

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

Family planning Focus

Family planning reduces the number of unintended and unwanted pregnancies and thereby saving women from high risk pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

There are lots of modern family planning methods available in Malawi and according to the Malawi 2010 Demographic and Health Survey, injectables are the most commonly known method used in the country.

In fact, injectable method is the most widely used modern family planning method among currently married women (61 percent); DHS 2010.

Contraceptive prevalence for injectable use increased from 2 percent in 1992 to 26 percent in 2010. There is still need to promote the use of injectables since there are lots of misconceptions about them and because some men disapprove of the use of family planning methods.

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 injectables.
- To learn about the benefits of using injectables from other women who are using it

The Problem: Low use of long-acting contraceptives

Injection is a long-acting reversible family planning method. There are two types of injectables - Depo-Provera which lasts for three months, and Noristerat which lasts for two months.

In Malawi, Depo-Provera is the one that is most commonly used. A woman takes an injection once every three months to prevent pregnancy.

Depo Provera is a contraceptive injection containing progestogen. This hormone is similar to one of the hormones produced naturally by a woman's ovaries.

Women should be aware that natural fertility can take some time to return to normal. (on average six months, but it can take up

to one year).

It is convenient, compared to other methods such as pills – which need to be taken on a daily basis.

Injectables prevent pregnancy primarily by preventing ovulation. Injectables also thicken the cervical mucus which inhibits sperm penetration. These changes make fertilization unlikely to occur.

Injectables do not protect a woman from sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS.

The injectable is 99% effective, which means that only one woman out of 100 will get pregnant each year. (fpnsw)

Activities for Journalists

Use your radio station to help your community understand how injectables (Depo-Provera and Noristerat) work.

You should also address the issue of side effects associated with injectables by helping the listeners understand that not all the side effects that people associate with injectables are related to it. You will, however, need an expert to clearly talk about this.

Make the following points:

There can be some side effects when a woman is using the injectables. These are not risky to the woman's health. Some women experience changes in vaginal bleeding such as spotting, light bleeding, between periods, or no bleeding.

Injectables are effective only if a woman has the injection on time (every 3 months).

When a woman wants to get pregnant again, she stops having the injections. In a few months, she will be able to get pregnant again.

Benefits include; Injectables help prevent uterine fibroids, ectopic pregnancies, ovarian cancer, and may help to prevent iron deficiency anemia. Women do not have to remember to take it each day, and it is very private.

Interview a woman who uses injectables. Ask her about her experiences with this family planning method. (A family planning service provider should be able to help you find someone to speak with who uses injectables)

Also ask her about the support she gets from her husband in using the injectables.

Interview a local nurse about the benefits of injectables. Ask him/herto mention some of the advantages of using injectables and the nurse should also address the misconceptions associated with injectables.

Community Engagement

Urge listeners to send SMS, call or stop by the radio station to talk about the benefits of using modern family planning methods.

Useful Contacts

- PRB - Contact person: Sandra Mapemba: +265 999219789
- Ministry of Health-Reproductive Health Unit - contact person: Jean Mwalabu: +265 993 210 392
- Respond Project - contact person: Sitingawawo Kachingwe; +265 1 755 /722/723
- www.familyplanning.org/pdf/Facts_About_Injectable_Contraception.pdf
- <http://www.ifpa.ie/media-info/contraception-factsheets/injectable-contraceptive>
- www.fpnsw.org.au/426088



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