

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF CONTRACEPTION AMONG REPRODUCTIVE AGE WOMEN - A STEP AHEAD

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ABSTRACT:

Background:

Unplanned birth or unsafe abortions and maternal morbidity contribute to about 40% of pregnancies worldwide. KAP of contraception among women of reproductive age is of utmost importance in populated countries like India to prevent unintended pregnancies and achieve optimal pregnancy outcome.

Methods:

This is a descriptive observational study, involving 200 women within 18-54 years age, interviewed regarding KAP for various contraceptive methods in the form of a questionnaire.

Results:

Majority were literate and about 91.7% were aware of contraception. In our group, 86.1% had good knowledge while very less had fair to poor knowledge of contraception. Sociodemographic factors like age, education, parity, age at marriage were found to have significant association with the use of contraceptives. Only 8.3% of women had a negative attitude towards contraception because of social stigma, beliefs and fearing side effects while young women were found to have a positive attitude towards various methods of contraception due to the growing awareness, literacy, partner counselling etc. About 98.8% women were using barrier method of contraception followed by IUCDS, Injectables due to the fears of side effects.

Conclusions:

The women's level of knowledge, attitude and practice of contraception in private clinics is higher than those in community clinic, government hospitals in spite of free availability of contraception thus indicating that KAP toward contraception mainly depend on the socio-economic and educational level of women. Therefore, there is need for aggressive advocacy of family planning norms, incentives and awareness about reproductive health through health workers, mass media, professionals etc

INTRODUCTION:

Increase in population has affected India economically, socially and politically. More and more awareness as well as various family planning methods and studies like KAP study have resulted in the use of contraception (1). The main objectives of this study is to have desired number of children as well as proper spacing of pregnancy in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies like septic abortions and other maternal morbidity, mortality (2). Despite increase in the use of contraceptive over time, there exists a knowledge or attitude or practice gap regarding contraception which is related to lack of knowledge or education, variations at community level, family and individual level, parity, socio-economic status, beliefs, misconceptions(3).

METHODS:

This is a descriptive cross sectional study consisting of 200 women of reproductive age group (18-54) including patients willing for spacing, for preventing STDs or prior history of sterilisation selected from the OPD of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at MKCG Medical College and Hospital, Berhampur over a period of 1 year (from August 2023 - July 2024). Women with prior history of chronic illness or women who have already attended menopause were excluded from the study. Data was collected using a questionnaire which included reasons for using and not using contraception to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of contraception, by direct interview method. There were questions regarding socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge, attitude and practice of contraceptives.

Ethical approval for the study as well as informed consent from the patient was taken by explaining the purpose of the study. There were a majority of positive respondents due to the increased literacy, awareness, public advertisement and programmes, incentives enforced by government. All the data's were noted, tabulated and analysed accordingly. Chi square test was used for analysis and P value < 0.05 was taken as significant.

RESULTS:

Table: 01 Socio- demographic characteristics

Table 01 shows most of the participants in the age group of 18-24 years and elderly age group being the lowest with a mean age of 21.67+/-2.5 years. About 45.5% of women with 2 or 3 parity had maximum contraceptive. About all the participants were literate, but maximum use was seen among professional group (55.3%) followed by housewife (21.1%), government employee (15.8%) and skilled/unskilled worker (7.9%). Majority of the female were housewives, within 1-3 years of marriage belonging to middle socioeconomic status.

CHARACTERISTICS	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AGE	18-24	142	71.1%
	25-34	21	10.5%
	35-44	32	15.8%
	45-54	5	2.6%
SOCIO - ECONOMIC STATUS	LOW	0	0
	MIDDLE	152	76.3%
	UPPER	48	23.7%
OCCUPATION	HOUSEWIFE	42	21.1%
	SKILLED/UNSKILLED WORKER	16	7.9%
	GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE	32	15.8%
	PROFESSIONAL	110	55.3%
PARITY	0	16	8%
	1	47	2.5%
	2-3	91	45.5%
	> 4	46	23%
YEARS OF MARRIAGE	1-3 years	155	77.5%
	4-10 years	37	18.5%
	11-15 years	5	2.5%
	> 15 years	3	1.5%

Table: 02 Knowledge of various contraceptive methods:

Implementation of National Family Planning programmes and spreading the knowledge among both urban and rural areas have contributed largely to a step ahead.

CHARACTERISTICS	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CONTRACEPTIVE	Heard about Family Planning	11	5.6%
	Aware of Contraception	172	86.1%
	Ignorant	17	8.3%

REASON FOR USING CONTRACEPTIVE	Having a child when required	63	31.6%
	Spacing a birth	16	7.9%
	Prevention of Unwanted Births	63	31.6%
	Prevention of STD	26	13.2%
	Improving Health	32	15.8%
SORCE OF KNOWLEDGE	TV/Magazine/Newspaper	52	26.3%
	Friends and Relatives	32	15.8%
	Health Personnel	116	57.9%

In **Table 02**, a majority (86.1%) of the participants were aware of method of contraception. As a majority of participants were literate, maximum of them took contraceptive in order to have a child when required or to prevent unwanted child birth (31.6%) while many used to improve health, prevention of STDs or spacing children. Mass media, Health care institutes and Social Interactions have added to knowledge as well as awareness among the common public. Health Personnel (57.9%) have been the major source of information followed by mass media such as TV/Magazines/Newspapers.

Table: 03 Attitude towards the use of Contraceptives:

CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Use of contraceptive is beneficial	110	55.3%
Would practice and encourage a friend	63	31.6%
Willing to adapt family planning if never done earlier	16	7.9%
Will not adapt Family planning measures	11	5.3%

Table 03 revealed that almost everyone aware about the benefits of contraceptives as well as family planning norms. Despite of good to fair knowledge, majority (94.7%) have positive attitude towards contraception. About 86.9% women have found contraceptive as beneficial

out of which 31.6% women have practiced and encourage others. Only a few among them have a negative attitude mainly due to various social stigma, beliefs, family pressure etc.

Table: 04 Contraceptive Practice among the Participants.

CHARACTERISTICS	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
CONTRACEPTIVE USED IN PAST	Oral Pill	68	34.2%
	Copper T	2	1%
	Tubectomy	5	2.65%
	Condom	58	28.9%
	Other (Injectables)	3	1.65%
	Not Used	64	31.6%
METHODS OF CONTRACEPTIVE USED NOW	Oral Pill	53	26.3%
	Condom	121	60.5%
	Tubectomy	4	2%
	Vasectomy	1	0.5%
	Copper T	16	7.9%
	Injectables	3	1.6%
	Conventional	2	1.2%
SOURCE OF AVAILABILITY	Health centre	26	13.2%
	Private Health Institute	42	21.1%
	Medicine Shop/Pharmacy	105	52.6%
	Government Hospital	27	13.2%

Table 04 shows that about 98.8% women are using contraceptive while only 1.2% remained unprotected thus using conventional method of contraception. Among them, 86.8% used barrier method of contraception followed by oral pills, Copper T, Injectables and natural methods being the least used (2.8%). Use of barrier method of contraception has significantly increased from 28.9% to 60.5%. Permanent method of sterilisation such as tubectomy or vasectomy have been marked only in 2% cases.

Table: 05 Reasons for not using contraception:

CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Willing to have more children	26	13%
Partner opposition	12	6%
Fearing Side effects	88	44%
Lack of knowledge	54	27%
Not reliable	12	6%
Interference with sexual pleasure	8	4%

Fearing side effects is the most common reasons for not using contraception followed by lack of knowledge, social stigma and beliefs. Counseling of the couples regarding the safety and the benefits of family planning norms would play a vital role. Mass media, Health care institutes and Social Interactions have added to knowledge as well as awareness among the common public. Medicine shops/Pharmacy aid to about (52.6%) as a majority of cases followed by private health clinics and government hospitals.

DISCUSSION:

Detailed analysis of our study reveals that out of 200 subjects, 71.1% belongs to 18-24 year of age with maximum No of women (45.5%) belonging to 2-3 para. Almost all women are literate belonging to middle to upper socioeconomic status out of which most of the women (55.3%) were professionals while about 21.1% were housewives. Sunita et al.(4) and Sarella et al. (6) have also showed similar results as our study with majority of women in 20-25 years of age and with parity more than 2. Another study conducted by Prachi et al.(5) showed majority in the age group of 15-34years and almost 80.1% were housewives.

Majority of women in our study (86.1%) were literate and had knowledge about the use of contraceptive methods. Among 198 women, our study revealed that maximum women used contraceptive to allow spacing and prevent unwanted live births (31.6%) while 15.8% women we're using to improve health and 13.6% for the prevention of STDs whereas Sunita et al. mentioned that 44% women used contraception for economic reason, motivation (22%) and incentives (22%).(4) whereas in Saluja et al. (14) the major reason of use of contraceptives were completed families (81.1%) followed by spacing (14.9%). In our study Health Personnels play a major role as the source of awareness, similar to the results were found by Sarella et al. (6), Bamniya et al.(2021) and Thapa et al. (2018)(9,17).

Certain attitudes in the human being (such as superstitions, delusions and prejudices) based on lack of awareness, attitudes and various trends that counter to social measures and the cause of difference in beliefs. Our study revealed that majority of women being literate have a positive attitude similar to Bamniya et al.(9) Sunita et al.(4) revealed that about 98.8% of the women used barrier method of contraception while only 1.2% were not using any while in our study, the use of condom (60.5%) was the most commonly used one followed by oral pills (26.3%),

IUCD (7.9%), injectables, permanent method of sterilisation being the least. On the other hand Thapa et al. revealed the abundant use of Injectables and barrier methods in Bamniya et al.(9,17). Similar results were also a found in the studies by Prachi et al. (2008), Salsa et al. (2009), Sharma et al (2012), Prateek et al. (2012), Sunita et al. (2013), Srivastava et al. (2014), Sarella et al. (2014), Thapa et al. (2018). (4,5,6,8,17,21,24,25). Considering the overall analysis of our study, the practice of contraception was mostly associated with age of women, literacy, socio-economic status and years at marriage. Out of women using contraception earlier, the usage was highest (71.1%) in women of 18-24 years. This association was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), revealing similarity with Pandey et al., Manna et al., Prateek et al. and Balgir et al.(10-13)

Fearing side effects of contraception (44%) is the major cause for non compliance in our study similar to Shendge et al.(15) which can be reduced by proper education, mass media awareness and selection of proper contraception followed by lack of knowledge (27%), willing to have more children (13%), partner opposition (6%). Counselling of the couples regarding the safety and the benefits of family planning norms would play a vital role. With gradual awareness and knowledge about contraception in our study group, contraceptive usage has gradually increased from the past. There is need of en-lightening the public about reproductive health and various family planning methods.

The limitation of our study was smaller study group of patients coming to our hospital only. The study should include a larger population group belonging to a wider area or region.

CONCLUSION :

Implementation of knowledge into practice is a big challenge due to various social and superstitious belief prevailing among women in India. The role of women in decision making in family planning as well education matters will significantly help in achieving family planning goals. Partner counselling, educating newly married and their families as well as young women in reproductive age along with advancement in services play a vital role.

DECLARATIONS:

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Ethical Considerations:

The study was performed according to the declaration after taking informed consent and approval by the Institutional Ethics Committee

Authors Contribution:

Dr.Sairindri Sahoo gave the concept and designed the study, collected the data, performed the statistical analysis and prepared the manuscript. Dr.Monisha Mohapatra supervised the study, provided critical revisions to the final manuscript. Dr.Radhakishan Sahoo contributed to the study design, data interpretation and manuscript format. All authors read and finalised the manuscript.

Conflict of interest :

There is no conflict of interest as per the authors.

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