Weekly News Review – week ending 22 December 2017

A round-up of the week’s most important, Africa-focused Family Planning and Reproductive Health reporting

(The Center for International Reproductive Health Training (CIRHT) at the University of Michigan seeks to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity from unsafe abortion in developing countries through pre-service training in evidenced based contraception and comprehensive abortion care for medical and midwifery students. This weekly news review is one way we hope to keep an ongoing conversation with our partners and the global reproductive health community. Hyperlinks in the text lead to relevant articles. A full list of articles, many of which are not mentioned in the review, can be found at the bottom of the document.)

Contraception Communication

Trained and sensitized health care workers are essential to providing contraception to satisfy the needs of their various constituents. An interesting study in *Global Health: Science and Practice* looked at post-abortion contraception use in 10 Asian and sub-Saharan African countries and found that “77% of women left with a contraceptive method after receiving abortion care. While contraceptive uptake was high among all age groups, adolescents ages 15–19 were less likely to choose a method than women 25 years or older… Health systems and facilities should pay increased attention to meeting the contraceptive needs of young women and adolescents.” Another study looked at involving frontline health care workers in Ethiopia with Implanon insertion improved contraception access. An initiative in Ghana is encouraging health professionals to educate their clients about family planning, where there is a need to improve Reproductive Health Services for adolescent girls. In Rwanda, an SMS tool is bringing sexual and reproductive health information to young people, yet it takes more than technology, as UNFPA notes that “cultural beliefs can be a barrier to family planning usage.”

Abortion Access

Counseling is one aspect, but real access to the full spectrum of choices requires action at many levels in society, as outlined by the International Center for Research on Women in its report about the importance of investing in international family planning. In South Africa, where the law allows for abortion, too many providers are refusing, making it difficult for women to access the services. The *Daily Maverick* calls for “going beyond lip service to protect and promote a woman’s right to choose.” Restricted access can have serious consequences, as experienced as a result of the Global Gag Rule at clinics in Kenya, which will lead to “an increased number of mortalities.”

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