REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS AWARENESS OF THE RURAL-TO-URBAN MIGRANTS IN YUNNAN, CHINA

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ABSTRACT

The current reproductive health services for the rural-to-urban migrants (RUMs) need to be urgently improved in Yunnan and China. This cross-sectional study based on multistage stratified sampling was conducted in Xishan County, an urban area of Kunming City, Yunan Province, in the year 2006, to explore the extent of awareness of reproductive health rights (RHRs) amongst the RUMs, and to examine its associated factors and possible determinants. The study samples were 519 migrants who had lived in Xishan County for more than three months, aged 18–49, interviewed by semi-structured questionnaire and scenario analysis. In-depth interviews and non-participant observation supplemented this study.

The results revealed that the majority of the RUMs (56.6%) lacked awareness of the RHRs. Significant differences were identified among the six specific items of the RHRs. Awareness of the right to information is relatively higher, while awareness of the right to access to reproductive health services is quite low. Although all at a very low level, significant difference were recognized in the awareness of the RHRs among the subgroups of the RUMs by sex, age, marital status, education, monthly income, occupation, and exposure to media (P < 0.05), generally speaking, the higher socio-economical and educational level, the higher awareness of the RHRs. Having new friends in destination urban area and keeping a reasonable connection with fellows from the same resource rural area demonstrated a positive factor to understand the RHRs for the RUMs. Moreover, in the case of providing the same services, reproductive health clients’ perceived acceptance of communication with reproductive health providers decreased with the increasing level of their awareness of the RHRs.

The regression analysis revealed that the variables significantly affected the RUMs’ awareness of RHRs includes education, occupation, and friends’ support, and knowledge of reproductive health related preventive practices.

The study recommends an advocacy and educational campaign targeting migrants to arouse awareness of the RHRs should be conducted immediately. Female migrants, especially housewives, illiterates and those with elementary educational level, and low-income unskilled workers or waiters should be given prior consideration in awareness raising campaigns. Further study is needed to better figure out the interesting connection between awareness of the RHRs and knowledge of reproductive health related preventive practices.

KEY WORDS: MIGRANTS / AWARENESS / REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH / RIGHTS / CHINA

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