

## **A Study on The Development of Family Planning Services in China: From Family Planning to Reproductive Health/Family Health Care**

Key Words: family planning, reproductive health, family health care

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**Background:** During the past 30 years, China's national family planning program has accelerated the pace of fertility transition and, after the 1994 ICPD, made a significant shift from focusing solely on population control to promoting reproductive health and family health care. We conducted a nationwide survey by historically reviewing the fertility data and analyzing the evolution of service expansion during the transition period.

**Method:** 6 provinces were first selected as study sites that represent different services model based on their administrative style and scope of service expansion. Then, one county was randomly selected in each province. Regular data collection, documents review, focus group discussion and field visit and observation are applied to evaluate the service development by comparing the results of the survey data within each county and between counties. The survey was conducted between June and August, 2009.

**Results:** Given a strong impulse of national family planning policy, China's family planning service system has made a rapid development through its services for the people of reproductive ages. The results show that the service system has experienced its first shift from contraceptive services to reproductive health services from year 1995 to year 2005. In early new century, the family planning service system in rural China has encountered some difficulties for its sustainable development. The people at reproductive ages have been gradually decreasing and the requirement for contraceptive operations is going down inevitably in most areas of China. The traditional target population for using contraceptives is getting smaller. In order to solve these new population problems and meet people's needs, the service system in rural China starts to initiate its second shift from reproductive health services to reproductive health/family health care services, particularly the service expansion for the middle-age and elderly people through family health promotion. Since year 2005, the national program focused on "service capacity building for reproductive health and family health care services" and many local programs have made a great success for this innovative shift.

**Conclusions:** .The shift is explained by four important factors of China's successful reduction of fertility to below replacement levels in the early 1990s, the external force

of the 1994 ICPD, the internal reformation force of the Quality of Care and the rapid growth of elderly population. It is evident that China's family planning program has been undergoing a significant development from target-oriented services to client-oriented, comprehensive reproductive health and family health care services.