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Global knowledge/local bodies: Family planning service providers' interpretations of contraceptive knowledge(s)

Lisa Ann Richey

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Abstract

Contraceptive technologies and the knowledges that are constructed around them are simultaneously global and local. Family planning methods in the context of international development interventions are interpreted and understood as part of the relationship between meanings that are at once embodied and remote. While quality of care issues have been raised over nearly two decades, the interactive relationship between policy/program, supply, and interpersonal relations in forming identities has not been analyzed. This paper is based on two years of qualitative fieldwork conducted in Tanzania over a period between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s. It will examine Tanzanian service providers' perceptions of contraceptives to shed light on questions of local level dissemination of population knowledge(s) and shaping of identities. The findings suggest that the family planning program serves in a process of differentiation between two groups of "local" women: the service providers and their clients. This differentiation subsequently shapes the implementation of the family planning program.

Author's affiliation

[Lisa Ann Richey](#)

Roskilde University, Denmark

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