P-097 • Long-acting reversible contraception knowledge & intent to use among US university students

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OBJECTIVES: More than 50% of births to women in the United States in their early 20s are unintended, and unintended pregnancies have adverse consequences on students' education. Long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) offer highly-effective, long-term prevention of pregnancy, yet are utilized at low rates. Thus, we sought to assess the level of students' LARC knowledge and any association with intent to use LARC at a large, urban university in the Midwest United States. We hypothesized that students with higher levels of LARC knowledge would be more likely to intend to use LARC in the future. We also hypothesized that fewer students would use LARC compared to the US rate of 15.8% of all contraceptive users in 2017. Data on student knowledge and attitudes regarding LARC will be used to inform a campus LARC initiative.

METHODS: We designed and administered a cross-sectional survey to 300 undergraduates, graduate students, and resident physicians that assessed sexual experiences, contraceptive use, LARC knowledge, and intent to use LARC. The survey was administered at the university's student center and student health facility in Indianapolis, Indiana. Participants' demographic characteristics and LARC knowledge were summarized using descriptive statistics. Awareness of different LARC methods was assessed using McNemar's test. The association between students' reported LARC knowledge and future intent to use a LARC method was calculated with Fisher's exact test.

RESULTS: Our preliminary analysis includes 126 students. The mean age was 20.2 years. Mean score on the 10-question LARC assessment was 5.2/10. Higher levels of LARC knowledge were positively associated with future intent to use LARC ($P < 0.05$). Only 7.9% of contraceptive users surveyed used LARC, compared to 15.8% of US contraceptive users in 2017. Differences in awareness of the copper IUD (61.1%), hormonal IUD (74.6%) and implant (88.9%) were statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). The most common reason cited for not considering LARC use was "need for more information."

CONCLUSIONS: University students surveyed displayed low LARC knowledge, low LARC use, and a need for more information on LARC. A positive association between LARC knowledge and future intent to use LARC amongst students at this university further supports need for a campus-wide contraceptive initiative that will empower students to make informed reproductive decisions. Understanding student use and knowledge of LARC could also provide a model for starting other university LARC initiatives across the United States, at which uptake of LARC has been historically low.