

ABSTRACT

Practising birth spacing after the childbirth is vital for the health of the mother and her children. Births too close together can endanger the maternal health. Practice of birth spacing is one of the ways to achieve Millennium Development Goal 5 of improving maternal health. The aim of this research is to study the birth spacing practice among rural women of Hmawbi Township within one year postpartum. A community-based cross-sectional study was undertaken among the infants' mothers of rural Hmawbi during September to November, 2011. A total of 209 respondents from the randomly chosen sub-centers of Hmawbi Township were interviewed face-to-face by using pretested semi-structured questionnaire. In this study, the mean age of the study population was 28.81 ± 5.919 years. About one-third of the respondents (33.0%) attained middle school level education. Midwives were the key health care providers in the ante-natal, delivery and post-natal care of the study area. Regarding knowledge of birth spacing, 90.4% of the respondents had low level of knowledge and the rest had high knowledge. Regarding attitude towards birth spacing, 70.8% of the respondents possessed favourable attitude and the rest had unfavourable attitude. Majority (81.3%) of the respondents were currently practicing birth spacing within one year postpartum. Among the current users, 91.8% were using three monthly injection (Depo Provera) followed by oral contraceptive pills and intrauterine device (2.4% each). The commonest reason for not practicing birth spacing was the thought of the respondents that it was unnecessary to use birth spacing method before the return of menstruation. Birth spacing practice was found to have significant association with the respondent's marital status, number of alive children, place of delivery and attitude towards birth spacing. The findings of this study revealed that to get good birth spacing practice of the rural women, there must have favourable attitude towards birth spacing. This can be achieved by expanding and disseminating the proper birth spacing knowledge with the help of effective birth spacing education programmes.