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Spousal Support and Prevalence of Family Planning among Women of Reproductive Age in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
Family planning is a panacea to the prevailing food insecurity and economic situation due to COVID 19 pandemic in the world more especially in Rivers State. This study examined spousal support and family planning prevalence among women of reproductive age in Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study included all women of reproductive age in the three senatorial districts in the state. Sample for the study was selected using multi-stage sampling procedures. The instrument for data collection was a validated structured questionnaire titled spousal support and prevalence of family planning index. Data collected was analyzed using percentages and chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study showed that spousal support of family planning was 59.1%, family planning prevalence was 70.2%. The findings of the study established a significant association between spousal support and prevalence of family planning ($p<0.05$). It was concluded that family planning prevalence and spousal support were moderate among women of reproductive age in Rivers State. Health educators in collaboration with film writers and producer should write on scripts and act on the family planning highlighting on spousal support for family planning
Keywords: spousal support, family planning, Rivers State, women

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is the populous nation in sub-Saharan Africa with a population of over 140 million (National Population Commission, 2009) and an estimated population of over 200 million with a growth rate of 2.68% (NPC, 2019).This population is likely going to double itself in the next 26years. This is a cause for concern and could imply that if nothing is done, the nation could face tremendous challenges due to the present economic situation. Reduction of population doubling could be achieved through adoption of family planning. Family planning enables couples to plan when to have children in such a way that couples could either space in- between pregnancies or limit the number of children, i.e. stop childbearing. This is achievable through the use of contraceptives which invariably help reduce the incidence of unplanned/unwanted pregnancies (Amosu, Moronkola, & Ojediran 2006). In Nigeria the family planning prevalence rate is low. The 2018 Demographic and Health Survey report indicated that the prevalence of family planning was 17% for all methods and 11% for modern contraceptives (National Population Commission, 2019).

In 2010, the Federal Government of Nigeria made family planning commodities free which was replicated by the Rivers State Government, yet family planning practice still remained low. Several factors such as age, cost of commodities, attitude of service providers and spousal support had in some quarters more especially in Africa implicated for the low family planning practice. Spousal support or approval influenced good family planning practices among women within the age of fertility. Husbands or spouses are fully expected to support their wives either by involving in decision making, or approve the use of family planning method, and or aid their finances which will go a long way to improve their well-being. Studies of Ferguson et al (2013) revealed spouses or husbands who disapproves or do not support

contraceptive use are 3.05 times less chances to contraceptive use as compared with women with husband support or approval.

In the same vein, women who never deliberated family planning practice are 3.98 times less chance to use family planning methods as compared with those who had discussion with their husbands. Studies of Gobhainn, Vignes, Ross, Boyce and Todd (2018) reported that husband's agreement (84.4%) boost the use of contraceptive with variation in their educational level. There should be a joint positive decision making between both couples regarding the use of contraceptive because of its huge benefit on family's economic growth. Evidence shown by Renjhan, Da-Gupth, Barua, Jaju and Khati (2010) shows that the use of contraceptive that was recommended by their husbands or spouse, Husband's approval of contraceptive use improves the prevalence rate of contraceptive. Studies illustrated by Guttmacher, Kagashe and Honest (20l3) showed that there is a rapid increase in contraceptive use (43%) among women whose spouse had approved of family planning and it is directly related with a joint discussion with the partner. There is increased use of contraceptive among those who had their husband support more than others who do not seek spousal support. Therefore, spousal support may likely predict the use of modern contraceptive among women. The study of Gupta and Mahy (2016) revealed that women whose spouses are involved in family planning practices are 26 times more chances or likely to utilize family planning services. Although their non-usage of family planning maybe due to spousal non approvals or fear. It is believed that spousal agreement will promote family planning practices.

In Rivers State most females are dependent on their male partners on major decisions as males are heads of family. Males as heads of family are also the breadwinners of the family, thus most woman depend on the economic support of the male for optimal family functioning. This study investigated spousal support and family planning practices in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study;

1. What is the prevalence of family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State?
2. To what extent is spousal support to family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State?
3. To what extent is spousal support and Prevalence of family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis guided the work and was tested at 0.5 level of significance.

1. There is no significant association between spousal support and family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State?

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for the study was descriptive research design that explored family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State. According to Ogunleye (2011), descriptive research allows the researcher gather information about a characteristic without manipulation. This design is useful as it allowed the researcher to gather information about a subject at the same time. This research design had been successfully utilized by Chaudhary, Dandol, Rai and Rai (2016) on predictors of use of contraception among married women of reproductive age in a rural area of Nepal. Thus it is considered appropriate for the present study.

The population of the study consisted of all women of reproductive age 15-49years in Rivers State with a population of 1,681,343 (National Population Commission, 2006). The sample size for the study consisted of 1,250 women of reproductive age 15years to 49years. The sample size was determined using EPI Info 7 Statistical package using the single proportion for descriptive surveys. Epi info is a statistical software for sample size determination among others developed by Center for Disease Control (CDC) for descriptive cross sectional studies. The software has the following parameters for calculating sample size, 1) Population, 2) expected frequency of the behavior based on previous studies, Confidence Interval and

design effect. The researcher inputted into the software to determine the minimum sample size: population size = 1,681,343; 52.6% for family planning practice based on previous study (Mohammed, Woldeyohannes, Fedeke & Megabiaw, 2014), 95% Confidence Interval, and design effect of 2, and arrived at the sample size used for the study. Sample size for the study was selected using multi-stage sampling procedure comprising of stratified sampling technique with non proportionate allocation of sample size, systematic random sampling and simple random sampling techniques.

A structured and validated questionnaire referred to as family planning practices Questionnaire (FPPQ) was used to elicit data from the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of three sections (A-C).Section A, elicited information on demographic data of the respondents. Section B elicited information on prevalence of family planning practice and methods of family planning adopted with reliability co-efficient of 0.73 on prevalence of family planning practices. Section C asked questions on spousal support with a reliability coefficient of 0.74. The Pallant (2011) criterion for interpretation of coefficient was used where reliability value of 0.70 and above was said to be reliable. Thus the instrument was reliable and was used for data collection.

A letter was submitted to the Rivers State Primary Health Care Management Board for their permission to use the primary health care facilities at the various local government areas (LGA). Permission was also sorted for at the LGA headquarters of identified health centres to be used through their supervisory counselor for health. In each of the health centres two staff were recruited to administer the questionnaire. Questionnaire distribution and collection lasted for two weeks and the researcher was able to retrieve 1,122 questionnaires out of the 1,250 questionnaires distributed, yielding 89.9% return rate.

The completed copies of the questionnaire were collated, coded and analyzed using the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 23. The results obtained were presented using Descriptive statistics of percentages and frequency distribution to answer research questions and Chi-square analysis to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Research questions 1-3 was analysed using Percentages. The United Nation Population Department (UNDP) (2018) criterion for contraceptive use satisfaction, was used, where a score of 75% and above are considered high, less than or equals to 50% as low while 51% to74% as moderate prevalence. This was used to interpret results on prevalence of family planning practices. All the stated hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using chi-square test analysis. Decisions were based on the stated level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What is the prevalence of family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Percentage on Prevalence of family planning

Prevalence	Frequency	Percentage	Decision
Currently using contraceptives			
Yes	788	70.2	**Moderate**
No	334	29.8	**Low**

Table1 shows the prevalence of family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State. The result of the study showed that out of the 1,122 respondents 70.2% indicated currently practicing family planning while 29.8% were not currently practicing family planning. Hence, the prevalence of family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers Sate was moderate.

Research Question 2: *What is the extent of spousal support to family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Percentage on spousal support on family planning practices

Spousal Support*	Frequency	Percentage	Decision
My spouse is in support of my using family planning by reminding me of my next appointment	847	75.5	**High**
My spouse encourages me to continue the use of family planning despites some side effects	607	54.1	**Moderate**
My spouse approves of my using family planning method	708	63.1	**Moderate**
My spouse accompanies me to visit the family planning clinic whenever he is around	575 583	51.2	**Moderate**
My spouse bears the cost of using family planning		52.0	**Moderate**
Average		**59.1**	**Moderate**

- Multiple response

Table 2 shows the percentage distribution on spousal support in family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State. The results of the study showed that three quarter (75.5%) of the respondents indicated that their spouse are in support of their family planning practices by reminding them of the next appointment, 63.1% showed that their spouse approved of their family planning practice, 54.1% of the respondents spouses encouraged them to continue with the use of family planning despite some side effects. Overall, the findings of the study showed that spousal support was 59.1%. Thus, spousal support on family planning practice was moderate.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant association between spousal support and prevalence of family planning practices among women of reproductive age in Rivers State.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis on prevalence of family planning based on spousal support

Spousal support	Prevalence of family planning practice		Total	χ^2	Df	p-value	Decision
	No	Yes					
Low	172 (55.8%)	136(44.2%)	308(100.0%)	138.07	1	0.00	**Rejected**
High	162(19.9%)	652(80.1%)	814(100.0%)				

P<0.05

Table 3 displays chi-square analysis result on prevalence of family planning based on spousal support. The result demonstrated a significant (χ^2= 138, df=1, p<0.05) association on prevalence of family planning practices based on spousal support. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant association between spousal support and the prevalence of family planning practices was thus rejected.

DISCUSSION

Table 1 showed that Prevalence of family planning practice was 70.2% among women of reproductive age which is moderate. This is very surprising comparing to the national prevalence of family planning use which is low. The plausible reason for this moderate prevalence rate may be associated with the free distribution of family planning commodities at the government owned family planning clinics and primary health care centres in Rivers State and the increased sensitization of the need for family planning in the State. The findings of the study are comparable to the findings of Nansseu, Nchinda, Katte,

Nchagnouot and Nguetsa (2015) in Mbouda health district Cameroon where 65.3% prevalence was recorded. Also the finding of the study is lower than the findings of Tekelab, Melka and Wirtu (2015) in western Ethiopia which recorded prevalence of 71.9%.

However, the finding of the study differed from the finding of Bifato (2016) in Southern Ethiopia and Alemayehu, Fekadu, Yitaya, Kebede, Abebe, Ayele, Gizaw, Wubeshet, Muchie, Gelagay, Azmeraw, Birku, Alemu, Tariku, Derso, Tesfahun, Tebeje, Tigabu, Gebeyehu, Debakie and Biks (2018) in northwest Ethiopia where prevalence rates where less than 50%. The difference in the result could be attributed to the time of study. For instance in the COVID 19 and Post COVID 19 era and with lockdown and its attendant economic hardship many families are more likely to go for prevention of pregnancy than getting pregnant which in turn could tell on the welfare of the family. The findings of the study are commendable but then, health workers and Health educators should not relent but intensify action in making the prevalence optimal.

The findings of the study in Table 2 showed that Spousal support on family planning was 59.1%. This is discouraging despite current economic situation in the country. The rate of spousal support in the study area could depict that attitude of male towards the acceptance of family planning is still negative. Also it showed that IEC materials and media are distributed only to females thus males are engendered. Twenty-six years after the International Conference on Population and Development males are still excluded in family planning programmes and programming. Therefore, there is need for evaluation of the IECs and other behavior change communication materials and processes for better support and optimal use of family planning commodities. The finding of the study is in keeping with the findings of Ogunjuyigbe, Ojofeitimi and Liasu (2009) among the Yoruba communities.

However, the finding of the study differs from the findings of Kana, Tagurum, Hassan, Afolanranmi, Ogbeyi, Difa, Amede and Chirdan (2016) in Northern Nigeria. The difference in the result should be attributed to the fact that females in Northern Nigeria are more dependent on their husbands and significant others in the family before ever they could do anything. Also the difference in the study could be as a result of the population of the study as the previous study included husbands of the women and may not be the true representation of the fact.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was shown that family planning practice among women of reproductive age in Rivers State was moderate. Spousal support in family planning was moderate. There was a significant association between family planning practices and spousal support. Conclusively, there is need for continuous sensitization of communities and training of service providers that would help utilization optimal which in turn could help bring about a sustainable nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were postulated.

1. Health educators in collaboration with film writers and producer should write on scripts and act on the family planning highlighting on spousal support for family planning
2. Development partners and funders should continuously fund family planning in other to improve on current prevalence rate
3. Health workers/Professionals, family planning providers with other services should be rendered in the health facilities across the nation.
4. Communication specialist should re-design and evaluate existing IEC material for behaviour change communication by targeting males as wells as women as partners in development.

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