

Baseline Study: Family Planning Among Iraqi Refugees in Amman, Jordan

A Study Conducted by UNHCR,
Women's Refugee Commission and CDC

June – August 2011

REPORT FOR COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS

WHO ARE WE?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) leads and coordinates international action to protect refugees and their rights worldwide.

The Women's Refugee Commission is an advocacy organization based in New York, United States (U.S.). It advocates for changes in laws, policies and programs to improve the lives and protect the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children and young people.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a U.S. government agency. The CDC has a Division of Reproductive Health that addresses the reproductive health of refugees and internally displaced persons in emergency and post-emergency settings.

WHY DID WE COME TO AMMAN?

We visited Jordan to examine the extent to which Iraqi refugees use family planning services in Amman. We wanted to learn about what the Iraqi people think about family planning and whether they are able to obtain contraceptives; how many people use them; and what family planning services are available to them in health facilities.



Training of household survey interviewers.

FAMILY PLANNING AND REFUGEES

Family planning is the ability of individuals and couples to anticipate and have their desired number of children. It is also the ability for them to choose the space between their children through use of contraceptive methods. Under international human rights law, access to family planning is a human right. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) says all individuals and couples have the “right to decide on the number, spacing and timing of children.” The Programme of Action from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development also notes the right of couples and individuals “to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so.”

WHAT DID WE DO DURING OUR VISIT?

One member of the Women's Refugee Commission visited Amman for eight weeks in June and July 2011. She and a team of 6 community members interviewed 410 women of reproductive age (15-49 years). They also met with 107 men, women and adolescent girls and boys in group discussions, and interviewed refugee community leaders to learn about their thoughts on family planning. They also visited seven health facilities and interviewed health care workers about the services they offer.

By listening to people in Amman, we learned directly about their thoughts and experiences. We are grateful to have met with them and for their permission to let us share the information and stories in a responsible way.



Adolescent focus group discussion.

WHAT DID WE LEARN DURING OUR VISIT?

We learned that 21.4% of women of reproductive age currently use a method of contraception. The most commonly used methods are withdrawal ('azl), a method by which the man removes his penis before ejaculation; oral contraceptive pills, pills a woman takes every day; and the intrauterine device (IUD).

We also learned that while knowledge of family planning methods is high among adults, adolescents and unmarried people know very little about reproductive health due to cultural norms. In addition, very few people have heard of emergency hormonal contraception or female condoms.

We heard that one problem Iraqi refugees in Amman have is accessing family planning services. Out of the seven facilities we visited, three did not provide any family planning methods.

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW?

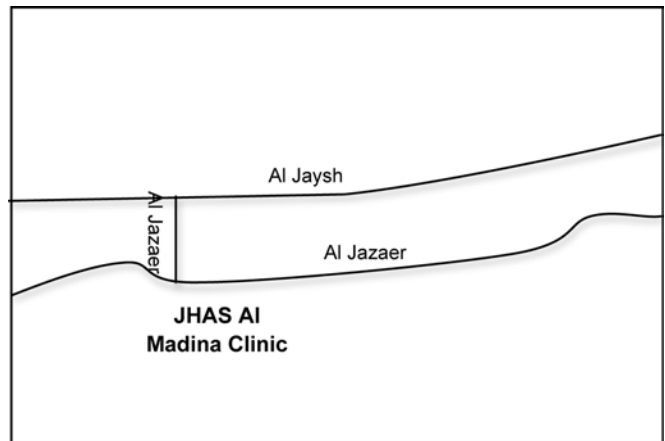
The Women's Refugee Commission and UNHCR will share these findings and recommendations to improve family planning services for Iraqi refugees. Some of the recommendations are:

- Help community-based health workers inform the Iraqi refugee community about the benefits of family planning and where to go for family planning services.
- Make sure that more family planning methods are consistently available, including implants.

- Provide education about family planning to refugees at all health facilities, even if family planning methods are not available at every facility. Clinics that do not provide family planning methods or education should give referrals to other clinics if clients want more information.
- Increase the capacity of staff to insert IUDs, and support in-service training at government public health centres.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WORK?

To learn more about family planning referrals and information in Amman, go to JHAS Al Madina Clinic, behind Raghadan Station, 06-465-1722, open 8am-11pm 7 days a week. For family planning methods, go to any government public health care centre. For other questions, contact Rana Tannous at the UNHCR Public Health Office, at 06-5502140/1.



To learn more about the Women's Refugee Commission's advocacy on behalf of displaced women, children and youth, visit www.womensrefugeecommission.org or contact us at info@wrcommission.org.

Photographs: Women's Refugee Commission/Michelle Connelly.

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