

Male Migration and Unmet Need among Married Couples in Eastern Nepal: Results from a Mixed Methods Study

Sarah Staveteig¹
Neera Shrestha²
Sunita Gurung³
Kathryn T. Kampa⁴

¹ Avenir Health and The DHS Program; ² Independent Researcher, Nepal; ³ New ERA, Nepal; ⁴Tulane University

Abstract:

Despite efforts to improve contraceptive coverage, Nepal has high levels of unmet need, a pattern that appears largely driven by non-use during spousal migration. This mixed-methods study reinterviewed a subsample of 2016 Nepal DHS respondents. Fieldwork included gathering in-depth data on contraceptive coverage among women whose husbands were currently or usually absent. Our data confirm that cultural taboos discouraging contraceptive use during spousal separation contribute to high unmet need, but more nuanced themes emerged. Of concern, we found that despite knowledge of his return date, many respondents tended to be poorly prepared for contraceptive use when their husbands returned. Respondents reported discomfort in broaching the issue of contraceptive preparedness; many of those who prepared mistakenly believed that hormonal methods would provide immediate protection. Beyond unmet need, these patterns show important gaps in contraceptive coverage of migrant couples and suggest the importance of contraceptive education and messaging around contraceptive preparedness.

The data collection and most analysis was supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through The DHS Program (#AID0AA-C-13-00095). The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government