The Influence of Perceptions of Community Norms on Current Contraceptive Use among Men and Women in Ethiopia and Kenya

Michelle Dynes¹. Rob Stephenson¹, Marcie Rubardt², Feven Tassew³, Rosemary Mbaluka⁴
Presented by Darcy White¹

¹Rollins School of Public Health, USA ²CARE USA, ³CARE Ethiopia, ⁴CARE Kenya
Of the many settings with continued low contraceptive prevalence, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to demonstrate the greatest gaps in contraceptive use by economic status, residence, and educational level (Ortayli & Malarcher, 2010).

Contraceptive use in the region has not risen significantly in the past decade (Creanga et al., 2011).
The influence of the community on reproductive health has primarily been studied with an emphasis on SES, exposure to media, and quality of health services (Maticka-Tyndate & Tenkorang, 2010; Hogan & Biratu, 2004; Stephenson, Beke, & Tshibangu, 2008).

**Gap in the research:**
- What is the role of community norms?
  - How do individuals perceive community norms?
  - How does this compare to personal ideals and behaviors?
Research Questions

● How do perceptions of community norms influence contraceptive use among men and women in rural areas of Ethiopia and Kenya?

● To what extent do differences in individual desires and community norms increase contraceptive use?
Study Setting

- Ethiopia: West Hararghe and East Hararghe zones of the Oromia region
  - Total fertility rate: 6.2
  - Contraceptive prevalence rate: 13.5%

- Kenya: Siaya district in Nyanza Province
  - Total fertility rate: 5.4
  - Contraceptive prevalence rate: 37%
Data and Methodology

- Results Initiative Baseline Data (RIBD), collected by CARE International and Emory University in 2009

- Household survey:
  - 60 villages/settlements per country
  - Approx. 10 married women and 5 married men 18-45 years old per village
  - Final sample:
    - Ethiopia: 520 women, 300 men
    - Kenya: 655 women, 301 men
Survey Questionnaire

- Current modern contraceptive use (yes/no)

- Family Planning Approval Index (8 items)
  - In general, I approve of couples using family planning to avoid or delay a pregnancy.
  - I think that most of my friends in this community would approve of couples using family planning to avoid or delay a pregnancy.
  - A woman who uses contraception will be unfaithful to her husband.
  - A man who lets his wife use contraceptives will lose control of her.
Survey Questionnaire

- **Questions to measure community norms**
  - What is the number of sons people in the community want to have?
  - What is the number of daughters people in the community want to have?

- **Questions to measure personal preferences and ideals**
  - What is the number of sons you would ideally have?
  - How many sons do you actually have?

- **Difference variables**
  - Represent the differential between perceptions of community ideals and their own ideals and actual experiences.
Analysis

- **Final analysis samples:**
  - Ethiopia: 405 women, 273 men
  - Kenya: 546 women, 288 men
- **Data analyzed using STATA 11 (StataCorp, 2009)**
- **Logistic regression**
  - Outcome: current modern contraceptive use (CCU)
  - Key covariates: gender and fertility ideals
  - Control variables: age, educational attainment, current employment status
## Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Ethiopia</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Kenya</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Women</strong> (n=405)</td>
<td><strong>Men</strong> (n=273)</td>
<td><strong>Women</strong> (n=546)</td>
<td><strong>Men</strong> (n=288)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (yrs)</strong></td>
<td>27.95 (18-45)</td>
<td>31.97 (18-56)</td>
<td>28.77 (18-45)</td>
<td>33.16 (20-45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education (yrs)</strong></td>
<td>0.68 (0-9)</td>
<td>2.36 (0-14)</td>
<td>7.59 (1-20)</td>
<td>8.01 (0-18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Children</strong></td>
<td>4.22 (0-12)</td>
<td>4.06 (0-12)</td>
<td>3.63 (0-10)</td>
<td>3.35 (0-12)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age at Marriage</strong></td>
<td>15.72 (10-28)</td>
<td>20.09 (12-40)</td>
<td>18.74 (11-39)</td>
<td>23.35 (14-37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Contracept. Use (%)</strong></td>
<td>36.05</td>
<td>39.19</td>
<td>34.25</td>
<td>29.17</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Ideal # Sons</strong></td>
<td>3.16 (0-10)</td>
<td>2.96 (1-10)</td>
<td>2.35 (0-12)</td>
<td>2.75 (0-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Ideal # Daughters</strong></td>
<td>2.94 (0-9)</td>
<td>2.62 (0-7)</td>
<td>2.30 (0-12)</td>
<td>2.44 (0-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FP Approval Index (0-8)</strong></td>
<td>5.46 (1-9)</td>
<td>6.05 (1-9)</td>
<td>5.66 (1-9)</td>
<td>5.56 (1-9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings of Regression Analysis

Odds of Current Contraceptive Use by Key Covariates

- Family Planning Approval Index Score
- Community Ideal # sons – own ideal #
- Community Ideal # sons – own actual #
- Community Ideal # daughters – own ideal #
- Community Ideal # daughters – own actual #
Discussion

- Women who have fewer sons than the perceived community ideal are less likely to report use of contraception

Knowledge contribution: Son preference appears to have a more potent influence on women’s contraceptive use than on men’s
A lower *personal* ideal number of sons in the context of perceived high communal ideals is associated with greater contraceptive use among women.

**Knowledge contribution:** This finding provides evidence for the existence of a subset of women whose own fertility preferences play a greater role in influencing contraceptive use than local fertility expectations—**POSITIVE DEVIANCE**
Conclusions

- Community attitudes set normative scripts around reproductive health behaviors
  - While a majority of women follow these scripts, there is a subset of women who deviate from the norms.

- Further research is needed to understand the factors motivating positive deviance and to understand why such deviance is more potent in shaping women’s contraceptive use than men’s.