

Pregnancy Intentions and Contraceptive Use Among Married Adolescents in Northern Nigeria

AUTHORS

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BACKGROUND

- Nigeria reports 2.3 million unintended pregnancies annually.
- Unintended adolescent pregnancy predisposes adolescent girls to multiple consequences including unsafe abortion, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS infection, maternal complications and death.
- Although unintended pregnancies and their consequences can be prevented by using modern contraceptives, many adolescents seeking to avoid or delay pregnancies are not able to do so for various reasons.
- Studies have documented inconsistencies between pregnancy intentions and use of contraceptives, with most women showing ambivalence to use.
- Few of these studies have been conducted among adolescent girls and in the context of interventions that seek to serve their unique needs.

Through a cross-sectional survey in 2021, we explored the influence of future pregnancy intention on contraceptive adoption among adolescent girls visiting sites offering girl-centered, contraception services in northern Nigeria at A360 Amplify sites offering the Matasa Matan Arewa (MMA) intervention.

HYPOTHESIS

- We hypothesized that married adolescent girls would report a relationship between their future pregnancy intentions and contraceptive uptake.
- We predicted this relationship because the MMA intervention works by inspiring girls and their spouses to see relevance of contraceptives. The program frames contraception a tool for attaining good health for the mother and baby, as well as the couple's future life goals

METHODS

- We conducted a cross-sectional survey among program attendees sampled from 28 family planning clinics implementing the MMA intervention in Kaduna and Nasarawa states in October 2021.
- Study participants were recruited consecutively at the point of exit from service points where married adolescent girls 15-19 years old were served with counselling and contraceptives.
- An interviewer administered a semi-structured questionnaire hosted on Survey CTO to elicit participant socio-demographics, experiences with services, utilization of contraceptives, and future pregnancy intentions.
- Future pregnancy intention was categorized as:

Immediate Desire (<3 years)	Delayed desire (3-5 years)	Postponed or not desired (> 5 years and not at all)
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- Adoption of modern contraception during the visit was categorized as:

Contraceptive adoption = uptake of a modern contraceptive method during the visit.

- Pearson's chi-square test of independence compared proportions and multivariate logistic regression were performed to determine predictors of contraceptive adoption at $p < 0.05$ significance.

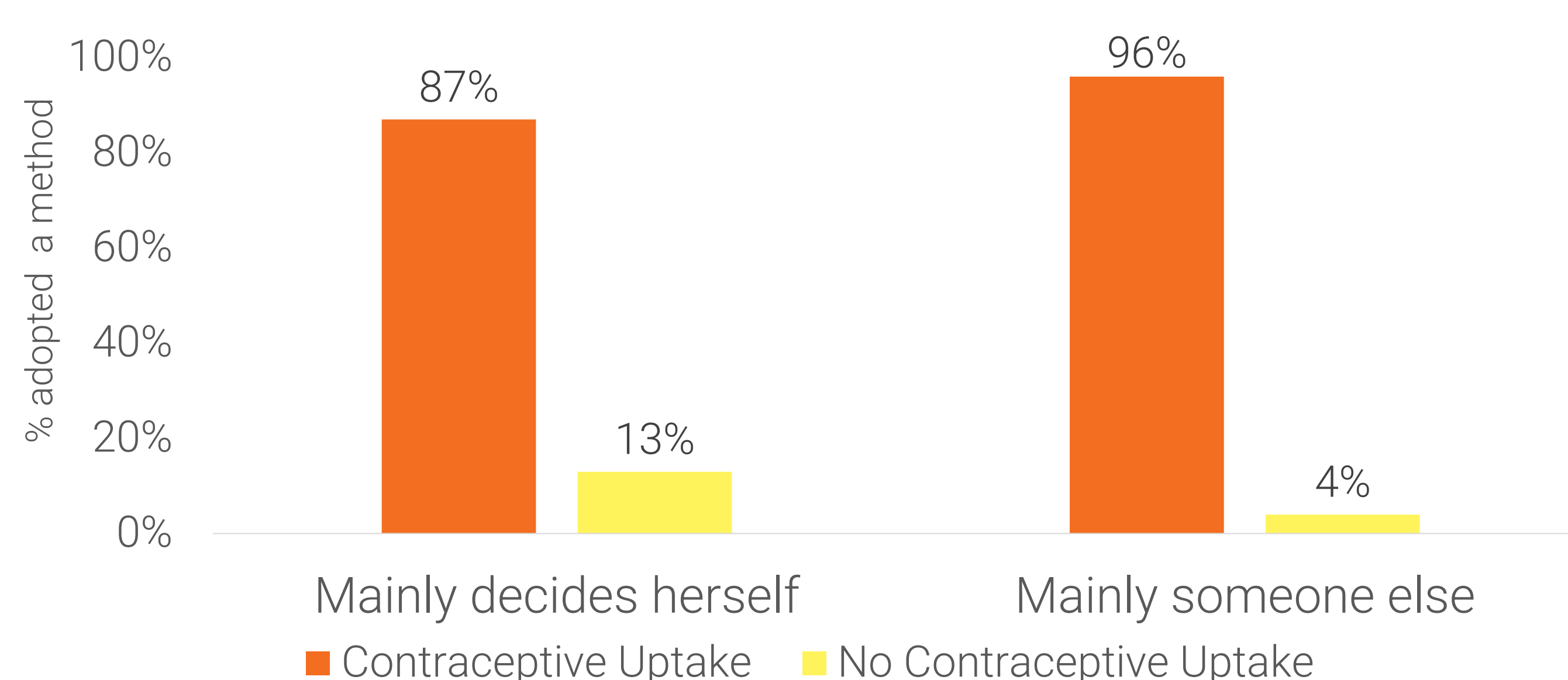
RESULTS

- Of 291 respondents, 60% were 19 years old, 92% married and 51% had completed secondary education.
- Nearly a third (30%) of the respondents reported immediate desire to get pregnant, **62% preferred to delay for 3-5 years**, and 8% wanted to postpone till after five years or were not desiring at all.
- Overall, **80% of participants received a modern method of contraception.**

Table 1. Bivariate analysis of predictors of adopting a modern contraceptive method

Variable	Categories	N (%) who adopted	p-value
Intention for a future pregnancy	<3 years	65 (28.7%)	0.44
	3-5 years	142 (62.8%)	
	> 5 or never	19 (8.4%)	
Who mainly makes decisions about contraceptives	Someone else	139 (61.8%)	0.01
	Myself	86 (38.2%)	
Marital status	Married monogamous	182 (81.0%)	0.181
	Married polygamous	28 (12.4%)	
	Living with partner	15 (6.6%)	
Prior contraceptive use	No	118 (92.2%)	0.286
	Yes	10 (7.8%)	
Contraception as a tool to achieve life goals	Agree	210 (92.9%)	0.311
	Disagree/neutral	16 (7.1%)	

Chart 1. Adopting a modern method was higher among girls who reported that the decision to adopt a method was not mainly their decision



CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Most respondents prefer to delay pregnancy for 3-5 years, implying candidacy for LARC methods, although this was dissonant with adoption of a method during the visit.
- AYSRH programs should provide consistent supply of all modern contraceptive methods to ensure clients are not limited in the choices of the modern contraceptives they can adopt.
- Contraceptive uptake was higher among girls who stated they were not the sole decision makers, emphasizing the role of key influencers and the need to engage them while programming for adolescent girls.
- Current and future programming should continue to include intervention components targeted to adolescent girls' key influencers to create an enabling environment that supports girls to adopt, switch, and continue contraceptive use in line with their fertility preferences.
- Improving adolescent girls' self-efficacy for contraceptive decision making could disentangle them from retrogressive social norms.
- More studies are warranted to understand the intersection between behavioral intentions and contraceptive use and adherence