

## ABSTRACT

Birth spacing takes crucial role in reducing maternal and child mortality while Myanmar is aiming to Sustainable Development Goals. Assuring access to quality birth spacing alone could reduce the number of maternal mortality by 25%. Among Basic Health Staffs (BHSs), Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) and Midwives (MWs) form backbone to fill up the unmet need of birth spacing in rural areas. The aim of this research is to identify the perception and practices of BHSs relating birth spacing services for women during postpartum period. A cross-sectional descriptive study was undertaken among the LHVs and MWs of Kaw Hmu, Kun Gyan Kon and Dedaye townships from September to October 2015. A total of 122 respondents (15 LHVs and 107 MWs) were chosen to take self-administered questionnaires after making small groups with explanation of each question by facilitators to reduce bias and misunderstanding. The mean age of respondents was  $38.07 \pm 8.975$  years. LHV to MW ratio was 1:7. Almost 70% of respondents had no birth spacing training within two years. There was difference in provision of birth spacing training within three townships. Only 39% of respondents had high knowledge scores on birth spacing of postpartum women. Major aspects of poor knowledge level are contraindications, danger signs of contraceptives; and also on solutions of missed pills. About 73.8% of respondents possessed positive attitude towards provision of birth spacing in postpartum women. About 49% of respondents had high practice scores on provision of birth spacing services to postpartum women. Among them, only 23 respondents (18.9%) had experience of provision of Intrauterine Device (IUD) to postpartum women. Only 34.7% of BHS performed birth spacing counselling during antenatal visits and 53.3% of them discussed both husband and wife on choice of contraceptives with their own decision while 18.9% of them made judgment on choice of contraceptives for clients. Association is found between having birth spacing training and knowledge level. Majority of respondents suggested providing health education of mothers since their adolescent hood is important for increase and sustainable use of contraceptives. To reduce unmet need of birth spacing and ensure quality birth spacing services, it is necessary to provide capacity building of BHS on contraceptives focusing on contraindication, danger signs of contraceptives and solution of missed pills. Moreover, counselling training for birth spacing is essential.