

ABSTRACT

Family planning helps in regulating the number of children and determine healthy spacing and timing of births between pregnancies. The global contraceptive prevalence stands at 49.0%, Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for 29.0 %, Kenya at 56.9% and in Marsabit County stands at 5.6%. Low contraceptive prevalence has also been associated with increased maternal, neonatal, infant and child mortality as well as reduced opportunities for education and employment for women who are unable to delay initiation of childbearing. Male spouse involvement on matters of family planning deserves attention. Male spouses can be involved through providing culturally friendly health education with child spacing messages rather than family planning itself. This study aimed to evaluate the utilization of male targeted short message service in enhancing family planning uptake among their spouses in Marsabit County. This study adopted a pre-test and posttest quasi experimental study design involving randomly selected 220 couples from Laisamis and Moyale subcounties. Intervention of male targeted short message service was offered to male spouses from Moyale sub-county while Laisamis subcounty was used as a control at a ratio of 1:1 for a period of 4 months. The data collection instruments used included a questionnaire and key informant interview guides. Quantitative data analysis was done using SPSS version 22.0 while qualitative were categorized and analyzed thematically. At baseline, descriptive statistics, chi-square and Fischer's exact were used to analyze socio-demographic factors, level of knowledge, nature of attitude and health system factors at a confidence interval of 95% and an error of precision of 0.05. At evaluation, logistic regression analysis and McNemar test were used to measure the effectiveness of SMS intervention. The results were presented in form of tables, pie-charts and graphs. All the required ethical and logistical considerations were adhered to accordingly. The results revealed that at baseline level of uptake was 13.2% and 15.4%, high level of knowledge 14.0% and 12.0% and positive attitude 38.6% and 6.8% for control and intervention arms respectively. Uptake of family planning was increased by 3.6 times though use of short message service (OR 3.6, P