

64. KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF FAMILY PLANNING AMONG WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE IN OKOLOBIRI, BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

Dr. Oluchi Mkpae¹; Dr. Deborah Oboli¹; Dr. Tonte Nyingifa¹; Dr. Monica Gbuchie²

¹ Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Nigeria

² Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health Research, Act4Her Health Initiative, Yenagoa, Nigeria

BACKGROUND: The term "Family planning" is often used as a synonym for birth control. However, family planning does not only involve contraception but also considers planning a child's birth for specific times (spacing the births a few years apart) and planning for a child when there are challenges in conception. Family planning services have the potential to build the quality of lives of people as it is important in the economic situation of the mother or family due to the financial demands in bringing up children. Family planning includes contraceptives, sexuality education and natural family planning. This study therefore seeks to understand the underlying factors and proffer solutions through the promotion of relevant approach to family planning. **METHODS:** A descriptive cross-

sectional study design was conducted, and data was collected from 224 respondents using self-administered questionnaires and analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 2.2. **RESULTS:** From the study, (87.9%) of respondents were aware of available family planning options, with male condom being the preferred option. Factors such as age, level of education, occupation, religion as well as the sociocultural influence of male partners may account for the significantly low acceptance of family planning options. **CONCLUSION:** The research findings show that in spite of the fact that there is an increment in the awareness of family planning, additional work needs to be done on its usage. From the study, the significance of males in family planning cannot be overstressed, for this reason they need to be involved in pre counselling. Furthermore, the side effect and health concerns of the female preponderance on the various contraceptive options obtainable needs to be addressed by the health officials. Similarly, effort should be made to embark on public enlightenment on the importance of contraceptive use among the target group of this study.

Key Words: Family Planning Services, Female, Condoms, Sex Education, Reproduction.