

# UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDES TOWARD EARLY PREGNANCY AMONG WOMEN IN NUNAVIK: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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## INTRODUCTION

Between 2003 and 2007, **30% of pregnancies in Nunavik were experienced by young women aged between 14 and 19 years old**, compared to only 8% and 3% respectively for the Quebec province and Canada<sup>1</sup>. A recent study among Inuit adolescents aged between 16 and 20 years old in Nunavik reported that one-third of its female participants have already been pregnant at least once<sup>2</sup>.

However, early pregnancy has been repeatedly **linked to numerous adverse social and health consequences for the mother**<sup>3</sup>:

- Hypertension, anemia, infections
- Eclampsy/ preclampsy, giving birth prematurely and to low birth weight baby
- Depression

**And for the child**<sup>4</sup>:

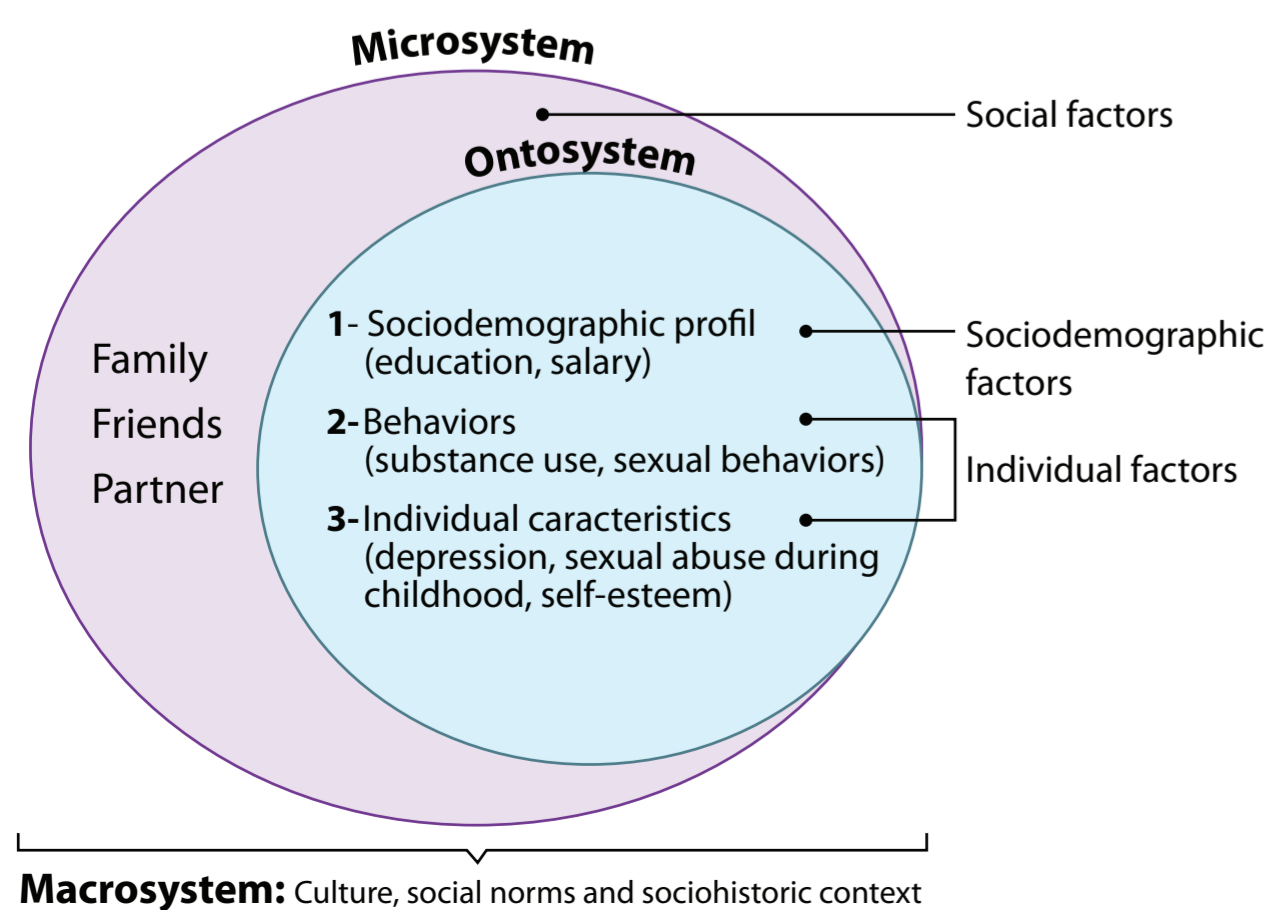
- Autism
- Mortality, respiratory distress syndrome
- School dropout

While factors precipitating early pregnancies have been well studied in diverse countries, **few studies have focus on aboriginal populations**. In such context, social and cultural views, rather than individual, may leave a unique footprint on pregnancy-related attitudes and behaviors. **Attitudes toward pregnancy, a key predictor** of adolescent pregnancy in western societies<sup>5</sup>, have seldom been studied among Inuit.

## Objective

**The Nunavik Early Pregnancy Study aims to examine social and cultural factors influencing attitudes toward pregnancy among young Inuit women.**

## Ecological model selected to consider factors influencing early pregnancy



## METHOD

Mixed methods doctoral project aiming to better understand factors influencing early pregnancy in Nunavik

Inuit Health Survey via the Amundsen-Qanuilirpitaa 2017



### Who were part of this study?

15 Nunavik Inuit women:

- experienced a pregnancy during the last 12 months;
- aged between 16 and 20 years old.

### What did participants do?

A recorded 30 minutes face-to-face interview to assess:

- opinions and feelings toward their pregnancy as well as those of their surroundings;
- positive and negative sides of an early pregnancy;
- previous experiences with birth control.

## Involving Inuit community members in the research process

**Step 1:** Numerous consultations with Nunavimmiut to identify priority topics (most needed and useful).

➤ **Priority topic that came out:** To better understand early pregnancy among Inuit adolescents.

**Step 2:** Involvement of Inuit partners to develop the research method (qualitative method, interview grid, etc.).

**Step 3:** Regular meetings with the Inuit and non-Inuit advisory committee in charge of final decisions.

**Step 4:** Involvement of 2 young Inuit women in every step of the study including revising interview grid, data collection, double coding using the general inductive approach<sup>6</sup>, interpretation, communication.

## COMPLETED STEPS

- ✓ Approval of protocol by Laval University, INSPQ and CHU de Quebec
- ✓ Ethical approval received in June 2017
- ✓ **Recruitment of 2 Inuit research assistants**
- ✓ Funding obtained from Kativik School Board- Youth training Program
- ✓ Data collection in the 14 communities during fall 2017
- ✓ **Recruitment of 15 participants**

## EXPECTED RESULTS

**Results are expected in winter 2018**

Several social and cultural factors specific to the Inuit culture will influence attitudes toward pregnancy of young women.

## LIMITS & STRENGTHS

**Limits:** Selection & recall bias; no generalization; cost & time.

**Strengths:** Involvement of Inuit collaborators in every research steps; mix of qualitative and quantitative methods.

## CONCLUSION

Using qualitative methods to assess social and cultural factors influencing early pregnancy in a cultural context is an asset in this study. This project will allow a thorough understanding of factors influencing early pregnancy among Inuit and will support the current effort to prevent an adverse trajectory associated with this issue and to reorient education programs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study is nested in Qanuilirpitaa?, which is a health survey conducted in the 14 communities of Nunavik on board the icebreaker Amundsen during fall 2017. This project is supported by the Nunavik Nutrition and Health Committee (NNHC), and funded by Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR, fellowship to C. Moisan) and the Kativik School Board (KSB), Youth Training Program.



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