

CONCEPT AND COMPONENTS OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

BY

ALI MUMBO

Definition

- A state of complete physical, mental, emotional and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.
- Reproductive health care refers to the methods, technologies and services that ensure reproductive health and well-being by preventing and solving problems related to human sexuality and reproduction

Definitions contd.

- Implied within the definition:
 - Involves both males and females
 - Includes issues beyond health and disease e.g. gender, reproductive rights, adolescent and youth issues, access to and quality of services
 - Wider than the traditional obstetrics and gynecology

Concept of Reproductive Health

It implies that

- couples have the ability to reproduce and regulate their fertility
- women are able to go through pregnancy and child birth safely
- outcome of the pregnancy is successful in terms of maternal and infant survival and well-being and
- couples are able to have sexual relations free of the fear of pregnancy and of contracting any disease.

WHO Reproductive Health Strategy

Five overarching activities necessary for accelerated progress in SRH:

- Strengthening health systems capacity (including attention to financing, health workers, quality of service provision and barriers to use of services);
- Improving information for priority setting;
- Mobilizing political will;
- Creating supportive legislative and regulatory frameworks; and
- Strengthening of monitoring, evaluation and accountability. (WHO 2004)

Kenyan RH strategy: Goal

- ❖ “to enhance the reproductive health status of all Kenyans by increasing equitable access to reproductive health services; improving quality, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery at all levels; and improving responsiveness to the client needs”

Components of RH

- Family planning
- Safe motherhood and child survival
- Management of STI's and HIV/AIDS
- Promotion of Adolescent and Youth Health
- Infertility
- Gender issues and reproductive rights
- Cancers of reproductive organs/Other reproductive tract conditions

Family planning

- Counseling, advocacy skills
- Clinical skills – method provision
- Infection prevention
- Male involvement – promotion, use
- Role of community health workers
- Record keeping, reporting, interpretation and use

Safe motherhood and child survival

Prevention of maternal and Peri-natal mortality

- Early diagnosis and management of pregnancy complications
- Management of labour
- Post-abortion care
- Resuscitation of the newborn, management of low birth weight infants, immunization

STI's and HIV/AIDS

- Counseling, infection prevention
- Prevention and syndromic management of STI's
- Management of pregnancy and delivery in HIV infected persons
- Management of opportunistic infections, home based care of people living with AIDS

Adolescent and youth health

- Peer education, Family life education
- Management of health problems among them – pregnancy, STI's
- Promotion of positive attitude towards adolescents and youth
- Youth friendly services

Gender issues and reproductive rights

- Early marriages
- FGM/FGC
- Sexual Assault
- Counseling and rehabilitation
- Male involvement in RH issues

Factors important for provision of quality RH services

- Integration of services
- Resource mobilization and allocation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- RH research
- Motivation and involvement of communities
- Management of health services

Barriers to reproductive health Services

- Social and cultural beliefs and practices
- Lack of women's empowerment, lack of male involvement,
- poverty
- Weak health management systems impede the demand for and utilization of reproductive health care.
- Poor growth of the economy
- Lack of engaging the community
- Inadequate service provision and poor access to family planning commodities and lack of support for contraceptive security.
- Lack of functional referral mechanisms