

➤ ***Stigma as a barrier to Family Planning among young women in Accra and Kumasi***

This is a two year project being undertaken by Dr. Abu Manu in collaboration with Professor Richard Adanu (School of Public Health), Dr. Kelli Hall (University of Michigan), Professor. Vanessa Dalton (University of Michigan) and Dr. Emmanuel Morhe (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology). Adolescent unintended pregnancy rate is high in Ghana and contribute to a host of adverse consequences including maternal mortality. Despite awareness of and perceived access to family planning methods and services in Ghana, the prevalence of modern contraception remains low. While many determinants of contraceptive non-use and unintended pregnancy have been researched, little is known about whether and how social stigma, that is, negative attitudes and perceived norms of adolescent sexuality, contraception, pregnancy, childbearing, and abortion, shapes family planning experiences among young women in Ghana. This study examines stigma as a barrier to modern contraception and family planning service utilization among young women aged 15-24 years. Society for Family Planning, USA is providing funds of USD 50,638 for this study.

- The first phase of the study consisted of qualitative work to provide a more in-depth understanding of young women's experiences with reproductive health-related stigma was completed last year. Findings from the first phase informed the development of a formal sexual and reproductive health stigma survey for phase two. The survey deployed electronic data collection technique via qualtrics. Data collection started in February 2015 and ended in June 2015. Over 1,000 adolescent and young adult women in 5 Ghana Health Service health facilities, 5 secondary schools, and 2 universities in Kumasi and Accra were interviewed.
- The data will be analyzed to assess relationships between social stigma and our primary outcomes of interest - modern contraceptive use and family planning service utilization. We hope that this study will provide a more broad understanding of the individual, community, and systems-level determinants of young Ghanaian women's reproductive health. The findings will be used to inform subsequent larger intervention studies to increase modern contraception uptake and reduce adolescent unintended pregnancy in the African sub-region.