

	Business lady	35	26.3
	Employed	20	15.0
	Total	133	100.0
Level of Income	0 Ksh	7	5.3
	<10,000 Ksh	78	58.6
	11,000-20,000 Ksh	30	22.6
	21,000-40,000	8	6.0
	>40,000 Ksh	10	7.5
	Total	133	100.0
	Parity	<2	33
2-5		67	50.4
>5		33	24.8
Total		133	100.0

3.3 The Outcome of the Unmet Need for Family Planning Services

The proportion who were using family planning services during the Covid-19 pandemic stood at 36 per cent (48/133), while the majority of them, 64 per cent (85/133), were not using family planning services since the pandemic began.

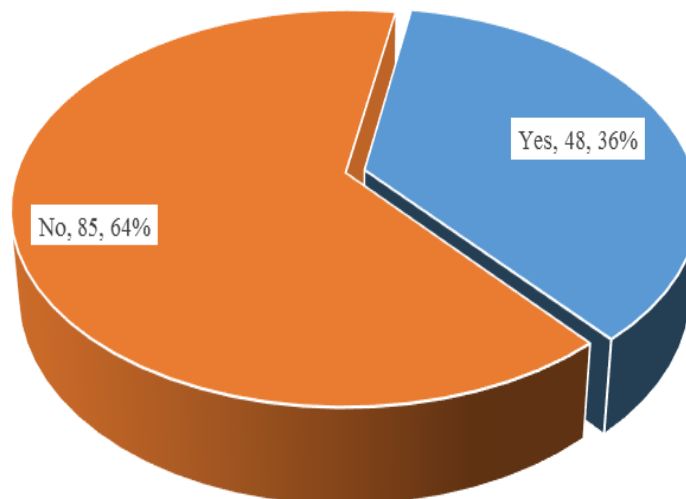


Figure 3. 1: Proportion of Women using Family Planning Services

Further interview with the healthcare providers revealed the theme of low uptake of family planning services. A provider stated that:

“Since the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic, people are so afraid of coming to the hospital for fear of contracting COVID or due to movement restrictions. This has led to low uptake of FP services, as they are considered not very essential services.” (HCP 1)

“The number of unintended pregnancies will increase as the lockdown continues and services disruptions are extended. Strict lockdown measures, disruption of continuity of essential services including family planning services, and limited access to such services.” (HCP 2)

3.4.1 Age of the respondent and outcome of the unmet need for family planning services

Majority of the women aged between 25-34 years, 28% (37/85), did not use family planning services during the COVID 19 pandemic as compared to other age groups. Similarly, the highest users of family planning services had their ages lying between 25-34 years, 14% (19/48). The number of women who did not use family planning services was relatively higher in all age brackets except for the ages between 18-24 years where it was at parity.

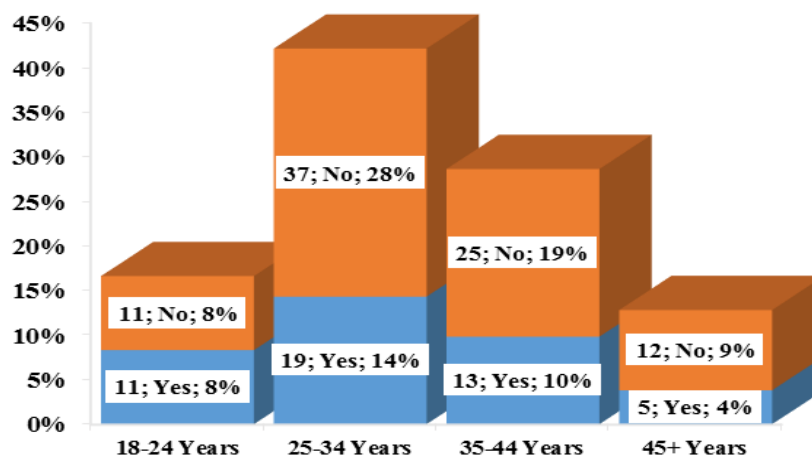


Figure 3. 2: Age of the respondent and outcome of the unmet need for FPs

3.3.2 Occupation of the respondent and outcome of the unmet need for family planning services

A cross-examination between occupation and uptake of family planning services show that the majority of the women who use family planning services, 20 per cent (27/133), were housewives, 9.0 per cent (12/133) were business ladies, while only 2 per cent (3/133) and 5 per cent (6/133) of them were farmers and employed respectively.

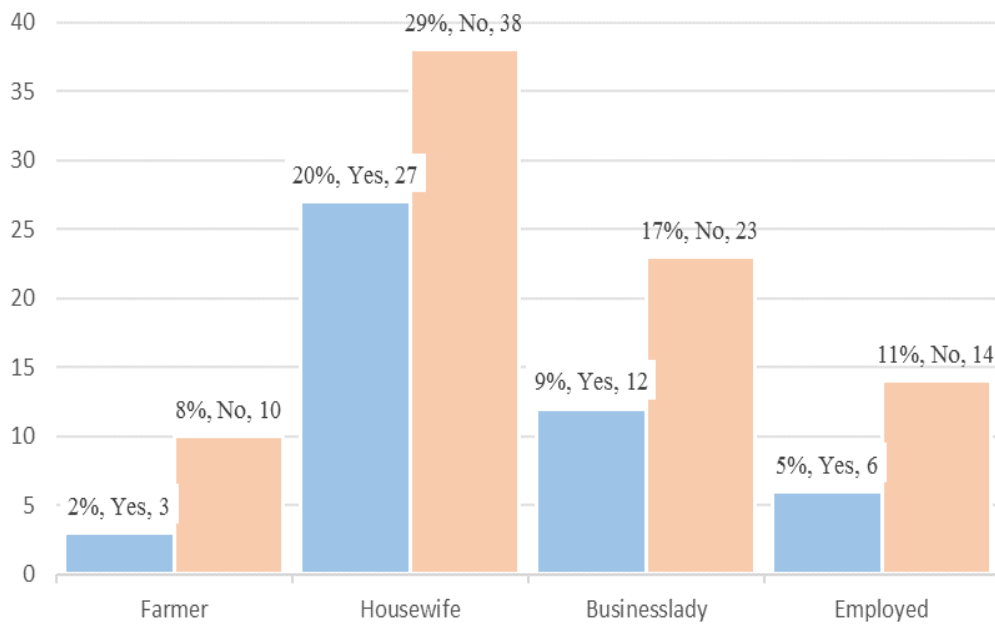


Figure 4. 3: Occupation and Outcome of Unmet Needs for FPs

Discussions

5.1 The Outcome of the Unmet Need for Family Planning Services

Occupation of maternal woman matters when it comes to the uptake of family planning services in Rongo Sub-County. Lack of employment on the side of the women significantly reduce their abilities to utilize family planning services. This study found that women who are unemployed and just playing the part of being housewives are more likely to fail to use family planning services than women who just are farmers. Lack of employment can be occasioned by many factors, including the closure of business activities due to hostile environments impacted by a catastrophe or a pandemic. Russel (2020) agrees with this view by suggesting that the effects of COVID-19 are likely to have a disproportionate and adverse impact on women compared to men since women's employment is concentrated in hospitality, education, and services, which have suffered shut-downs due to COVID-19. Additionally, United Nation (2020b) women show that most women work in the informal sector, especially domestic laborers, which exposes them to severe effects of Covid-19 social restrictions such as a lockdown. Consequently, a series of work lay off lead to many women not receiving their monthly payments, and this is likely to impact women's unmet needs for family planning services because they work more in insecure, lower-paid, and part-time employees when compared to men.

Marriage arrangements influence uptake of family planning services. This study shows that, however insignificant, women who are separated are more likely to avoid using family planning services compared to those in monogamous families. In a similar vein, Bwazi et al., (2014) showed that unmarried women in Malawi were at risk of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies due to fewer FP services. Okech et al., (2011b) also agree with this view and assert that marriage means regular exposure of women to the risk of pregnancy since married women have high incidences of sexual activity. As such, married women use contraceptives more often than their single counterparts.

Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that there is an association between most selected independent study variables and outcome of the unmet needs for family planning services among antenatal and postnatal. Precisely, the age of the respondents, their level of education, marital status, employment status and knowledge of the FP method had a direct impact on unmet needs for FP's. It is also noted that a woman's decision to adopt a family planning method is strongly influenced by how she perceives the quality of health care service provided. Thus, improved access to family planning services, better education, improved standard of living, and higher exposure to mass media, can significantly decrease the unmet need for family planning.

The study concludes that level of education was key consistent use of FP's. It revealed that those with tertiary and secondary education were likely to have knowledge on FP's which translates to use FP's than those with primary level and age when one had her first child also determined consistent use of FP's as those who had their first child from age 24 and below were not likely to plan the families and space the children.

The study showed that a majority of women at the clinic obtained FP services from government hospitals. In this facility, it was established that the quality of care is relatively good. However, the counselling services received by the women who obtained from chemists FP services were inadequate. Furthermore, it was established that some women expressing no desire to have children in the future were on short-term contraceptives. This suggests that there is room for improvement for counselling services, even in government facilities.

The study showed that the demand for FP services among the respondents driven by information disseminated by health workers is not matched by efficient supply, which results in frequent stock-outs due to COVID 19 pandemic lockdown interruptions. The study further reveals that the high cost of contraceptives reduces their use compared to cheap ones. Additionally, long distances also limit contraceptives in Rongo Sub-County due to the associated high cost of transport.

The study concludes that knowledge on FP is high. Antenatal and postnatal women in Rongo-sub county have knowledge on some of the available options of FP. Though knowledge was high not

all FP methods were known to the women, knowledge on how some FP methods works was not known to the women. Knowledge on negative effects of FP like the side effects and medical complications was high among study respondents than knowledge on the benefits that come with use of FP methods and services consistently.

6.2 Recommendations

It was observed that a drop in coverage due to COVID-19 in 2020 alone could be damaging for SRH programmes, particularly for access to family planning services and modern methods of contraception. There is a risk of reversal on the progress made in building functioning health systems and improving women's health through access to SRH services and contraceptive methods of choice. The negative consequences of COVID-19 will last much longer than 2020, and therefore the results of this analysis may be considered a conservative estimate. Therefore, strengthening SRH programmes across the country to ensure improved and accessible SRH services need to be prioritized.

6.3.1 Action

- 1) Through the ministry of health, the Migori county government should prioritise maternal, and reproductive health services as an essential health service and support family planning education at all levels during and post COVID-19. This can be achieved by developing activities and programmes that will assist antenatal and postnatal women with primary level education and below should be identified by the attending MCH nurse when they attend the clinics and allocated more time in discussing FP methods to bridge the information gap. Health care providers should come up with innovative ways of ensuring family planning services are more accommodative to the needs of men to encourage them to accompany their partners or visit the family planning clinics for information and use of family planning.
- 2) The County pharmacist should collaborate with Rongo Sub-County Reproductive Health Nurse to ensure the chemists sell the FP methods that they are allowed to by the guidelines. The County and National government should expand family planning facilities to provide more access and also helps reduce long distances that limit the uptake of contraceptives. Also ensure commodity security for uninterrupted supplies for SRH health services during and post pandemic including lifesaving maternal medication and contraceptives.
- 3) National and County government should maintain or increase resources for continuation of SRH services with a functional referral system, including emergency obstetric and newborn care and linkage with higher-level hospitals. Also roll out family planning services in all

public and private health facility to make easy access for women seeking the service; County Government should allocate funds towards promoting family planning services by listing services of Community Health Workers (CHW's) to visit women at household levels.

- 4) The Ministry of Health should team up sensitization among religious groups on the benefits of contraception.
- 5) The Ministry of Health should improve their advisory services, especially the health provider's attitude on family planning services to the women clientele. Prioritize adequate financing for research, strengthening logistics and data systems to adequately meet the family planning needs.

6.4.2 Future Research

Another study with a more significant sample power should be conducted to determine the unmet need for family planning services among urban and rural residents in Rongo towns. The current study findings will serve as pilot, baseline and springboard for the proposed larger and more advanced research. Hopefully, this proposed research will add to the evidence and justification for implementing the aforementioned recommendations.

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