

The Role of Midwives in the Implementation of Family Planning Programs : Increasing Public Awareness and Engagement in Contraception



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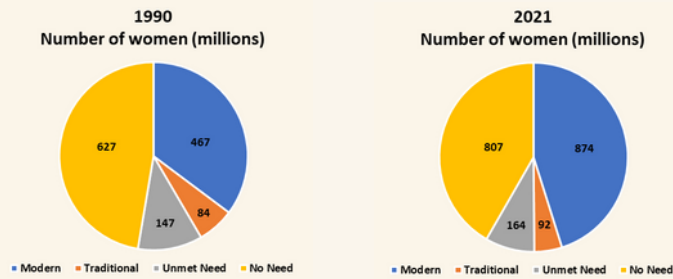
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Introduction

Globally, the number of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) rose from 1.3 billion in 1990 to 1.9 billion in 2021, an increase of 46 % (United Nations, 2022).



Source: United Nations, 2022.

Midwives play a vital role in delivering family planning services and counseling, especially during prenatal and postnatal care, which improves contraceptive uptake and adherence (WHO, 2019; Liberty et al., 2020; Lori et al., 2018; Zivich et al., 2019).

Materials and Methods

Study Design

This study utilized a literature review methodology concentrating on articles from 2019 to 2024, examining the role of midwives in family planning programs across Jordan, Australia, the UK, Sweden, and Indonesia.

Search Strategy

Data were sourced from PubMed, Science Direct, and BMC using keywords like "role of midwives," "family planning," and "contraception." Boolean operators and the PICO framework ensured relevance.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Included studies were full-text articles in English from 2019–2024. Non-English or inaccessible articles were excluded.

Study Selection

Of the 5,245 initial records, 572 remained after duplicates were removed. Screening reduced these to 139 articles, with five meeting the final criteria.

Quality Assessment

Each selected article was evaluated for methodological rigor, sample size, research question relevance, and findings' validity. Only high-quality studies were included to ensure robust conclusions.

Data Synthesis and Analysis

Data from the selected studies were synthesized narratively. Key themes identified included the roles of midwives in family planning, challenges in service delivery, and the influence of training and resources on their effectiveness.

Result

Five studies were included, highlighting the roles of midwives in family planning programs across various contexts:

1. Jordan

Recognized obstacles in decision-making regarding family planning influenced by gender roles and societal influences; highlighted the importance of involving men in counseling to promote collaborative decision-making and enhance services (Al-Sheyab et al., 2021).

2. Australia

Many midwives consider contraception counseling essential but require specialized training to deliver it properly, which may aid in decreasing unplanned postpartum pregnancies (Botfield et al., 2021).

3. The United Kingdom

Both midwives and women endorsed midwifery-led contraceptive care for its ease and trustworthiness; however, training and institutional support are essential for midwives to administer methods such as implants and IUDs efficiently. Structural impediments such as time constraints and financial challenges were identified (Walker et al., 2021).

4. Sweden

Trust is crucial in midwife-led contraceptive counseling, highlighting the need to surmount cultural boundaries and deliver continuous care to enhance service accessibility for immigrants (Kolak et al., 2022).

5. Indonesia

Midwives significantly enhance contraceptive utilization by facilitating equitable access, particularly in rural regions, leading to a rise in contraceptive adoption (Lai and Tey, 2022).

Improving Training and Support for Midwives to Enhance Contraceptive Counseling and Access: A significant proportion of midwives (79%) in Australia provide contraceptive advice, but many lack formal training. Integrating contraceptive education and improving postpartum access is essential for effective family planning (Botfield et al., 2021).

Enabling Midwives to Address Deficiencies in Family Planning and Contraceptive Services: Midwives in Indonesia provide over 50% of modern contraceptives, especially in rural areas. Enhancing their training and resources is crucial to improving access for marginalized groups (Lai and Tey, 2022).

Augmenting Postnatal Contraceptive Services with Improved Midwifery Training and Support: Midwives in West England recognize the need for contraceptive guidance but lack adequate training. Most women prefer in-person consultations, emphasizing the importance of integrating high-quality counseling, especially on the progesterone-only pill (POP), into midwifery training (Walker et al., 2021).

Establishing Trust and Cultural Proficiency in Contraceptive Counseling: In Sweden, midwives are vital for building trust in contraceptive counseling for immigrants, who often distrust healthcare providers. Addressing communication barriers and enhancing cultural training are essential for effective counseling and fostering trust (Kolak et al., 2022).

Addressing Gender Dynamics and Enhancing Women's Role in Family Planning Decisions: A study in Jordan indicates that husbands often influence family planning decisions, even though wives initiate the discussions. Women frequently face violence from their partners when using modern family planning methods without consent, and midwives play a crucial role in addressing cultural barriers to open dialogue (Al-Sheyab et al., 2021).

Discussion

The global focus on enhancing reproductive health and attaining sustainable development goals highlights the essential function of midwives in delivering family planning services and addressing disparities in contraception access.

Despite their critical contributions, midwives face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient training, resource shortages, and heavy workloads (Abera et al., 2023; Adatara et al., 2021; Dehingia et al., 2019; Hassan et al., 2024), compounded by cultural and gender-related barriers like male dominance in family planning decisions (Ochako et al., 2015; Al-Sheyab et al., 2021). Addressing these issues requires integrating contraceptive education into midwifery training, fostering trust through culturally sensitive approaches, and improving infrastructure and access to contraceptive options (Morgan et al., 2017; Troutman et al., 2020).



The article highlights that empowering midwives and tackling these structural and cultural barriers are crucial to enhancing maternal health outcomes and achieving sustainable development goals by ensuring equitable access to quality reproductive health services.

Conclusion

Our review highlighted the essential role of midwives in delivering family planning programs, which is vital for promoting reproductive health objectives. Enhancing their training, resources, and cultural competency can improve access to contraception, address gender dynamics, and overcome structural barriers, contributing to better maternal health and progress toward global development goals.

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