

Perceived Influence of COVID-19 on Access of Family Planning Services in Nigeria

Authors: Daini BO¹, Okafor E², Oladejo B², Ekele J² and Baruwa S¹

Affiliation (L-R): ¹Population Council, Nigeria ²IntegratE, Society for Family Health

Abstract Category: Impact of COVID-19 on family planning

Background/Objectives: Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has continued to challenge health systems and services around the world. By limiting person-to-person contact, it has been postulated that access to family planning (FP) information and services would be greatly affected. This study thus aimed to assess the perception of women about the impact of COVID-19 on their sexual and reproductive health and access to FP services from Community Pharmacists and Patent and Proprietary Medicine Vendors.

Material/Methods: We used cross-sectional data collected from clients who were interviewed six months after receiving FP services from Community Pharmacists (CPs) and Patent Proprietary Medicine Vendors (PPMVs) trained on the IntegratE project in Lagos and Kaduna States. We adapted the tool used during the first client exit interview to include COVID related questions and perceptions about its impact on continued access/discontinuation of FP services.

Results: A total of 525 women were interviewed after the pandemic had reached Nigeria. The mean age of respondents was 32 years and majority had ≥ 3 children (51%). 83% were still using the FP method received 6months prior, 7% had switched methods and 10% had discontinued using contraceptive. When asked about COVID-19, 70% did not feel at risk of contracting the COVID-19 and about one-third (34%) reported that they would not feel comfortable leaving their house for FP services. Few women (8%) reported that COVID-19 had any influence on their fertility intentions with majority of these (n=44) wanting fewer kids (61%) and wanting the next child later (95%). The most influence on fertility intentions was reported among Kaduna women. Among those currently pregnant (17), 59% reported having no ANC visit despite most reporting no concerns about being pregnant during a pandemic. Coronavirus related concerns accounted for 8% of FP discontinuation (64). Among those still using FP methods (441), COVID was reported by few women to influence delay in accessing services (3%) and getting re-supply of FP commodities (6%).

Conclusion: The Pandemic had very little influence on fertility intention (both for limiting and spacing) among women of reproductive ages. It also showed to slightly influence discontinuation rates and access to services/commodities among women.