Global Health Experiential Learning: Adolescent Pregnancy in Ecuador

Ecuador is a nation with diverse geography, ethnicities, and culture. These diversities determine the healthcare system that resolve common diseases and trends affecting the mortality of the people. In the Child Health and Family International Internship (CFHI) “Urban/Rural Andean Health” of Ecuador Internship, we tackled these relationships.

One of the central parts of the internship was the concern about young women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights. Because of the country’s societal expectations, young women are prevented from receiving adequate education and support. They often engage in early sexual activity and are more susceptible to relationship violence. The most alarming consequences of adolescent pregnancy are the significant numbers on child and maternal mortality due to birth complications.

There were different policies implemented by the Ecuadorian government regarding this concern. Factors that affect the trends of adolescent pregnancy rates include the four main policies on reproductive and sexual health from 2007 to now. The abrupt changes caused confusion and debates between healthcare officials, political leaders, and religious leaders. With this information, I conducted more research regarding the policies and found that the trend of adolescent birth rates increased no matter what the policy in place was. The ENIPLA policy from 2011-2015 which was favored by many healthcare professionals was not an improvement from the years before. Knowing which policy was the most efficient is inconclusive because of the short timeline per policy and external factors like its dependency on the current government’s values.