, four of the teens interviewed in this study reported having been sexually abused in their own homes. These kinds of abuse have been reported by other investigators (Polit et al. 1989). The street has a fascination and holds a certain magic as a place where anything is possible.

Observations indicated that the girls in this study did not see the possibility of returning to their own family, nor of receiving support from them during pregnancy. As well as in other studies, lack of a partner is a characteristic of this sample (Saewyc 2003; Hanna 2001; Vega and Gutiérrez 1998).

Given the difficult family conditions presented here, living on the streets is something that takes on a character of solution and relief against an unsustainable situation. The streets bring a sense of self-protection, a survival strategy in the light of the neglect and abuse caused by an unstable family context, as reported in other studies as well (Backer and Musick 1994; Saewyc 2003; Greene et al. 1999; Ensign 2001).

One of the central questions raised by this study concerns the stay at the shelter and the fear of loss or theft of the child. These observations were present in several testimonies and showed consistency among adolescents. These data could be interpreted in different ways. The street and shelter environment is subject to human and urban violence of all kinds and could justify this apprehension. Having grown up in a family environment that did little to protect her and exposed her to many unstable situations, the teen can feel difficulty in establishing relationships of trust with other adults. She doubts her own capacity to establish a warm and lasting relationship with her child, as well as her own ability to become a reliable adult.

On the other hand, if maternity is considered as a structuring, uncertainty-reducing condition, fear of theft of one's child could be viewed as the loss of something vital for someone to organize themselves as individuals. As far as this review goes, all this information was little observed in the literature (Friedman et al. 1994).

In this sample, there is a constant search for social and psychological support. Nonetheless, ambivalence and hate concerning this dependency also appear in the difficulty in accepting rules, arguments with colleagues, and defiant behavior. In their relationships with adults, generally a woman from the shelter staff, this hopelessness seems to awaken. In this sense, Oliver Rich (1990) emphasizes the vulnerability of these teens due to their runaway tendency, that is, their trying to escape from their life situations, permanent connections, and need for support.

Changes of residence, violence, and neglect may have influenced their lack of care concerning sexual behavior, thus resulting in unplanned pregnancy (Polit et al. 1989).

For the teens interviewed, a pregnant girl is valued by the group on the streets, while this pregnancy is rejected by the family (Vega and Gutiérrez 1998). On the other hand, motherhood in the shelter is experienced in an ambivalent fashion. The search for support from colleagues and educators represents a survival strategy, but it also triggers anger, fear of dependency, and a disturbed behavior. Comparable findings were observed in other studies (Meadows-Oliver 2003; Meadows-Oliver 2006; Banyard 1995; Hanna 2001).

At the same time, living with others is a source of stress. For those teens who grew up in a context of privation, violence, and dependency, living with others causes paranoia and is also threatening (Banyard 1995; Ensign 2001). Moreover, motherhood in the shelter turns what is normally a private phenomenon into a public spectacle: the mothers in this study were unable to protect their small children from being exposed to their emotional state and found the rules of the shelter excessive (Meadows-Oliver 2003; Boxill and Beaty 1990).

The research data, by means of consistent reports throughout the interviews, pointed to maternity being an expression of hope, an organizer, and a structure-builder. For the teens studied, motherhood appears as an attempt to give meaning to a harsh life, to establish stable and meaningful bonds. Over time, motherhood becomes a positive fact, a transforming experience that helps the teen to leave behind drugs and the streets and to have a purpose in life. Some girls describe getting closer to their mothers. In addition, motherhood interrupts the abrupt shifts of "circulation" and obliges the teen to seek a stable residence situation. Pregnancy and motherhood emerge as a recovery and rebuilding of more stable relationships. A systematic review carried out by Donna Clemmens (2003), who studied teen mothers, confirmed many of these findings.

In the context of a life with little perspective, economic restrictions, and no loving figures, partner, or work, maternity can be viewed as something that has the intrinsic value of the child being capable of organizing and disciplining this teenager's life. Thus, the results from this

work provide one more piece of evidence that supports the theory proposed by Friedman et al. (1994). According to this theory, the authors understand that the reduction in uncertainty would be a universal principle. It would not only be applicable to developed countries, where children represent a significant economic cost, but especially to developing countries, where children may not represent such high economic cost. In this study, it was observed that teen pregnancy among street children, associated with little family and economic support, could have a structuring, life uncertainty-reducing role, thus compromising the young mother with rules and activities. Comparable results were found in studies with divorced women or those who have just become widows and have little economic protection. In these conditions, women become pregnant with the perspective of reducing uncertainty.

Limitations of the study

This study has the merit of having managed to investigate in situ a sample that is difficult to interview. However, some limitations should be taken into consideration when analyzing the results of this research. Participants were interviewed only once, and some opportunities for new interviews were lost due to the runaway character of the sample. To control this gap and increase the amount of information, a triangulation of sources was carried out, by means of experienced coordinators who work with this type of population. Some participants were only allowed to participate in the evaluation if accompanied by institutional monitors, a situation that may well have stifled teens' spontaneity. Finally, examining teens in shelters can provide information that is different from that originating from the literally homeless. The findings of this investigation, as a result, may differ from a sample obtained from this other population.

Conclusion

In summary, it could be observed through this investigation that leaving one's home behind and staying on the streets could not only be a problem, but also a solution for the difficult family life conditions previously mentioned. Among these conditions, the following stand out: lack of support, violence, maltreatment, and sexual abuse. Maternity develops through the need of support, and shelters offer some measure of support. The shelter/teen ratio is not free from conflicts, with the ambivalence between autonomy vs. dependence, loss of privacy, and fear of theft of children standing out as the most important elements. Maternity organizes and disciplines the young mother's life and also gives support to the uncertainty reduction theory.

Acknowledgments This study was funded by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel)

Conflict of interest statement The authors disclose any relevant associations that might pose a conflict of interest.

References

- Aptekar L (1996) Crianças de rua nos países em desenvolvimento: uma revisão de suas condições. *Psicol Reflexão Crítica* 9:153–184
- Backer G, Musik J (1994) Rebuilding nests of survival: A comparative analysis of the needs of at-risk adolescent women and adolescent mothers in the U.S., Latin America, Asia and Africa. *Childhood* (2):152–163. DOI 10.1177/090756829400200305
- Banyard VL (1995) "Taking another route": daily survival narratives from mothers who are homeless. *Am J Community Psychology* 23:871–891, DOI 10.1007/BF02507019
- Bassuk E, Rubin L, Lauriat A (1986) Characteristics of sheltered homeless families. *Am J Public Health*. 76:1097–1101
- Bassuk E, Weinreb L, Buckner J, Buckner JC, Browne A, Salomon A et al (1996) The characteristics and needs of sheltered homeless and low-income housed mothers. *JAMA* 276:640–646
- Bassuk E, Buckner J, Perloff J, Bassuk S (1998) Prevalence of mental health and substance use disorders among homeless and low-income housed mothers. *Am J Psychiatry* 155:1561–1564
- Boxill N, Beaty A (1990) Mother/child interaction among homeless women and their children in a public night shelter in Atlanta, Georgia. In: Boxill NA (ed) *Homeless children: the watchers and the winters*. Haword Press, New York, pp 49–64
- Choi N, Snyder L (1999) Voices of homeless parents: the pain of homeless and shelter life. *J Hum Behav Soc Environ* 2:55–77, DOI 10.1300/J137v02n03_04
- Clemmens D (2003) Adolescent motherhood: a meta-synthesis of qualitative studies. *MCN Am J Matern Child Nurs* 28:93–99
- Ensign J (2001) Reproductive health of homeless adolescent females in Seattle, Washington, USA. *Women Health* 31:133–151
- Friedman D, Hechter M, Kanazawa S (1994) A theory of the value of children. *Demography*. 31:375–401
- Glaser BG, Strauss A (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory*. Aldine, Chicago
- Greenblatt M, Robertson MJ (1993) Life stiles, adaptative strategies and sexual behaviors of homeless adolescents. *Hosp Community Psychiatry* 44:177–180
- Greene J, Ennett S, Ringwalt C (1999) Prevalence and correlates of survival sex among runaway and homeless youth. *Am J Public Health* 89:1406–1409
- Gregori MF (1998) *Desenhos Familiares. Pesquisa sobre família de crianças e adolescentes em situação de rua*. UNESCO, Fundação BankBoston, Alegro, São Paulo
- Hanna B (2001) Negotiating motherhood: the struggles of teenage mothers. *J Adv Nurs* 34:446–459
- Johnson AK (1999) Working and nonworking women: onset of homelessness within the context of their lives. *Affilia* 14:42–77, DOI 10.1177/08861099922093518
- Kidd S, Scriment K (2004) Evaluating child and youth homelessness. *Evaluation Rev* 28:325–341
- Leppard P (1991) "Homeless Kids": their educational aspirations and needs [thesis]. Acadia University, Canada
- Levins M (1995) Young women who were homeless pregnant adolescents [dissertation]. [place unknown]: [s.l.]

- Meadows-Oliver M (2003) Mothering in public: a meta-synthesis of homeless women with children living in shelters. *J Spec Pediatr Nurs* 8:130–136
- Meadows-Oliver M (2006) Homeless adolescent mothers: a meta-synthesis of their life experiences. *J Pediatr Nurs* 21:340–349
- Miles MB, Huberman AM (1994) *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks
- National Center on Family Homelessness (2005) *Family homelessness: a growing american tragedy* [text on the internet]. Coalition on Human Needs, Washington (DC), [cited 2007 12 mai]. Available from: http://www.chn.org/dia/organizations/chn/pdf/homeless_presentation031805.pdf
- Noto AR, Nappo S, Gualduròz JCF, Mattei R, Carlini EA (1994) Levantamento sobre o uso de drogas entre meninos e meninas em situação de rua de cinco capitais brasileiras. CEBRID/EPM, São Paulo
- Omolade B (1997) *The culture of african- american adolescent-mothers* [thesis]. University of New York, New York
- Organización Mundial de la Salud (1997) *Necesidades de la salud de los adolescentes*. OMS, Ginebra
- Patton MQ (1990) *Quantitative evaluation and research methods*. Sage Publications, California
- Polit D, Morton D, White C (1989) Sex, contraception and pregnancy among adolescents in foster care. *Fam Plann Perspect* 21:203–208, DOI [10.2307/2135572](https://doi.org/10.2307/2135572)
- Rich OJ (1990) Maternal-infant bonding in homeless adolescents and their infants. *Matern Child Nurs J* 19:195–210
- Rosemberg F (1993) O discurso sobre criança de rua na década de 80. *Cad Pesquisa* 87:71–81
- Saewyc EM (2003) Influential life contexts and environments for out-of home pregnant adolescents. *J Holist Nurs* 21:343–347, DOI [10.1177/0898010103258607](https://doi.org/10.1177/0898010103258607)
- Scappaticci AS (2006) *Life contexts and motherhood of homeless teen mothers: social and psychological aspects*. Universidade Federal de São Paulo, São Paulo
- Vega L, Gutiérrez R (1998) La inhalación deliberada de hidrocarburos aromáticos durante el embarazo de adolescentes consideradas como “de la calle”. *Salud Mental* 21:1–9
- Weinreb L, Goldberg R, Bassuk E, Perloff J (1998) Determinants of health and service use patterns in homeless and low-income housed children. *Pediatrics* 102:554–562

Copyright of Journal of Public Health is the property of Springer Science & Business Media B.V. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.