

The State Of Women's Reproductive Health And The Main Factors Affecting It

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Annotation. This article analyzes the medical and social factors affecting women's reproductive health during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), during the pandemic, healthcare systems were under excessive pressure, which created serious challenges in ensuring women's sexual and reproductive rights. The study found that women's reproductive health is closely related to economic, social, and demographic factors, and that during the Covid-19 pandemic, their lifestyle, psychological state, sexual activity, and overall health were significantly influenced by stress factors.

Keywords: Covid-19, reproductive age, risk, women's health.

Introduction. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasized that "all countries must strike a balance between protecting health, reducing economic and social disruption, and respecting human rights." Because healthcare systems were under heavy strain, countries were required to implement not only direct response measures to Covid-19 but also strategic planning and coordinated actions to preserve essential medical services. While some healthcare services became more difficult to access, women's sexual and reproductive health rights and choices had to be respected regardless of the pandemic situation.

According to WHO, reproductive health is not merely the absence of disease or dysfunction of the reproductive system, but a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being concerning the reproductive system and its functions [2,3]. The state of reproductive health, including that of the general population, depends on economic, social, and environmental factors.

Reproductive health is an integral part of general health and a fundamental determinant of human development. It reflects the level of health in childhood and adolescence and forms the foundation of health in the reproductive period, influencing intergenerational health outcomes. Therefore, the role of reproductive health is of great significance. Fertility rates are linked not only to the current health status but also to the well-being of future generations.

Improving reproductive health within families reduces infertility and unwanted pregnancies, thereby preventing family conflicts, divorces, and the breakdown of marriages [2,4]. Consequently, enhancing reproductive health as an essential component of national health should be a top priority for both the government and the healthcare system.

According to WHO, reproductive health implies complete physical and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system, its functions, and processes. It is also closely connected to society's attitude toward women and their social role.

In modern socio-demographic conditions, abortion remains one of the most critical issues in the preservation and restoration of women's reproductive potential.

The prevalence of abortion reflects reproductive awareness, behavioral patterns, and the overall health culture of the population [3,5].

Sexual function is an essential aspect of human life and is as fundamental as sleep and nutrition. It can manifest at any age or stage of sexual activity and is a crucial determinant of quality of life. Sexual dysfunction significantly reduces the quality of life for many women and often remains underdiagnosed and untreated.

Currently, data on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women's sexual function remain limited and inconclusive. A review of the literature shows that changes in lifestyle, social isolation, and decreased income during the pandemic have acted as major stressors, negatively affecting women's reproductive and sexual health.

Some studies have reported an increase in libido and sexual desire, while others have shown a decrease. Although sexual activity declined by less than 40%, most studies indicated a reduction in orgasm frequency and satisfaction levels. These variations differ across countries and ethnic groups. In Uzbekistan, no comprehensive studies on this issue have yet been conducted.

Relevance of the Study. Coronavirus (Covid-19) is caused by the novel SARS-CoV-2 strain identified in 2019. Its main symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. On March 11, 2020, WHO declared Covid-19 a pandemic. As of January 22, 2021, more than 98 million cases had been reported worldwide.

According to WHO, the clinical course of Covid-19 does not differ significantly between pregnant and non-pregnant women. However, data on its effects on fertility and pregnancy outcomes remain insufficient. A systematic review published in the *British Medical Journal* in September 2020 analyzed 77 studies involving 13,118 pregnant and 83,486 non-pregnant women. The results showed that pregnant or recently delivered women were more likely to be admitted to intensive care units compared to other women of reproductive age [6].

Reproductive health encompasses sexual, physical, and psychosocial development as well as mental balance. Reproductive disorders directly affect the health of future generations. This issue is particularly relevant among young women due to limited family planning awareness and inadequate access to health education. The disruption of women's healthcare education systems has further exacerbated this situation. Therefore, urgent state-level measures are required to restore and strengthen women's reproductive health.

Aim of the Study. To develop scientifically based recommendations for strengthening reproductive health among women of reproductive age during the Covid-19 pandemic through the analysis of their medical and social characteristics.

Objectives of the Study.

1. To analyze the medical and demographic indicators of women's reproductive health at the regional level;
2. To study the medical and social characteristics of women of reproductive age during the Covid-19 pandemic;
3. To assess the current state of reproductive health and the main factors affecting it;
4. To develop evidence-based recommendations and comprehensive therapeutic and organizational measures to improve women's reproductive health.

Discussion. The study revealed that the Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected not only global healthcare systems but also women's reproductive health. Limited access to medical services, strict quarantine measures, economic instability, and social isolation led to an increase in stress, depression, and anxiety among women.

These psychological factors, in turn, contributed to reproductive health problems such as menstrual irregularities, increased infertility risks, and complications during pregnancy.

Furthermore, during the pandemic, healthcare resources were largely redirected toward Covid-19 patients, leading to a decline in preventive reproductive services, prenatal care, and scheduled medical check-ups. Socially, women experienced higher unemployment rates, increased domestic violence, and weakened social support systems, which collectively had a negative impact on their general well-being.

The study also found a decline in adherence to a healthy lifestyle, reduced physical activity, and the rise of unhealthy eating habits among women during the pandemic. These factors directly affected reproductive system function, causing hormonal imbalances and elevating pregnancy-related risk factors. Consequently, the protection of women's reproductive health should be considered a priority at the national health policy level.

Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrate that the Covid-19 pandemic had a complex and multifaceted impact on women's reproductive health. This influence manifested through medical, social, psychological, and economic factors, significantly affecting women's physical and mental well-being. The following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Restriction of reproductive health services during the pandemic reduced access to prenatal care, gynecological examinations, and contraceptive resources. As a result, pregnancy complications increased, and postpartum monitoring was often neglected, heightening risks for both mothers and newborns.
2. Economic and social instability negatively affected women's quality of life, increasing stress and anxiety levels. Unemployment, income loss, and social isolation led to emotional distress, disrupting hormonal balance and reproductive function.
3. The rise in domestic and gender-based violence during the pandemic emerged as a major social and hygienic threat to women's health. Psychological trauma and insufficient social support directly harmed reproductive well-being.
4. Future strategic directions must focus on protecting women's reproductive health in crisis situations through an integrated public health approach. This should include telemedicine, remote counseling, psychological support programs, health promotion initiatives, and stable access to essential healthcare services.

In conclusion, the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic underscores the need for a systematic approach, strong social protection mechanisms, and coordinated healthcare infrastructure to safeguard women's reproductive health. Therefore, in future epidemic or crisis conditions, the protection and promotion of women's health should remain a top priority in national health policy.

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