

Position Statement

Planned pregnancies and contraception services for women

Background

The ICM Code of Ethics supports the right of every woman to decide on the right time, number and spacing of her pregnancies considering the health and wellbeing of herself and her family. Furthermore, there is evidence that planned pregnancies have better health outcomes for mothers and newborns. This contributes to achieving ICM's goal to achieve safe motherhood, quality midwife-led continuity of care and reduction of risk and adverse events in midwifery care. Thus, to ensure the right of every woman to self-governance and make informed choices to achieve better health outcomes, ICM aims to support each woman's right to contraception.

Fundamental to the rights of a woman is her ability to plan her pregnancies, and that she should play a full and equal part with her partner in determining the number and spacing of their children. To enable women, with confidence, to affect the choices about childbearing, and to prevent unwanted pregnancies they should have access to appropriate knowledge and adequate services. ICM further believes that midwives, by virtue of their education, scope of practice and unique relationship with women and their families are ideally positioned to provide the information, contraception services and support that women need to prevent unplanned pregnancies.

Position

The ICM supports the rights of women to plan and control their pregnancies, and takes every opportunity at regulatory, educational, and political levels to enhance this right by:

- Recommending that midwives proactively update their evidence-based knowledge, skills, and women-centred philosophy regarding contraception advice and service provision.
- Providing women with the appropriate knowledge and resources to enable them to achieve their desired planned pregnancies.
- Participating in and influencing the national regulation, strategic planning, evaluation of policy, clinical guidelines and contraceptive services which enable women to plan their pregnancies and prevent unplanned pregnancies.
- Ensuring that all women have access to contraceptive services that are appropriate, accessible, cost-effective (or free of charge), and woman-friendly.
- Providing quality advice and support to women which is relevant to their needs and free of judgement.
- Strengthening midwives' role in providing pre-conception health promotion and education for adolescent and school age groups to prevent unplanned pregnancies.
- Ensuring that services provided by midwives include the ability to initiate examinations and counselling and prescribe contraceptives relevant to women to plan their pregnancies.

Recommendations

Midwives Associations are urged to use and disseminate this statement and are further urged to:

- Take an active role in supporting the development of appropriate services for women which enable them to plan their pregnancies and prevent unplanned pregnancies.
- Influence the education of midwives to ensure that they have the appropriate evidence-based knowledge, understanding and skills to meet the needs of women in planning their pregnancies.

Related ICM Documents

- ICM. 2014. Core Document. International Code of Ethics for Midwives.
- ICM. 2014. Core Document. Philosophy and Model of Midwifery Care.
- ICM. 2017. Position Statement. Midwives, Women and Human Rights.
- ICM. 2019. Core Document. Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice.

Other Relevant Documents

- Family Planning 2020. (2020) Rights, Empowerment, & Family Planning: Progress and Unfinished Business. Available at:
<http://www.familyplanning2020.org/resources/rights-empowerment-family-planning-progress-and-unfinished-business>
- Family Planning 2020. (2019) Contributions of FP2020 in Advancing Rights-Based Family Planning. Upholding and Advancing the Promises of Cairo. Available at:
<https://www.familyplanning2020.org/resources/contributions-fp2020-advancing-rights-based-family-planning-upholding-and-advancing>
- Family Planning 2020. (2020) Meeting the Unmet Need: A Choice-Based Approach to Family Planning. Available at:
<http://www.familyplanning2020.org/resources/meeting-unmet-need-choice-based-approach-family-planning>
- World Health Organization. (2007) Report of a WHO technical consultation on birth spacing: Geneva, Switzerland 13-15 June 2005. WHO, Geneva. Available at:
<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/69855>.
- World Health Organization. (2017) Monitoring human rights in contraceptive services and programmes. WHO, Geneva. Available at:
<https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/contraceptive-services-monitoring-hr/en/>
- World Health Organization. (2017) Task sharing to improve access to Family Planning/Contraception. Summary brief. WHO, Geneva. Available at:
<https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/task-sharing-access-fp-contraception/en/>
- World Health Organization, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, United States Agency for International Development. (2018) Family Planning: A Global Handbook for Providers. Updated 3rd Edition. WHO, Geneva. Available at:
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/260156/9780999203705-eng.pdf?sequence=1>

This Position Statement supersedes the "Planned Parenthood 90/5"

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