

Menstrual Regulation services in Bangladesh: Experience from REACHOUT Research

Reachout
Linking Communities & Health Systems



Ilias Mahmud, Malabika Sarker, Salauddin Biswas, Mohammad Riaz Hossain, Sabina Faiz Rashid
James P. Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University, Dhaka Bangladesh



- Procedures like Menstrual Regulation (MR) prevent unsafe abortion related death and morbidity
- Factors that influence the MR decision making process:
 - Place of MR
 - Pluralistic health system
 - Confidentiality
 - Social norms
- REACHOUT is an international 5-year consortium project. In Bangladesh we focus on MR services – MR refers to a procedure to safely establish non-pregnancy up to 8-10 weeks after a missed menstrual period

OBJECTIVE:

To understand the dynamics of health seeking behaviour of poor women for MR services

METHOD:

- Study Sites: Three Urban Slums: two in Dhaka and one in Sylhet. One Rural slum (Sylhet)
- Study Design: This is a qualitative study conducted as a part of context analysis. Twelve focus group discussions (average 7-8 participants) with married community members and 24 in-depth interviews with married women who received MR services were conducted. Transcriptions, coding and thematic outputs were generated. Atlas. ti software was used

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

In-depth interview

Study Site	Male	Female (two groups in each site)	
Kallyanpur, Dhaka	6	6	7
Keraniganj, Dhaka	8	8	7
Gashitola, Sylhet	8	7	6
Lakkatura, Sylhet	14	6	8
Total	36	55	

Focus group discussions

Study Site	Female (married woman)
Kallyanpur, Dhaka	6
Keraniganj, Dhaka	6
Gashitola, Sylhet	6
Lakkatura, Sylhet	6
Total	24

RESULTS:

Factors shaping MR decision making processes among poor woman in slums:

- Lack of awareness about menstrual regulation services among men and women
- First points of contact for taking up MR services (Informal: drug sellers, untrained birth attendants and traditional healers. Formal: Government, NGOs and private sector)
- The high cost of MR services in government and private hospitals means clients seek cheaper medicine and unsafe methods from informal close-to-community providers
- There is a social stigma within communities related to MR
- Clients want the services that they access, and their medical records, to be confidential

CONCLUSION:

- Vulnerability, lack of awareness and social stigma effect women's decision about whether to use MR services
- Facilitative referral is needed to reduce stress and anxiety among MR clients
- Dissemination of clear information on health services will ensure safe MR services and women's rights and reduce inequity

Contact: sabina@bracu.ac.bd

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REACHOUT is an international research project to understand and develop the role of close-to-community providers of health care in preventing, diagnosing, and treating major illnesses in Africa and Asia

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