

# Consequences of unwanted childbirth: outcomes for women and children

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Doctor Catherine Bonnet  
Consultant in child and adolescent psychiatry  
(France and UK)

# Unwanted childbirth is still a reality in countries where contraception and abortion have been legalized. Why?

Most of women/teenagers recognise being pregnant soon after missing their period during the 1st trimester.

However we can observe from the 2nd trimester clinical aspects of neglected pregnancies:

## 1. Concealment of pregnancy

Women/teenagers are aware being pregnant but concealed it to their family and others.

## 2. Pregnancy denial

Women/teenagers have not verified being pregnant. They only recognize being pregnant after the 20 weeks until birth.

As a result women/teenagers may ask for a termination after then 2nd trimester or lately in planning centres.

# What is pregnancy denial?

Pregnancy denial is a primitive defence mechanism of the psychic process that indicates a failure to recognize a pregnancy and to admit the interaction between a woman and her fetus:  
*The visual, tactile, kinesthetic information are not recognized as the physical features of a pregnancy.*

1. Women/teenagers do not recognize the presence and the movements of fetus.
2. Women perceive their body's changes, the lack of her periods but do not relate them to a sexual intercourse.  
All the physical changes are rationalized away.

*Pregnancy denial may be shared by the partner, the family members and others including healthcare professionals.*

# The risks of pregnancy denial/concealment of pregnancy at delivery time

The risks of precipitated, unassisted or/and denied delivery

1. Unexpected positive outcome for the newborn

2. Risks of perinatal morbidity, death, violence and severe neglect

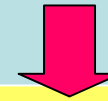
3. The unthinkable decision-making

# 1. Unexpected positive outcome



Happy welcome  
of an unplanned  
and expected newborn.

However  
Women/teenagers  
need a social, judicial and  
psychological support.



Women/teenagers choose  
To give up their newborn  
for adoption.

However  
Women/teenagers  
need a social, judicial and  
psychological support.

The choice of adoption is not always view as a positive outcome

## 2. The risks of perinatal morbidity/mortality

Unassisted and precipitated labour expose mother/child health to negative outcomes

Preterm labour, breach presentation, infections, low birth weight or/and perinatal death.

Panic and outburst of violence may expose at risk of active neonaticide

Denial of childbirth may expose at risk of abandonment on a public place or passive neonaticide

How to support women/teenagers in maternity wards?

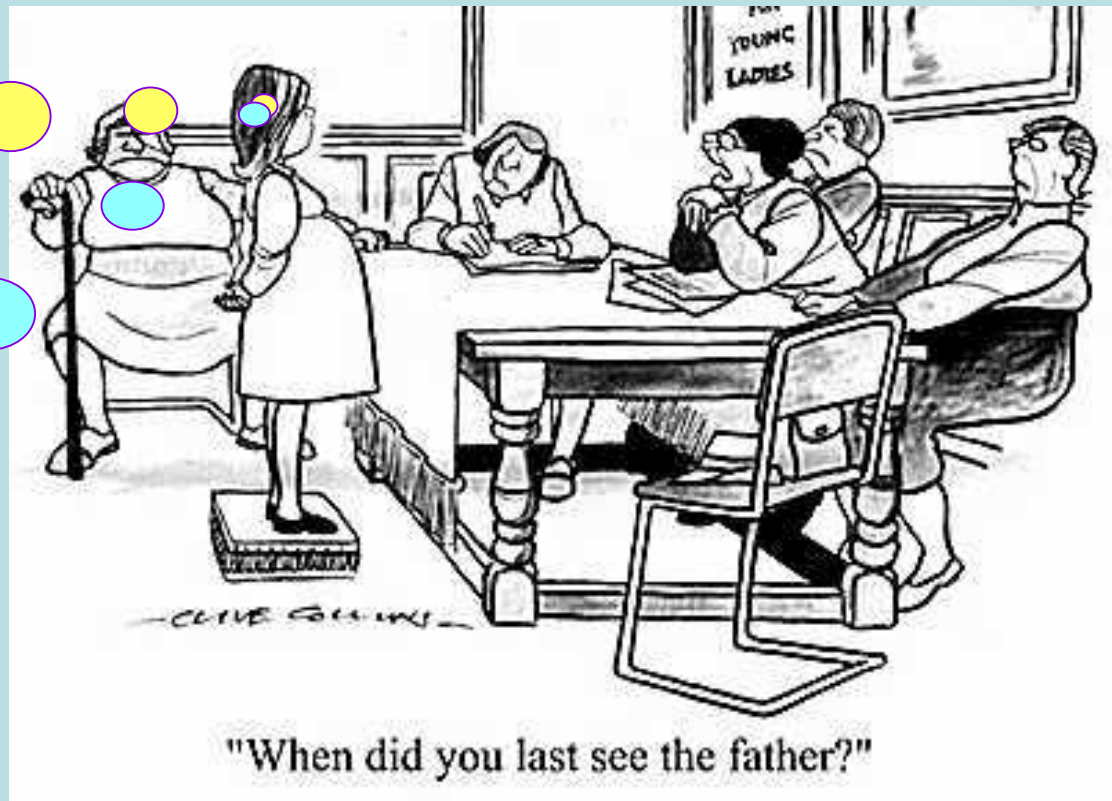
### 3. The unthinkable decision-making at the delivery time

*Healthcare professionals may face  
complex difficulties  
if women/teenagers  
change their mind  
or keep silent.*

# What would be the 'best' decision with 'mute' teenagers?

*If I tell it is my boy friend, they will call my parents, who will become unhappy? violent?*

*If I tell them that the father's baby is my father, and they call my parents...he will become more violent*





# What would be the 'best' decision while migrating?



1,7 millions of migrants during  
2000

in Europe

Some women who migrate,  
are pregnant as the results of rape  
by:

- criminal gangs
- war criminals
- political detention

# How women/teenagers may be able to express their feelings, thoughts, under high amount of external pressures ?

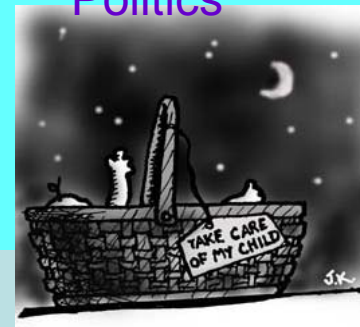
Health professionals,  
grand parents,  
family, neighbours



?



Institutions  
Culture  
Religion  
Politics



# Is it possible to reduce/prevent negative outcomes?

- To detect denied, concealed pregnancies from the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester
- To offer a follow up with a multidisciplinary team: social worker, midwives, psychologist/psychiatrist, juridical counselling)
- To help them to speak out their negative thoughts before the birth.
- To plan and book the delivery time

*One of the answer may be  
to train healthcare professionals for recognizing and detecting  
unwanted motherhood at the 3rd trimester  
may be  
the best prevention for negative outcomes*

## The choice of anonymous birth may reduce the negative outcome

1. As it protects fetus health, (prematurity, death) (European Court of human rights, 2003)
2. As it protects mother health (unassisted delivery) (European Court of Human Rights, 2003)
3. As it protects any women and teenage pregnancy from external pressures for their decision making.

*Anonymous setting have been developed in some countries:  
Anonymus delivery in France, Italy, Austria, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, etc  
Electronic baby box in German speaking countries, India, Japan, etc  
Safe haven laws in USA*