

The Effect of Gender Inequality on Reproductive Health in Africa: The Case of Cultural Ghana

Authors : Edna Roseline Dede Tetteh

Abstract : Reproductive health research and discussions have, over the years, placed a special focus on Africa. This is partly due to the significant relationship between African cultures and reproductive health. Several studies have also acknowledged the economic impact of reproductive health in Africa, because of which reproductive health, particularly family planning, has featured prominently in many economic discussions about Africa. Gender, which is a major element of most African cultures, inspired this study. Given that gender has a significant cultural influence in Africa, the study examined the effect of gender inequality on reproductive health in Africa, with a special focus on Ghana. Specifically, the study examined whether there exists any relationship between gender inequality and reproductive health and, if there is, what the nature and the effect of the relationship are. The study's findings were based on data gathered from 2304 respondents, randomly selected from Ghana's different tribes and ethnic groups. Given that the study was focused on the influence of gender in sexual relationships, the study's population was people 16 years and above since 16 is the legal age of sexual consent in Ghana. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. It was found that the beliefs and practices of the traditional Ghanaian society, like most African societies, have direct and significant impacts on reproductive health. Males in these cultures have more control over reproductive health decisions and choices than females. The study found that it was culturally condemnable for a wife to refuse her husband's request for sex, even when she is not in the mood for sex, or she is unwell. It was further found that, when it comes to the decision of birth control, males have more power. Consequently, females with reproductive health conditions have no control over choices that support their reproductive health conditions; they must always satisfy their husbands' sexual needs. Most of the female respondents indicated they had less or no control over protecting themselves from reproductive health risks unless they had the understanding and support of their sexual partners.

Keywords : culture, gender, Ghana, inequality, reproductive health

Conference Title : ICWPH 2024 : International Conference on Women and Pregnancy Health

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : December 09-10, 2024