Navigating Barriers: A Qualitative Exploration of Women’s Access to Family Planning Services in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

**Background:** Low contraceptive prevalence rates among women of reproductive age in low-income countries, including Nigeria, continue to impede efforts to improve women’s reproductive health through family planning services. This qualitative study examines the barriers to accessing family planning clinics. **Methods:** In-depth interviews with 30 women aged 15 to 49 were conducted at a secondary and a tertiary health facility, Lagos. **Results:** The research identifies two key themes: the impact of geographic proximity and the challenges faced at the clinic in accessing family planning services.” Women living far from clinics face transportation barriers. Long waiting times, stigma and privacy are issues identified, particularly in government clinics. Despite challenges, respondents praised nurses and expressed satisfaction with services. **Conclusions:** The study offers contemporary insights into the specific challenges faced by women in Lagos State, aiming to inform targeted interventions and policy recommendations. The study, however, suggests that even with the removal of proximity barriers, stigma remains a limiting factor for interventions, adding a novel perspective to the discourse on reproductive health in low-income settings. Addressing these barriers in a holistic manner is vital for empowering women to make informed reproductive choices, ultimately improving maternal and child health outcomes.

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