

# Meeting the Need for Family Planning in Loreto, Peru



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## Introduction

Family planning is internationally recognized as a cost-effective public health intervention to improve maternal and infant health, empower women, and reduce risks of poverty. Achieving universal access to reproductive health by 2015 was a MDG established by the United Nations to improve maternal well-being. In 1990, worldwide contraceptive prevalence among partnered women ages 15-49 was 54% and increased to 64% by 2015 (1). This growth is sluggish and not dispersed equally.



Fig 1: A map of Loreto, Peru <sup>2</sup>

Disparities to access exist internationally, intra-country, and among socioeconomic lines. Often, this means women who live in areas where they are more susceptible to death during pregnancy have the least means of prevention. Peru has the second highest rate of maternal mortality in South America (3) and rates are disproportionately high in rural, impoverished, and indigenous communities in the Loreto region. Family planning has been most successful in Peru for the spacing of children, but has not been promoted widely to delay first birth.

## What is Family Planning?



Fig 2: A chart explaining and describing effectiveness of family planning techniques <sup>4</sup>

*“Contraceptives or natural techniques to limit or space pregnancies including the pill, female and male sterilization, IUD, injectables, implants, male and female condom, diaphragm, and emergency contraception. Traditional methods include periodic abstinence, withdrawal and folk methods”*  
– USAID Demographic Health Surveys

## MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health

Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	5.1 Maternal mortality ratio 5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate 5.4 Adolescent birth rate 5.5 Antenatal care coverage 5.6 Unmet need for family planning

## Why is it Important?

- Women’s role in decision making
- Health benefits for mother and child
- Prevention of unwanted pregnancy
- Reduction in spread of disease

## Where Does it Go Wrong?

- Inaccessible, unavailable or unaffordable
- Culturally inappropriate
- Previous public health failures
- Local, state, and international policies

## Materials and Methods

- Completed literature review from resources available at Iowa State University’s Parks Library including peer-reviewed journal articles, websites, books, and other reference sources.
- Collected previous research conducted by Project Amazonas and Florida International University for detailed information on Loreto clinics.
- Acquired NIH certification and prepared survey regarding family planning and health-seeking behavior that will be conducted in January 2016.

## Conclusions

The MDG focus on the importance of women in development efforts has called larger attention to perpetuating gender inequality. The value of women in society is often related to their decision-making role on an individual and household level, including their ability to seek health services. Systemic and cultural discrimination against women is a barrier of Peruvian and universal access to reproductive health. Family planning is imperative to meeting goals of improving maternal health. Policies that eliminate barriers to voluntary family planning should be supported and more research regarding health-seeking behaviors is necessary for successful implementation.

## Literature Cited

- (1) Universal Access to Reproductive Health. Rep. World Health Organization, 2011. Web. 8 Oct. 2015. (2) Google Maps. Loreto Region of Peru 2015. Web. Oct. 2015 (3) Greene, Margaret, Shareen Joshi, and Omar Robles. By Choice, Not by Chance: Family Planning, Human Rights, and Development. Rep. United Nations Population Fund, 2012. Web. 1 Nov. 2015. (4) USAID, and World Health Organization. Comparacion De La Eficada De Los Metodos De Planificacion Familiar. Digital image. Family Planning: A Global Handbook for Providers. K4Health, 2011. Web. 25 Oct. 2015.