

1

Myths and misconceptions about reversible female contraceptive methods: an exploratory qualitative study with married youth of Karachi

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Presentation Outline

- Background
- Study rationale
- Study objectives
- Methodology
- Analysis
- Results
- Policy implications
- Conclusion

Background

Pakistan

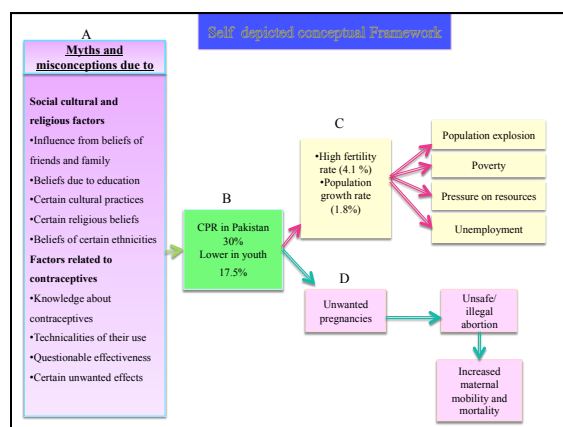
- Current population is 185 million, with population growth rate of 1.8 percent. (PRB, 2010)
- Total fertility rate is 4.1. (PDHS 2006-7)
- One of the largest cohorts of young people with approximately 36 million youth, aged 15-24 years. (UNFPA, 2008)
- Mean Age of marriage is increasing: (Pop Council, Islamabad, 2005), (UNFPA, 2008)
 - in males from 19.1 to 26.5 years.
 - in females from 17.9 to 21.7 years.

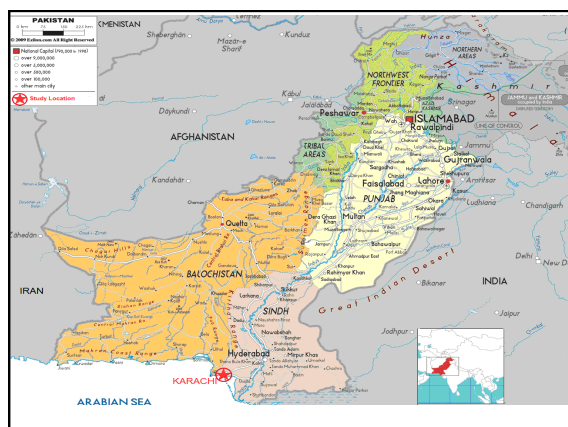
Study Rationale

- Contraceptive prevalence rate among married female youth is 17.4% against national CPR of 30%. (UNFPA, 2006/2007)
- Reasons for not using contraceptives, amongst youth (PDHS, 2007)
 - Access related
 - Unmet needs of contraceptives
 - Supply related
- One of the reasons could be myths and misconceptions. (IPPF, 2007)
 - IPPF study in countries around world has found myths as a reason for non use but Pakistan is not included in it.
 - New myths circulate constantly & methods that become more widely available & used, lead to new misperceptions. (IPPF, 2007)

Study Objectives

- To explore the perceptions regarding myths & misconceptions about reversible female contraceptive methods amongst currently married youth aged 18-24 years.





Methodology Cont...

8

Inclusion criteria

- Currently married male and female youths aged 18-24 years resident of study areas and having at least one live child and consenting to participate in FGDs.

Exclusion criteria

- Participants not giving consent
- Youth not having a live child

Study population

Youth male & female, 18 to 24 years having at least one child

Methodology Cont...

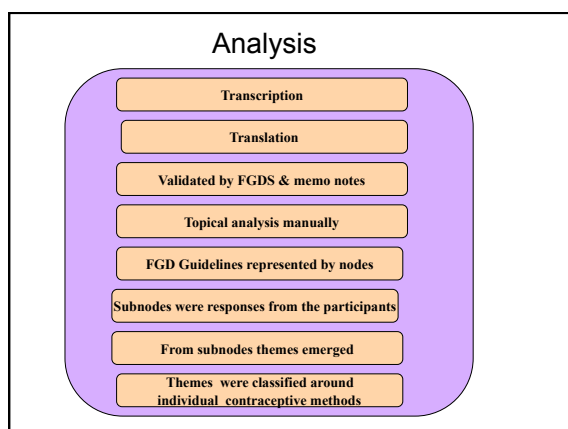
Methods	Sampling technique	Sample size
Focus Group Discussion (6-8) participants in each FGDs guidelines	<u>Sampling of sectors:</u>	8 FGDs till point of saturation
	Out of 9 UCs, UC 2 & 3 were selected.	UC 2 UC 3
	<u>Selection of youth:</u>	2 Males FGDs 2 Males FGDs
	Purposive sampling.	2 Females FGDs 2 Females FGDs

Study duration: July to September, 2010

Ethical approval & considerations

11

- Approval for conducting study**
 - Ethical Review Committee of Aga Khan University, Karachi.
 - Regional Coordinator of National Programme for FP & PHC, Korangi
- Privacy & confidentiality**
 - Conducted FGDs & interviews at a convenient places for them.
 - Collected data was kept under lock and key.
 - Documentation findings didn't result in identification of any person.
- Voluntary participation & right of refusal & participants encouraged to ask questions**
- Monetary & nonmonetary benefits not offered.**
- No conflict of interest**



Results

12

- Myths & misconceptions regarding contraceptive methods**

Results

13

- Female Family planning methods cause sterility in women.

“After using contraceptive method, ovaries of females will become dry & then they will not be able to have children”(FGD 4)

Myths & misconceptions regarding contraceptive methods cont...

14

- **Oral contraceptive pills:**

FGDs:

- *M/F:* Diabetes, hypertension, cardiac problems & excessive weight gain
- *M:* Swelling of body in females
- *F:* causes nervousness & uncomfortable feelings in women

“A female physician recommend me to take pills, but I stopped it after few days, because they made me nervous & uncomfortable” (24 years, higher secondary education, mother of 3)

• OCPs cause swelling in females & do not use it because of fear of excessive bleeding, diabetes & hypertension

Myths & misconceptions regarding contraceptive methods ...

15

- **Injections**

M/F: Swelling of body, sterility, increased blood pressure & diabetes

“Injections cause sterility in females & because of its use, milk secretion also become low in women” (24 years mother of 4)

- *F:* Heart problems & cancer of uterus.
- *M:* Loss of physical and sexual powers in females

“Injections will get mixed in the mother’s milk and if baby is girl, she cannot become pregnant when she grows up.”(23 years father of 2)

Myths & misconceptions regarding contraceptive methods ...

16

Intra Uterine Contraceptive Device

FGDs

M/F: Injury to uterus, Infections, putrefaction, moves up to heart

- *F:* excessive bleeding & it moves to brain
- *M:* Ulceration of both male & female genitals

“It is dangerous and if there is rusting of IUCD, this is injurious for both males & females” (24 years father of 3)

• youth sense that IUCD causes infections in uterus and ulceration in both males & females & it moves up in the heart.

Other factors influencing family planning practices cont...

17

- **Socio-Cultural misperceptions**

- FP methods to be practiced by females only
- Son preference

“I know some families, who keep on trying, for a male child even if 11 daughters are born” (22 years, education till secondary, father of one child)

- Husbands & mothers in law role
- Bengali & Sindhi prefer large families & associate it with respect

Other factors influencing family planning practices

18

- **Religious misperceptions**

Youth do not use contraceptives due to the

- their understanding that children are given by God and cannot be stopped by contraceptive
- their belief that prayers are not accepted if Family planning methods are used
- Burial time prayers of a female is not accepted if she uses contraceptive methods

Strengths & Limitations of the study

19

Strengths

- All of the researchers were competent in the local language and the cultural meaning of the content
- Study addresses the reproductive health issues of youth in a community setting.
- Focus group discussions were conducted at Health houses.

Limitations

- There was difficulty in arranging FGDs because of security situation in the city during study period.
- Unmarried youth not included in study, because of cultural constrains.
- Study findings could not be generalized.

Conclusion

20

The study demonstrated that:

- Contraceptives use amongst youth is low.
- In addition lack of appropriate knowledge about contraceptives contributes for low CPR among the youth
- Myths & misconceptions about different contraceptive methods were potential factors contributing to low use of contraceptives.
- Major factors underlying these myths & misconception could be :
 - Apprehensions about side effects of FP methods.
 - Different cultural & religious misperceptions.

Policy Implications

21

- Need to disseminate correct information on contraceptive methods with a view to remove related myths and misconceptions through easy to understand booklets
- Use participatory approaches and open discussions with friends, families, mothers in law and other groups opposing to FP methods use
- Social marketing through peers, mass media, IEC & youth community centers
- There is a need for long term planning for educating the women and men

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