

Evaluating knowledge, attitude and behavior of women on reproductive health subjects in seven central cities of Iran

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Abstract

Introduction: Reproductive health and paying attention to its different dimensions in national and international levels are the essential steps in providing social and family health, with an emphasis on women's health. Regarding the new applications of the term, "Reproductive Health" is dependent upon all aspects of girls' and women's lives and health. The point that women should enjoy their reproductive health, reproductive rights are considered as parts of human rights and also considering Islam's support for this issue, the present research was carried out to determine women's knowledge, attitude and behavior on reproductive health subjects.

Materials & Methods: This is a cross-sectional and analytical-descriptive study carried out in seven central cities of Iran in 2005. The subjects consisted of 840 married women, aged 15-49 years, who attended urban and rural health centers and were selected in a 3-stage sampling method. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire completed through interviews. The data were entered into and analyzed by SPSS, version 11.5. Applied statistical tests in this research was Kruskal- Wallis non parametric test, χ^2 and Pearson correlation test.

Results: According to the results, 62% of the women were familiar with the term reproductive health and 66.4% of them used effective contraceptive methods, although they obtained an average of 9.21 (from a maximum mark of 14 for knowledge), just 18% of them knew the appropriate time for Pap smear and breast self-exam and also there were many misconceptions on HIV/AIDS. Kruskal-Wallis test showed a significant difference between awareness of women in various cities with their educational achievements ($p < 0.05$). Women's attitude about reproductive health was good but there were significant differences among women from different cities ($p < 0.05$). The women's behavior in many categories, such as Pap smear, breast self-exam and use of safe contraception methods need to be enhanced.

Conclusion: Regarding the results and importance of women's reproductive health and rights, as well as instructive advocacy of Islam on the matter, promoting women's knowledge, attitude and behavior on reproductive health must be included on the agenda of health policy makers and non-governmental organizations in studied cities.

Key Words: Women, Reproductive health, Reproductive rights, Family planning, Reproductive health services, Contraceptive methods, Knowledge, Attitude, Behavior.

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