

Knowledge, attitude and practices of contraception among the married women of reproductive age

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the knowledge, attitude, practices of contraception and to evaluate factors associated with non use of contraception among married women in reproductive age group. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among 200 married women in reproductive age group, attending department of obstetrics and gynaecology, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College and Hospital for a period of six months. A predesigned proforma was used which included details of socio-demographic features, questions related to knowledge, attitude and practices regarding contraceptive use. **Results:** In our study 92% women were aware of at least any single method of contraceptives. Out of 200 women only 154 (77%) were using or willing to use contraception, which was very low compared to the knowledge of contraception. The number of women who were properly using contraception was 82 (41%). Among the 200 women, 41.5% got information from health care workers and 40% got their information from media. The most preferred method was oral contraceptive pills (OCPs) 39% and least preferred was post partum intrauterine contraceptive device (PPIUCD) 1.5%. Out of 136 women who heard about Cu-T, 25% thought it causes cancer, 27.9% thought there will be perforation if they take Cu-T and 19.8% of them did not prefer Cu-T as their family member or husband opposed it. Main cause of refusing tubectomy was religious 60%. **Conclusions:** It can be concluded that usage rate is very low compared to the knowledge and awareness of contraception. Misconceptions and fear of side effects are the reason for inadequate practice of contraceptive methods.

Keywords: Contraception, OCP, Cu-T.

India is the second most populous country in the world. As the decadal growth rate is high which is 17.64, it is stated that country's population will surpass that of China by 2028¹. This ever increasing population of India is the most important obstacle in the development of the nation. It was the first country in the world to launch a family planning programme in 1952, with the aim of controlling its population. The challenges now has extended beyond population stabilization to addressing sustainable developmental goals for maternal and child health. As the

maternal mortality of India is very high, the focus of national family programme has shifted from population control to save the lives and improving the health of mother and children. Now importance is also given in the use of various reversible spacing methods thus reducing unwanted, closely spaced and mistimed pregnancies.

From various studies it has been found that the number of maternal death would have been 1.8 times higher than at present without contraceptive use¹. Unplanned or unintended pregnancies are causing major health hazards in young

Received: 15th May 2020, Peer review completed: 25th July 2020, Accepted: 14th August 2020.

Barman K, Roy M, Choudhary SS, Naznin W. Knowledge, attitude and practices of contraception among the married women of reproductive age. The New Indian Journal of OBGYN. 2021; 7(2): 224-27.

adults. As the age of menarche is decreasing more girls are exposed to unplanned and unprotected sexual intercourses. This is increasing the number of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion². Again abortion outside the medical set up leads to very dangerous consequences of unwanted pregnancy³. Total fertility of the world has declined to 2.6 children in 2005-2010⁴. Fertility in India has declined to 2.7 children due to increasing use of contraception. The contraceptive prevalence for married women is only 56% in India⁵.

A cross sectional study was conducted among the married women in reproductive age group attending the Obstetrics and Gynaecology department of FAAMCH for a period of 6 months. Our hospital is a rural tertiary centre, the only medical college in lower Assam. Since inception there is a huge load in Obstetrics and Gynaecology department. But it was seen that women are reluctant to use contraceptive methods though various methods are available free of cost, which might be due to poor educational level, pressure from family members, some religious or cultural belief or some myths and misconceptions etc. This study was undertaken to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of contraception among married women in reproductive age group; and to identify the factors that are associated with non use of contraception. An opportunity was taken to counsel them so that their knowledge increases regarding contraception and acceptance increases as a whole.

Materials and methods

A cross sectional study was conducted in the department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology of Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College and Hospital from August 2019 to January 2020. The study group included 200 women of reproductive age group (15-45 years) attending the out patient department (OPD) and emergency services. Unmarried females were excluded. Data was collected by using a predesigned questionnaire, to elicit information regarding their age, educational status, knowledge and attitude towards different contraceptive methods. Various reasons for non use of contraception were also asked. Permission was taken for the study from the ethical committee of the college. The respondents were informed about the study and consent was taken. Fisher exact test was done to correlate between education of the women with the knowledge of contraceptive methods and it was found significant (p<0.0002). Women who were more knowledgeable about different methods of contraceptives were mostly using it. Data thus collected were

tabulated and descriptive analysis was done to describe the results in percentage.

Results

A total of 200 married women in reproductive age group took part in the study. Various results were tabulated and analyzed.

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of the patients

Categories	Number	Percentage (%)
Age in years	<18	1
	18-25	108
	26-30	60
	31-35	25
	35-40	6
Religion	Hinduism	58
	Islam	142
Area	Rural	191
	Urban	9
Parity	Para 0	46
	Para 1	75
	Para 2	51
	Para 3	17
	Para 4	9
	Para 5	2

Among the 200 women in the study group, maximum were (54%) in the group of 18-25 years. Majority (71%) was Muslim and 95.5% participants belonged to rural areas. Among the women, 37.5% were para 1, 25.5% were para 2 (table 1).

Table 2: Socioeconomic status

Modified Kuppuswamy Score	Number	Percentage (%)
Upper	10	5
Upper Middle	49	24.5
Middle	88	44
Lower middle	46	23
Low	7	3.5

Out of 200 women, 88 (44%) belonged to middle class, 49 (24.5%) belonged to upper middle class (table 2).

Table 3: Knowledge of different contraceptive methods

Contraceptive methods	Number	Percentage (%)
OCPs	172	86
Condom	109	54.5
IUCD	110	55
PPIUCD	26	13
Injection DMPA	44	22
Natural method	44	22
Tubectomy	65	32.5
Vasectomy	15	7.5

OCP – Oral contraceptive pill, IUCD – Intrauterine contraceptive device, PPIUCD – Postpartum intrauterine contraceptive device, DMPA – Depot medroxyprogesterone acetate

Out of 200 women, 184 (92%) heard about at least any one of the contraceptive methods and rest 16 (8%) did not know about any method. Majority of them 172 (86%) knew about OCPs, followed by IUCD (55%) and condom (54.5%) (table 3). Among the 184(92%) women who had knowledge about contraception, the main source of information were the health workers mainly the ASHA's 83 (41.4%), followed by

TV 80(40%). 5% of them came to know about contraception from doctors and nurses (table 4).

Table 4: Source of knowledge

Sources	Number	Percentage (%)
Television	80	40
ASHA worker	83	41.5
Relatives	42	21
Peer group	22	11
Radio	13	6.5
Nurse/doctor	10	5
Hoarding	2	1

Out of 200 women, 154 (77%) were using or willing to use contraception. The number of women who were properly using contraception was 82 (41%). maximum women 78 (39%) preferred OCPs, followed by natural method 31 (15.55%) and condom 12 (6%). Minimum 3 (1.5%) preferred PPIUCD as contraceptive method (table 5). Criteria for choice of the method were mainly safety and easy availability (table 6).

Table 5: Choice of methods

Contraceptive methods	Number	Percentage (%)
OCPs	78	39
IUCD	8	4
Natural method	31	15.5
PPIUCD	3	1.5
Condom	12	6
Injection DMPA	11	5.5
Sterilisation	11	5.5

The table 7, data shows various reasons for not using contraceptive methods which are mainly due to the prevalence of myths and misconceptions. 34 women out of 136 (25%) who heard about Cu-T thought it causes cancer, 27.9% thought there will be perforation if they take Cu-T. In our study 13% didn't prefer OCP due to the fear of weight gain, 11.7% for irregular bleeding, 1.7% due to fear of infertility. Condom was not preferred by them as in 71.55% husband opposed it. Major cause of refusing tubectomy was religious 60%.

Table 6: Reason for selecting

Reasons	Number	Percentage (%)
Easy availability	33	16.5
Easy to use	38	19
Safe	50	25
Husband wanted	13	6.5
Permanent method	4	2

It was seen that, among the 200 women, 137 (68.5%) were literate and 63 (31.5%) were illiterate (table 8). There was a significant association between the educational status of the women with the knowledge of different methods of contraception (p= 0.0002).

Discussion

This study was conducted in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department of FAAMCH which is a rural hospital. Out of 200 women enrolled in the study, 92% heard

about various methods of contraception. Which was 96% in a study conducted by Agarwal et al⁶, 72% in a study by Nath J & Islam F⁷ and 71.22% in a study by Srivastav A et al⁸.

Table 7: Various reason for non use of contraceptive methods

Contraceptive methods	Reason for nonuse	Percentage of women
Cu –T	Cancer	25%
	Perforation	27.9%
	Expulsion	2.2%
	Bleeding	8.8%
	Husband opposed	5.8%
	Pain abdomen	7.3%
Barrier method	History of failure	16%
	Husband does not use	71%
OCP	Difficult to use	4%
	Weight gain	13.3%
	Irregular bleeding	11%
	Husband opposed	4.6%
	Fear of infertility	1.7%
Injection DMPA	Costly	20%
	Irregular bleeding	15%
Tubectomy	Not reversible	3%
	Religious cause	60%
	Husband opposed	3%
	Want more children	7.6%

Maximum women heard about OCPs (86%) in our study followed by IUCD (55%) and condom (54.5%). IUCD and condom were the best known methods in studies conducted by Nath et al⁷, and Srivastav A et al⁸ respectively. The main sources of knowledge in our study were health care workers (mainly ASHA) and media (TV + radio) 46.5%. Radio was the main source in a study by Srivastav A et al⁸, media (both printed and electronic) in Tuladhar H et al⁹. The method which was preferred most was OCPs (39%) and PPIUCD was least preferred (1.5%). Out of 200, 154 (77%) women used or were willing to use contraception, which was very low compared to the knowledge of contraception. The number of women who were using contraception properly was 82 (41%). It was 51.71% in the study of Srivastav A et al⁸. Majority of them knew about OCPs (86%), but many women didn't know how to take it properly.

Table 8: Association between education and knowledge of contraceptive methods

Educational status	Know	Don't know	Total
Illiterate	51	12	63
Literate	133	4	137

Various myths and misconception are prevalent in the society. 34 women out of 136 (25%) who heard about Cu-T thought it causes cancer, 27.9% thought there will be perforation if they take Cu-T, 19.8% of them did not prefer Cu-T as their family member or husband opposed it. Fear of side effects was an important determinant for use of contraception. In our study, 13% didn't prefer OCP due to the fear of weight gain, 11.7% for irregular bleeding, 1.7% due to fear of infertility. Condom was not preferred by them

as in 71.55% husband opposed it. This reflects importance of more education of males on family planning. Major cause of refusing tubectomy was religious 60%. In our study, there was significant correlation between education of the women with the knowledge of contraception.

In a large study conducted in Mexico¹⁰, it was found that women who received family planning advice during post natal care were more likely to use a contraceptive than those who did not receive such advice. Strong association between maternal health care and family planning practice has been established in many previous studies^{11, 12}.

Conclusion

In our study, it was evident that women did not have adequate knowledge about the contraceptive methods though they have heard about different methods. Oral contraceptive pills were mostly preferred by them. There was a significant association between educational status of the women with the knowledge of contraceptive methods. It is also evident from the study that there are many myths and misconceptions regarding contraceptive methods. Fear of side effects was one of the dominant reasons for low compliance. To overcome this barrier it is important to improve the educational status of the female. ASHAs are taking great role in spreading the knowledge among rural people. We got the opportunity to counsel them regarding various methods and also taught them the correct method of use.

Conflict of interest: None. **Disclaimer:** Nil.

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