



PLANNED PREGNANCIES AND PARENTHOOD

BACKGROUND

The ICM code of ethics supports the right of every woman for self-determination, self-governance and informed decision making. Therefore, it is every woman's right to decide on the right time, number and spacing of her pregnancies considering the health and wellbeing of herself and her family's. Furthermore there is evidence now that planned pregnancies have better health outcomes for mothers and neonates. This is important for ICM's goal to achieve safe motherhood, quality of midwifery care and reduction of risk and adverse events in midwifery care. Thus, to ensure the right of every woman for informed choices and self-governance as well as for better health outcomes ICM aims to support women's right for planned pregnancies and parenthood.

Fundamental to the rights of a woman is her ability to plan her pregnancies, and that, in the interests of her own health and wellbeing, and that of her family; she should play a full and equal part with her partner in determining the number and spacing of their children. To enable her, with confidence, to effect the choices about her childbearing, and to prevent unwanted pregnancies she should have access to appropriate knowledge and adequate services. The Confederation further believes that the midwife, by virtue of her education, sphere of practice and unique relationship with women and their families is in an ideal position to provide the information, services and support which women need in planning their families, as well as to influence the type of services which are available to them.

POSITION

The ICM supports the right of women to control their pregnancies, and takes every opportunity at regulatory, educational, and political level to enhance this right by:

- recommending midwives to have and update evidence-based knowledge, skills, and women-friendly philosophy regarding family planning
- being proactive and take every opportunity to improve own education, women's health education, regulations, policies and services in order to provide women with the appropriate knowledge and resources to achieve planned pregnancies
- participating in the strategic planning, provision and evaluation of services which enable women to plan their pregnancies and prevent unwanted
- ensuring that all women have available to them family planning services which are appropriate, accessible, cost-effective (or free of charge), and women-friendly
- providing quality advice and support to women in a way and at a level which is relevant to their needs
- empowering women to make decisions in fear-less environments
- strengthening midwives role in pre-conceptual health education for adolescent and school age groups to prevent unplanned and adolescent pregnancies
- ensuring that services are effective, efficient and accountable to women and public through: midwives evidence-based and continuous education and practice, having the available resources, being able to prescribe contraceptive and examinations relevant to plan their pregnancies, supported by women-friendly clinical guidelines (not medicalized)
- influencing governments, regulation, policies, organizations to promote the right of women for planned pregnancies

RECOMMENDATIONS

Midwives Associations are urged to use and disseminate this statement and are further urged to:

- take an active role in supporting the development of appropriate services for women which enable them to plan their pregnancies and prevent unwanted pregnancies
- seek to influence the education of midwives to ensure that they have the evidence-based knowledge, understanding and appropriate skills to meet the needs of women in planning their pregnancies

RELATED ICM DOCUMENTS

ICM International Code of Ethics for Midwives (2008)

ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice (2011)

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Report of the International Conference on Population and Development; Cairo, 5-13 September 1994

WHO. (2006) Report of a WHO Technical Consultation on Birth Spacing. Geneva, Switzerland, 13–15 June 2005

Adopted at Manila International Council meeting, 1999

Reviewed and endorsed at Durban International Council meeting, 2011

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This Position Statement supersedes the "Planned Parenthood 90/5"