

Contraception in Guatemala, Panajachel and the Surrounding Areas: Barriers Affecting Women's Contraceptive Usage

Authors : Natasha Bhate

Abstract : Contraception is important in helping to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates by allowing women to control the number and spacing in-between their children. It also reduces the need for unsafe abortions. Women worldwide use contraception; however, the contraceptive prevalence rate is still relatively low in Central American countries like Guatemala. There is also an unmet need for contraception in Guatemala, which is more significant in rural, indigenous women due to barriers preventing contraceptive use. The study objective was to investigate and analyse the current barriers women face, in Guatemala, Panajachel and the surrounding areas, in using contraception, with a view of identifying ways to overcome these barriers. This included exploring the contraceptive barriers women believe exist and the influence of males in contraceptive decision making. The study took place at a charity in Panajachel, Guatemala, and had a cross-sectional, qualitative design to allow an in-depth understanding of information gathered. This particular study design was also chosen to help inform the charity with qualitative research analysis, in view of their intent to create a local reproductive health programme. A semi-structured interview design, including photo facilitation to improve cross-cultural communication, with interpreter assistance, was utilized. A pilot interview was initially conducted with small improvements required. Participants were recruited through purposive and convenience sampling. The study host at the charity acted as a gatekeeper; participants were identified through attendance of the charity's women's-initiative programme workshops. 20 participants were selected and agreed to study participation with two not attending; a total of 18 participants were interviewed in June 2017. Interviews were audio-recorded and data were stored on encrypted memory sticks. Framework analysis was used to analyse the data using NVivo11 software. The University of Leeds granted ethical approval for the research. Religion, language, the community, and fear of sickness were examples of existing contraceptive barrier themes recognized by many participants. The influence of men was also an important barrier identified, with themes of machismo and abuse preventing contraceptive use in some women. Women from more rural areas were believed to still face barriers which some participants did not encounter anymore, such as distance and affordability of contraceptives. Participants believed that informative workshops in various settings were an ideal method of overcoming existing contraceptive barriers and allowing women to be more empowered. The involvement of men in such workshops was also deemed important by participants to help reduce their negative influence in contraceptive usage. Overall, four recommendations following this study were made, including contraceptive educational courses, a gender equality campaign, couple-focused contraceptive workshops, and further qualitative research to gain a better insight into men's opinions regarding women using contraception.

Keywords : barrier, contraception, machismo, religion

Conference Title : ICRHFP 2021 : International Conference on Reproductive Health and Family Planning

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : March 15-16, 2021