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Knowledge and attitudes of multiparous women on contraceptive methods in the communities of Kolofata, Mora and Maroua 1 in Septentrion - Cameroon

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Background : Maternal mortality remains high in Cameroon, with 406 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births according to the DHS 2018. Also, the Far North of Cameroon is a region where access to reproductive health-care remains low, due to a number of factors (cultural, religious, social, geographical, environmental, etc), but also to the context of insecurity due to Boko Haram. Yet family planning is an essential pillar in reducing maternal mortality. We therefore carried out a study to determine the knowledge and attitudes of multiparous women about contraceptive methods in three communities in northern Cameroon.

Methodology : This qualitative/quantitative study took place in Maroua 1, Mora and Kolofata, 3 communities in the Far North of Cameroon. The study lasted 14 months, from March 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025. We had obtained ethical clearance and various administrative authorizations. Participants were women of childbearing age (between 15 and 49 years) in the community who had already given birth at least twice. Data were collected using a pre-established and tested questionnaire. After data collection, they were transcribed, edited and analyzed.

Results : A total of 651 multiparous women were enumerated: 207 (31.8%) in Kolofata, 212 (32.6%) in Maroua and 232 (35.6%) in Mora. Multiparous women ranged in age from 16 to 49, with an average age of 34. 52% of multiparous women had not attended school, 92% were unemployed and 72% were married. Multiparous women had given birth to between 2 and 16 children, with an average of 5. At the time of the study, 31.6% of multiparous women had no knowledge of contraception. Of the 68.4% multiparous women who knew about contraceptive methods, 83.4% cited injections, 66.9% the pill and 61.4% condoms. 66.9% had information on the efficacy and side effects of contraceptive methods. Also, 84.8% of multiparous women did not use any contraceptive method. Injections and the pill were the most commonly used methods, at 43.8% and 25% respectively. Among those using contraceptive methods, 65.2% had no concerns or fears about contraception, and 54% felt that contraception was important for maternal health.

Conclusion : This study revealed a low proportion of contraceptive use among multiparous women in Kolofata, Maroua and Mora. Also, limited knowledge of the different methods. Hence the need for education and awareness-raising, combined with improved access to reproductive health services.

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