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Knowledge and use of contraceptive methods among Tunisian women

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Introduction

Contraception has played a crucial role in succeeding a demographic transition in Tunisia since the independence

Objectives :

This work aims to evaluate people's knowledge and adherence to contraception.

Methodology and research tools:

This was a prospective descriptive study. Data was collected during two months in a Procreation Health Center and in the obstetrics gynecology section in a local hospital. The target population was Tunisian women in the age of procreation. Data was collected via questionnaires.

Results

The average age of the women participating in this survey was 31, and the majority of them (87.3%) have persued their higher studies. Forty two percent of them were multiparous. 41% of the women thought that they were knowledgeable enough about contraception, 34% thought that their knowledge was moderate, 19% that they were well-informed, and only 6% that they need to know more. Condoms represented the most known method for 87.5% of the women, followed by the periodic abstinence with 86%, and the intrauterine device (IUD) with 83%.

Results

Concerning the fears from contraception, 58.3% of the women worried about how to use the contraceptive tools, 40.8% feared the possible pain, 35% had memory problems, 34% suffered from abnormal bleeding, and 3.5% considered those tools as costly. The remaining 6.7% expressed their fear from different possibilities such us ineffectiveness, possible decrease of sexual desire, cancer, and long-term effects. When women were asked about the use of contraceptive methods, the calendar rhythm method was on top of list with 21.3%, followed by the IUD with 15%, and condoms came last with 13.3%. The remaining 41.1% of women were not using any contraceptive method; still, 27% of them had never used any contraceptive method.

When asked about the best contraceptive method regarding tolerance-efficiency scale, 30.8% of women have chosen the IUV, 17.5% opted for the calendar rhythm method, and 15.5% went for condoms. The majority of women (67%) indicated that they have a regular gynecologic follow-up; 89.2% consult a gynecologist, 21.6 % a midwife, and 1 % a general practitioner.

21% of the total number of women has opted for the voluntary interruption of pregnancy (VIG). Among them, 79.8% had one to two VIG, 8.3% had three to four VIG, and 11.9% had it more than five times.

Discussion

In our study of the knowledge of contraceptive methods, most women were insufficiently aware about the side effects. In comparison with literature, we have noticed a modest level of knowledge among participants [1].

Most women highly value the effectiveness, safety and ease of use when choosing a contraceptive method [2]. In our study, the IUD was the first contraceptive method considered to be safe.

We have noticed that 21% of women has opted for a voluntary interruption of pregnancy and this fact demonstrate a lack of use of contraception.

Moreover, there is evidence that counseling and making awerness of contraceptive use can potentially decrease the rate of unintended pregnancy [3]. Also, it has be proven that encouraging LARC (Long Acting Reversible Contraception) methods can help reduce

contraception failure, enhance adherence and creates the potential for perfect use [1].

Conclusion

Tunisian women awareness of contraception appears to be quite sufficient yet most of the women do not make use of it. In order to help these women put their knowledge into practice, they need to be further informed, well-listened to, and well-reassured.

[1] EISENBERG, David L., SECURA, Gina M., MADDEN, Tessa E., *et al.* Knowledge of contraceptive effectiveness. *American journal of obstetrics and gynecology*, 2012, vol. 206, no 6, p. 479. e1-479. e9.

[2] STANWOOD, Nancy L. et BRADLEY, Karen A. Young pregnant women's knowledge of modern intrauterine devices. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 2006, vol. 108, no 6, p. 1417-1422.

[3] LEE, Jessica K., PARISI, Sara M., AKERS, Aletha Y., *et al.* The impact of contraceptive counseling in primary care on contraceptive use. *Journal of general internal medicine*, 2011, vol. 26, no 7, p. 731-736.