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Traditional and modern contraceptive use in Malawi: A comparison of their demographic and socio-economic determinants among married female users

BY

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ABSTRACT

Despite Malawi's policy goal of reaching a modern contraceptive prevalence rate of 60% by 2020, use of ineffective traditional methods of contraception still persists. Almost half (42%) of unintended pregnancies among female users in the country have been attributed to traditional method failure. This study seeks to compare the socio-demographic and economic factors associated with use of traditional and modern methods of contraception. Malawi's 2015-16 Demographic and Health Survey data comprising 9,386 married females aged between 15-49, and using any method of contraception were analysed. Descriptive statistics and binary logistic regressions were fit to determine the association. About 2.23% of the sample used traditional contraception out of which 93% did know a source for any method (traditional or modern). Traditional methods were highly prevalent than modern methods among females aged 35-44 years (37.56%), highly educated (8.92%) and Muslims (11.74%). Furthermore, being Muslim increased the odds of using traditional methods by 1.98 (CI:1.044-3.757; α=0.008) times higher than Catholic (reference category), whereas those who lived in the Central and Southern Malawi were 0.30 (CI:0.181-0.495; α=0.000) and 0.34 (CI:0.219-0.539; α=0.000) times less likely to use traditional methods than those in Northern Malawi (reference category). Married females with tertiary education were the most likely (OR:3.53; CI:1.215-10.271; α=0.000) to use traditional contraception. Therefore, there is an association between socio-demographic factors and use of traditional methods of contraception. Government should consider strengthening its engagement with stakeholders in implementing existing strategies to ensure demand creation and service delivery initiatives that reach contraceptive users of various socio-demographic characteristics.