



Introduction

- Bolivia has some of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy and maternal and infant mortality in South America.
- Bolivia is home to one of the largest Indigenous populations in South America with over two-thirds of people identifying as such.
- Although Bolivia is undergoing healthcare reform, the Indigenous population is being left behind with young women particularly affected by political and social exclusion.
- Little research has been done on the specific barriers for Indigenous adolescent women reproductive health.

Objective

To qualitatively explore the barriers to contraception and reproductive health for Indigenous adolescent females in the Altiplano of Bolivia.

Methods

Participants: Adolescents, 12-19 years old admitted to Hospital de Los Andes (El Alto) or Hospital de La Mujer (La Paz) for pregnancy complications or labor in January 2023.

Study Design: Convergent parallel mixed methods study of pregnant adolescent females). Semi-structured interviews performed.

Analysis: Demographic summary statistics and code frequencies analyzed together. Thematic content analysis performed, and conceptual framework developed.

Demographics

| Characteristic | Distribution | Characteristic | Distribution |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Age of Patient | 16.6 (15- 18 years) | Age of Partner | 20.9 (16- 28 years) *** |
| Time that Interview Occurred | | Time with Partner | 3.25 (2.5- 4 years) *** |
| Pre-Partum | 4 (44.4%) | Relationship with Partner | |
| Post-Partum | 5 (55.6%) | Yes | 5 (55.6%) |
| Complications during pregnancy | | Now no, before yes | 2 (22.2%) |
| Yes | 6 (66.7%) | No | 2 (22.2%) |
| No | 3 (33.3%) | Married | |
| Type of Delivery | | Yes | 1 (11.1%) |
| Vaginal Delivery | 2 (40%) | No | 8 (88.9%) |
| C-Section | 3 (60%) | Desire to be Married | |
| Education | | Yes | 4 (44.4%) |
| High School | 5 (55.6%) | No | 5 (55.6%) |
| Completed High School | 3 (33.3%) | | |
| University | 1 (11.1%) | | |
| Place of Residence | | | |
| El Alto | 3 (33.3%) | | |
| La Paz | 2 (22.2%) | | |
| Campo/Other | 4 (44.4%) | | |
| Live with | | | |
| Only Family | 5 (55.5%) | | |
| Partner +/- Family | 4 (44.6%) | | |

Figure 1: Summary of demographic characteristics from (N=9) semi-structured interviews with adolescents ages 12-19 admitted to Hospital de Los Andes (El Alto) and Hospital de la Mujer (La Paz) in January 2023.

Conceptual Framework

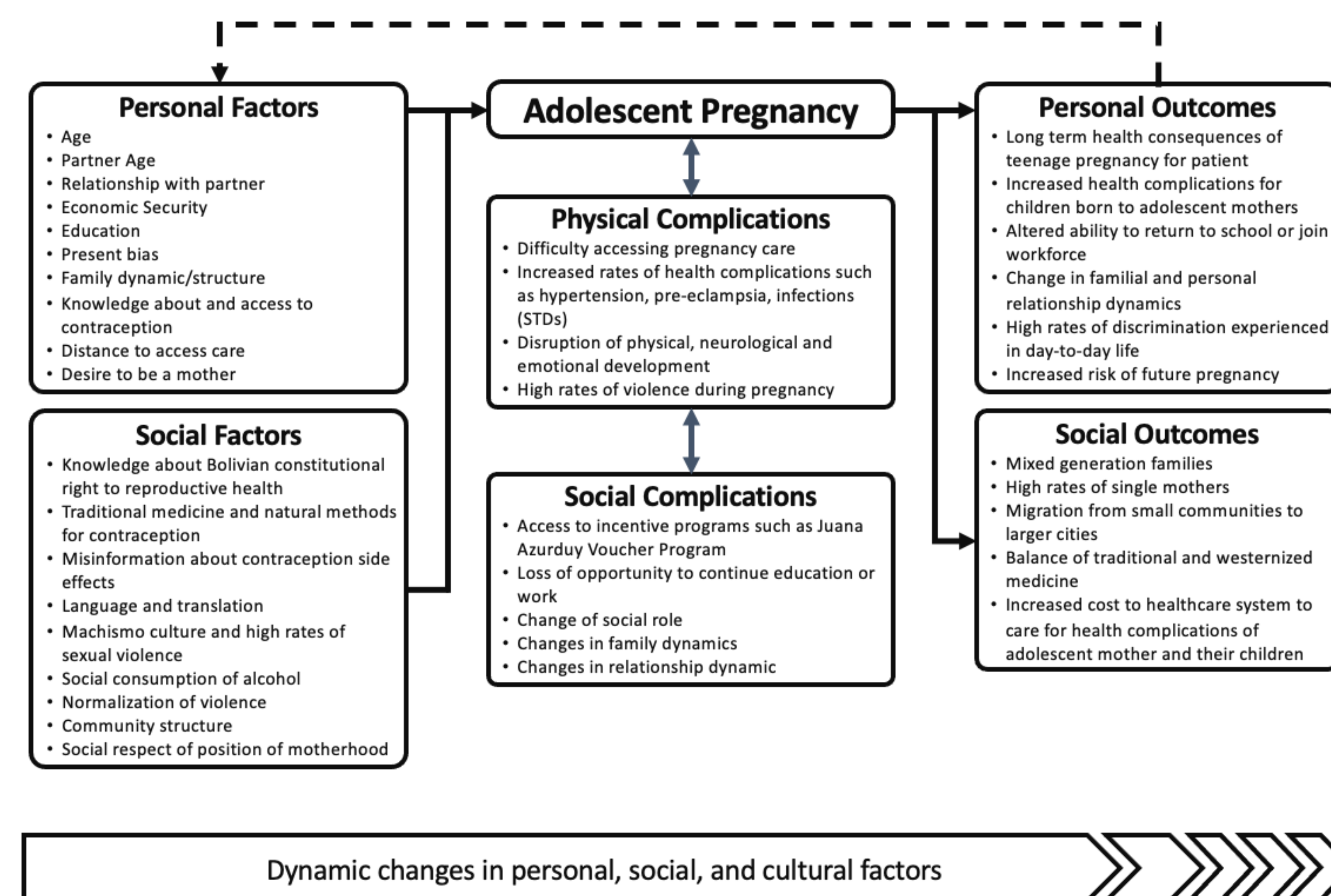


Figure 2: Conceptual framework for thematic content analysis from semi-structured interviews (N=9) with pregnant adolescent females.

Results

- 100% pregnancies unplanned
- 56% participants were in a relationship with the father of their child
- 90% reported knowing >2 forms of contraception, 20% had ever used contraception
- 56% stated main source of information about contraception was from high school
- 80% did not want more children, 90% desired contraception to prevent future pregnancies
 - Most common desired methods were subdermal implant or hormonal injection
- Other themes:
 - Belief contraception causes cancer or damages body
 - Tabu discussing contraception with partner, family and medical providers
 - Machismo Culture

Conclusions

- Although most adolescent females in the Altiplano know about contraception methods, very few use them.
- There are numerous misconceptions about side effects of contraception as well as preference for traditional medicine alternatives.
- Culturally competent interventions that integrate traditional medicine concepts, address misconceptions, and empower young women are needed to promote reproductive autonomy and lower rates of unintended pregnancy.