

ABSTRACT

The Government of Kenya, nongovernmental organizations, and donors are dedicated to promoting and improving easily accessible, affordable, acceptable, and effective family planning methods. These efforts have apparently paid off as recent demographic, health, and fertility surveys show that knowledge of contraceptive use is nearly universal, and that over 90% of men and women are aware of at least one family planning method. However, the unmet need for contraception remains at approximately 26% in Kenya, suggesting that the right of Kenyan couples to access sufficient information concerning their preferred birth control method and the actual use of such methods have not been fully realized. This study focused on a cohort of women utilizing health facilities in West Yimbo Division, western Kenya. We concluded that cultural beliefs that equate family planning methods with interference in fecundity and fertility may argue against the use of these methods in the long term. Moreover, the desire to give birth and nurture children, fear of side effects, bride wealth presentations, and disapproval by couples and others may be stumbling blocks to contraceptive use in the study region.