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**KNOWLEDGE AND ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANING SERVICES BY WOMEN
OF CHILDBEARING AGE IN EDU LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF KWARA
STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study determined knowledge, sources of information about and accessibility of Family Planning (FP) services among women in Edu Local Government of Kwara State using a descriptive research design. Three research questions were answered and a hypothesis was tested in this study. A researchers-designed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection from 480 women and a split-half test of reliability was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Three hundred and sixty women were purposively sampled for the study. The result was analyzed using frequency count and percentages, while, Chi-square was used to test null hypothesis at Alpha level of 0.05. The research findings showed that women of childbearing age sources of information about FP services was mainly by health workers (62.5%) while women knowledge about FP was below average (43.3%) and women showed poor willingness to utilize FP services in Edu Local Government Area. This study concluded that knowledge has no significant influence on utilization of family planning services by women of childbearing age in Edu LGA, Kwara State. The study however, recommended that all levels of Governments health workers and Non-governmental Organizations should strengthen health education intervention programmes on the significant of FP services utilization in the existing primary health care centres in Edu LGA.

Keywords: Family Planning Services, Women of Childbearing Age, Knowledge, accessibility and Utilization.

Introduction

Family planning services is a key component of maternal health care services which place emphasis on the birth control and reproductive health among men and women in most societies in developing nations. Effective health communication programs and contraceptive technology helps in achieving the millennium development goals aimed at improving the overall maternal health status of citizens. The Millennium Development Goal (5) targeted in improvement of women access to basic family planning and reduces maternal deaths by as much as one third and child deaths by as much as one fifth. The United Nation member Countries were urged to focus on the critical importance of family planning if the Millennium Development Goals are to be successfully achieved (Ban Ki-moon, 2008). In 2008, UNFPA continued efforts to ensure universal access to reproductive health and the right of all people to decide the number and timing of their children was re-emphasized. Based on this concept family planning programs was instituted in 140 countries and works in collaboration with governments, civil society and United Nations partners to forecast needs provide and coordinate the distribution of contraceptives and maternal health supplies and build each country's logistical capacities (UNFPA,2008).

In most African countries, high fertility and rapid population growth represent a bigger threat to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals than infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Cleland, Bernstein, Ezeh, Faundes, Glasier& Innis 2006). The knowledge and utilization of family planning among women is crusher to the health of the women in their reproductive age. Despite the critical need for family planning, many families in the communities have not been adopting various methods of family planning to improve their reproductive life and child health. Early marriages, religious belief as well as women inability to make decision on issues relating to their health has been factors militating against FP use (WHO, 2005). Furthermore, family planning is usually left out of the planning, budgeting and implementation of maternal health programmes in most African countries. It was observed that there is a missing link in women's knowledge of reproductive process particularly FP which probably influenced their utilization level and preventive attitude on maternal health problems. A study by Seifeld in Abdalla (2012) on knowledge and utilization of family planning in post conflict Southern Sudan revealed that only 28% of women have never heard of FP methods while 61.9% heard about pill, 57% heard about rhythm calendar methods as against 38.3% that heard about injectable methods, however, only 16.3% used pills, 14.2 used rhythm and only 5.5% used injectable respectively. This implies that majority of women in Southern Sudan had knowledge about FP methods but heard poor utilization of FP methods. In a similar study on the knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning among women living in the Mbouda health district, Cameroon, a total of 101 women enrolled with a mean of 31.7 ± 8.8 years, Ninety-six percent of these women heard about family planning. Almost all respondents (98 %) were aware of at least one contraceptive method, the most cited being the male condom (96 %), the safe period (86.1 %), injectable (76.2 %) and oral pills (75.2 %), Sixty-six women (65.3 %) were currently practicing at least one contraceptive method, and the three prevailing methods used were: the safe period (50 %), the male condom (34.8 %), and injectable (12.1 %). The main

reasons precluding women from practicing contraception were lack of knowledge (31.4 %), uselessness (31.4 %) and unbearable side effects (8.6 %). Fourteen of these women (42.4 %) expressed the willingness to start practicing contraception if they received more information about the subject (Richie, Nansseu, Nchinda, Katte, Nchagnouot and Nguetsa, 2015).

In Nigeria, study on utilization of family planning services in a Nigerian tertiary hospital: a six-year review by *Olaleye, Akintayo, Adewoyin and Olaleye* observed that out of a total of 1,284 clients accepted a family planning method during the period. Contraceptive prevalence rate in relation to hospital deliveries was 18.1%. A third of the clients sought contraception within 6 months of delivery. Intrauterine contraceptive device was the most common method (65.0%). Information on family planning was mainly from nurses (66.7%). as menstrual irregularity and husband's decision were some other reasons for nonuse of contraception among the women sampled. However, health information is needed for most effective and efficient treatment to save women's lives from preventable causes of maternal death.

In Edu LGA of Kwara State, despite the provision of reproductive health services particularly FP, women of childbearing (WCA) have not been accessing various forms of FP methods and this has accounted for various forms of pregnancy and delivery related complication which in most cases lead to maternal death. The inability of WCA in this LGA could probably be due to lack of knowledge about the importance of FP, religious/traditional myth about FP and lack of husband consent and support to the women in these communities. Based on the observed high level of maternal mortality and morbidity on reproductive health among women in Edu LGA, this study aimed to determine knowledge and access of family planning service by women of childbearing age in Edu LGA of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research questions:

1. What are the women sources of information about family planning services in Edu Local Government Area, Kwara State?
2. What is the knowledge level of WCA about family planning services in Edu LGA of Kwara State?
3. Do women of Childbearing Age have knowledge about various methods of FP in Edu LGA?
4. Are WCA willing to access FP services in Edu LGA of Kwara State?

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference between knowledge and the accessibility of family planning services among WCA in Edu LGA of Kwara State.

Methodology

Design

This study used descriptive research design to determine knowledge, sources of information about and access of family planning services among women of childbearing

age in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State. Edu LGA is located in the north central district of Kwara State with a total population of 201,642, from which 97,602 were females (National population Census, 2006). The LGA comprises of three traditional districts with ten (10) political wards and have sixty five (65) health facilities located all around the communities of the LGA. Eleven (11) out of these health facilities, provided family planning services among others which did not offer such services.

The population for this study consisted of all women of childbearing age in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. A multiple stage sampling method was used in this study as follows; six (6) political wards were selected by simple random sampling, from each of the district. A systematic sampling method was used to select 160 households in each district from which 360 WCA were purposively sampled for this study. The instrument for this study was researchers-designed questionnaire which covered various components of family planning services. This questionnaire was translated into Nupe language which is the major spoken language and administered on women who could not read nor write in English Language in the LGA. Section A of the questionnaire obtained information on the sources of WCA information about family planning (FP) designed in the form of multiple-choice format, section B was a close ended questionnaire type designed in the form of Yes or No, which sought information on the knowledge of WCA about FP services. Section C was designed in Likert type scale of three (3) Point responses that sought information about WCA utilization of FP services. The reliability of the instrument was determined by pre-testing using split-half test of Cronbach statistic of reliability method and the result of coefficient reliability was 0.68 using Pearson product correlation reliability index.

A permission to conduct the study was obtained from the authorities of the LGA and the community leaders of the study areas. Subsequently, the introductory letter was translated into Nupe language and read to various households and women of childbearing selected to participate in the study for their consent. Descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentages was used to answer research questions and inferential statistic of Chi-square was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Research question 1: *What are the women sources of information about Pregnancy associated Problems?*

Table 1: Sources of Women of Childbearing Age (WCA) about family planning services in Edu Local Government Area, Nigeria

Sources of information	Frequency	Percentage
Mass Media	332	69.2
Health workers	280	58.3
Family members	260	54.3
Friends/public	212	44.2

Table 1 shows WCA main sources of information about family planning services was through health workers (69.2%) compare with other sources in the communities of Edu LGA.

Research Question 2: *What is the knowledge level of childbearing women about Family Planning Services (FPS) in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State?*

Table 3: The knowledge of Women of Childbearing Age about Family Planning Services

Family Planning Services	(N = 480)		
	Yes	No	Not sure
Do you know what family planning is?	208(43.3%)	120(25.0%)	152(31.7%)
Do you know of any family planning services provided?	196(40.8%)	120(25.0%)	164(34.2%)
Advice on importance of family planning	264(55.0%)	104(21.7%)	112(23.3%)
Health education on types of F/P methods	216(45.0%)	152(31.7%)	112(23.3%)
Fertility problem are discussed and managed	168(35.0%)	160(33.3%)	152(31.7%)
Sexually transmitted infections are treated	128(26.7%)	184(38.3%)	168(35.0%)
Do you know of any method of Family Planning?	176(36.7%)	184(38.3%)	120(25.0%)
Is barrier method one of the F/P?	168(35.0%)	156(43.3%)	104(21.7%)
Is a pill contraceptive a method of F/P?	216(45.0%)	168(35.0%)	96(20.0%)
Is Injectable one of the methods of F/P?	200(41.7%)	176(36.7%)	104(21.7%)
Is traditional method one of the methods?	184(38.3%)	200(41.7%)	96(20.0%)

The above table revealed WCA knowledge about family planning was little below average (43.3%), while, majority (40.8%) of them claimed to have knowledge about various types of F/P services provided in the health centers. On the various methods of F/P available, majority (38.3%) of WCA do not have knowledge about methods of F/P services available but identified pill and injectable types of contraceptives as major types of F/P (45.0%) and (41.7%) known to them respectively.

Research question 3: *Will Women Childbearing Age Utilize Family Planning Services in Edu Local Government Area of Kwara State?*

Table 3: The Utilization of Family Planning Services among WCA in Edu LGA

Variable	(N = 480)		
Family Planning Services	Always	Sometimes	Not at All
I attend family planning clinic	88(18.3%)	84(35.0%)	112(46.7%)
Do you use any of F/P method provided?	72(15.0%)	176(36.7%)	232(48.3%)
I use barrier method	40(8.3%)	136(28.3%)	224(63.3%)
I use pill contraceptive	40(8.3%)	120(25.0%)	240(66.7%)
I use Injection method	64(13.3%)	160(33.3%)	256(53.3%)
I use traditional method	56(11.7%)	92(26.7%)	296(61.7%)

(Modified Likert scale)

The table above shows majority of women (46.7%) neither attended F/P clinic for family Planning services provided, nor used any form of family planning method (48.3%) compared with dose who did adopt one form of FP or the other. This result indicated that generally there was low level utilization of family planning services by WCA in Edu LGA.

Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant difference between the knowledge and accessibility of family planning services by Women of Childbearing Age in Edu LGA of Kwara State.*

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests on the Knowledge and Utilization of Family Planning among WCA

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.829 ^a	9	.365
N of Valid Cases	480		

P value greater than 0.05

Table above shows P value of .365 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance, implies that knowledge has no significant influence on utilization of family planning services by women of childbearing age in Edu LGA, Kwara State. The hypothesis is hereby accepted. This result shows that WCA knowledge level about and accessibility of Family planning services among WCA was very low.

Discussion

Majority of women of childbearing age who were married got their information about family planning (FP) services from health workers and family members; this is probably due to availability of FP facilities and information gotten from health workers during antenatal and post- natal visits. This finding supported study by Nansseu, Nchinda, Katte, Nchagnouot and Nguetsa(2015) on Assessing the knowledge, attitude

and practice of family planning among women living in the Mbouda health district, Cameroon that Ninety six percent of respondents had already heard about family planning, and their main source of information being the health personnel (58.8 %). This finding corroborates study by Ghazal-Aswad, Rizk, Al-Khoori, Shaheen and Thomas (2001), that primary health care physicians were cited as main source of information. Contrary to study by Omo-Aghoja, Omo-Aghoja, Aghoja, Okonofua, Aghedo and Umueri, et al. (2009) whose findings revealed that media are the main sources of information to the respondents.

As regards to women knowledge about family planning (F/P) services, WCA demonstrated very poor knowledge about family planning services, which also reflected on their awareness of the importance and significance of F/P services respectively. Among few WCA who had knowledge about various forms of F/P services, pill and injectable types of contraceptives were the only types of F/P services known to them compared to their knowledge about other methods of FP such as barrier and traditional methods. This finding supported study on knowledge and utilization of family planning by Seifeld in Abdalla (2012) and Nansseu, et.al (2015) which claimed that the large number of women had heard about family planning but only very few of them (4.1 %) knew exactly what it refers to, and 60.3 % had heard about contraception before. This implied that despite health education campaign by health workers WCA knowledge about FP services provided does not improved probably because health workers explanation on various forms of FP to them was centered on the available types of FP services hence, WCA knowledge about F/P services were limited to available types of FP services information provided in the health centers.

Majority of Women did not access F/P services provided, as 46.7 percent of women did not attend F/P clinic at all and equal number (48.3%) of them did not adopt any form of family planning method. This implied that women in Edu LGA, neither attended FP clinics nor access FP services. This finding corroborates the studies by Seifeld in Abdalla (2012) and Nansseu, e tal, (2015) which revealed that despite large number of women who have heard about various methods of FP, only 16.3% used pills, 14.2 used rhythm and only 5.5% used injectable respectively. The demonstration of lukewarm attitude towards F/P services use among women in Edu LGA especially inability of women to response freely to questions asked about FP use was probably due to their religious backgrounds or stigma attached to those who openly express their opinion about various types and their willingness to access FP services. This finding was in agreement with the studies conducted by Goldman, Pebley and Gagnolati, (2002), Seifeld in Abdalla (2012) and Nansseu, et.al (2015) in developing countries, which they associated variety of obstacles including beliefs and economic reasons that impede women from receiving treatment in a timely manner or from seeking appropriate help. The Women poor attitudes towards health practices can only be modified through health education intervention programme, although, it was alleged by Chapman, 2003; Goldman, Pebley and Gagnolati, 2002; Pillai, Williams, Glick, Polsky, Berlin, and Lowe, 2003, that changing human health behaviour is indisputably a difficult task and can be complicated by cultural and logistical barriers. But consistent health education by health workers will improve the women health seeking behavior in these communities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there is no significant difference between the knowledge of Women of Childbearing Age about family planning services and the accessibility of FP services by WCA in Edu LGA of Kwara State. The low level of knowledge about family planning services among women of childbearing age probably hindered the use of FP services in Edu local Government Areas. Until adequate and efficient health education intervention is put in place to improve WCA knowledge about FP and willingness to access FP services, women reproductive health will remain a serious challenge in Edu LGA of Kwara State.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made: -

1. Governments at all levels of health care especially in Edu, Kwara State ministry of health and Non-governmental organizations are to strengthen the knowledge levels of WCA about attendant of family planning clinics for various reproductive services in the primary health care services of the communities.
2. Maternal health services as a matter of policy should be instituted in all health institutions and priority should be given to health education intervention on the improvement of knowledge of WCA about FP services among other primary health care programmes.

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