ABSTRACT

A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted on factors influencing the practice of family planning among married women in Quetta, Balochistan province, Pakistan with the aim to identify the socio-demographic factors, psycho-social factors, current practice, availability/accessibility and cue to action factors which influence the practice of family planning.

Two hundred and twenty seven married women aged 15-49 were interviewed by using structured questionnaire during March 1998. From the result it was found that the majority of the respondents were between the age of 25-34. Almost 91% of the respondents were married below the age of 25 years, the mean age at marriage was 19.7 years, which showed that a trend of young marriages in this area is very common.

The results of the study reveal that 29.1 percent of the respondents were currently practicing family planning, the most popular methods used were oral pill and injection. There was statistically significant association between practice of family planning and factors such as education of wife and husband, knowledge about family planning, support by husband sex preference, religion, source of service, distance, convenience, cost, source of information and motivation towards family planning provided by neighbors/friends and media, e.g. radio and television.

The major findings of this study show that almost half of the respondents either did not have their husband’s support or they thought family planning is against religion. One of the strategies in dealing with these problems is to give an effective education, information and communication program. In a male dominant social structure there is an urgent need to convince the husband and gain his confidence in order to see any visible impact of family planning. Misinterpretation of the Islamic concept for birth control needs to be dispelled as it has been done in many Muslim countries by promoting contraception for better health of mother and child.