

**KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE ON BIRTH
SPACING AMONG MARRIED WOMEN IN
LOIKAW TOWNSHIP
KAYAH STATE**

**BY
TIN WANN
M.B.,B.S**

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ABSTRACT

A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among married women of two wards and two villages in Loikaw Township, Kayah State from September to November, 2012 using semi-structured interview questionnaires with the general objective of identifying knowledge and practice on birth spacing among the study population (n=238). The study revealed that the proportion of women who practiced birth spacing currently was 42 percent. Respondents' mean±SD age was 32 + 6.5 years. Mean±SD age at marriage was 22.5±4.1 years and mean±SD age at first birth spacing using was 35.9±5.2 years. Majority were Kayah (27.3%), Buddhist (50.8%), at middle school level (25.2%), housewife (48.3%), earned monthly family income of (10000 - 50000 kyats) (36.1%), and received health knowledge from media (63%). Regarding knowledge about birth spacing, 98.7 percent had heard birth spacing. The most common method they responded was injection (97.1%) followed by oral contraceptive pills (92.9%). The least recognized modern method of birth spacing was emergency contraception (4.6%). There were current users (42%), past users (37.8%) and never users (20.2%). Among currently used methods, modern methods were injection (70%), oral contraceptive pills (16%), intrauterine device (8%) and condom (4%). Traditional methods were withdrawal (1%) and calendar method (1%). Among most of current non-users, the reasons for not using birth spacing were desire to get children (25.3%), presence of pregnancy (11.6%), afraid of side effects of methods (12.1%), female sterilization (8.4%) and religious reason (5.1%). Out of 138 current non-users, 79 (57.3%) women had future plan for practice on birth spacing. In the present study, the background characteristics such as residence, education level, family income and accessibility to source of health information were statistically associated not only with knowledge but also with practice on birth spacing (p<0.05). Knowledge was also associated with practice (p<0.05, OR=2.67, 95%CI: 1.28 - 5.54). It is concluded that reproductive health programme should be expanded to Loikaw Township and the activity of health talk and counseling about reproductive

health should be promoted for each and every reproductive aged women especially in rural area.