

Abstract

Contraceptive Use among Myanmar Immigrant Workers in Southern Thailand in the Early Phase of Work Permit Legalization: A Baseline Survey and the Short-term Results of Special Health Services

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Reproductive health is a major concern of health services for immigrant workers worldwide. To be able to understand contraceptive behavior and responses to service, an area in southern Thailand with 1,475 immigrant construction workers was selected for study. Among them, 406 married women of reproductive age were studied. An active family planning service using a special group of providers of the same ethnic origin as the immigrants was conducted during the study period and the effect of the service on contraceptive practices four months later was measured. Initial contraceptive prevalence was 72.9 percent. Oral pills (70.3) and injectables (21.6) were mostly used. Age of women, number of living child, accessibility to health services and size of construction camps were inversely associated with use. Ethnicity was also related to use in large camps. The contraceptive use rate was higher among Mon than other ethnic groups in large camps. Migrant life barriers were strong determinants in controlling fertility. Perception of barriers and ability to overcome barriers was associated with differences in use among different ethnic groups. The abortion rate was reduced from 29.5/1000 woman-yr to 14.8/1000 woman-yr by the intervention. The incidence rate ratio is 0.5 (with 95%CI 0.04- 4.36). The effect of special service was not significant on contraceptive practices for all respondents. However, among the relatively higher educated group, injectable method users and those with an unstable residence were more likely to discontinue. Previous switchers were less likely to discontinue. Injectable method users and previously short duration users were more likely to switch. Women staying in less accessible camps were more likely to be new users. High rates of

contraceptive use and switching highlight the need of special family planning services in order to be able to maintain the use rate and through good counseling among the workers.