

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Recent Advances, Future Directions

Volume I

Editors

Chander P. Puri
Paul F.A. Van Look

Associate Editors

Geetanjali Sachdeva
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Preface

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, close to 180 nations not only reemphasized the need for reducing the population growth rate but also endorsed an altogether new strategy to stabilize human numbers. Specifically, ICPD viewed the population issue in relation to overall development and human rights. It placed people at the centre of development and suggested that demographic as well as human rights would be achieved if: (i) people were informed of the advantages of small family size; the health risks of unwanted pregnancies and of pregnancies that come too early, too close or too late; and the risks associated with unsafe abortions, performed by unqualified persons and/or under unhygienic conditions; and (ii) if people could be assured of the survival of their infants and were provided with a variety of effective contraceptive options. The ICPD meeting closed with a strong hope that “we have succeeded in our wildest dreams” and “the world is never going to be the same after Cairo.”

The comprehensive approach to reproductive health put forward in Cairo was viewed as a necessary response to expanding needs arising from, among others, increased demand for family planning, greater awareness of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality, and a growing burden of reproductive ill-health resulting from reproductive tract infections, cancers of the reproductive organs, sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, infertility and the adverse effects of gender-based violence.

While the concept of comprehensive reproductive health care is generally well-understood and accepted, the translation of the concept into actual practice is not always so evident. Unless we conduct a periodic review of our reproductive health programmes and critically assess progress, we may fail to detect delays—and the reasons behind them—and find ourselves lagging behind the targets scheduled for the year 2015, i.e. 20-years post Cairo.

The present International Conference on Reproductive Health was therefore organized jointly by the Indian Society for the Study of Reproduction and Fertility, and the UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research

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The two volumes of this book present a critical review of the research and service delivery done on various aspects of sexual and reproductive health throughout the world. Issues addressed in these volumes relate to fertility regulation, unwanted pregnancies and abortion, safe motherhood, reproductive health care, reproductive tract infections and sexually transmitted infections, menopause and hormone replacement therapy, infertility, the socio-cultural context of reproductive health and country-specific experiences in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action.

The papers on these topics highlight the breadth and content of all the research conducted and programmes implemented; in addition, the papers also highlight the existing gaps in knowledge.

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