

ABSTRACT

Female sterilization is the world's most widely used family planning method and one of the fastest growing (Cathleen 1990).

In Sri Lanka female sterilization services were made available since late sixties and number of acceptors increased till 1984. In spite of high demand, the acceptance rate decreased substantially mainly due to the lack of service availability throughout the country. In order to address the shortcomings of the programme it is timely and worthy to study some aspects of client's perspective on female sterilization services provided at different settings.

Objective of this study was to compare the client's perspective on selected aspects of the female sterilization procedure. The following aspects of the clients, were studied: background characteristics, the experiences of the surgery and perspective on the services obtained. In addition the comparison will highlight any unique advantages of either technique.

This was a descriptive cross sectional comparative study where two groups of clients who under went laparoscopic procedure and mini laparotomy sterilization were studied. They were enrolled from the family planning clinic of the FHB and sterilization clinics conducted by a non governmental organization (PSL). Study sample comprised of two groups of clients; each consisted of 160 women. Data were collected by the Principal Investigator in both study settings, using an interviewer administered questionnaire, which was pre tested to improve the validity of information. All possible measures were

taken to improve the quality of data. Data analysis was done by using standard statistical packages.

Results of this study revealed that, in Sri Lanka women of various ethnic and religious groups sought sterilization services. Most women underwent surgery when they had 3 children. Use of other contraceptive methods (especially OC pills) in the past was high among the clients. Lack of awareness about vasectomy among the clients was evident and some women were adversely affected by the freedom exercised during decision making. It was also revealed that lack of easily accessible services had made clients inconvenient.

Abdominal pain following surgery was the main side effect experienced by clients in both groups. Severity of pain was more in mini lap group when compared to the laparoscopy group ($X^2 = 15.2$, $p = 0.00$, $df = 1$).

Laparoscopic method has its unique nature of causing relatively lesser pain compared to mini laparotomy method. However, in the latter group, clients felt convenient as the services were provided mostly in mobile setting by reducing their travel time and cost.

This study concludes that women in Sri Lanka are in need of high quality, acceptable and freely accessible female sterilization services. It is recommended that family planning information and counselling should be strengthened at every level. Establishment of a steering committee and regular meetings of all stake holders would be an important strategic step in the future. The issues related to the quality of services in different settings need to be addressed. In this respect conduction of national level training programmes to train medical officer on female sterilization (LRT) techniques is recommended.