Abstract for PAA Session 108: Gender and Reproductive Health

Authors:
Geeta Nanda
Sidney Ruth Schuler
Jane Alaii
James Foreit
Elisabeth Rottach

Exploring the Use of Gender Scales in Predicting Contraceptive Use in Tanzania

Short abstract

This paper presents preliminary quantitative findings from an ongoing study in Tanzania that tests the effectiveness of radio programming addressing male gender norms in support of a community based distribution of contraceptives (CBD) program. A baseline household survey was conducted in two regions, Dodoma and Mwanza, with 100 couples per region, in order to explore gender norm attitudes as measured by various gender scales for both members of the couple as well as family planning knowledge and use. Logistic regression analyses were carried out for women and men separately, and focus on exploring the use of gender scales in predicting contraceptive use, including the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale, and three scales from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS): household decision-making, attitudes toward refusal of sex, and attitudes toward wife-beating. Findings will have programmatic implications on approaches to consider with the aim of increasing use of contraception.

Long abstract
Gender norms and power dynamics between men and women are likely to have an influence on contraceptive use. While gender power dynamics have been studied in the HIV context, less research has been done on the role of gender factors in family planning use and with couples. What research has been done has often suffered from weak measurement. Blanc (2001) pointed to two problems in measurement.[1] First, some measures of gender power have been shown to be related to outcomes in some settings, but little is known about their ability to predict outside of that setting. Second, measurement constructs must be multidimensional, implying the use of scales. A recent secondary analysis (Leon and Foreit, 2009) that analyzed the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) gender scales of twelve countries found that women's participation in household decision-making was a strong and consistent predictor of family planning behavior in Sub-Saharan African countries.[2] Conversely, opinions about wife beating and the permissibility of women refusing sex to their husbands were not significant in most of the African countries studied.

---

[1] Ann K. Blanc. September 2001. The Effect of Power in Sexual Relationships on Sexual and Reproductive Health: An Examination of the Evidence, *Studies in Family Planning,* 32: 189-213.

[2] Federico Leon and Foreit, James. 2009. Women's Empowerment and Contraceptive Use: A Study of DHS Data from Twelve Countries, C-Change, AED (unpublished).

In this study, we explore whether different gender scales measuring gender norms and power differentials predict family planning behavior in Tanzania *above and beyond* frequently used predictors such as education, age, and number of children, for example.

This paper addresses the following research objectives:

- To determine which of the gender scales, if any, predict contraceptive use.
- To compare the predictive validity of the gender scales in predicting contraceptive use.
- To compare the predictors of contraceptive use for women and men separately.

Setting
The larger study takes place in two regions in Tanzania: Mwanza region in the northwest, and Dodoma in the slightly central part of the country. Modern method contraceptive use measured by the 2004 DHS was 9% percent in Mwanza and 22% in Dodoma. According to the 2004/5 DHS survey, most unmet need in the regions is for spacing, estimated at 16% in Dodoma, and 18% in Mwanza.

Methods
The findings that will be presented come from a larger project that is focused on testing the effectiveness of radio programming addressing male gender norms in support of a community based distribution of contraceptives (CBD) program. Therefore, the study areas in Mwanza and Dodoma include places where local FM radio stations are available.

Baseline household survey data collection was completed in December 2009. The survey included 100 couples ages 15-44 in each of the two areas. The survey was focused on gender norm attitudes for both members of the couple as well as family planning knowledge and use, and included gender norms scales, including those derived from the DHS gender module, and the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale.

Analysis
Logistic regression analyses was carried out for women and men separately, and focuses on comparing the gender scales as predictors of contraceptive use, including the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale, and three gender scales from the DHS that are related to women's empowerment: women's participation in household decision-making, women's opinions on whether a woman can refuse sex with her husband, and women's attitudes toward wife-beating by husbands. Specifically, for each gender scale, different sets of hierarchical logistic regression models were run separately for men's and women's data which will include the following dependent and independent variables:

- Dependent variable: contraceptive use.

- Independent variables: education, religion, number of living children, age, region, and gender scale score.

Findings

Findings will have programmatic implications on approaches to consider with the aim of increasing the use of contraception, and these will be elaborated upon in the paper. An illustrative finding may be, for example, that using media or other social and behavior change communication (SBCC) interventions to encourage joint decision making and shared responsibility for family planning could be a viable strategy for increasing contraceptive use.