

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

Family planning Focus

Malawi's population of nearly 16 million is expected to increase by more than three times to 50 million people by 2050.

The population growth is driven by a high fertility rate – that is, women are having between five and six children, each.

Even though such is the case, the use of modern contraceptive methods among married women of reproductive age increased from 28% in 2004 to 42% in 2010, according to the Malawi 2010 Demographic and Health Survey.

It is also important to note that out of the 42 percent of married women using modern contraception, less than two percent use a long-acting method.

Using family planning to have smaller families helps preserve health and improve the overall quality of our lives.

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To encourage listeners to seek more information about the long acting contraceptives.
- To dispel myths and misconceptions about implants.
- To learn about the benefits of using implants from other women who are using it

The Problem: Low use of long-acting contraceptives

The 2010 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey shows that implants are one of the least used modern family planning methods in the country.

Implants are small plastic rods which are put under the skin of a woman's arm. Implants last between three to five years.

There are two types of implants available in Malawi – and both work up to five years.

Jadelle contains two plastic rods and Implanon contains only one rod. Another one, Synoplant – this will be in Malawi shortly).

The implant releases hormones that keep ovaries from releasing eggs and thicken the cervical mucus, which helps to block sperm from getting to the egg.

Health professionals with specific training perform a minor surgical procedure to insert the implants.

Implants can be used by any woman, and may be inserted at any time in the menstrual cycle as long as the woman is not pregnant.

It is important to remember that implants do not protect a woman from sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS.

Activities for Journalists

Use your radio station to help your community understand how long-term family planning methods work.

Explain to your listeners what an implant is how it works and also mention the types of implants: Jadelle and Implanon. As well as Synoplant – this will be available in Malawi soon.

Let your listeners know that women who stop using implants can become pregnant as quickly as women who stop non-hormonal methods. Implants do not delay the return of a woman's fertility after they are removed.

The bleeding pattern a woman had before she used implants generally returns after they are removed. Some women may have to wait a few months before their usual bleeding pattern returns.

Also help the listeners understand that a few women using the implants may experience the absence of their periods for some time, but this is normal.

Almost every woman can use an implant whatever her age. It is suitable for women who may forget to take their birth control pills, forget injection appointments or who

may have a medical reason that stops them from using other birth control methods.

Some of the advantages of the implants are:

Easy to use – there is nothing to remember once inserted it will be effective for several years and rapid return of fertility once it is removed.

Interview a woman who uses implants. Ask her about her experiences with this family planning method. (Talk with a family planning service provider to help identify a woman to interview.)

Interview a local nurse about the benefits of using implants. Ask him/her to mention some of the advantages of using implants as compared to using injectables or pills.

Community Engagement

Urge listeners to send SMS, call or stop by the radio station to talk about the benefits of having a small family

Useful Contacts

- PRB- Contact person; Sandra Mapemba: +265 999 219 789
- Ministry of Health-Reproductive Health Unit contact person; Jean Mwalabu: +265 993 210 392
- <http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR247/FR247.pdf>
- <https://www.unfpa.org/pds/trends.htm>



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