|  |
| --- |
| **Title of Research Presentation:** Male involvement in contraception in the Busoga region of Uganda: A qualitative study  |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title)****Background/Objectives**In Uganda, unmet need for contraception stands at 34.3% among women of reproductive age. The low rates of male involvement in seeking and receiving contraceptive services, and yet their dominant role in decisions around contraception and family size, has shown to have a great impact on their partner’s health-seeking behaviour and reproductive choices. The objective of this study is to understand the factors and barriers that contribute to unmet need for contraception, from the perspective of men in the Busoga region of East Uganda. **Methods**The Busoga region was chosen due to its low contraceptive prevalence of 31.3% and high unmet need of 36.5% among women of reproductive age. Qualitative data was obtained by conducting 9 focus group discussions, stratified by urban/rural location, gender and age, with 4-8 participants in each group. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling at 3 study sites over a six-week period in January and February 2018.**Results**Men’s perceptions of contraceptive use were heavily influenced by concerns about harmful side effects of contraceptives, stemming from misconceptions and their partners’ experiences, as well as the implications for their own sexual pleasure or masculinity. Men described contraception as a ‘woman’s business’; these views were mirrored in the women’s discussions where they described needing to decide about contraception on their own; it wasn’t discussed with their partners because ‘they don’t allow’ them to use a method. Several women also spoke of clandestine contraceptive use due to partner opposition.**Discussion**The findings of this study point to key areas of consideration for family planning initiatives in the region. Male involvement in family planning programs is central to their success and continuation, given the gender norms, decision-making dynamics and patriarchal traditions that exist in the context of Uganda. There still exist many barriers and challenges to incorporating men’s active participation in contraceptive use, particularly norms which dictate that family planning and reproductive health are a woman’s ‘domain’, and thereby exclude men from the process. Health program considerations for couple counselling, spousal communication, and the health and economic benefits of contraception need to continue, with a strong emphasis on male involvement and joint decision-making in reproductive health matters.**Keywords**Women; family planning; male involvement; Uganda.**(2,493 characters with spaces)** |