

## Factors associated with poor utilisation of modern family planning methods

Sandra Kabwe<sup>1</sup>, Pheby Kasimba<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Public Health, University of Lusaka, Lusaka, Zambia

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Pre-Medical Sciences, Lusaka Apex Medical University, Lusaka, Zambia

### Abstract

**Objective:** The study focused on determining the factors associated with poor utilization of modern family planning services among sexually active women.

**Materials and Methods:** The Cross-sectional survey design was used to carry out a study at Mporokoso district hospital in Northern Province. A sample size of 229 women aged between 15-49 was purposively sampled. Data was collected using a questionnaire and descriptive statistics was used to report various factors that discouraged respondents not to go for family planning services. The association between utilisation of family planning services with independent categorical variables were investigated using chi-squared test.

**Results:** The majority (45%) of the women didn't want to use modern family planning services for fear of causing side effects, 14.85% gave a reason of causing cancer, 12.23% said they cause infertility and 5.68% said it was against their religious beliefs. Long distance to the healthy facility and lack of spouse support also contributed to poor utilisation of family planning services at 7.42% and 14.8% respectively.

**Conclusion:** The findings showed a high awareness of modern Family Planning methods among women of childbearing age in Mporokoso district but the use rate was low. Therefore, it is imperative for reproductive health programs to intensify efforts in improving women's knowledge of modern family planning methods in order to raise contraceptive prevalence rate. Further studies are necessary to identify other potential factors affecting the use of modern Family Planning methods among rural women.

**Keywords:** family planning, utilisation, misconception, knowledge

### 1. Introduction

In developing countries, it is estimated that some 214 million women of reproductive age who do not wish to become pregnant are not using a modern contraceptive method despite their publicized benefits <sup>[1]</sup>. Contraception, also known as family panning carries advantages which include reducing the risk of unintended pregnancies and reducing the need for abortion, especially unsafe abortion. Further, family planning methods such as condoms help prevent the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Although maternal mortality dropped by 44% between 1990 and 2015" <sup>[2]</sup>, it is estimated that 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth and that 99% of all maternal deaths occur in poor countries <sup>[1]</sup>. Globally, the proportion of women currently using a modern contraceptive method among all women who have a need for family planning is 78%. However, this proportion is lowest in Africa at 56% and lower than any other region in the world <sup>[3]</sup>.

In Zambia, the government in collaboration with other stakeholders involved in the provision of family planning services have put in place various strategies and policies to increase uptake of family planning services. Despite the various strategies and policies, total fertility rate still remains high. The national contraceptive use of any method of family planning stands at 49% but use of modern method of contraception is 45% according to the 2013-14 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) report [4]. At district level, Mporokoso like any rural district in Zambia has low contraceptive usage. It has consistently recorded

low contraceptive rates of about 20% among 2, 685 women of child bearing age <sup>[5]</sup>. Therefore, there is need to determine the factors that are associated with the utilisation of contraception in Zambia beginning from districts. Knowing such factors would provide vital information for problem specific targeted interventions.

The purpose of the study was to complement the current knowledge of family planning utilization in Zambia generated by the Demographic and Health Survey. The study also narrowed the investigation to district level and perhaps set a tone for future research on whether contraceptive usage varies from one district to another or one region to another depending on socio-economic, cultural or religious Factors.

### 2. Research Methodology

This study used a Cross-sectional survey design. The study was carried out at Mporokoso district hospital, of Zambia in Northern Province. A sample size of 229 women was purposively sampled on the basis of availability on the days they visited the hospital. Data was collected using a questionnaire and entered into SPSS for analysis. The P-Value of 0.05 was taken for statistical significance. Descriptive statistics was used to report proportions and frequencies of demographic characteristics, factors associated with utilisation of family planning services and knowledge and utilisation of family planning services. The association between utilisation of family planning service with demographic characteristics were investigated using chi-squared test.

**2.1 Ethical consideration**

Research ethics were considered before carrying out the study. Written consent letters were obtained from Mporokoso District Hospital and the Research Ethics Committee of University of Lusaka to carry out the study. Consent was also obtained from participants by having them sign the consent forms.

**3. Results**

The results on this chapter were obtained by looking at factors associated with poor utilisation of modern family planning methods.

**3.1 Socio-Demographics**

The majority of the participants were between the age of 21-26 years old table 1.

**Table 1:** Socio-Demographics (n=229)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	15-20	33	14
	21-26	74	32.3
	27-32	48	21
	33-38	48	21
	39-49	26	11.4
	Total	229	100
Marital status	Single	96	41.9
	Married	133	58.1
	Total	229	100
Education level	No education	58	25.8
	Primary	86	37.6
	Secondary	45	19.7
	Tertiary	39	17.0
	Total	229	100
Religion	Muslim	1	8.3
	Christian	207	90.4
	Traditional	3	1.3
	Total	229	100
	Employment status	Employed	104
Unemployed		125	54.6
Total		229	100

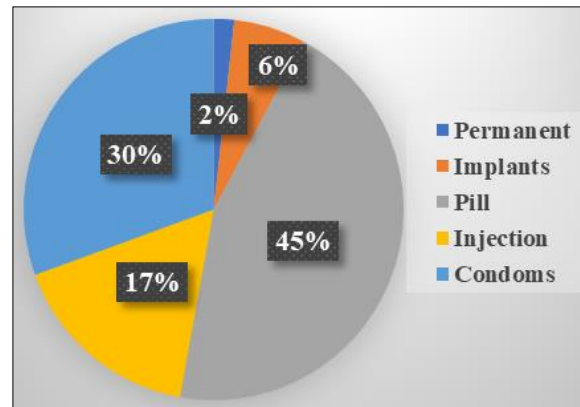
**3.2 Knowledge and utilization of family planning**

The common modern family planning method which was most known amongst the participants was pills table 2.

**Table 2:** Knowledge and utilisation of family planning among women of Mporokoso District (n=229)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Use of contraceptives	Yes	83	36.2
	No	146	63.2
Modern Family Planning services participant know	Permanent	4	1.7
	Implants	14	6.1
	Pill	103	45.0
	Injection	38	36.6
	Condoms	70	30.6
	Total	229	100
	Traditional Family Planning participant know	LAM	31
Withdrawal		185	37.1
Calendar		13	5.7
Total		229	100
Sources of information participant know	Media	13	5.7
	Health facility	99	43.2
	Community	117	51.1
Types of preferred Family Planning	Traditional	152	66.4
	Modern	77	33.6

participant know	Total	229	100
Sources of	Health facility	73	31.1
Contraceptives	Shop	156	68.9
participant know	Total	229	100



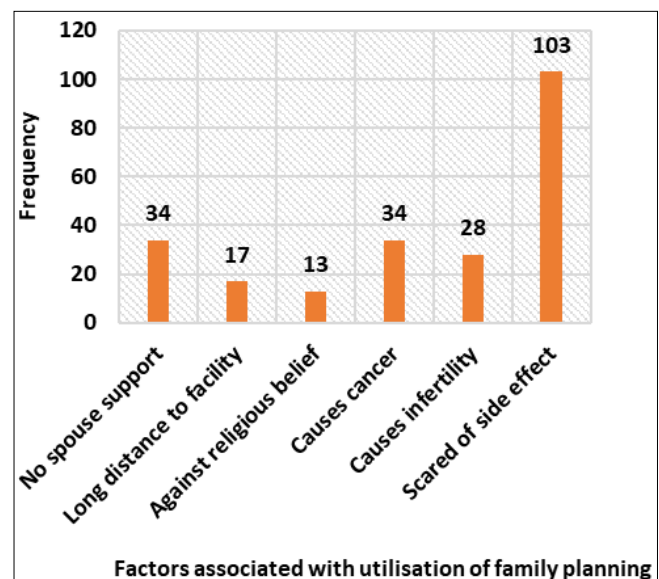
**Fig 1:** Modern Family Planning services participant know.

**3.3 Factors associated with the utilisation of family planning**

The majority (103) of the women didn't want to use modern family planning services for fear of causing side effects table 3.

**Table 3:** Factors associated with the utilisation of family planning among women

Factors	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of access to Family Planning	No spouse supports	34	14.8
	Long distance to facility	17	7.4
	Total	51	22
Misconceptions on the use of Family Planning	Against religious belief	13	5.8
	Causes cancer	34	14.8
	Causes infertility	28	12.2
	Scared of side effects	103	45.0
	Total	178	78



**Fig 2:** Factors associated with the utilisation of family planning among women.

**3.4 Association between demographic characteristics and utilisation of family planning**

All the independent categorical variables were statistically significant table 4.

**Table 4:** Association between utilization of family planning and demographic variables (n=229)

Variable	Category	Yes	No	P-value
Age group	15-20	15	18	0.002*
	21-26	21	53	
	27-32	24	24	
	33-38	10	38	
	39-49	13	13	
Marital status	Single	42	54	0.002*
	Married	41	92	
Education level	No education	19	40	0.019*
	Primary	32	54	
	Secondary	22	23	
	Tertiary	10	29	
Religion	Muslim	5	14	0.032*
	Christian	77	130	
	Tradition	1	2	
Employment status	Employed	48	58	0.001*
	Unemployed	37	88	

\*Statistically significant

**Table 5:** Determining whether Misconceptions has an influence on FP utilisation

Variable	Category	Yes	No	P-value
Misconception	Against religious beliefs	2	13	
	Causes cancer	19	15	
	Causes infertility	0	28	
	Scared of side effects	10	93	0.000*

\*Statistically significant

### 3.5 Determining whether Misconceptions has an influence on Family Planning utilisation

Misconceptions were all statistically significant table 5.

### 4. Discussions

The purpose of the study was to determine the factors associated with poor utilization of modern family planning services among sexually active women of Mporokoso district. It was aimed at determining whether the level of education, religious beliefs and misconceptions influence the utilization of modern family planning services in Mporokoso district. Use of modern FP methods was highest (32.3%) among women in the age group of 21-26 years. This could be attributed to the fact that the younger ones, knowing how highly sexually active they are, desire not to bear children and therefore, decide to use contraceptives. The association between age of respondents and use of the modern FP methods in this survey was statistically significant (p=.002). These findings therefore imply that the age of the woman alone can predict the trend of use of modern FP methods among particular age groups. Findings revealed that majority of women of reproductive age in Mporokoso district were aware of at least one method of modern FP and that the most widely known methods were the pill (45.0%) followed by the condoms (30.6%). These findings are consistent with observations in the recent nationwide survey [4] which showed that almost all respondents surveyed knew of at least one method of contraception, with eight out of every ten women having heard about the pill and the injectable.

The level of education plays an important role in the use of modern FP methods. The current study shows that the respondents who were never been to school were 25.8%, primary 37.6%, secondary 19.7% and tertiary level 17.0%. Indicating that most of the participants' level of education was primary level with the highest percentage and with

lowest being tertiary level. These findings were in line with published data on education attainment by the ZDHS [4] a national survey which revealed that 31% of women of childbearing age attained primary education. It also indicated that “modern contraceptive use increases with education; one-third of married women with no education use modern methods compared to 58% of women with more than secondary education”. This agrees with another study also that revealed that women with higher education tends to be better informed about family planning services and are more likely to use the service than their peers with lower education [6]. This could be one of the reasons why there is poor utilization of family planning because education has an influence on FP utilization (P =.019).

The findings on religion reviewed that out of 229 respondents, 90.4% were Christians, 8.3% were Muslim while the other 1.3% were traditional. The Roman Catholic Church for example, who are Christians in the current study advocates abstinence or use of natural methods for FP, as the use of modern methods is against the religious beliefs. There was a strong statistical association between use of the modern FP methods and the religion of the respondents (p = .032). These findings are similar to the study done by [7] which indicated that most of the research participants felt that using contraceptives for family planning was not acceptable owing to the ethos and values of their faith and religion. It has been documented, however, the role of religion in FP varies even among followers of the same religion in different settings.

The study revealed that misconception was one of the factors that contributed to poor utilisation of FP methods. The majority (45%) of the women didn't want to use modern FP services for fear of causing side effects, 14.85% gave a reason of causing cancer, 12.23% said they cause infertility and 5.68% said it was against their religious beliefs. This is in agreement with the study done by [7] which revealed that research participants pointed out excessive menstrual bleeding, fear of cancer and having a disabled child as further inhibiting factors in the utilisation of family planning contraception services. There was an association between misconception and utilisation of family planning contraception services (P= .000).

Long distance to the healthy facility and lack of spouse support were also identified as factors that contributed to poor utilisation of family planning services at 7.42% and 14.8% respectively. According to [8], participants narrated that long distances were demotivating to women who wanted to consistently use FP services, and were a major contributor to discontinuation and intermittent use. The other study indicated that, couples counselling services help to educate and encourage male partners to support their spouses in using family planning services [9].

### 5. Conclusions

Findings showed a high awareness of modern FP methods among women of childbearing age in Mporokoso district although the levels of knowledge of the methods and the use rate were low. The most important determinants of using the methods were observed to be level of education, religious beliefs and misconceptions of FP utilization. It is therefore imperative for reproductive health programs to intensify efforts in improving women's knowledge of modern FP methods and encourage partner communication in order to raise contraceptive prevalence rate. Further studies are

necessary to identify other potential factors facilitating use of modern FP methods among rural women.

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