



CONTRACEPTIVE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES IN WOMEN: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

Community Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Background: Uncontrolled Population has been India's major problem since independence. Adoption of family planning methods is one of the best solutions to tackle this problem. India was the first country to start family planning programme in the year 1952. Family Planning basically, refers to the practices that help individuals or couples to avoid unwanted birth, regulate the intervals between pregnancies, control the time at which births occurs in relation to the age of parents and determines the number of children in the family. **Objective:** To assess the knowledge and practice about contraceptive methods among women attending family planning clinic. **Materials and methods:** A descriptive study on women aged 18-49 year was conducted using a structured questionnaire between September 2019 and October 2019 at family planning clinic of department of community medicine of a tertiary care institute. **Results:** It was found that 73.6% of the women belonged to 20-30 yrs age group, 80.8% were urbanites, 43.2% were graduates, majority (92.0%) of women were home maker by occupation, 64% were having one living child and 44% of the women belonged to upper socio-economic class. Correct knowledge on various aspects of contraception was varied e.g. 88% of women knew that contraceptives are used for spacing purposes where as 89.6% did not know about emergency contraception. Majority (99.2%) considered that having contraceptive knowledge was necessary. 81.6% were having knowledge about all spacing as well as terminal methods, 60.8% were aware about side effects of oral contraception. 35.2% of the women were currently using contraception and rest of the 64.8% were those who had come for contraceptive advice or its use. **Conclusion:** Women in this study had fair knowledge and practices of contraception which need to be preserved and boosted from time to time but on those aspects were it was poor targeted and well-organized educational campaigns are needed especially for women who are uneducated, belonging to rural areas and lower socioeconomic strata.

KEYWORDS

Knowledge, Practice, Family Planning, Contraceptive Methods.

INTRODUCTION:

Uncontrolled Population has been India's major problem since independence. ⁽¹⁾ Current Indian population stands at 1.3 billion. ⁽²⁾ By 2045 or earlier, India would overtake China as the world's most populous Nation. ⁽³⁾ The cumulative momentum in population growth in India can be attributed mainly to a higher percentage of women (45.0%) in the reproductive age group (15-45 years) and majority of them getting married at an early age. ⁽⁴⁾ Adoption of family planning methods is one of the best solutions to tackle this problem. India was the first country to start family planning program in the year 1952. ⁽¹⁾ Family planning in India is based on efforts largely sponsored by the Indian government. Family Planning basically, refers to the practices that help individuals or couples to avoid unwanted birth, regulate the intervals between pregnancies, control the time at which births occurs in relation to the age of parents and determines the number of children in the family. ⁽⁵⁾ Contraceptives can prevent at least 25% of maternal deaths by allowing women to prevent unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions, and protect themselves from sexually transmitting diseases including HIV. Even though there is wide availability of various types of contraceptives, the rate of population growth and unplanned pregnancies is still high. ⁽⁶⁾ Globally 62% of married women aged 15-49 use a method of family planning and 56% use a modern method. ⁽⁷⁾ In India the use of family planning methods have increased in last few decades e.g. from 41% in NFHS-1 (1992-93) ⁽⁸⁾ to 53.4 % in NFHS-4(2015-16). ⁽⁹⁾ The current (2020) total fertility rate in India is 2.2%. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Contraceptive practices vary due to diversities of religion, culture, socio-economic status, number of living children and literacy. These diversities exist even within the states and between rural and urban areas. Women living in rural areas may be more influenced by traditional gender roles than women in urban areas, and this might affect their family planning and pregnancy decisions. ^(11,12) Present study has been conducted with an aim to know the contraceptive knowledge and the gap in its practices.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

This was a cross-sectional study involving 500 women who attended

the family planning clinic of the department of community medicine SKIMS. The respondents were interviewed by the use of structured questionnaire administered by resident of the department

Study population: 500 women who were in the reproductive age group (15-49 years) were selected randomly in the family planning clinic.

Inclusion Criteria:

Women in the reproductive age group (15-49 years) who consented to be part of the study. Exclusion Criteria: Those who were not willing to participate in the study.

Frequency, percentage and chi-square were used for analyzing the data. For data entry and analysis, SPSS version 20 was used.

RESULTS:

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics Of The Studied Women

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Age (Years)		
20-25	92	18.4
26-30	276	55.2
31-40	132	26.4
Resident		
Rural area	96	19.2
Urban area	404	80.8
Education status		
Nil	72	14.4
10 th class	92	18.4
12 th class	120	24.0
Graduate	216	43.2
Occupation		
Employed	40	8.0
Home maker	460	92.0

Number of living children		
1	320	64.0
2	168	33.6
3	12	2.4
Socioeconomic Status		
Upperclass	220	44.0
Middleclass	108	21.6
Lowerclass	172	34.4
Total	500	100.0

Table 1 depicts the socio-demographic characteristics of the women in which 73.6% of women belonged to 20-30 yrs age group. 80.8% were residents of urban area, 43.2% were graduates, majority (92.0%) of women were home maker by occupation, 64% were having one living child. Socioeconomic status was assessed using the modified BG Prasad's classification. For analysis purpose the Class I & II were grouped together as Upper Socio-economic Class, Class III was taken as Middle Socio-economic Class and Classes IV & V were grouped together as Lower Socio-economic Class thus 44.0% of women belonged to Upper Socio-economic Class and 34.4% to Lower Socio-economic Class.

Table 2: Knowledge of women Regarding Contraception*		
Knowledge	Frequency (n)	Percent(%)
What are contraceptives used for?		
To maintain gap between pregnancies	440	88.0
Don't know	60	12.0
Is it necessary to have the contraceptive knowledge?		
Yes	496	99.2
No	4	0.8
Why should a person have contraceptive knowledge		
For spacing	308	61.6
For maintaining good health	236	47.2
For monetary reasons	96	19.0
What are different methods of contraception you know?		
Condoms and OCPs	52	10.4
Copper-T	8	1.6
Condom, OCPs, Copper-T and Injection Antara and terminal methods	408	81.6
Don't know Any	32	6.4
Side Effects of contraceptives containing hormones.		
Affect fertility in the long run	72	14.4
Affect the regularity of menstrual cycle	168	33.6
Weight gain	64	12.8
No side effects	52	10.4
Don't know	144	28.8
Side Effects of IUCD'S		
Causes injury to uterus	50	10.0
Causes heavy bleeding	450	90.0
Chance of ectopic pregnancy	2	0.4
Knowledge about emergency contraception?		
Have knowledge	52	10.4
Don't know	448	89.6
Which methods can be used for emergency contraception?		
E-Pill	48	9.6
Don't know	452	90.4
Whether emergency contraception can be substituted for oral contraceptive pills?		
Can	4	0.8
Cannot	40	8.0
Don't know	456	91.2
Knowledge about safe period		
Present	56	11.2
Absent	444	88.8
If yes : duration of safe period		
Few days before and after menstruation	56	11.2
N/A	444	88.8

Source of information for contraceptive knowledge.		
HealthPersonal	172	34.4
Friend	184	36.8
Relative	16	3.2
MassMedia	128	25.6
Total	500	100.0

*Multiple answers to many of the question received.

Table 2 shows that women had varied knowledge on different aspects of contraception, 88% of women knew that contraceptives are used for spacing. Majority (99.2%) considered this knowledge as necessary, 61.6% and 47.2% said that contraceptives knowledge was necessary for spacing purpose and for maintaining good health respectively. 81.6% knew about all the contraceptive methods, 60.8% were aware about side effects of contraceptives containing hormones and majority (90%) knew that IUCD'S can cause heavy bleeding. Only 10.4% were having knowledge about emergency contraception and 9.6% of the women were aware of the method which can be used for it. Only 11.2% of women were aware about safe period. 36.8% of women had got information on contraception from their friends and 34.4% had got this information from Health Personal.

Table3:PracticesofwomenregardingContraception		
Practice	Frequency	Percent
Are you using any type of contraception?		
Yes	176	35.2
No	324	64.8
Have you ever used contraception?		
Yes	224	44.8
No	276	55.2
Which contraceptive method have you ever used?*		
InjectionAntara	8	1.6
OCPs	24	4.8
IUD	8	1.6
Condom	184	36.8
Haveusedmorethan onetype	20	4.0
FollowedNatural Method	75	15.0
Frequency of contraceptive use(no=176)		
Always	110	62.5
Often	50	28.4
Sometimes	16	9.1
Total	500	100.0

Table 3 depicts 35.2% of the women were currently using contraception 64.8% were not using contraception but had come for advice on contraception or for contraception and 44.8% had ever used it, among them 36.8% had mostly used condom as means of contraception followed by other methods. 62.5% of the women always used contraception while as 28.4% used it often.

Table 4: Association Of Knowledge With Socio-demographic Characteristics			
Socio-demographic Characters	What are contraceptives used for?		P-value
	To maintain gap between pregnancies n(%)	Don't know n(%)	
Age (Years)			
20-25	80 (18.2)	12 (20.0)	0.702
26-30	248 (56.4)	28 (46.7)	0.143
31-40	112 (25.5)	20 (33.3)	
Education status			
Nil	48 (10.9)	24 (40.0)	0.000
10th class	72 (16.4)	20 (33.3)	0.000
12 th class	108 (24.5)	12 (20.0)	0.001
Graduate	212 (48.2)	4 (6.7)	
Residence			
Rural area	68 (15.5)	28 (46.7)	0.000
Urban area	372 (84.5)	32 (53.3)	
Occupation			
Employed	36 (8.2)	4 (6.7)	1.000
Home maker	404 (91.8)	56 (93.3)	

Socio economic status			
Upper Class	212(48.2)	8(13.3)	0.000 0.268
Middle Class	84(19.1)	24(40.0)	
Lower Class	144(32.7)	28(46.7)	
Total	440(88.0)	60(12.0)	

Table 4: shows association of participants knowledge with their socio-demographic characteristics in which 56.4% women having knowledge about contraception belonged to 26-30 yrs age group but the difference between age groups was not statistically significant ($p=0.702, 0.143$). 48.2% of women who were having knowledge about contraception were graduates and the difference in educational status was statistically significant ($p=0.000, 0.000 \& 0.001$). 84.5% women who had knowledge about contraception belonged to urban area and the difference between rural and urban dwelling was statistically significant ($p=0.000$). Majority (91.8%) of women having knowledge about contraception were home makers by occupation and 48.2% of them belonged to upper socioeconomic class and the difference between upper and lower socioeconomic class was statistically significant ($p=0.000$). Table 5 depicts that among those women who were using contraceptives 81.8% were condom users, 9.1% OCP, 4.5 % IUCD and 4.5% Antra users. Condoms were used mostly by women in the age group 26-30 years (53.4%), graduates (34.1%), women from urban areas (76.1%), homemakers (73.9%) and women from upper class (46.5%). OCP were used by homemakers (6.8%) and in urban areas (7.9%).

DISCUSSION:

In our study 55.2% of women belonged to 26-30 years age group, fortunately none of the women were below 20 years of age, 80.8% were resident of urban area, 43.2% were graduates, majority (92.0%) of women were home makers by occupation, 64% were having one living child, 44% belonged to upper socioeconomic class and all were Muslims. This was almost in accordance with the study conducted by Kumar S et al were majority (62.5%) of the women were in the same age group.⁽¹⁾ In a study by Mahawar P et al 38% women were in the age group 22-24 years. 78% of respondents were Hindu by religion. 90% of the respondents were housewives. 74% of the respondents were in social Class II. 30% of the respondents were having more than two children.⁽¹³⁾ Our study revealed majority (88%) of women were having correct knowledge about contraception and majority (99.2%) consider this knowledge as necessary, 61.6% were aware about importance of contraception in spacing, 81.6% were having knowledge about all contraceptives. This was in accordance with the studies conducted in Sikkim by Prachi R et al in which 95.8% of subjects knew about the oral contraceptive pills, 74.2% about condoms, 72% about copper T, 67% about tubectomy and 34% about vasectomy⁽¹⁴⁾ and in Srivastava et al's study 82% were aware about female sterilization, 50% were aware of vasectomy, and IUCD was the most known (61%) temporary method followed by OC pills (60%) and condoms (50%) however 17% were not aware of any form of contraception in contradiction to our study.⁽¹⁵⁾ The findings are also contradicting with the study conducted in 2011 at Bhopal, MP by Mahawar on Contraceptive knowledge, attitude and practice, where results showed poor contraceptive knowledge among females.⁽¹³⁾ Another study conducted in 2009 on knowledge and use of contraception among Racha Koyas of Andhra Pradesh revealed that among the 252 Racha Koya women, 81% had a high level of knowledge on different contraceptive methods⁽¹⁶⁾ and this was in accordance with our study. In our study 36.8% of women got contraception information from their friends and this was in contradiction to the findings of studies by Nansseu et al in Cameroon, where the main source of information for respondents about family planning were the health personnel (58.8%)⁽¹⁷⁾ and in Ghazal-Aswad et al's where primary health care physicians were cited as main source of information.⁽¹⁸⁾ Our study revealed 35.2% of women were current users of contraception and 44% have ever used contraception. This was in accordance with the study conducted by Pegu B et al where 62% of women were not using any method of contraception whereas 55% had never used contraceptives⁽¹⁹⁾ In studies conducted by Sherpa S.Z. et al, 38.23% had never used contraceptive methods⁽²⁰⁾ and 44.6% had never used any contraceptive methods in a study conducted at Sikkim in 2005,⁽²¹⁾ compared to 55% in a study conducted by Srivastava et al on Contraceptive Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) India.⁽¹⁵⁾ Our studied participants preferred condoms (36.8%) to other temporary methods like OCP's (4.8%)

and injectable (1.6% and 15.0% used natural methods as means of contraception. This was against the studies conducted by Sherpa S.Z. et al, were 37.5% preferred OCP, around 22.1% preferred condoms and around 16.2% preferred Injections⁽¹⁹⁾ while in Srivastava et al's study 18% used oral pills, 34 % had used condoms and 26% natural methods.⁽¹⁵⁾ In present study 62.5% always used contraception and Condoms was higher in women in the age group 26-30 years (53.4%), graduates (34.1%), women from urban areas (76.1%), homemakers (73.9%) and women from upper class (46.5%). OCP use although very less were mostly used by homemakers (6.8%) and by urbanites (7.9%). In a study by Keyal NK & Moore M from Nepal DMPA was the most popular contraceptive, followed by condoms, followed by OCP.⁽²²⁾ About 68% of respondents had previously used some modern contraceptive methods and 56% of respondents were using contraception at the time of the study. Among the current users, the majorities were pill users (44.6%); second were respondents using the contraceptive injection method (38%); and only about 8% of respondents said that they were using condoms as a method of family planning. Implants, IUD and female sterilization all were used by less than 1.5%. **CONCLUSION:** Women in this study had fair knowledge and practices of contraception which need to be preserved and boosted from time to time but on those aspects were it was poor targeted and well-organized educational campaigns are needed especially for women who are uneducated, belonging to rural areas and lower socioeconomic strata.

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