

CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

Unintended pregnancy is a social issue that severely jeopardizes the quality of life for parents and their children. College age women between the ages of 20-24 have one of the highest rates of unintended pregnancies due to lack of contraceptive use and unsafe sexual practices. Since college females are sexually active and not seeking to become pregnant, it is important to provide these women with effective contraceptive options. The purpose of this study was to examine contraceptive attitudes and demographic characteristics among female college students. Participants were grouped into those who use contraceptives consistently, intermittently, or not at all. The sample consisted of 100 racially diverse female college students who were sexually active within the past 3 months. Participants completed the Contraceptive Attitude Scale, contraceptive use tool, and demographic tool. The results showed that there was no significant difference in demographic characteristics and contraceptive attitudes for race, age, marital status, years of college education and income between the contraceptive groups. A majority of participants had a positive attitude regarding contraceptives. Women with higher contraceptive attitude scores were significantly more likely to be consistent contraceptive users. Uninterrupted contraceptive users had significantly higher mean contraceptive attitude scores than intermittent users and nonusers. The results of this study may enable healthcare providers to develop more effective methods of increasing contraceptive use and simultaneously decrease unintended pregnancy rates. Nurses play an integral role by providing women with contraceptive counseling that will assist these women in making an informed decision about contraception use.

Key words: STD's, IUD, Contraceptives, Tubectomy, Vasectomy, Family Planning

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine and to understand undergraduate and post-graduate students' contraceptive attitudes and its effects on contraceptive use to further enhance the education regarding unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

"The high occurrence of unintended pregnancies and STD contraction can be prevented through contraceptive use."¹ "With contraceptives becoming increasingly easier to access, costing less, and expanding in variety or options the question remains as to why such incidences of pregnancies and STDs are so high among the young adult age group."² The CDC STD Surveillance report stated that "STDs are hidden epidemics of enormous health and economic consequence in INDIA. They are hidden because many Indians are reluctant to address sexual health issues in an open way and because of the biologic and social characteristics of these diseases. STDs are public health problems that lack easy solutions because they are rooted in human behavior and fundamental societal

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problems".³ The validity in the clause lies in that this deeply rooted behavioral and societal stigma of discussing sexual activity has become an overwhelming barrier to education on contraceptive use.⁴ Solutions to these societal issues can only begin through knowledge and discussion to explore how the adolescent population's behaviors and attitudes regarding contraceptives are affecting their use.⁵

METHODS

A descriptive study to understand contraceptive attitudes while exploring demographics and sexual behaviors as well as the incorporation of the Contraceptive Attitude Scale (CAS). The researchers utilized an online survey system to distribute surveys electronically with the help of what, s app groups and using e-mail ID's.

Significance

Based on the literature review it was concluded that situational behaviors and self-perception of efficacy are leading causes related to contraceptive misuse. While most of the literature studied women's perceptions and behaviors, this generalization among the college aged student should be taken into consideration regarding the male adolescent. College aged men and women should have increased education focusing on risky behaviors that could lead to STD infection or pregnancy. Realizing the high potential for STD contraction or unintended pregnancy should be stressed from a young age prior to entering the college community. Increased awareness may strengthen consistency of contraceptive use. Because of the high incidence rates of unintended pregnancy and STD infection among young adults, the environment and behaviors of

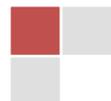
college students increases the risk factor. Health centers on college campuses should promote reproductive services including STD and pregnancy testing, treatments, and prevention methods such as condoms and birth control prescriptions. Maximizing knowledge, consciousness, and treatment of these health epidemics is the first step to preventing future instances.

The purpose of this study was to examine the contraceptive attitudes of undergraduate students at the Universities of Lucknow. The present day college environment elicits significantly different attitudes and behaviors from students than other generations and public atmospheres. College is a period of time where students' beliefs, morals, independence and relationships undergo significant changes and challenges. Studying where our generation stands regarding sexual health and habits can be helpful for university health care providers in planning what factors require additional education and promotion.

Research Instrument

Contraceptive Attitude Scale

As discussed earlier, the Contraceptive Attitude Scale developed by Dr. Kelly Kyes was utilized in order to assess whether students had a positive or negative attitude regarding contraception. Likert scales, developed in 1932, measure attitudes by asking people to respond to a series of statements about a topic, in terms of the extent to which they agree with them, thus tapping into the cognitive and affective components of attitudes (McLeod, 2008). The Contraceptive Attitude Scale asked positive and negative statements and their responses portrayed participants' attitudes relating to contraception.



The questionnaire had three sections. The first section consisted of demographic information such as age, sex, year of study, etc. The second section consisted of 'awareness' regarding questions on contraception. This section had 14 questions of which 13 questions had yes, no and do not know answers and only one was correct. The last question consisted of multiple answers requesting the respondents to indicate the methods of contraception. The last section dealt with respondent's utilization of contraceptives.

CONCLUSIONS

Misconceptions, fears and safety concerns about contraceptives were common among young ladies.

Contraception among young people is a stigmatized practice.

There are changing perceptions and attitudes in favor of contraceptive use among young girls. Facilities were not prepared in terms of service organization, structures, and resources to provide highly effective contraceptive methods to young ladies.

87% of the target objectives (female students), living in hostels or apart from family were found sexually active. But due to social stigma they do not want to share the secret of their intercourse activities

Health care providers chose or recommended specific contraceptive methods, young college girls were therefore not able to exercise their rights to choose, obtain and use contraceptives when needed.

Future studies and reflections

Future studies should approach and discuss with men about the risks of unwanted pregnancy and excessive fertility. Studies were cross-sectional and descriptive, thus no causal relationships can be drawn. Prospective studies on contraceptive use patterns are recommended.

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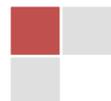


Table 1. Awareness regarding contraception of the students (%).

S.No.	Awareness statement	Yes	No	neutral/ unanswered
1	Contraceptives are free of charge in India.	85	00	15
2	Contraception should be used all the time as long as sexually active.	90	00	10
3	After unprotected sex, not necessary to continue women who use contraceptives do not experience, unplanned pregnancy	05	86	09
4	Do you know about more than one Contraceptive methods?	99	00	01

Table 2. Contraceptive practices among students.

S.No	Contraceptive practices	Assertion	Special information
1	Had sex ever	89	
2	How often use contraception? Always Sometimes/never	Always- 87	
3	Contraceptive method used Condom Pill Injection	Condom-67 Pills - 17 Injection -03	Some female students accepted that they use more than one protection
4	What one can do after unprotected sex? Visit the nearest clinic Wait for a month to see if pregnant Seek emergency pill	 00 22 65	The respondents told that they do not want to see the doctor. they prefer to use emergency pills suggested by peers or friends

Table 3. Students' source of information and access point concerning contraceptives.

S. no.	Sources of information	No. of Respondents
1	School/health facilities	17
2	Television	65
3	Printed	37
4	material/billboards/magazine	67
5	Internet	81
6	Peers Hospitals	12

