

Social networks and contraceptive method choice among women in rural Uttar Pradesh, India

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CONTEXT: The use of family planning methods in Uttar Pradesh remains very limited among various states of India. Large proportions of women who use some form of family planning method generally opt for sterilization after completing their desired family size. The role of spacing method in the component of method mix is very limited, and constitutes an important reason for higher unwanted fertility in the state.

OBJECTIVE: This paper attempts to understand how does social networks of women are associated with contraceptive methods choice in rural Uttar Pradesh.

DATA & METHODS: The present paper is based on the primary data collected from Jaunpur district, situated in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, as part of the doctoral work. The study employed mixed-method approach for data collection. Semi-structured schedules were canvassed to collect information related to ego-centric social network, reproductive histories and 5 year calendar for capturing the contraceptive behaviour of around 570 currently married women in the age groups of 18-35 years. Bivariate and multivariate techniques were employed for data analysis.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: The results suggest that social networks are significantly associated with any form of contraceptive method use among women in rural Uttar Pradesh after adjusting of socioeconomic and demographic confounding characteristics. The use of contraception was significantly higher among women with large social networks, and proportion of networks members using family planning was positively associated with method use.

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