

PREFERENCE IN CONTRACEPTION AND ATTRIBUTING FACTORS BEHIND IT AMONG WOMEN PRESENTING TO FAMILY PLANNING CENTER IN A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To study the frequency of use of contraception and the preferred method of contraception among women presenting in family planning center in Jinnah hospital Lahore.

Method: A total of 500 women were randomly selected by convenient sampling. These women presented at family planning center in Jinnah hospital. This family planning center provides services for 6 days in a week for five hours daily. The women were interviewed on a structured questionnaire and prior consent for interview was taken from each participant.

Results: The majority of women had awareness about the use of different available contraceptive methods. The awareness about using condoms as contraceptive was highest up to 98% whereas awareness about hormonal implants was the least known method known to them less than 2 %. The most common method of contraception practiced was condoms in about 41% whereas the least used method was implanon 0.6%. Women shared different reasons for not using contraceptive methods the foremost reason was lack of availability of contraception in 28% whereas only 11% did not use contraceptive due to fear of its side effects. As regards the knowledge about side effects of different contraceptive methods 48% were aware about the side effects with condoms and least awareness about the side effects of hormonal implants about 0.4%. The source of information regarding use of contraceptive methods was received from the family planning centers about 48% and least from newspaper about 2%.

Conclusion: The women have knowledge about common contraceptive methods like condoms, injectable and oral contraceptive pills but least knowledge about hormonal implants. The knowledge about side effects of the contraceptives is very poor. The main barrier in using contraception is the lack of availability of contraceptive method of choice. The most common source of information about contraceptive use comes from the family planning centers and media is still lagging behind to spread contraceptive advice.

Key Words: Contraception, women, preference, attributing factors

INTRODUCTION

Family planning continues to be a fundamental element of the reproductive health programmes specified in international law¹. It persists as an essential component of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for the continuousness of still uncompleted affair of Millennium development goals. Developing countries have made significant progress towards achieving MDGs although this progress varies grossly among various countries and regions². MDG 4 and 5 are related to the reproductive health³⁻⁴. The developed countries achieved birth control through effective contraceptive practices whereas the developing countries are still struggling to control their growth rate. In developing countries, International federations and governmental bodies are trying to introduce various policies at regional level and effective implementation of these interventions will lead to national health and

development planning for the next twenty years of these countries by reducing the number of induced miscarriages, unwanted pregnancies with inherent risk of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality⁵⁻⁶. Various studies in developing countries over the last 20 years have revealed that contraceptive preference and use is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include demographic features, education and religious beliefs of couple, socio economic status and awareness about contraception⁷. Other attributing factors include source of motivation, media support, availability of contraception, quality of information provided by health professional, fear of side effects, cost of contraception, gender preference among children and family support⁸⁻⁹. Baseline knowledge about contraceptive effectiveness is also inadequate among women¹⁰. All over the globe, approximately 222 million women living in developing

countries would prefer to delay or cease child bearing instead of practicing contraception¹¹.

Pakistan has a high growth rate of 2.5%¹². A large number of factors is responsible for the humongous increase in population like illiteracy, poverty, early marriages along with lack of knowledge as well as lack of access to available contraceptive methods. Different studies show that despite the desire of women to space their pregnancies, the contraceptive needs are usually unmet.

This study was designed to look into the contraceptive practices of women, their preference regarding different methods and also knowledge about the side effects of different methods.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This was a descriptive study conducted in the outdoor department of family planning center at Jinnah hospital Lahore. A total of 500 women were randomly selected during a period of ten months from January 2014 to October 2014. The exclusion criteria were women who came from rural area and those did not want to be part of the study. The questions were designed in the form of structured interview. The interviews were conducted by trained group of senior post graduate students. The information was gathered on predesigned Proforma. The information included age, parity and level of education. The knowledge about available contraceptive methods, preferred method, knowledge about side effects, reasons for using a preferred method and the source from where they first got to know about the method were also recorded. The results were analyzed and inferences were drawn in form of frequency tables and percentages. Ethical permission was taken from the concerned authorities of the institute before conducting the study.

RESULTS

The results show that the age of women presenting to family planning center were highest 26.6 % within 26 to 30 years whereas 5.2% women were upto 20 years. 11.4% women had not gone to school ever, however 48.4% women did go to school but only up to fifth grade. The parity of the women shows that only 9.4% of the women look for contraception after one child, majority 35.8% go for contraception after 2 to 4 child births.

The most preferred method of contraception was condoms in 41.8% of the women whereas the least preferred method was hormonal implant in 0.6% of the women. In 28.2% of the women, lack of access to the contraceptive method was the most important reason for not using any contraceptive method. The source of

motivation to use contraception was family planning center in 48% of the women whereas only 23 % were motivated by media. The women were aware about the side effects of different methods of contraception, 43% knew about side effects of condoms like allergies whereas only 0.4 % were aware about side effects of hormonal implants.

Figure1: Distribution of study subjects by demographic characteristics; age and educational status

Variables	Number of respondents	Percent
Age in years		
Upto 20 Years	26	5.2
21 to 25 years	129	25.8
26 to 30 years	133	26.6
31 to 35 years	104	20.8
36 to 40 years	76	15.2
41 to 43 years	32	6.4
Educational status		
No education	57	11.4
Primary	242	48.4
Secondary	110	22
Bachelors	37	7.4

Figure 2: Distribution of parity of study subjects

Parity	No. of respondents	Percent
One	47	9.4
2 to 4	179	35.8
5 to 7	162	32.4
More than 7	112	22.4

Figure 3: Frequency of preferred method of contraception by study subjects

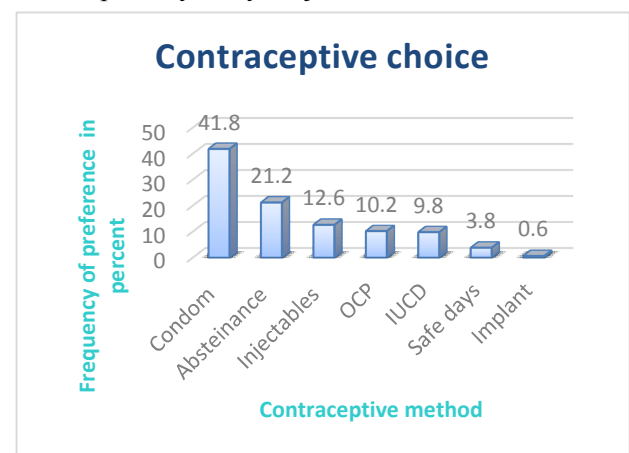


Figure 4: Attributory factors for avoiding contraception by the study subjects

Attributory Factors	Number of respondents	Percent
Religious concern	31	6.2
Lack of knowledge	103	20.6
Lack of access	141	28.2
Not allowed by family	102	20.4
Cost of method	64	12.8
Fear of side effects	59	11.8

Figure 5: Various motivational sources for contraception among the study subjects

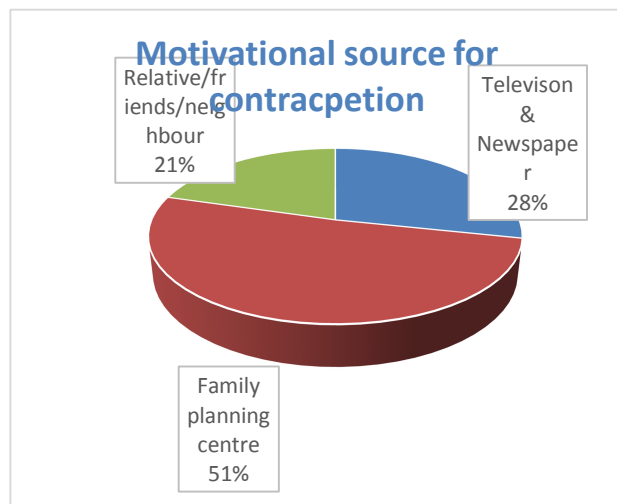


Figure 6: Knowledge about side effects of contraceptive method among the study subjects

Method for contraception	No. of respondents	Percent
Condoms	197	43
Injectable	116	23.2
Oral contraceptive pills	47	9.4
Intrauterine device	70	14
Hormonal implants	2	0.4
Female Sterilization	34	6.8

DISCUSSION

The use of contraception in Pakistan remains at a sub optimal level, whereas there is data to suggest an increase in the use of contraception in urban as compared to the rural area, but this remains insufficient. This study was conducted to look into different aspects regarding knowledge and contraceptive practices of women presenting in Jinnah hospital family planning center. Jinnah hospital is one of the largest public sector hospitals which cater health care services to middle and poor socioeconomic urban population.

The largest number of women was within 26 to 30 years of age seeking contraception, already having up to four children. The extreme age groups were teenage and 43 years. This shows the trend of marriage is at young age and child bearing even after 40 years. Most of the women have their desired number of children before 30 years of age. This finding is in contrast to most studies from developed countries.

The education level of women indicated that most of them had attended school at least up to fifth grade. They could easily read and understand the information available in pamphlets or posters. The women who never went to school were not able to read the available information thus making them dependent on others to provide information to them.

The most preferred method of contraception found in this study was condoms. In a study done by Haider Rashid Mannan in 2002 also revealed that condom was most preferred method of contraception in Bangladesh¹³. Women thought it was good because the husband was responsible to use it effectively and the availability was easier besides being at an affordable price. This also shows that the women like husband to cooperate and communicate with their wives to choose contraception. This also shows that men wish for contraception and spacing their children. Other studies also show that woman's interaction in her family, autonomous decision influence contraceptive use but on the other hand quality of counseling by health care provider can play a role in decision making process to some extent¹⁴. Rise of condom use signify positive male attitude towards family planning, who were always dominant in decision making concerning to women's fertility and birth spacing in Pakistan¹⁵. Mass media campaigns have played crucial role in promotion of family planning in this study, which is already well-established worldwide¹⁶.

The least preferred method was hormonal implants, the sole reason was they hardly had any knowledge about the method and the availability was limited. Surprisingly oral contraceptive pill was not a favored method of contraception despite its easy availability and affordable price. Most women were apprehensive to use pills as they had fixed idea that it would lead to marked weight gain and hamper further conception if they desire it in future. Women preferred injectable hormones over the oral contraceptive pill because of its single dose being effective.

The reason given by majority of women for not using contraception was lack of access to contraceptive methods. They had no means to get the preferred contraceptive for their use. Surprisingly a very small number had religious concern for not using

contraception, most of them believed in spacing or limiting their family was according to their religious believes. To make the usage of contraceptive methods socially acceptable, the religious leader's help can be sought by the policy makers to run campaigns and support the programme messages as majority of people will follow their opinions¹⁷. Other reasons for not opting contraception was lack of knowledge and family support at home. Another study conducted in this region also propose that husband-wife communication, son preference and female autonomy influence contraceptive use¹⁸.

The motivational source to use contraceptive method in majority of the women was the information provided by the family planning center. The women had read or heard about the centers providing information about family planning. The second motivational source was media including television radio and newspaper. This finding suggests a need to improve information provision to the women through media especially television.

The knowledge about side effects of different contraceptives showed that women had idea that these methods may cause harm to them. They thought condoms can lead to vaginal discharge and allergies. Knowledge about side effects of different contraceptive methods was the biggest reason for avoiding contraception. The limited use of oral contraceptive pill and intrauterine device by women suggests that quality information on these very effective methods of contraceptive methods is lacking. Most of the side effects were over quoted by women. Another study suggest that continuation of contraceptive use is not ensured after a woman initiates its practice and one of reason behind discontinuation of method is fear of its side effects¹⁹. In the 2006-07 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey, it was reported that 10% of women were not using contraceptive method because of concerns of contraception to their health¹¹. Another study done in Pakistan also proves that woman's awareness and knowledge about contraception is one of the six major obstacles in contraception practice in Pakistan²⁰.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of increasing use of television and social media, governmental policies and international funding in South Asian countries, the rate of contraceptive use did not improve since last few decades. Although this study highlights the reasons behind not using contraception among sexually active females and their preferences for various methods but a significant number of woman who come to health centers to seek

contraceptive advice are still unaware of modern methods of contraception. There is need to improve access and availability of family planning services to the population by enhancing utilization of lady health workers and development of mobile teams along with improving services at basic health centers. An awareness of elements that influence contraceptive practice and particularly factors and fears that are behind use or non-use of each contraceptive method need to be explored separately. Further qualitative studies are needed for better understanding of women's attitudes, perceptions and experiences towards family planning and awareness about modern methods of contraception.

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