

Impact of Mhealth Tools on Psycho-Social Predictors of Behaviour Regarding Contraceptive Use

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Abstract : Family planning plays a role in saving lives across the globe by preventing unwanted pregnancies. The purpose of this multidisciplinary research was to determine the impact of mHealth tools have on psychosocial determinants of behaviour for family planning. The present study examines a topic that is very relevant in times where human-technology interaction is at its peak. It is probably one of the first studies that have investigated the impact of mobile phone technology on the underlying mechanisms of behaviour change for family planning using primary data. To examine the association between exposure to mHealth tools and predictors of behaviour, data was collected from mHealth intervention areas in India. A post-intervention quasi-experimental study with a 2x2 factorial design was conducted among 831 men and women from the state of Bihar. The quantitative data analysis evaluated the extent of influence that predictors of behaviour (beliefs, social norms, perceived behaviour control, and outcome behaviour) have on a woman's decisions about family planning. The results indicated an association between exposure to mHealth tools and improved communication about family planning among various family members after receiving health information from a health worker (H1). A relationship between exposure to mHealth tools and increased support women received from their husbands and extended family (mothers-in-law specifically) and peers (H2) was also found. A further result showed that knowledge about family planning was greater among users of family planning (H4). mHealth tools empower women to communicate with family members. This has important implications for developing mobile phone-based tools, as they can be used as a crucial communication channel that can be an effective method of increasing communication among family members about contraceptives. Thus, it can be implied that where women feel nervous talking about contraception, the successful application of mHealth tools can strengthen the interactivity of the health communication and could increase the likelihood of using contraception. However, while it may improve health communication that can inform health decisions, it may be insufficient on its own to cause behaviour change.

Keywords : contraceptive, e-health, psycho-social, women

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