

Awareness of Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health

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ABSTRACT

The level of men's awareness on Maternal and Child Health (MCH) is largely not researched in Afghanistan. The interventions to extend men knowledge and awareness on maternal and youngsters health haven't systematically been studied.

Keywords: Maternal; Child

INTRODUCTION

This is a cross sectional study which compares men and women's awareness on maternal and youngsters health dimensions in an urban setting in Afghanistan. Care International's health program has implemented community based women and child health project in 2nd district of Kabul city. The project's interventions included: 1) Undertaking community based surveillance of mothers of reproductive age. 2) Organizing health education sessions on safe motherhood, child care, and birth planning for mothers enrolled in surveillance through house to house visits. 3) Establishing community support groups to facilitate peer to peer education on pregnancy danger signs, pregnancy complications, and accessing quality care 4. Establishing Community Health Centers (CHC), where community midwives receive basic uncomplicated cases. The project is getting to involve men to support women's health care seeking behavior. The respondents covered 119 men and 341 women living in the same district. The data collection team utilized random sample selection approach to interview the respondents.

Overall men's awareness on MCH except on the age of mother initially birth was negligible. Men preferred a better age for a lady to offer birth to their first baby comparing to women themselves. Men also rated highly whether underage marriage poses risks to women and their children. Women and men both awareness on future birth spacing methods, was minimal or non-existent. They also confirmed that husbands are the prime decision makers to select the location for the delivery. Women Men didn't respect women's birth spacing choices and that they didn't have sufficient knowledge about pregnancy complications.

Women weighed higher the importance of completing Ante Nata 1 Care (ANC) than men.

This study aimed to match the extent of men and women's awareness of MNCH issues in study area. We found that men's awareness except on the age of mother initially birth was negligible.

Mothers mean age for delivering first baby in Afghanistan is 20.1 years. Men on the average preferred women to possess their first baby by age of 20.40 years, women themselves favoured conception at 17.85 years. Pregnancy under 18 years is a crucial public ill health with a high rate of marriages at a young age, alongside poor prenatal and postnatal care.

Though it's realized that the target group in birth control are the females and particularly, women of childbearing age, it's averred that the male is a crucial partner for reaching positive or negative implications for the practice. In this context, the decision to have or not to have children is the male's and invariably his decision. Their decisions are invariably in favor of having children, as more children further enhance his status as a man in society. A significantly lower percentage of men 56.67% desired their wives to delay pregnancy or space births as compared to women themselves 74.11%.

ANC is an important prerequisite of safe delivery. It is a proxy pointer regarding monitoring of maternal mortality reduction. Women awareness on importance of ANC is significantly above men. 42% of men indicated ANC as not important. Considering the influential role of men in family decisions, it is necessary to work with them regarding ANC essence.

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Received date: July 09, 2020; Accepted date: July 21, 2020; Published date: July 28, 2020

Citation: Nikitha N (2020) Awareness of Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health. Health Care: Current Reviews 8:254. doi: 10.35248/2375-4273.20.8.254.

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The awareness of danger signs in pregnancy can be regarded as one of the ways to eliminate the first level of delay. This delay is a critical factor influencing maternal mortality. The role of men as decision makers can't be overlooked during this regard. The

awareness level on pregnancy complications among both men and ladies show a mixed picture but highlight the requirements for improvement for further improvement.