

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Planning a Family: Priorities and Concerns in Rural Tanzania

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## Abstract

A fertility survey using qualitative and quantitative techniques described a high fertility setting (TFR 5.8) in southern Tanzania where family planning use was 16%. Current use was influenced by rising parity, educational level, age of last born child, breastfeeding status, a preference for longer than the mean birth interval (32 months), not being related to the household head, and living in a house with a tin roof. Three principal concerns amongst women were outlined from the findings. First, that there is a large unmet need for family planning services in the area particularly among teenagers for whom it is associated with induced abortion. Second, that family planning is being used predominantly for spacing but fears associated with it often curtail effective use. Third, that service provision is perceived to be lacking in two main areas — regularity of supply, and addressing rumours and fears associated with family planning. Reproductive health interventions in the area should ultimately be more widespread and, in particular, abortion is highlighted as an urgent issue for further research. The potential for a fast and positive impact is high, given the simplicity of the perceived needs of women from this study. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2004; 8[2]:111-123)

**Keywords:** Tanzania, fertility, family planning, teenagers, abortion

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