

Knowledge and Attitude of Men on Contraceptive Methods

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ABSTRACT

Family planning refers to a conscious effort by a couple to limit or space the number of children they have through the use of contraceptive methods. Family planning in the global health field often revolves around women and girls. It is often regarded as the woman's responsibility, but there is growing recognition of the need to involve men in family planning programs.

One of the most serious problems of developing countries still have to solve is their rapid and uncontrolled increase in population. It is well documented that men's general knowledge and attitudes concerning the ideal family size, gender preference of children, ideal spacing between child births, and contraceptive method use greatly influence women's preferences and opinions. Family planning has traditionally been viewed as the woman's responsibility, but there has been a growing recognition of the need to involve men in family planning programs as a means of achieving reproductive health objectives, as well as attaining greater gender equity.

Keywords: *Contraceptive Method, Family Planning, Knowledge*

BACKGROUND

Family Planning (FP) is a way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily, upon the basis of knowledge, attitudes and responsible decisions by individuals voluntarily, upon the basis of knowledge, attitudes and responsible decisions by individuals and couples, in order to promote the health and welfare of the family group and this contribute effectively to the social development of the country¹.

FP refers to a conscious effort by a couple to limit or space the number of children they have through the use of contraceptive methods. Contraceptive methods are classified as modern or traditional methods, the modern methods include female sterilization, male sterilization, the pill, the Intra Uterine Device (IUD),

injectable, implants, male condom, female condom, diaphragm/foam/jelly, while Lactation Amenorrhea Method (LAM), methods such as rhythm (periodic abstinence), withdrawal are grouped as traditional².

LITURATURE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

World's population has risen to an alarming level, which in turn leaves its nations bulging at the seams in terms of population density. At the same time the paradox is that the financial and material resources cannot match the population growth that has occurred. A second paradox is the uneven population growth. While some nations are experiencing a population explosion, others show a negative growth. The future

population growth rate is highly dependent on the fertility rate. Fertility levels have shown a decrease in the recent decades. If this trend in fertility decline continues, the world population may reach 9.3 billion in 2050 and 10.1 billion in 2100. Hence, the concept of contraception as a method for population control is of paramount importance³.

Reproductive health programs around the world are increasingly recognizing that men are an important target for their services. Men not only have reproductive health concerns of their own, but their health status and behaviors also affect women's reproductive health. The need to include men in all matters that require joint spousal decisions is crucial in achieving key reproductive health goals. However, men have not been involved as they should and progress to involve them has been insufficient and uneven⁴.

Study was carried out in the teaching hospitals of Kasturba Medical College (Manipal University), Mangalore; India among 156 men on "Married Men's Involvement in Family Planning" revealed that most of the subjects were of the opinion that frequent pregnancies lead to health problems and also concluded that special family planning services for men would encourage the utilization of male contraception. Also, 92.3% subjects from upper and 86.9% from lower Socio-economic status were aware about the male family planning services available in the market and Family planning methods were actively practiced by 71.2%. This study concluded that males had more preferences for temporary methods of contraception⁵.

Family planning has traditionally been viewed as the woman's responsibility, but there has been a growing recognition of the need to involve men in family planning programs as a means of achieving reproductive health objectives, as well as attaining greater gender equity. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo made an explicit call for programs and policies to educate and enable men to play a more active role in reproductive decisions, including contraceptive method choice and use⁶.

The study showed that identified barriers to male involvement were the perception that FP is women's activity (89.4%) and were not their custom to participate in FP programme (90.6%)⁷. Since 1968 Government of Nepal has been actively involved in providing family planning services with the establishment of Nepal Family Planning. Data from the four Demographic and Health surveys conducted in Nepal over the past 15 years show that current use of modern contraception has increased from 26 percent in 1996 to 44 percent in 2006 and then declined slightly(43%) in 2011⁸.

Similar cross-sectional study was conducted from February 2014 to October 2014 on knowledge, attitude and practices regarding family planning methods among married men in the urban slum area of Gangwadi, India among 320 married men concluded that awareness about family planning method needs to be improved among less educated family. The study revealed that only (19.1%) of married men had good knowledge about family planning methods while majority of men (58.4%) had average knowledge. Others (22.5%) had poor knowledge about the same. Only (10%) married men had positive attitude towards family planning while majority (64.4%) had average attitude, 25.6% men had negative attitude⁹.

The use of any method of FP by women is often influenced by their husbands. Men have rarely been involved in either receiving or providing information on sexuality, reproductive health, or birth spacing. They have also been ignored or excluded in one way or the other from participating in many FP programmes as FP is viewed as a woman's affair. Traditionally, men are the heads of households and decision makers in all issues in their respective households. Men decide on FP and the number of children as well as how to use what is produced by the family. Also, findings have shown that since men were the decision makers, they were expected to initiate discussions on FP and the number of the children the couple want to have. Men were perceived as the sole providers for their family needs. Women were not considered decision makers, but implementers of what had been decided by men, without questioning men's decisions¹⁰. In developing

countries women have long been the subjects of research for fertility and family planning ¹¹.

Men's participation in family planning programs is a promising strategy for addressing some of the world's most pressing reproductive health problems. Men can assist in preventing early and unintended pregnancies and reduce unmet needs for family planning, foster safe motherhood and practice responsible fatherhood. Increased men's participation involves more than program activities conventionally associated with men. It also involves encouraging a range of positive reproductive health and social behavior by men to help ensure the well being of all those affected by their decisions. Understanding factors that influence the participation of men in family planning decision making is important because it will enable family planning programmers to design programs that are more inclusive of men and that cater to their needs concerning family planning⁸.

CONCLUSION

Different journal, national and international research reports are reviewed related to contraceptive method. Rate of family planning users in male is very low, the reason behind this can be illiteracy, poor communication between husband and wife, shyness, poor accessibility of services, patriarchal nature of society. Many study conducted to assess men's knowledge and attitude on contraceptive method showed that increased knowledge and positive attitude are directly correlated with higher involvement in reproductive health. Men's awareness and knowledge are essential prerequisites for taking correct decisions at right time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Similar study must be conducted in married couple. Same study can be conducted to assess the practice of men on contraceptive methods. As limited study is conducted on this topic, study can be conducted in many regions, countries. Health education, campaign can be conducted to improve beliefs and attitudes of men.

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