

Dynamics of contraceptive use in women attending a tertiary care hospital

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ABSTRACT

Background: Though India was the first country in world to implement a national population control program in 1952, it is still struggling to control the baby-boom. A lot of efforts and resources have gone into the National Family Welfare program but the returns are not commensurate with the inputs.

Objectives: To assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of contraception in the women of reproductive age (15 to 45 yrs) group.

Methods: This is a cross-sectional observation study. Participants of this study included five hundred married women in the age group of 15 to 45 yrs attending O.P.D of tertiary hospital's Obstetrics and Gynecology department. Study period: Two years (Dec 2009 - Dec 2011). They were interviewed about their knowledge, attitude & practices of contraception using fixed pre-formed questionnaires.

Results: 62.4% uses contraception, however 54.33% women discontinued afterwards and the reason cited was interest in child bearing. Practice of contraception increased with age and parity. Almost 99.7% women had knowledge of female sterilization. OC pills were preferred method in 124 users (39.74%) followed by female sterilization in 91 women (29.14%). Fear of side effects was the main reason cited for not using contraception.

Conclusions: In spite of good knowledge of contraception there exists substantial gap between the reproductive behaviour and practice of a reproductive couple. There is, thus a huge unmet need in this area. Continuous motivation, counseling and follow up are required to improve the contraception use as well as to prevent high drop-out rate.

Key words: contraceptives, knowledge, attitude, practice

INTRODUCTION

With a population of 1169 million by the year 2007, India is the second most populous country in the world, next to China, whereas it is seventh in land area.¹ Voluntary control of fertility by adopting one or other methods of contraception is pertinent in India in order to reduce family size. Effective control of reproduction will also allow woman's ability to accomplish her individual goals. Despite having a good knowledge and wide spectrum of available contraception, there exists a substantial gap between its use and availability.

The Government of India has shown commitment in reducing the growth rate of India and in increasing the use of contraception by implementing National Family Planning Programme and by continually upgrading the services and spreading the knowledge of family planning. Since the inception of the programme several knowledge, attitude and practice studies (KAP) have been conducted. The progress achieved through this programme is normally assessed from the result of K.A.P. Survey.²

Interstate/regional variations in the contraceptive use do exist depending upon their availability, accessibility and cultural acceptance in the community. A need was felt for the KAP studies at regional level/ state level to know the demographic variables affecting the use of contraception so that effective modifications can be suggested in the family planning programme as per the need of that particular society.

The present study is an attempt to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning (KAP) methods among the women attending obstetrics dept. of S.C.B Medical College, Cuttack.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present cross-sectional, observational study was carried out from Dec 2009 to Nov 2011 at Obstetrics department of S.C.B. Medical College, Cuttack. The objective of this study was to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of contraception in reproductive age group women. After obtaining informed consent, 500 married women in the age group 15 to 45 yrs. were randomly selected from the patients attending

outdoor of postpartum centre & Obstetrics department. Post menopausal women, pregnant women and unmarried women of reproductive age group were excluded from the study.

All females included in the study were interviewed, based upon a pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire. The questionnaire elicited information regarding their age, educational status, income, knowledge, practicing of either male or female family planning methods. Women were asked about their knowledge regarding different methods of contraception. Information on knowledge of contraception, reasons for discontinuation and reasons for not using contraception were collected. Modified Kuppaswamy classification (2007) has been used to classify socioeconomic status. The data was collected by direct questioning and the survey was conducted under the guidance of the experts. Descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the results in percentages. Descriptive statistics were used for demographic details. Informed consent was obtained from patients for monitoring and using their records.

RESULTS

312 females (62.4%) were using or had used contraception in their reproductive life span Rest 188 females (37.6%) had never used any kind of contraception in their lives (Table 1).

Table 1: Categories: Users and non- users

Category	Subtype of users	Total no. of females(N=500)	Percentage (%)
USER		312	62.4
	Past users	173	34.59
	Current users	30	5.99
	Both user	109	21.8
NON USER		188	37.6

Table 2. Correlation between Literacy level, age group & parity with contraception use (n=312)

Education	Users (%)	Age groups	Users (%)	Parity	Users (%)
		20 to 24 yrs	25	Zero	17.39
Illiterate	64.7	25 to 29 yrs	63.5	One	60.60
1 st to 5 th std	54.9	30 to 34 yrs	66.88	Two	72.80
6 th to 10 th std	64.8	35 to 39 yrs	79	Three	71.42
>10th std	59.54	40 to 44 yrs	72.72	Four & >	88.88

Correlation exists with literacy level, age & parity with contraception use which indicate increasing trend as age and parity increases (Table 2).

The study group possesses good knowledge of various methods of contraception e.g. about female sterilization (99.7%), male sterilization in 65%, about oral contraceptive pills (OCP) in 94.6% and regarding emergency pills by 31.2%. In natural methods, abstinence knowledge was present in 94% and for safe period it was present in 23% (Table 3).

Table 3: Knowledge of various contraceptive methods

Type	No of females (%) (n=500)
Abstinence	470(94)
Safe Period	115(23)
Coitus Interruptus	260(52)
Condoms	461(92)
OC Pills	473(94.6)
Cu TE	435(87)
Female sterilisation	497(99.7)
Male sterilisation	322(65)

Preference of contraception method reflects OCP users as maximum (39.74%), followed by female sterilization (29.14%), then condom users (15.7%) and CuT (11.85%). Coitus interruptus method was used by 9 users (Table 4).

Table 4. Distribution of contraceptive methods in ever users (n=312)

Type of contraception	No. of females	Percentage (%)
OC pills	124	39.74
Female sterilization	91	29.14
Condoms	49	15.70
Cu T	37	11.85
C.I.	9	2.8
Male sterilization	2	0.6
Total	312	100

The main reason cited for discontinuation of contraception by past users was desire for fertility in 42 (44.68%) followed by fear of side effects in 29 (30.85%). Perception of side effects also formed a sizeable group (19.14%). "Not comfortable with the particular method of contraception" as the cause for discontinuation was put forward by 2.12% (Table 5).

A total of 188 females did not use any contraception method and commonest reason cited was the fear of side effects (40.42%) followed by a desire for childbearing (38.82%). Other reason included were "not being sexually active" (5.3%), lack of knowledge (4.7%), socio-cultural reasons including family pressure (4.7%), not able to specify any reason (3.2%) and feeling that contraception was unnecessary (2.65%) Table 5.

DISCUSSION

In the present day scenario of population explosion, family planning has been the most important national issue & KAP studies have a deciding role to play in it. The present study is aimed at assessing the knowledge, attitude and practices of family planning methods to enhance the contraceptive practice in the women attending the outdoor clinics.

62.4% of the interviewed females in our study were practicing family planning methods; this rate is higher than the prevalence rate of contraception in Odisha (50.7%).³ In other studies prevalence of 59% was found which is quite close to our study.^{4,5} In contrast, the prevalence of contraceptive use was found to be very low (34.9%) in rural Muslim area of Haryana.⁶ Demographic variables, cultural factors, interstate variables may be responsible for this difference in results.

Table 5. Reasons for discontinuation and not using any contraception

Reasons	No (%)
For discontinuation (n=94)	
Further child bearing	42(44.68)
Fear of side effects	29(30.85)
Perception of side effects	18(19.14)
Not sexually active	3(3.19)
Not comfortable using it	2(2.12)
For not using contraception(n=188)	
Fear of side effects	76(40.42)
Further child bearing	73(38.82)
Not sexually active	10(5.3)
Lack of knowledge	9(4.7)
Socio cultural factors	9(4.7)
Reason not specified	6(3.2)
Feel no need of contraception	5(2.65)

Age and parity are the important determinant of the contraceptive use. In our study we found that contraceptive use increased with the increase in the age and parity of the women. Similar results were also observed in other studies as that of our study.^{3,7}

Overall knowledge about any modern method of contraception was present in 87.4%. The findings by other studies showed prevalence of knowledge in 73.5% to 100%.^{3,8,9} In present study the knowledge was higher for female sterilization (99.7%) and low for spacing methods (94.6%, 92% & 87%) for Oral Pills, Condom & IUCD respectively and male sterilization (65%) which is consistent with a study where it was 95.8%, 74.2%, 72%, 67% & 34% respectively for oral pills, condoms, CuT, Tubectomy and Vasectomy.¹⁰ The credit for this universal knowledge on the female sterilisation is widespread publicity shared by media, governmental as well as the non governmental agencies.

OC pills were the most common chosen method of contraception used in our study (39.74%) which is far higher than that during 2005-2006(14%).³ The other adopted methods included sterilization (29.14%), Condoms (15.70%), CuT (11.85%) and coitus interruptus (2.8%). This finding is consistent with the results from other Indian studies done elsewhere.^{5,10,11,12} Maximum OC pills use in our study can be explained by the easy availability of the OC pills as over the counter drug, and free supply through government health channels.

Out of 173 past users, 94 (54.33%) discontinued it due to various reasons. Frequent reasons cited were desire for further child (44.68%); fear of developing side effects (30.85%); perceived side effects (19.14%); hindrance to sexual pleasure(3.19%); and not comfortable with condoms (2.12%). According to NFHS-2, desire for a child (30%) is the most important cause of discontinuation.¹³

Couples not practicing contraception were 37.6% and were lower as compared to other studies.^{14,10} This could be due to the effective spread of

message regarding contraception by the state health machinery. Fear of side effects (40.42%) and fertility intention (38.82%) were the most cited reasons consistent with another study.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

Although the knowledge of family planning is widespread among the respondents, nonetheless sizeable proportions are yet to adopt a method. Effective counseling through extensive information, education and communication activities may help to remove some of the unfounded belief that may ultimately result in bridging the existing gap

between the greater knowledge and lesser practice.

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