

## Perception of family planning use among married men and women

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### Abstract

Despite the launching of a family planning programme in Ghana about 5 decades ago, the country's family planning prevalence rate remains relatively low and its total fertility rate is still considerably high compared with other African countries. One of the factors that may contribute to the low family planning prevalence rate and thus the slow fertility decline in Ghana is the perception of family planning use among married men and women in Ghana. This study sought to examine the perception of family planning use among married men and women at Anomabu community in the Mfantseman Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana. Data were collected among married men and women who were in their reproductive ages (15-49 years). Questionnaires were administered to 200 randomly selected respondents. The data collected were analysed with Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) software version 21 and presented using graphs and tables. The results revealed that 82.5% of the respondents had knowledge about family planning with media (radio, TV and internet) being the major source of information about family planning. Fifty-two percent of the respondents had ever used at least a type of family planning with 59.5% ever used modern type of family planning. However, 81% of the respondents were currently using at least a type of family planning of which 87.5% were also using modern family planning method. In conclusion, the findings indicate that respondents had high knowledge about family planning, especially the modern family planning method. Reasons for not using family planning and modern contraception included incomplete family size, negative perceptions, in-laws' disapproval, religious concerns, side-effects, and lack of access to quality services. The majority preferred private facilities over the government health facilities as the later were cited as derided. The study concluded the need for qualified female healthcare providers, especially for long term family planning services at health facilities instead of camps arranged occasionally. Addressing issues around access, affordability, availability, and sociocultural barriers about modern contraception as well as involving men will help to meet the needs and ensure that the women and

couples fulfill their childbearing and reproductive health goals. A qualitative study was conducted to understand the perceptions and experiences of men and women towards acceptability and contraceptive use. A total of 20 FGDs (Men = 10 FGDs; MWRA = 10 FGDs) were conducted. Three overarching themes were identified: (I) Appropriateness and means to promote contraceptive use; (II) Equity and Accessibility to contraceptives; and (III) Perspective on available FP services. Generally, both men and women were informed about FP methods but women were more cognizant of FP information. The door to door services by community health workers in Sukh initiative areas was largely appreciated both by women and men as it has made the accessibility and availability of the information and services easy. Women suggested that the Sukh initiative should bring some strategies that can help men broaden their perspective towards FP. The study informed that the men feel left out from the FP programs. Therefore, male participants expressed keen interest in initiatives for men in their communities that would cater to their FP needs. Contraceptive use helps couples and individuals realize their basic right to decide freely and responsibly if, when and how many children to have. Couples having fewer children can provide good education and health facilities to their children, as it gets affordable. The use of contraceptive methods has remained stagnant over the past 5 years (34% in the 2017-18 PDHS and 35% in the 2012-13 PDHS). This change has been slower when compared to the FP2020 pledge-55% CPR and 2.6 TFR by 2020. The Sukh initiative project was conceived to alleviate these challenges by providing access to quality contraceptive methods to promote the well-being of mothers and children and supporting the overall health and development of communities in some of the most underserved areas of Karachi, Pakistan. The study informed that generally, both men and women, were informed about FP methods but women were more cognizant of FP information. The Door to Door services by community health workers in Sukh initiative areas was largely appreciated both by women and men as it has made the accessibility and availability of the information and services easy. Women suggested that the Sukh initiative should bring some strategies that can help men broaden their perspective towards FP. The study informed that the men feel left out from the FP programs. Therefore, male participants expressed keen interest in initiatives for men in their communities that would cater to their FP needs.