

Abstract

Introduction: Traditionally, the family planning programmes have focused mainly on women ignoring the crucial role played by men in the family's decision-making process. Male involvement in family planning includes; men as clients of contraception, men as partners in decision making, and men in a supportive role with their partners to use contraception.

Objective: The objective of this study was to, describe the knowledge, attitude and practices of contraception among male spouses, to assess their involvement in family planning decision making and its associated factors in the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area Deraniyagala.

Methods: A community based descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted, among the married males, whose female spouses were between 15- 49 years. Multi-stage cluster sampling method was applied to obtain the calculated sample size of 507. There were 16 clusters and from each cluster, the first household was selected using the simple random method. A pre-tested interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data.

Results: Age of the participants ranged from 21 to 52 years with a mean of 32.7 (SD = 6.5) years. Among the 485 males participated, the majority (99.2%, n=476) were aware of family planning, eventhough, a low percentage (15.4%, n=63) were currently practising any contraceptive method. Male condoms was the highest known method (92.4%, n=440), followed by oral contraceptive pills (65.3, n=311) and hormonal implants (32.6%, n=155). Only 33.1% (n=159) of male spouses had a satisfactory knowledge on family planning whereas 56.9% (n=273) of them had a positive attitude towards family planning. Majority (64.7%, n=262), showed a good involvement in decision making related to family planning. Male spouse's residence (OR = 2.3; 95% CI: 1.4 – 3.9; $p = 0.001$), age (OR = 0.5; 95% CI: 0.3 – 0.7; $p = 0.002$), monthly income (OR = 0.6; 95% CI: 0.3 – 0.9; $p = 0.016$), age at marriage (OR = 0.6; 95% CI: 0.2 – 0.8; $p = 0.002$), duration married (R = 0.4; 95% CI = 0.3 – 0.7; $p = 0.001$) and the knowledge on family planning (OR = 2.2; 95% CI = 1.4 – 3.2; $p < 0.001$) showed statistically significant associations with their involvement in family planning decision making.

Conclusions and recommendations: Majority of the males had an unsatisfactory knowledge but a positive attitude towards family planning. A high percentage of male spouses showed good involvement in decision making related to family planning. But the

current practice of contraception by males was poor. Hence, family planning services, information, education and communication need to target men more specifically to increase their knowledge and participation.

Key Words: Family planning, male spouse, decision making