



**The Influence Of Gender Perceptions On Access To And Use Of Family
Planning By Young Married Girls:
A Case Study Of Kigulu, Iganga District, Uganda**

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2013/ HD03/ 1310X/ 213003413

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS
IN GENDER STUDIES OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

ABSTRACT

Young married girls' reproductive desires are strongly influenced by cultural beliefs, gendered beliefs and gendered stereotype (expectations of gendered roles) which produce gender perceptions. The belief that a girl's primary value and role in society is that of a wife or mother can impact greatly on her family planning desires and decisions. In many societies, social cultural beliefs which falls within the context of gender perception place value on girl's roles as wives and mothers at the expense of other potential roles, limiting the opportunities that are available for them.

The major objective of this study was to examine how gender perception influence access to and use of family planning services by young married girls. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collections and analysis. It covered forty respondents and one focused group discussion with an average of thirty respondents and ten key informants.

Study findings revealed that(100%) all respondents have heard and have knowledge about family planning services. The study further indicates that girls in child marriage who seek family planning services mainly face the challenge of the long line at the health facility, limited stocks, lack of money to transport themselves to the hospital (Boda Boda fare is from 3000 shillings - 5000 shillings)and walking long distances (10-15 km) from their homes to the health facility. Statistics show that 77% of young married girls use family planning secretly without the knowledge of their spouses because their husbands are not interested in family planning services while 5% of them use it with the knowledge of their husbands. These young married girls identified the need to sensitise their spouses, community, religious and traditional leaders about family planning and its benefits. There is also a need for the government, local and international NGO to restock the existing health service facility within Kigulu because these girls walk miles from their homes and before some get to the family planning centers, stocks are finished, the facility is closed or there is a long queue. Although the study was carried out successfully, some challenges were language barriers and participants were afraid to be recorded citing that their husbands will hear their voices on radio and it will cause problem for them. To conclude, cultural beliefs, gendered beliefs and gendered stereotype (expectations of gendered roles) which produce gender perceptions have negative impacts on young married girls accessing and utilizing family planning in Kigulu, Iganga District.