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Research Article

## Awareness, attitude and practice of contraception among antenatal women in a tertiary care hospital- a cross sectional study

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Reproductive health services that empower women will greatly reduce the social and economic disruption in society. The aim of the study was to assess the level of awareness about different types of contraceptive choices and also to find out the current practice of contraceptive methods by antenatal women attending the antenatal outpatient department in a tertiary care hospital.

**Methods:** This was a cross-sectional study conducted over a period of 6 months at SRM medical college hospital. 200 antenatal women attending outpatient department of obstetrics and gynecology were randomly selected and were interviewed with predesigned questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using percentage.

**Results:** Majority of the women in the study were between 20 to 25 years. 97% were aware of contraception, 81% were aware of the needs of birth spacing and only 64% were aware of the benefits of birth spacing methods. About 74% of them were aware of more than one method of contraception. Condom (93%) was the most heard about method. Only 23% of these women gave a history of usage of contraception. Majority of these women had used condoms (16%). Sterilisation (44%) was considered the safest option among the contraceptive choices followed. Social circle (49%) and health care providers (42%) played a major role as source of knowledge. Majority of the antenatal women did not use contraception because of desire of child (41%) and fear of side effects (21%).

**Conclusions:** The high contraceptive awareness and educational level did not reflect on the contraceptive usage level in this study. Hence proper counselling and education is required to motivate the women for contraceptive usage and eradication of myths involving the risks of using contraception.

**Keywords:** Awareness, Contraception, Antenatal, Birth spacing

### INTRODUCTION

Family planning services have a direct impact on maternal health. Reproductive health services that empower women will greatly reduce the social and economic disruption in society. India is the second most populous country in the world. India's population growth rate is a matter of great concern. The unmet need of contraception i.e. the gap between women's reproductive intention and their contraceptive behaviours is still high in India.

Family planning through contraception tries to achieve two main objectives; firstly, to have only the desired number of children and secondly, to have these children by proper spacing of pregnancies.<sup>1</sup> A lack of knowledge of contraceptive methods or a source of supply, cost and poor accessibility are the barriers that exist in developing countries. Side effects perceived or real are major factors for the abandoning of modern methods. Mass media also plays an important role in promotion and acceptability of contraception.<sup>2,3</sup>

This study was undertaken with the objective to assess the level of awareness about different types of

contraceptive choices and also to find out the current practice of contraceptive methods by antenatal women attending the antenatal outpatient department in a tertiary care hospital.

## METHODS

This was a cross-sectional study conducted over a period of 6 months at SRM medical college hospital from January 2016 to June 2016. 200 antenatal women attending outpatient department of obstetrics and gynecology were randomly selected and were interviewed with predesigned questionnaire after getting an informed verbal consent. The only exclusion criterion was denial of consent. The questionnaire was based on two sets of variables.

- Socio economic and demographic conditions.
- Awareness, knowledge and practice of family planning methods.

Statistical analysis was performed using Microsoft excel. The data collected were analysed using percentage.

## RESULTS

Women in the age group of 20-25 years constituted the majority (47%). 70% of women belonged to urban and suburban areas. Majority (83%) of them being hindus, 13% were muslims and 4% were christians. 87% of the women were housewives and belonged to a low socioeconomic class. There were no illiterates in our study population and 47% of them had completed their schooling, the rest being graduates and post graduates. 54% of the antenatal women were multigravida and 46% of them were primigravida (Table 1). Out of the 200 women, 97% were aware of contraception, 81% were aware of the needs of birth spacing and only 64% were aware of the benefits of birth spacing methods (Table 2).

About 74% of them were aware of more than one method of contraception. Condom (93%) was the most heard about method followed by intrauterine contraceptive devices (65%), sterilization (58%) and oral contraceptive pills (19%) (Table 3).

Only 23% of these women gave a history of usage of contraception. Majority of these women had used condoms (16%) followed by intrauterine contraceptive devices (6%) and natural methods (2%) (Table 4).

Sterilisation (44%) was considered the safest option among the contraceptive choices followed by intrauterine contraceptive devices (37%) and condoms (24%) (Table 5).

Social circle (49%) and health care providers (42%) played a major role as source of knowledge (Table 6). Majority of the antenatal women did not use

contraception because of want of child (41%) and fear of side effects (21%) (Table 7).

**Table 1: Demographic variables.**

Parameters	Number of antenatal women	Percentage
<b>Age in years</b>		
<20	6	3
20-25	94	47
26-30	76	38
>30	24	12
<b>Area</b>		
Urban	70	35
Sub urban	70	35
Rural	60	30
<b>Gravida</b>		
Primigravida	92	46
Multigravida	108	54
<b>Education</b>		
Schooling	94	47
Graduate	106	53
<b>Socioeconomic status</b>		
Low	174	87
High	26	13
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	166	83
Muslim	26	13
Christian	8	4
<b>Family</b>		
Nuclear	110	55
Joint	90	45

**Table 2: Awareness.**

Awareness	Aware	Not aware
Aware of contraception	194(97%)	6(3%)
Aware about need of birth spacing/limiting child birth	162(81%)	38(19%)
Aware of benefits of birth spacing	128(64%)	72(36%)

**Table 3: Methods of contraception known.**

Contraceptive methods known	Number	Percentage
Condom	186	93
Oral contraceptive pills	38	19
Injectable hormones	30	15
Intrauterine contraceptive device	130	65
Natural methods	24	12
Sterilisation	116	58

**Table 4: Contraceptive methods used.**

Contraceptive method used	Number	Percentage
Condom	32	16
Oral contraceptive pills	12	6
Injectable hormones	4	2
Natural methods	4	2
Intrauterine contraceptive device	2	1

**Table 5: Contraceptive method presumed safe.**

Contraceptive method presumed safe	Number	Percentage
Condom	48	24
Oral contraceptive pills	14	7
Injectable hormones	6	3
Intrauterine contraceptive device	74	37
Natural methods	8	4
Sterilisation	88	44

**Table 6: Source of knowledge.**

Source of knowledge	Number	Percentage
Health care workers	84	42
Mass Media	70	35
Social circle	98	49

**Table 7: Reason for not using contraception.**

Reason for not using contraception	Number	Percentage
Lack of awareness for need of birth spacing	24	12
Fear of side effects	44	22
Lack of awareness of methods of contraception	36	18
Husband/in laws opposition	38	19
Want of child	82	41

## DISCUSSION

Contraceptive use has increased in nearly every country in recent decades. It was interesting to explore the perception and use of contraceptives among antenatal women. Antenatal period is more appropriate to motivate a female to accept postpartum contraception than postnatal period. So this period should be adequately utilized for postpartum contraceptive counselling.<sup>4,5</sup>

In present study, most of the participants are between 20-25 years corresponding to the peak reproductive age group (47%) and most of the study population were in this age group. The peak reproductive age is 20-24 years in the study done by Rao BS et al.<sup>6</sup> This is the peak period of fertility during which most pregnancies occur.<sup>7,8</sup>

This study showed a high level of awareness of family planning methods against the low level of knowledge of specific contraceptive methods among the antenatal women similar to the study by Allagoa DO et al.<sup>9</sup> There is therefore need to emphasize specific contraceptive options with a view to improving utilization.<sup>9</sup>

Though 81% were aware of need of birth spacing only 64% were aware of benefits of birth spacing. Therefore the gap between the awareness of the need and awareness of benefits of birth spacing need to be reduced by educating the women regarding the benefits of birthspacing.

Only 23% of women had history of usage of contraception. It was observed that knowledge and awareness does not always lead to the use of contraceptives. There is still a need to educate and motivate the couples and improve family planning services to achieve more effective and appropriate use of contraceptives and to arrest the trend towards increase in population and avoiding unwanted pregnancies.<sup>1</sup> Efforts should be made to educate the public about the safety and convenience of modern, long-term, reversible methods of contraception. Perception towards using contraception might improve with more emphasis on the non contraceptive benefits with its use.

In present study, condom and intra uterine contraceptive device were the most commonly known contraceptive similar to the study by Allagoa DO et al.<sup>9</sup> Condom use was maximum reported in the studies by Singh KK, Mahmood et al and Goel et al similar to our study.<sup>10-12</sup> In a study by Alakananda et al, oral contraceptive pills were the most used contraceptive method (66.6%).<sup>13</sup>

Social media (74.5%) followed by health care providers (61.1%) were the most common source of information in the study by Kokane AM et al.<sup>14</sup> But in our study social circle (49%) was most common source of knowledge followed by healthcare workers (42%).

Common reasons for not using contraception include want of child (41%), fear of side effects (22%). The fear of side effects has been a recurring factor reported in many studies.<sup>13,15</sup>

A significant proportion of present study group were primigravidas and with the prevailing societal pressure of bearing children, the need to conceive early and wanting a child constituted a major reason for not using contraception.

## CONCLUSION

Antepartum period is the effective period during which women will be perceptive to contraceptive advice. Imparting correct knowledge at correct time can easily motivate them for adoption of proper family planning method. The high contraceptive awareness and

educational level did not reflect on the contraceptive usage level in this study. Hence, aggressive target oriented information dissemination is required to motivate the women for contraceptive usage and eradication of myths involving the risks of using contraception. Routine inclusion of contraceptive counseling in the antenatal period will go a long way in improving the utilization of various contraceptive choices.

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