

Reproductive health needs of street dwellers and contribution of stakeholders in southern Ethiopia: A Mixed study design

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Abstract

Background: People with adequate sexual and reproductive health have a satisfying and safe sexual life. Street dwellers are economically, socially and nutritionally disadvantaged part of the population with lack of knowledge and access of reproductive health service. Hence, this study intended to assess knowledge, attitude and practice of contraception, maternal health service utilization and contribution of stakeholders among street dwellers in southern Ethiopia.

Methods: A mixed study design was conducted among 845 respondents. A simple random sampling technique was used to select seven cities among fourteen major cities in the region. The sample was allocated proportionally to each selected cities. Snowball sampling technique was used to identify and fill the required sample size. Pre-tested and structured interviewer administered questionnaires were used to collect data. Moreover, a total of twenty one in-depth interviews and ten key informants' interviewees were carried out.

Results: In this study, 334 (58.5%) of street dwellers had sexually intercourse in the last three months of the study period. The median age at sexual debut for street dwellers were 15 years. Among those who had sexually intercourse in the last three months; 100 (11.9%) of them have been using contraception. Most, 690(81.9%) of the respondents were knowledgeable about contraceptive methods. In addition, 756(89.8%) of the respondents had a favourable attitude towards contraceptive methods. About 31(3.7%) of the female respondents were ever had abortions. Moreover, 47(5.6%) of street dwellers had antenatal care for the recent pregnancy they had in the last 2 years of the study period. Among this 9(1.1%) of them were gave birth with the assistance of their friends. Regarding to the postnatal care only 22(2.6%) of the respondents had postnatal care within first 2 days of delivery. Moreover, lack of integration between different sectors is the barrier reported by qualitative finding to address reproductive health needs of street dwellers.

Conclusions: In this study, significant percentages of street dwellers were knowledgeable and had a favorable attitude towards contraception. However, contraception use and maternal health service utilization among street dwellers is found to be low. Inter-sectoral collaboration is remaining critical to address reproductive health needs of street dwellers.

Keywords: Street Dwellers, Southern Ethiopia