

Title: Impact of outreach services on family planning among young married women in a slum community in India

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Background:

In 2015, a study in the slums of Pune city indicated that 75% of women aged 20-24 years got married before reaching 18 years of age. Despite such high prevalence of child marriage the utilisation of contraceptives to delay age at marriage and spacing was only 11% (IHMP 2015).

Methods:

Starting in 2015, community health workers (CHWs) assessed demand and utilisation, provided need specific information and counselling regarding family planning following which they distributed contraceptives during monthly household visits.

A systematic random sample of 200 women was taken from the list of young married women \leq 24 years following a census. Sample size was calculated to detect a 10 percent difference in use of contraceptives by assuming an alpha of 0.05 and using a two-sided test to achieve 80 percent power. (Fleiss et al, 2003). A similar sample was taken from 12 control slums.

Results:

Respondents from the intervention and control sites were similar for most key socio economic, health utilisation and health status indicators.

In 2017, 18 months after implementing the intervention knowledge regarding contraceptives increased significantly at the study sites at end line as compared to baseline OR 5.92 95%CI (3.98-8.81)

Utilization of current use of contraceptives was significantly higher at intervention sites as compared to control OR 2.49 CI (1.56-3.98). The other key predictors of use of contraceptives were age of the women, education of the young married women, and knowledge of temporary family planning methods.

Intervention demonstrated a significant increase in proportion of sustained users of temporary family planning methods at end line as compared to baseline (11.1% Vs 2.75%, $p=0.000$). At the end line, among users, 67% reportedly using condom and 28.6% used oral pills as a method to delay spacing between two children.

Difference in differences between the study and control sites was equally significant 17.4% ($p=0.000$).

Discussion:

Monthly assessment of needs followed by need specific counselling by CHWs at the household level can lead to a rapid and significant increase in contraceptive use. With one million CHWs trained in India contraceptive use for spacing can be easily scaled up.