

Overview of the Reproductive Health Survey

Background

The National Family Planning Board (NFPB) has, over the past few decades, conducted a series of surveys which have explored issues such as fertility rates, contraceptive prevalence, Reproductive Health and Family Planning and thus kept health care providers, policy makers and the society at large informed about the ever changing Jamaican situation.

These periodic enquiries began with the Jamaica Fertility Survey during the period 1975-1976 and continued with the 1983, 1989, and 1993 Contraceptive Prevalence Surveys. In more recent times, the NFPB has created the Reproductive Health Survey which covers a broader spectrum of issues. These surveys were conducted for the years 1997, 2002 and most recently, the year 2008.

Collaborations

In order to conduct the research to produce these reports, many collaborative efforts were forged over the years between the NFPB and organisations both nationally and overseas. Agencies which the Board has worked with in the past include, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Division of Reproductive Health, the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Population Reference Bureau, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN).

Areas Covered

Several topics have been explored through the development and improvement of these surveys over the years. As with any periodic investigation, new issues which need special attention have continuously been indentified, and have thus been added to subsequent publications. This explains the differences in the areas covered in some chapters when comparing varying survey years.

Topics which have been developed and reported on over the years are as follows:

- Nuptiality;
- Fertility;
- Infant and Child Mortality;
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices in Contraception;
- Child bearing and Rearing;
- Reproductive Health;
- Contraceptive use;
- Contraceptive Knowledge;
- Young Adult Behaviour and Practices;
- Maternal Health and Childcare;
- Health Behaviours;
- Sexually Transmitted Infections;
- HIV/AIDS; and
- Physical and Sexual Abuse

In the past, and also recently, data from the RHS have been used by researchers for population planning and family planning projections; lecturers and students in the areas of Demography and Reproductive Health for the preparation of reports, and have also been beneficial to health care providers, policy makers, guidance counsellors and others who work

in the areas of Family Planning and Reproductive Health. The data have been used in helping to identify issues of concern, providing the data needed for trend analyses in these areas, and subsequently, guiding the delivery of Reproductive Health services.

Conclusion

It can be clearly seen therefore that the work of the Board in producing a survey of this nature is crucial to the development of our country. Once the health care workers, researchers and health care providers have the information needed to design and improve their programmes and services, the citizens of this country will be better able to make informed decisions regarding their Reproductive Health.