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Perception of Muslim women of childbearing age from 15 to 49 years on the use of contraceptive methods in the Briqueterie District in Cameroon

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Context: Cameroon faces a high maternal mortality rate, which means that it remains a priority public health problem. This rate is estimated at 406 deaths in 2018 and 438 in 2020 per 100,000 live births (Demographic Health Surveys (DHS), 2020). However, many strategies are being implemented in order to reduce this rate to 70% as targeted in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Family planning is an essential way of prevention of postpartum hemorrhage, which is the main cause of maternal death (measuring maternal mortality in sub-Saharan countries: an example in Cameroon, 2024). Unfortunately, the prevalence of attendance and use of services remains low, estimated at 19% of women aged 15-49, of which 15% use a modern method and 4% a traditional method (DHS 2018). The country still faces many deficiencies in contraception, particularly observed among the Muslim community with the preponderance of ISLAM as in the north part of Cameroon very low estimate 1.4% and 7.1% in Adamaoua region due to cultural and religious considerations (ZRA ISSA, 2008). This study aimed to identify the perception of Muslim women of childbearing age from 15 to 49 years on the use of contraceptive methods in the Briqueterie District in Cameroon.

Methods: A mixed (quantitative and qualitative) descriptive research was conducted among 385 Muslim women of reproductive age aged 15 to 49 years during August 2024. The target women were selected using a household survey approach, notably the random walk technique. A questionnaire has been used for the quantitative part, an interview guide and focus groups for the qualitative part. The outcome (dependent) variables were knowledge, types of contraception used. The protocol was approved by the national ethical committee.

Key findings: A total of 385 women aged 15 to 59 participated in this study with an average age of 29.8 years old. The participants have mostly already heard about the contraceptive method (78.7%), especially those with a higher level (90%). Among traditionally married women (35% of the sample), who represents the largest proportion, only 36.9% use a contraceptive method. Regarding the decision to use a contraceptive method, 35.6% of women explain that the decision is jointly taken in the couple (48.9%), even if they affirm that the decision on the number of children in the couple is up to «ALLAH» 48.9%.

Conclusion: This study focusing on the perception of Muslim women on the use of contraceptive methods in the Briqueterie district of Yaoundé, also highlights an urgent need for an awareness session for couples and community leaders on the issue of birth spacing, the desire for procreation and birth control in order to achieve the desired number of children. It is also possible to propose practical actions on the use of contraceptive methods.

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