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Research Article

Knowledge, attitude and practices of contraception among married women

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ABSTRACT

Background: Aim of current study was to assess the knowledge, attitude & practices of contraceptives among married women of reproductive age group.

Methods: A cross sectional study was conducted in obstetrics & gynaecology (obs. & gynae) out door patient department (OPD), North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Sciences, Shillong, Meghalaya. 200 married women aged between 15-45 years were included in this study. Along with the socio-demographic characteristics of the women, their knowledge, attitude and practices on contraception were evaluated with the help of predesigned questionnaire.

Results: It was observed that out of 200 women, majority of them were Christian (52%), illiterate (26.5%), housewife (43.5%) and belong to low socio economic status (31.5%). 174 (87%) had knowledge about contraceptive methods and it was mainly obtained from health workers (58.6%) followed by media (24.1%) and social circle (15.5%). 76 (38%) women were practicing contraceptive methods, out of which most of them were using condom (38.2%) followed by Oral Contraceptive Pills (OCPs) (27.6%), intra uterine contraceptive device (15.8%) etc. Though most of the women had knowledge about contraceptive methods majority of male 55.5% and female 51.5% were showing negative attitude towards family planning.

Conclusions: The study showed, inspite of having good knowledge, utilization of contraceptives were less because of large family norm, religious myth, cultural & political barrier.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, Contraception

INTRODUCTION

Uncontrolled population explosion is a burden on resources of many developing countries. Of the world population, 75% live in developing countries characterized by high fertility rate, high maternal & infant mortality rate and low life expectancy.¹ The world population will likely to increase by 2.5 billion over the next 43 years, passing from the current 6.7 billion to 9.2 billion in 2050.² Birth spacing not only reduce fertility but also improve health of the mother. The leading causes of death among reproductive age women are due to complications arising during pregnancy and child birth.

Each year approximately 55,000 women die in India due to pregnancy or childbirth-related complications.³

According to WHO, family planning is defined as "a way of thinking and living that is adopted voluntarily, upon the basis of knowledge, attitude and responsible decisions by individuals and couples, in order to promote the health and welfare of family group and thus contribute effectively to the social development of a country." National family planning program was first launched in India in 1951, with aim to reduce the birth rate to stabilize the population.⁴

In developing countries Couple Protection Rate (CPR) is still very less. According to national family welfare statistics 2011, CPR in India is 40.4%. In Pakistan CPR was 30% in 2011 while most developed country like USA has 71% CPR for all methods.^{5,6.}

Now a days fertility rate has come down due to wide spread use of family planning methods, whereas some developing countries like India, Pakistan, the use of contraception is still low because of lack of awareness, education, religion, cultural, economic and political barrier.⁷ Proper counseling for family planning necessary because 27% of women are at risk of unplanned pregnancy.⁸

METHODS

This cross-section study was conducted in obs. & gynae OPD, NEIGRIHMS, Shillong. 200 married women aged between 15-45 years were interviewed. Along with the socio-demographic characteristics of the women, their knowledge, attitude and practices on contraception were evaluated with the help of predesigned questionnaire. Questionnaire also enquired about source of knowledge regarding contraception whether they obtained from media, health worker, social circle, family members, friends etc.

Exclusion criteria were pregnant women, infertility and patients having any medical disorder.

RESULTS

The study shows, mean age of respondent was 29.8 ± 7.28. All the socio-demographic characteristics of responders were described in Table 1.

Table 2 shows knowledge regarding different contraceptive methods. Out of 200 women, 174 (87%) had knowledge about family planning. Majority of them 73 (42%) knew about condom, followed by OCPs & other methods.

The women who had knowledge about contraceptive methods, they mainly obtained from health workers 58.6%, followed by media and social circle. Distribution of source of knowledge regarding different methods is shown in Table 3.

Table 4 shows attitude of male and female regarding contraceptives. Though majority of women had knowledge about family planning methods most of the male and female had negative attitude towards contraceptives.

Out of all the different methods of contraception commonly practicing method was condom followed by OCPs & others. Table 5 shows practices of different contraceptive methods.

Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of respondent.

	Frequency (%)
Age (in years)	
15-19	19 (9.5)
20-30	96 (48)
31-40	57 (28.5)
>40	28 (14)
Religion	
Christian	104 (52)
Hindu	49 (24.5)
Muslim	36 (18)
Others	11 (5.5)
Education status (woman)	
Illiterate	53 (26.5)
Primary	40 (20)
High school	41 (20.5)
Higher secondary	46 (23)
Graduate & above	20 (10)
Education status (husband)	
Illiterate	25 (12.5)
Primary	45 (22.5)
High school	48 (24)
Higher secondary	62 (31)
Graduate & above	20 (10)
Occupation (woman)	
Govt. employee	23 (11.5)
Private employee	48 (24)
Daily wage earner	42 (21)
House wife	87 (43.5)
Family Income (monthly in Rs.)	
Below 5000	63 (31.5)
5001-10000	38 (19)
10001-15000	58 (29)
>15000	41 (20.5)
Number of children	
One	22 (11)
Two	48 (24)
Three	73 (36.5)
>Four	57 (28.5)

Table 2: Knowledge regarding different contraceptive methods.

Contraceptive methods	Number (n=174)	Percentage (%)
Condom	73	42
OCPs	40	23
Copper T (IUCD)	26	14.9
Injectable device	15	8.6
Tubectomy	20	11.5

Table 3: Source of knowledge.

Source	Number (n=174)	Percentage (%)
Health worker	102	58.6
Media	42	24.1
Social circle	27	15.5
Others	3	1.7

Table 4: Attitude towards contraception.

Attitude	Users (n=76)	Non users (n=124)	Total
	Number (%)	Number (%)	
Female			
Positive	55 (72.4)	42 (33.9)	97 (48.5%)
Negative	21 (27.6)	82 (66.1)	103 (51.5%)
Male			
Positive	35 (46.1)	54 (43.5)	89 (44.5%)
Negative	41 (53.9)	70 (56.5)	111 (55.5%)

Table 5: Practices of contraception.

Contraceptive method	Number (n=76)	Percentage (%)
Condom	29	38.2
OCPs	21	27.6
IUCD	12	15.8
Tubectomy	8	10.5
Injectable device	6	7.9

DISCUSSION

Strategies to increase contraceptive use must include improving delivery of correct and adequate information about the availability of contraceptive methods.⁹ Education of women is considered to be a most important factor in decision making.¹⁰ For contraceptive usage, woman's will and motivation is necessary. Awareness and knowledge is the key to choose the right method for contraception. In our study, result showed that 87% women had knowledge about contraception whereas 97.4 & 99% is seen in other studies conducted at Lahore.^{11,12}

The findings are contradicting with the study conducted in 2011 at Bhopal by Mahawar P et al.¹³ In 2009, another study conducted in Andhra Pradesh among Racha Koya women, 81% had knowledge on different contraceptive methods.¹⁴

Major source of knowledge regarding contraceptives were health worker (58.6%) followed by media 24.1%, social circle 15.5% and others. Similar result seen in study conducted in Ethiopia, showed that 80.3% of health worker contributed in disseminating information regarding contraception.¹⁵ Another study conducted by Omo-Aghoja et al. from Nigeria in 2009, and Srivastava et al. from India in 2005, social circle was found to be the main source of knowledge & followed by health

worker.^{16,17} While another study showed media as a main source of information.¹⁸

In present study, 62% of women were not using any method of contraception whereas 55% had never used contraceptives in study conducted by Srivastava et al. in 2005, India¹⁷ and 8% in Young et al study done in New Zealand.¹⁹

In this study, condom was the most common method (38.2%). Similar results were shown in other study as well.²⁰⁻²² In contrast, study conducted by Musarrat Jabeen et al., commonly used methods were traditional, injectable & female sterilization which is different from the work of Seema et al.^{6,7}

Though majority of women had knowledge about contraceptives only 48.5% female and 44.5 % male had positive attitude towards contraception as stated by their wives, whereas study conducted by Zangmu Sherpa et al., 87.5% had positive attitude.²³ 78% and 74% of husband approved the use of contraceptives in other Studies conducted in Sindh and Punjab respectively.^{24,25} Similar result was seen in the study done by Sonia Naqvi et al.²⁶

Family planning services need to provide a range of quality method that can allow women to either limit or space birth and to fulfill the need of women with differing socio-demographic characteristics.²⁷ In our study though majority of interviewer women had knowledge about family planning methods but practicing is still low because of lack of education, cultural, religion, economical and political barriers.

CONCLUSIONS

Inspite of having good knowledge about family planning methods & positive attitude there are some factors like desire for large family, pressure from husband, religious concern etc. lead to non-use of contraceptives. So this is important to improve educational status of the female to overcome these barriers and increase the uptake of modern contraceptive methods.

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