Family planning through private practitioners: characteristics of Kenyan contraceptive acceptors.

Abstract:

Kenya has one of the highest population growth rates in the world. Innovative programs are therefore called for to help curb the fast population growth rate. The Kenya Medical Association started a new program of involving private physicians in the active provision of family planning services. A preliminary analysis shows that the program serves generally young, better educated women of low parity. Sixty-one percent of the clients are new acceptors and the oral contraceptive pill the most popular method. The level of education of the clients had marked influence on family size. Age, parity and marital status also influenced the pattern of contraceptive use. These preliminary results are discussed against the background of the 1984 Kenya Contraceptive Prevalence Survey findings and possible areas of improvement suggested. PIP: Kenya has one of the highest population growth rates in the world. This article describes an innovative new program by the Kenya Medical Association (KMA) involving private physicians in the active provision of family planning services. By the end of 1987, 216 physicians had been recruited and trained to provide family planning information and services free of charge. Information profiles from these physicians were returned monthly to the KMA and they included client profiles, age, marital/educational status, parity, and contraceptive practice. Information from the first 40 private physicians recruited is reported in this article. The 40 physicians had 1626 clients. These preliminary results of the program show that the program serves generally young, better educated women of low parity. 61% of the clients are new acceptors and oral contraception is the most popular method. The level of education of the clients had a marked influence on family size. Age, parity, and marital status also influenced the pattern of contraception usage. These preliminary results are discussed against the background of the 1984 Kenya Contraceptive Prevalence Survey findings. The potential of this new program is exciting because the 2700 private practice physicians and clinical officers can now be used to expand Kenya's 800 service delivery points for family planning at a cost well below current start up costs.