

## ABSTRACT

Planning the family is a human right. All individuals have the right to equal access and to choose a scientific process in the selection of family planning method. Family planning methods are broadly categorized into two main groups as modern and traditional methods. In general, the family planning methods which are categorized as traditional have a markedly high failure rate compared to the methods categorized as modern.

Sri Lanka has a well established family planning services which is provided mainly through field level public health service network and are governed centrally by the Family Health Bureau of Ministry of Health. In spite of efforts to promote modern family planning by family planning services, a considerable percentage of Sri Lankans are using traditional family planning methods. This study aimed to assess knowledge, attitude and practices regarding family planning, to describe personal and service related factors associated with contraception among married women 40-49 years of age currently not using family planning methods and reasons for unmet need in this group.

This was a community based descriptive study conducted in Dehiwala MOH area in Colombo district. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the study sample after selecting the sample size by probability proportion to size (PPS) in each clinic area. Pre tested interviewer administered structured questionnaire was used to collect data and statistical analysis was performed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 12.0.

The overall contraceptive prevalence of married women aged 40-49 years was 69.8% (n=282) (95% CI: 65.3-74.3). Among married women aged 40-49 years 73.4% (n=207) were using modern family planning methods while 26.6% (n=75) were traditional method users. Proportion of married women aged 40-49 years currently using a family planning method, who were undergone LRT was 30.4% (n=63) followed by Injectables (21.3%, n=44) and OCP (16.9%, n=35). Nearly 18.8% (n=39) were on IUCD. Among married women aged 40-49 years who were on traditional methods 62.7% (n=47) were using calendar method.

Among married women aged 40-49 years currently not on family planning methods, 10.7% (n=13) believed that they do not need a family planning method as they are reaching menopause and 8.2% (n=10) due to fear of side effects that heard of. Among non users 13.9% (n=17) wanted to have another child.

Among all married women aged 40-49 years, 10.1% (n=41) were belonged to unmet need for family planning. There was a statistically significant association ( $p=0.001$ ) between the status of unmet need and advanced age (46-49 years). Statistically significant associations were not found between unmet need status and educational level ( $p=0.78$ ) as well as average monthly income ( $p=0.47$ ). Among married women aged 40-49 years unmet need for family planning, 23.2% (n=22) were not using a method due to perceived low risk of pregnancy as reaching menopause and 24.4% (n=10) due to fear of side effects that heard of.

This study found that majority of the married women using family planning method because they have already completed their families. Among married women aged 40-49 years currently on family planning methods, 63.5% (n=179) were using with intention of limit births. Accessibility of the family planning clinic centers is satisfactory, Non availability of the IUCD facilities in some clinics is a concern.

Good comprehensive knowledge (65,6%) on modern family planning methods was significantly associated with the choice of modern family planning methods. Comprehensive knowledge on traditional methods was 55.4%.

The study identified a range of personal and service related factors that were associated with unmet need among married women 40-49 years. Reasons for the choice of less effective traditional family planning methods. The women to be targeted in interventions to promote modern family planning methods were highlighted as recommendations. Improvements to family planning filed services were also recommended to promote choice of modern family planning methods.

**Key words:** Family planning methods; Married women; 40-49 years; Unmet need; Sri Lanka