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Factors influencing long acting reversible contractive [contraceptive] use in Malawi.

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Abstract

Background: Unintended pregnancy is a major problem among sexually active women and occurs due to a number of reasons, such as inconsistent use of short term contraceptive methods or non-use of modern contraception. Recent scientific findings indicate that long acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) methods, which are cost effective and highly effective in pregnancy prevention, are a possible solution to the problem of unintended pregnancies. Therefore, the aim of the study is to identify the demographic, socio-economic and reproductive health factors associated with the use of long acting reversible contraceptive methods among sexually active women aged 15-49 in Malawi.

Methods: The study used the Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2010 data. The sample comprised of 17 744 sexually active women aged 15-49 years. LARC methods were defined as Norplant, Intra-uterine device (IUD) and Depo-Provera. Descriptive analysis was done to describe the study sample, while binomial logistic regression modeling was done to identify demographic, socio-economic and reproductive health factors that influence LARC method use. Data analysis was done using Stata 12.

Results: The results suggest that prevalence of LARC methods is 26%. At multivariate level, the results indicate that younger women (15-24) are more likely to use LARC methods than older women (35+). There is distinct regional variation of LARC use, with women in the Southern region being more likely to use the methods. Additionally, being married, with a secondary education or higher, having been visited by a family planning worker, staying in urban areas and wanting children after 2 years, increased the odds of using the LARC methods among the women.

Conclusion: Increasing the prevalence of LARC methods is very crucial as a solution to the challenge of unintended pregnancy. Measures need to be put in place to ensure that there is no distinct variation in LARC use in women found in the three regions of the country.

Formal education and mobile family planning workers are crucial in increasing LARC methods use.