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| Family planning providers and women agree, spousal communication is key to contraceptive use in Rwanda |
| **Background/Objectives**Family planning (FP) use increased nearly 3x in Rwanda from 2005 to 2010. This increase is unprecedented, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Research has shown that spousal communication about family planning use is one of the strongest predictors of FP use. Thus, this study aims to investigate the role of spousal communication in Rwanda’s FP success.**Methods**This study consisted of 8 focus group discussions with FP providers and 32 in-depth interviews with modern contraceptive users in 2018 in two districts of Rwanda, Musanze and Nyamasheke, the districts having the highest and lowest modern contraceptive prevalence rates in the nation, respectively. Analyses was done with Atlas.ti 8 software. Human subjects review was received at Western Washington University and with the Rwandan Ministry of Education. **Results**The notion of women using FP secretly, without their husband’s knowledge, was noted as a rare and risky endeavour by both providers and users. Most FP users described the process of deciding to use FP as a collective process. “The important thing is if you and your husband agree.” Most husbands supported FP use to manage family size in relation to finances: “My husband received this decision well because he saw how life was hard and we discussed it together saying let’s use family planning so that our children can grow up well.”Women also noted how husband involvement extends beyond the decision to initiate FP use – in terms of reminders about appointments, understanding and empathy about side effects, and accompanying partners to appointments. The issue of marital disagreements, and even divorce, surrounding FP use arose among study participants. Some noted how FP use can lead to divorce, but unexpectedly, most noted how the lack of FP use can lead to divorce: “I use family planning because I don’t want fights in my family.”**Discussion**This study shows that communication between husband and wife is an integral piece of the FP process in Rwanda. Most men do not avoid discussions about FP with their wives – some even extend support beyond discussions. Providers and women agree that male involvement in FP decision making is best and supports couples in their quest to space and limit births. Once FP use became normative, so has spousal communication about FP. Increasing spousal communication about FP use will likely sustain, and even enhance, Rwanda’s FP program into the future.**Keywords**Family planning, Rwanda, spousal communication |