



Reframing Ideal Family Planning Services Through a Rights- Based Quality of Care Lens

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Dear Editor,

For the advancement of reproductive health, gender equality, and sustainable development, high-quality family planning (FP) services are essential. However, having access to services alone does not ensure success. Equally important is the standard of treatment given. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the best FP services should maintain human rights, therefore ensuring non-discrimination, dignity, autonomy, privacy, informed choice, access, and continuity of care ¹.

Historically stressing six aspects as pillars of quality, the “Bruce-Jain framework” is the freedom of choice for method selection, shared guidance, professional expertise, communication dynamics, continued support, and a comprehensive care network ². Building upon this, a rights-based approach stresses that FP services must prioritize individual agency, free from coercion or bias. Research on client-centeredness in providing effective contraceptive care and its relevance for more general reproductive health care underlines the several benefits of client-centeredness in delivering good contraceptive care and its significance for more general ³.

However, challenges persist, including service denial, invasion of privacy, substandard client-centered care, and incidents of humiliation and non-dignified treatment that still affect young people, unmarried women, and marginalized communities ⁴. In many settings, the method mix remains skewed, and clients’ informed decision-making is undermined by limited options or provider pressure ⁴.

Despite considerable efforts under the FP2020 and now FP2030 commitments, quality remains a major gap in Pakistan. Particularly in rural and low-income areas, service delivery is often skewed toward short-term solutions, counseling is often insufficient, and method choice is limited. Research shows that provider bias,

stockouts, and socio-cultural barriers further compromise the user experience⁵. Based on rights, a framework is crucial for Pakistan to move beyond goals and toward genuine client empowerment. Combining respectful care, increasing method choice, guaranteeing confidentiality, and involving communities will greatly improve the quality of FP services.

Ideal FP services can only be attained by right-based quality criteria at every service delivery point implemented by program managers and legislators. This covers training suppliers in

established accountability and feedback systems; respectful care; increased method choice; client involvement in service design; International projects like FP2030 underline that fulfilling worldwide FP objectives depends on rights-based quality enhancements⁶.

Finally, repurposing FP programs around human rights and quality of care is not only ethical but also essential for reinforcing health systems, advancing reproductive justice, and reaching sustainable development.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FP: Family Planning

WHO: World Health Organization

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

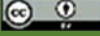
JMA completed the manuscript, devised the editorial, oversaw the writing process, and integrated data. **SS** confirmed compatibility with worldwide FP2030 objectives, polished the rights-based framework, and contributed to important revisions. The final version for publication was approved by both authors.

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