

# **Nigerian men and modern Contraceptives: Who are the non-users and what are their perceptions about family planning?**

Akinyemi JO<sup>\*+</sup> Alabi OO<sup>\*\*</sup>, Adebowale AS<sup>\*</sup>

*\* Department of Epidemiology and Medical Statistics, Faculty of Public Health, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria*

*+ Demography and Population Studies Programme, Schools of Public Health and Social Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa*

*\*\* Department of Demography and Social Statistics, Federal University, Birni-Kebbi, Nigeria*

*\* Correspondence: odunjoshua@gmail.com*

## **ABSTRACT**

Some previous studies in Nigeria have shown that certain belief among men is associated with poor contraceptive uptake. In this paper, we explored the regional patterns of a few of these perceptions and their predisposing characteristics. Using data from the 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, we derived a variable for modern contraceptive use categorised as non-users (1) and users (0). Perception about contraception was captured using two statements: (1) “contraception is woman’s business and a man should not have to worry about it”; (2) “women who use contraception may become promiscuous”. Out of 12226 Nigerian men, 71.0% do not use any modern method of contraceptive; 19.9% believed that contraception is woman’s business while 38.1% believed that women who used contraceptive may become promiscuous. This varied across geo-political regions. Factors independently associated with non-use of contraceptive and perceptions about family planning were identified via multiple logit model.

## **BACKGROUND**

Contraceptive use has positive impacts on maternal and child health as well as the development of a country. For instance, it reduces maternal morbidity and mortality (1). Contraception also plays critical roles in birth spacing, thereby preventing short birth interval which is a risk factor for childhood mortality(2). It is well known that contraceptive prevalence rate in Nigeria is one of the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa (3). Many of the factors associated with contraceptive use among women have been documented in the literature. Some of these include lack of formal education, poverty, low empowerment status, poor awareness about family planning(4). Furthermore, there are evidence about effectiveness of intervention programmes aimed at promotion the uptake of contraception (5). Involvement of male partners is another critical factor that have received both research and programmatic attention. These past studies often focus on women contraceptive users by describing their characteristics while some looked at men. Amidst scarcity of resources, it is necessary to identify the population sub-group that need to be targeted so that interventions can be more efficient and effective. This is even more critical among men who often are the decision-makers on reproductive health matters in many households.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

While a few previous studies in Nigeria have shown that certain beliefs among men is associated with contraceptive uptake (4), the beliefs/perceptions themselves are rarely explored to understand the regional patterns and their predisposing characteristics. To fill this gap, in this paper, we addressed the following questions: (1) who are the contraceptive non-users among Nigerian men and what are their perceptions about contraception? (2) What are the factors associated with these perceptions? (3) Do socio-economic and other background characteristics explain the influence of these perceptions on non-use of modern contraceptives?

## METHOD

This study is a retrospective analysis of nationally representative cross-sectional men's data from the 2013 round of Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). During the survey, households were selected using a stratified two-stage cluster sampling technique. Men aged 15-49 years are interviewed in every second household selected. The total number of men interviewed was 17, 359.

In this study, we excluded men who did not know any method of family planning (n=986) and those who never had sex (n=4147). Therefore, the analytical sample was 12,226.

We derived a dichotomous variable for modern contraceptive use categorised as non-users (1) and users (0). Data was also extracted for background characteristics and other variables such as number of women fathered with, exposure to family planning messages. Attitude to contraception was captured using two statements: (1) "contraception is woman's business and a man should not have to worry about it"; (2) "women who use contraception may become promiscuous". The responses to these were either: "agree", "disagree" or "don't know".

In the analysis, we fitted a logistic regression model to identify the key characteristics of contraceptive non-users at  $p < 0.05$ . Thereafter, we explored their attitude to contraception according to the identified characteristics.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Out of 12226 Nigerian men, 71.0% do not use any modern method of contraceptive. Of the total sample, 19.9% believed that contraception is woman's business. This perception across geo-political regions was: North-central: 15.5%, North-east: 22.1%, North-west: 29.3%, South-east: 26.0%, South-south: 14.9% and South-west: 14.2%. In addition, 38.1% believed that women who used contraceptive may become promiscuous. This also ranged from 24.0% in the South-south to 45.9% and 54.3% in North-east and North-west respectively. Multivariate analysis showed that the predominant background characteristics of those who believed that contraception is woman's business are: lack of formal education (OR=1.55, CI: 1.26-1.90); sales (OR=1.32, CI: 1.00-1.44)/ agricultural occupation (OR=1.34, CI: 1.10-1.63); being resident in North-east (OR=1.47, CI: 1.21-1.78), North-west (OR=1.96, CI: 1.63-2.37) and South-east (OR=2.19, CI: 1.80-2.67) compared to South-west region. Similarly, the profile of those who opined that contraception encourage promiscuity include: none or primary education, Islamic religion, sales occupation, non-exposure to family planning messages and being resident in North-east, North-west, South-east and South-south compared to South-west region.

In a multivariable logit model, these negative perceptions [ its woman's business (OR=0.87, CI: 0.77-0.99); promiscuity (OR=1.17, CI: 1.06-1.30)] remained significant independent predictors of non-use of modern contraceptives. The other main characteristics of non-users are lack of formal education (OR=2.06, p<0.001); traditional/other religion (OR=3.05, p<0.001); poorest household wealth quintile (OR = 4.04, p<0.001); North-east (OR=3.16, p<0.001) and North-west (OR= 2.27, p<0.001) residence; fathering with one or more women and non-exposure to family planning messages (OR=1.50, p<0.001).

## **KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTION**

Previous studies on contraceptive use in Nigeria have often focused on women. This study provides information on male non-users. Descriptive characteristics of male contraceptive non-users were provided. Besides, we also documented the prevailing negative perceptions about contraceptive use among Nigerian men. Though these perceptions were more common in the North-east and North-west, they cut across all the six geo-political regions. It is likely that there are other wrong misconceptions about family planning. Awareness and advocacy programmes can be designed to address the negative perceptions. Further studies are also necessary to understand other barriers to contraceptive use among men.

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