months of their previous delivery.8

Before the birthspacing program was initia
ted, the main source of information about
men’s attitudes toward family planning was
a brief quantitative survey carried out in
1985 to follow up on a 1983 survey of mar-
rried women. The results showed that 53%
of husbands believed that God determines
how many children a family will have and
that husbands were less knowledgeable
than their wives about contraceptive meth-
ods. Furthermore, the findings revealed
that the majority of husbands in Jordan held
negative attitudes toward contraception
and had no desire to regulate their fertility.9

In 1995, two years after the birthspacing
program was established, the JNPC con-
ducted a qualitative study exploring Jor-
danian men’s and women’s attitudes and
practices concerning family planning.10
Findings from 24 focus-group discussions
held throughout the country revealed that
respondents typically defined family plan-
ing as “a deliberate decision to limit all fu-
ture births.” Most said that economic con-
siderations were the main reason that they
used (or intended to use) family planning,
although some cited the ability to provide
a good quality of life for their children as the
most pressing reason for wanting to limit their
family size. Echoing other research
findings, many men opposed their wives’
use of contraceptives—some because they
feared negative health consequences,11 others
because of religious or cultural reasons,12
but the majority because they believed that
women have no right to make reproductive-
related decisions on their own.13

However, a 1996 survey of 1,000 men
and 1,000 women throughout the nation re-
vealed that 74% of men approved of fam-
ily planning. Men aged 25–44 had higher
approval rates than other age-groups.
When asked about the degree to which
they concurred with seven attitudinal state-
ments about outcomes of family planning
use, men who had ever used a method
recorded significantly more positive views
than never-users. The survey results also
indicated that communication between
partners is significantly associated with
contraceptive use; male current users were
twice as likely as never-users to have dis-
cussed contraception with their wives.14

Data and Sample

This article presents descriptive statistics
and results of chi-square analyses of data
gathered as part of a general male sur-
vey conducted to examine men’s knowl-
ledge, attitudes and practices regarding
birthspacing and the use of contraceptives.
The sample consisted of 241 husbands of
women delivering between February 1996
and October 1997 in three hospitals in
Amman (Jordan University Hospital, Al-
Basheer Hospital and the Royal Medical
Services). Potential respondents had to
be available, including 26% who called for
a special television program addressing
issues related to male contraceptives.

When asked about their readiness to use
male contraceptives, 28% of respondents
voiced their willingness to do so (not
shown). While 33% said they would use a
method if their wives were unable for med-
ical reasons to use any female contracep-
tives, 60% said they would not use a method
in such circumstances, and 15% said that
they did not know what they would do.

Men’s educational level had a significant
effect on many of these measures. Seventy-
three percent of men with at least a sec-
dary education defined birthspacing as
“planning for pregnancies,” while 60% of
their less-educated counterparts defined it

Results

Knowledge Measures
In all, 98% of respondents said they had
heard about the concept of birthspacing
(Table 1). However, only 40% correctly de-

defined it as “planning for pregnancies”; 42% mistakenly thought it means “deliv-
ering a smaller number of children,” and
10% said that it means “using contracep-
tives to prevent pregnancy.”

Although 69% of respondents were
aware of the presence of some male con-
traceptives on the market, 60% opposed
the marketing of male methods. Some 70%
did not know of any source of information
about male contraceptives; 35% stated that
media and information programs should be
available, including 26% who called for

Table 1. Percentage distribution of men, by re-

tponses to questions about birthspacing and


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of the word “birthspacing”?</td>
<td>97.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>97.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does “birthspacing” mean to you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using contraceptives</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for pregnancies</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering a smaller number of children</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know of the presence of any male contraceptives on the market?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that male contraceptives should be present (marketed)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Do you know of any source of information about contraceptives that is
  focused only toward men?                                              |       |
| Yes                                                                     | 30.3  |
| No                                                                      | 69.7  |
| Which of the following media can be the best source of information to
  you about male contraceptives?                                         |       |
| Radio                                                                   | 9.1   |
| Television                                                             | 25.7  |
| Lectures/seminars                                                      | 3.4   |
| Brochures                                                              | 7.9   |
| More than one method                                                    | 45.6  |
| No response                                                             | 8.3   |
| Total                                                                  | 100.0 |

*One dinar is equivalent to U.S. $1.44.