

FACTORS AFFECTING THE UPTAKE OF FAMILY PLANNING CONTRACEPTIVES AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Authors; P. Kenneth, T. Mwasiya, Steven Balakasi, Catherine Mwakikunga

Introduction and objective

The government of Malawi joined other countries in intensifying the provision of contraception in an effort to control the population boom, neonatal deaths, teen and unintended early pregnancies amongst the people of various sectors, including those with disabilities. This was also to empower the adolescents on accessing the sexual reproductive health services as their rights.

This study was undertaken to explore the factors affecting the uptake of family planning contraceptives amongst the adolescents with disabilities.

Methods

This was a cross sectional study that used quantitative and qualitative methods. A questionnaire was administered to 137 adolescents students aged 15-19 randomly selected from three secondary schools. Two focus group discussions comprising of adolescents students were conducted at two secondary schools.

Results

80% of youth get information from their peers. 45%% of adolescents know about family contraceptives; however, there were variations in the level of knowledge. It was also noted that 81.4% would advise a friend to use the contraceptives i.e. female condoms (FC) and 66.4% accepted that they can use contraceptives. It was also found that while 63.8% of adolescents reported to ever had sex, only 40.9% reported to have ever used contraception and only 5.9% reported using contraception. Several reasons contributed to adolescents' uptake of contraception. Among others, 74.2% of adolescents reported of poor interaction with providers when they go to get the contraception. Further, while none was advised about contraception, moreover, high knowledge and positive attitude of adolescents did not translate into contraceptives use, shyness and difficult to use were also cited as other reasons adolescents could not use contraceptives.

Conclusion

Generally, there is low uptake of contraception among adolescents with disabilities due to lack of knowledge on contraceptives, poor staff attitudes towards adolescents use of SRH services and inappropriate approach to motivate adolescents to use contraception. Therefore, intensifying contraception messages is crucial for a such as initiation ceremonies and promoting positive behaviors towards adolescents SRH service use among health providers could be critical to promoting contraceptives use among the adolescents living with disabilities.