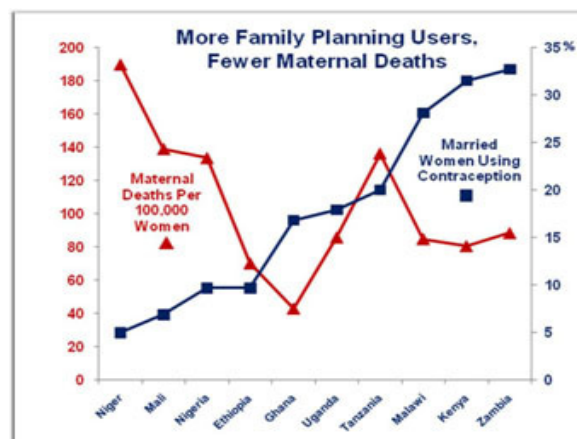


Saving Women's Lives With Family Planning

Fewer Women Die When Pregnancies are Planned

Family planning saves women's lives in two ways. First, family planning helps women avoid unwanted pregnancies. Each year, 687,000 maternal deaths are averted with family planning versus the 533,000 maternal deaths that occur.¹ As shown in the graph,² the more couples practice family planning, the fewer women die from pregnancy-related causes.^{3,4,5} Women who are not pregnant do not die from pregnancy-related causes.

Second, family planning helps couples plan the size of their family and avoid high-risk pregnancies. Women who become pregnant when very young or very old are at a higher risk of a pregnancy-related death. Women who become pregnant soon after their last birth or who have many children also have an increased danger of maternal death. Fewer deaths will occur among pregnant women if more couples practice family planning.



Too Young, Too Old, Too Close, Too Many

- When a woman becomes pregnant before age 18 she is more likely than an older woman to develop hypertension, anemia and prolonged or obstructed labor⁶ and to die as a result of pregnancy.⁷
- For pregnancies among women in their 40s, the risk of death can be as much as seven times higher than among women in their 20s.⁷
- When pregnancy occurs less than six months from the last birth, a woman is more than twice as likely to die in childbirth than a woman who becomes pregnant between 18 to 23 months later.⁸
- Five or more pregnancies significantly increase the risk of dying of pregnancy-related causes.^{7,9,10}

Saving the Lives of Uganda's Women

Uganda has one of the highest levels of maternal deaths per live births in Africa. For every 100,000 babies born, 430 women die.³ Contraceptive use is low—only 15% of all women practice family planning.⁴ Satisfying just half of the unmet need for family planning among women in Uganda would result in an estimated 519,000 fewer unintended pregnancies and 1,600 fewer maternal deaths per year.¹¹ Maternal mortality in Uganda could be reduced by 40% if all unmet need for family planning were met.¹¹

What Can Be Done

- ◆ Make family planning services and supplies available in the Ugandan health system.
- ◆ Ensure that Ugandan women and couples are able to plan their families and avoid unwanted and high risk pregnancies.

Sources

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