

Babylon University – College Of Medicine
Department of Community Medicine

*Lectures in Community Medicine
For 4th Stage Students
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Lecture 21

Family Planning

Family planning refers to practices that help couples to attain certain objectives:

- To avoid unwanted births
- To bring about wanted births
- To regulate the intervals between pregnancies (spacing)
- To control the time at which birth occurs in relation to the ages of the parents, particularly the mother (timing)
- to determine the number of children in the family (family size)

Spacing:

Of less than two years may lead to the following:

- 1- LBW due to the depletion of maternal nutritional status
- 2- Infant and child death: if all pregnancies are adequately spaced, IMR can be reduced by 10% and child mortality rate (1-4 years) by 16%
- 3- Poor mental development especially in poor families.
- 4- Increased birth defects.
- 5- Increased child malnutrition
- 6- Increased maternal deaths

Timing:

It is specifically means the age of the mother at which pregnancy occurs
The most suitable age for reproduction is between 20 and 35 years, outside these limits risk to the mother and child will increase.

Family size:

Too many births appear to decrease the efficiency of reproduction and lead to maternal depletion, this can be proved by the higher female than male mortality rates between 15-45 of age in poor and under-developed countries.

High parity is associated with pregnancy complications.

Wanting pregnancy:

Sometimes a pregnancy is not wanted for clinical or social reasons, an index for unwanted pregnancy is abortion rate.

Abortion is a negative method of family planning and may endanger the life of the mother

Contraception:

Wide spread public service that enable individuals and couples to limit child bearing.

There are many methods each has its own failure rate, ease of compliance, reversibility, side effects and contraindications.

A. Methods not required medical consultations used by males:

- 1- Coitus interrupts
- 2- Condom

Used by females

- 1- Safe period (rhythm method)
- 2- Vaginal spermicides

B. Methods requiring medical supervision:

- 1- systematic contraceptives:
 - A- oral contraceptives
 - B- injectable steroids
- 2- Intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- 3- Occlusive diaphragm and cups.

C. Permanent sterilizations:

- 1- for females: tubal ligations
- 2- for males: vasectomy

Criteria for Ideal contraceptive methods:

- 1- Safe
- 2- Effective
- 3- Acceptable
- 4- Inexpensive
- 5- Reliable
- 6- Reversible
- 7- Simple
- 8- Long lasting

Female Education

All over the world, a clear correlation exists between **high levels of female literacy and low levels of infant and child mortality**.

It has usually been assumed that female literacy is merely an indicator of general living standards, rather than a factor in itself determining infant and child health.

The more educated the woman, the more likely she is to have an educated husband and a higher income, resulting in a high purchasing power, better housing, sanitation, nutrition and health care.

Recent research suggests that this assumption is not true and that maternal education acts as a powerful independent force in reducing the number of infant and child deaths (infants of mothers who had 10 or more years of education have 1/5th the rate of death of infants of illiterate mothers).

The explanations are:

Schooling enhances women's ability to provide adequate child care because she is less fatalistic, more knowledgeable about health, hygiene and nutrition and better equipped to deal with modern methods of child care.

Education increases the woman's status and power within the family and encourages her to stop such traditional practices related to male domination and preference.

An educated woman can find and use health services and health facilities properly

An important point is that educated women in developing countries tend to abandon breast feeding which can be dangerous to the health and survival of infants and children.

Therefore, those women should be encouraged & persuaded to initiate and continue breast feeding for the first two years of the infant's life.