



SUCCESS STORY

Family planning in Haiti: Not just women’s responsibility

With support from USAID, the family planning program at Fermathe hospital offers all methods of contraception to families plan their futures.



: Photo : Gummy Dorvilmar

Sagesse Exilus in his office at Fermathe hospital, where he works as a health worker.

The family planning program is one part of the Santé pour le Développement et la Stabilité d’Haïti (SDSH) project managed by MSH and supported USAID. The family planning program is implemented at Fermathe hospital serving a population of 60,000 residents.

In Haiti, it is rare for men to choose to have a vasectomy. Many believe this method of family planning robs a man of his virility. Yet in 2009, Sagesse Exilus chose to have a vasectomy at Fermathe hospital.

“I have two children. In order to better plan their future, should I choose a family planning method,” said Sagesse Exilus.

After counseling sessions during which he was briefed on the full range of methods available. Sagesse chose to have a vasectomy. This is a minor operation that is usually done in the doctor's office or health center and usually takes no more than 30 minutes. Sagesse said he chose to have a vasectomy to better plan for the future of his two children and to be an example to other men that family planning is also men's business.

Three years later, Sagesse has not looked back. For him it was the best decision of his life. Now, He sends his children to better schools than he could have afforded if he had more children. "This operation has had a positive impact on my life. Who knows, maybe I would have one or two more children by now. I would not have enough money to secure their future."

This operation has not only changed Sagesse’s life, but his example has encouraged other men to choose vasectomy. "I told other men about my experience and as a result twenty of them have chosen to have a vasectomy," said Sagesse.

In February 2008, SDSH project began working with Fermathe hospital to establish a modern approach to promote the use of family planning methods in the community. Education and awareness-raising activities by trained community health agents enabled women and their partners to develop awareness of harmful traditional practices and beliefs and correct knowledge of modern family planning methods.

