

Sexual and reproductive health services for women in China

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Sexual and reproductive health from a development and empowerment perspective

- Development perspective: health as an important part of human capital, closely related to economic growth, individual's development, ... and poverty
- Empowerment framework: a process
Resource(service) → awareness/agency → decision/choice → take action (use service) → outcome/impact
- Women's health is not only maternal or medical issues (a "tradition" thought)
- Health is one of monitor and evaluation components of women's development plan in China in the last 4 decades
- Special attention to equality and benefit of service among different sub-groups in a fast developed society
- The role of government and related multi-sectors:
Providing service and resource, raise women's awareness, enable women to decide and make choice, and take informed voluntary action

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Health service priorities in different stages of development in China

- Early stage: training village midwife, reduced maternal mortality and under 5 mortality, especially caused by infection
- Since 1980s: prenatal health care, institutional delivery, universal family planning service
- In recent two decades: effort of full coverage of prenatal care and follow-up service after delivery, contraceptive service after delivery and after abortion
- National Health Commission: Action Plan for Safe Motherhood and Children (2018-2020), to reduce maternal health risks and safeguard maternal and child health
- Next stage: “Outline of Healthy China 2030 Plan” (2016) : health service for all through the entire life course

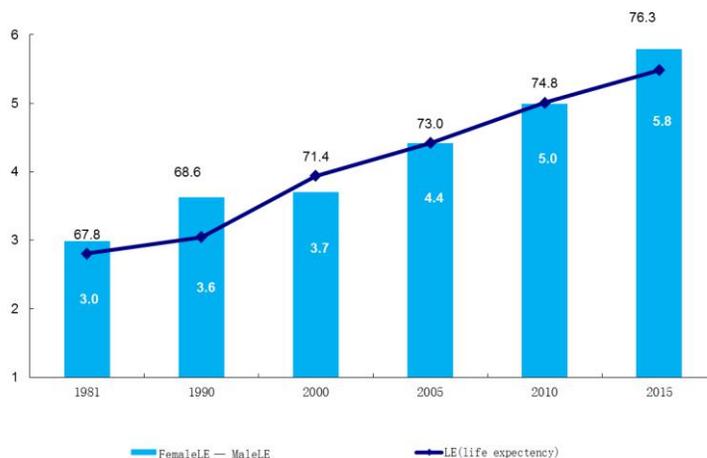
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SRH risks/challenges in different stages of life course

- Child and adolescents
 - Comprehensive knowledge, service availability
 - Prevention and self protection
- Childbearing age
 - Married: fertility regulation, childbearing, domestic violence
 - Working: workplace environment, pressure and conflict (of family and work), service information, accessibility and appropriate use
 - In poverty or low income: diagnose and treatment of STDs and other symptoms, nutrition
- 50+
 - Psychological issues, cancer screening, menopause
 - Elder women in poverty or live alone
- Targeting at higher risks in different stages, and collaborating with different departments

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Life expectancy of men and women and change in gender gap, 1981-2015



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SRH of adolescents

- Birth rate of 15-19 adolescents: about 8‰
- Proportion of unmarried 20-24 women: 74.5%
- First married couples (2010-2014) who had premarital cohabitation: about 35%
- Reproductive health education in most middle schools (>80%)
- Sexual and reproductive health education, information and technical service available in most cities
- SRH programme/project for 10-24 population by CSOs: such as China Family Planning Association (CFPA) and China Youth Network (CYN)
 - Curriculum development, training school teachers and trainers of peer education
 - Networking 257 universities nationwide



SRH of women in reproductive age

- Maternal mortality: 19.6 per 100,000 live births in 2017 (was 30.0 in 2010 and 23.2 in 2013), hospital delivery rate: 99.8% for the same year
- To realize the goal of further reduce maternal mortality to 12.0 by 2030
 - “Notice to strengthen works to ensure safe motherhood and infant” (2017) to further reduce maternal risk
 - Safe Motherhood Action Plan (2018-2020)
- Family planning education, information, and services have been widely available and accessible to people of reproductive age
- Healthy China 2030: universal practice of contraceptive use through implementation of policies on making informed choices
- Contraceptive prevalence rate in 2017: 83.8%
 - IUD (34.1%), condom (24.6%), sterilization (18.3%) and others

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SRH of “50+” women

- Regular health check-up among women only about 37~39% during 2000~2007, and mainly in cities
- Since 2009, the task of cervical cancer and breast cancer screening has been carried out nationwide, lead by the government and participated by multi-sectors in urban and rural China, with special efforts covering most rural residence
 - Initiated target: women in less developed areas or low-income women, age 35 and above
 - Currently included in government’s regular budget for people’s livelihood in many cities
 - More than 3.7 million rural women received screening during 2009~2013, among 47 thousand women with positive result, about 95% received follow-up diagnoses and treatment
- Contraceptive service needs growth among women around menopause
- SRH service to elderly women, and on psychological and cognitive issues

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Collaborative efforts targeting health risks and gaps

- **Multi-sector collaboration:** proved to be very important to service providing, service use, and satisfied outcomes, especially when resource is limited
- **Child and adolescents**
 - Education department, schools and universities, parents
 - The success stories of China Family Planning Association and China Youth Network
- **Childbearing age**
 - Government: to ensure the same service to all, especially to those who informally employed or self-employed
 - Labor department and private sectors: safe work environment and maternal/childbearing/childrearing benefits
 - A strong partner—All China Women's Federation: capacity building among low-income and most vulnerable sub-groups, and health promotion
- **50+:** CSOs related to different needs of elder women

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Challenges

- A common “narrow” sense of health, especially SRH of women
- A strong central governmental will but less satisfied attention and participation from CSOs and private sectors
- Maternal and child health often easily become a “silo” (get most of the investment, local budget and human resource) while other SRH issues neglected
- The coverage of vulnerable sub-groups in developed regions

Some recommendations

- Improve women's health in a framework of development and empowerment, mobilize all related sectors
- “Invest in health” should be a policy priority in a fast ageing society, and SRH is a very important part; must make sure that women benefited equally as men, and all sub-groups (large or small) benefited from Healthy China 2030

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Thank you
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