

DISSEMINATION OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH KNOWLEDGE BY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THROUGH TELEPHONE HOTLINE: A FEASIBILITY STUDY IN MYANMAR

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Abstract. This study was conducted to determine the feasibility of disseminating reproductive health (RH) information to the general public of Myanmar in a confidential, anonymous and interactive way through a telephone hotline. We carried out a cross-sectional study using a short questionnaire interview with the RH hotline callers and analyzing sample audio recordings of conversations. The hotline was advertised in print media. It was answered by trained hotline responders (medical doctors) of Department of Medical Research (Lower Myanmar) (DMR-LM). There were 743 calls during six months, from all 14 States and Divisions. Most of the calls were from Yangon, Mandalay and Bago Division. Both male (48%) and female (52%) callers used the hotline. The majority of callers (74%) were between 25 and 45 years old; 21% were young people (15-25 years old). Married people (81%) used the hotline more than singles (19%). Most of the callers (91%) had a high school to graduate education level. The most frequently asked topics were infertility (23%), birth spacing (22%), sexual problems (13%) and adolescent health, including reproductive function (12%). The anonymity of the callers, the non-judgmental attitudes of the responders and the use of media for publicity appeared to facilitate the use of the hotline by the public. More linkages with service entry points, enhancement of communication skills, sexual counselling training and use of media can improve topic coverage and utilization of the reproductive health hotline.

Keywords: reproductive health, hotline, health communication, Myanmar

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