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INTRODUCTION



Global Perspectives on the Sociocultural, Economic, and Political Contexts Shaping Adolescent Sexual Behaviors: Introduction to a Special Issue

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Adolescence is one of the most crucial developmental periods and is characterized by complex physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. During this period, sexual development is pronounced. Youth may experience several challenges such as early sexual debut, inadequate access to contraceptives, increased risk for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV, unintended pregnancies, and early parenthood. Current trends indicate significant improvements in adolescent sexual and reproductive health within the last two decades and outline areas that have emerged or persisted as challenges (United Nations, 2019). Annual data on sexual and reproductive health showed that of the 35 nations that have completed annual tracking, 29 had a decline in early sexual debut among adolescent girls (Liang et al., 2019; STAT Compiler, 2019). However, a decline in early sexual debut was not shared equally as there was no decrease in early sexual debut within Latin American and Caribbean