REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND HIV/AIDS AWARENESS AMONG NEWLY MARRIED UNEDUCATED EGYPTIAN COUPLES

W. Saleh¹, S. Gamaleldin²

¹. Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt
². Department of Andrology & Sexology, Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt

Objective: To assess the awareness of newly married uneducated couples regarding a number of reproductive health issues and HIV/AIDS. Also determine the sources of their reproductive health and HIV/AIDS knowledge.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted from January 2012 to January 2013. One hundred and fifty (150) newly married Egyptian couples – within first year of marriage that didn’t receive formal education - were selected by purposive random sampling and interviewed through an in-depth private questionnaire.

Results: Premarital counseling was rare (8-10.7%) while premarital testing was often not conducted (57.3-58.7%) among the study group. Awareness about HIV/AIDS was relatively high (78-85.3%). However, all couples were not aware about all the modes of transmission. Condom was ever used by 16-24% of the couples. Almost none of the study group was aware of the public free HIV/AIDS hotline. TV and friends were the main sources of reproductive health knowledge prior to marriage for the husband and wife. The third main source of knowledge was family for the wife and the internet for the husband.

Key Conclusions
Premarital counseling was rare while premarital testing was often not conducted among the study group. It is necessary to enforce routine premarital counseling and testing in Egypt.
HIV/AIDS awareness was relatively high. However, most couples aren’t aware about all the modes of transmission. Condom was ever used by less than 25% of the couples. Mass media remains the main source of knowledge about reproductive and sexual health knowledge in Egypt.