

# FACTORS AFFECTING THE CONTRACEPTIVE PRACTICES OF WOMEN IN GYNAE & OBS UNIT OF TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL OF KHYBER PUKHTUN KHWA

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To determine the factors affecting the knowledge and practices regarding family planning amongst women of reproductive age (15-49) years of Khyber Pakhtun Khwa.

**Material and Methods:** The study was conducted in Gynae department of Hayatabad Medical Complex, over a period of 6 months (January –June 2013).

**Study Design:** This was a cross sectional study. 202 women were taken randomly from Gynae A department. Women with history of infertility were excluded from the study. All information including age, ethnicity, parity, educational status and profession were recorded on a predesigned proforma. Knowledge, attitude and practices regarding contraception were noted. All the data was entered in Statistical Package **SPSS** version 10 and results obtained.

**Results:** In our study 202 women were included, mean age was 30 years. Only 58% women had knowledge of contraception and had used any one method of family planning in their life time. Maximum users were in age group of 35 years or more. Contraceptive use in our study was 76.5% in women having more than secondary level of education, while it was 52% in illiterate group. Although multiple methods of contraception were used by individuals, yet condoms were found to be the most popular method. Wish to extend the family (18.3%) followed by desire to have a male child (9.9%) were common reasons for not using contraceptives. 40.6% of the women were self motivated for using family planning methods.

**Conclusions:** Contraceptive use in our study was found to be consistent with the studies done in other area of Pakistan. Female education, awareness & proper counseling can increase the contraceptive prevalence in Khyber Pakhtun Khwa.

**Key Words:** Family planning, contraceptive knowledge, attitude and practice.

## INTRODUCTION

Pakistan with an estimated population of 180 million is the 7<sup>th</sup> most populous country in the world. Population explosion is a major burden on the already meager resources of developing countries. Pakistan's current population growth rate is 2.6% and if left unchecked, Pakistan population is expected to reach 335 million by 2050. 14% of the total Pakistan population resides in KPK with a total fertility rate of 4.33%<sup>1</sup>. Family planning has important implication in population dynamics of the country. Family planning aims at providing the liberty of having only desired number of children, and allows for adequate spacing among children<sup>2</sup>. It is an effective way to improve the health of the mother and child and is central to efforts required to reduce poverty, provide economic growth, lower fertility and improve maternal and prenatal mortality rates.

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According to population reference bureau, the contraceptive prevalence (i.e. number of women of reproductive age who themselves or their partners are using any contraceptive method) is 29% in Pakistan<sup>3</sup> while around 97% of Pakistani women know at least one method of contraception. Thus a wide gap is observed between knowledge and practice of contraception.

Important factors contributing to this huge disparity in family planning outcome are: patient preferences, demographic, cultural and religious believes. Other factors include: age, parity, education, family attitude, motivation, availability and acceptability of contraception. Because knowledge and practice of contraception go hand in hand, women education and counseling of couples can play an important role to adopt family planning methods.

This study was undertaken to determine the knowledge, attitude and practices of family planning amongst target population and to identify factors that can affect its acceptance and usage.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in Hayatabad Medical Complex over a period of six months (Jan- June 2013). This is a descriptive, cross sectional study. 202 women

of reproductive age (15-49yrs) attending Gynae unit A were interviewed. Women with history of infertility were excluded from this study. A questionnaire was designed to find out knowledge, attitude and practice regarding contraception. Various socio demographic factors like age, parity, education and profession were studied in relation with their effects on contraceptive practices. The knowledge and motivation regarding contraception use was assessed. Reasons for not using contraception were listed and methods of contraception ever used were taken into account. All the data was entered in SPSS version10 and results obtained.

## RESULTS

In this study, 62% (n=114) of the respondents had the knowledge about contraception. In 202 cases studied, 58.4% (n=118) had ever used contraception. 81.18% respondents were Pakistanis while 18.82% were Afghan's. The contraception rate was 60.4% among the Pakistani population while 50% in Afghani responders.

The pool of respondents was divided into three age brackets; 15-24 years, 25-34 years and 35 years and above. In the first age group 48.5% (n=16) were using contraception while in the second age group 56.3% (n=54) and in the third age group 65.8% (n=48) were using contraception.

As far as parity is concerned three age groups were taken; para 3 or less, para 4-5 and para 6 and above. In para 3 or less 58.3% (n=60) were using contraception, in para 4-5 61.7% (n=29) and in the last group 55.8% (n=29) were using contraceptive methods.

The respondents were divided into four educational stratas i.e illiterate (n=121), informally educated (n=23), formally educated up to secondary level (n=24)

**TABLE 1: CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD IN USE**

Method	Frequency	Percent
Natural Method	4	2.0%
Withdrawal	13	6.4%
Combine Oral Contraceptive Pills	12	5.9%
Injectable Contraceptives	14	6.9%
Intra Uterine Contraceptive Device	6	3.0%
Condoms	36	17.8%
Emergency Contraceptive Pills	1	0.5%
Bilateral Tubal Ligation	10	5.0%
Multiple Methods	18	8.9%
Not Mentioned	4	2.0%
Not Used any Method	84	41.6%
Total	202	100 %

**TABLE 2: REASON FOR NOT USING**

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Non availability	1	.5
Lack of knowledge	10	5.0
Lack of husband consent	12	5.9
Lack of family consent	1	.5
Wants to extend family	37	18.3
Religion/cultural taboos	2	1.0
Side effects	5	2.5
Misconception that she can't conceive without medication	4	2.0
Husband lives abroad	2	1.0
Wants a male child	20	9.9
Couple never thought of using contraception	1	0.5
H/O caesarean hysterectomy	1	0.5
Reason not given	9	4.5
Not Applicable	97	48.0
Total	202	100.0

and formally educated higher than secondary level (n=34). Among the illiterate group 52% were using contraception, among the informally educated 60.9%, among those with formal education up to 62.5% and among those with more than secondary level education 76.5 % were using contraception.

In this study, 185 respondents were housewives, 9 respondents belonged to medical profession and 8 respondents worked in other fields. Among the housewives the prevalence of the use of contraception was 55.7%.

The study revealed that 40.6% (n=82) women were self motivated, 14.4% (n=29) were motivated by their husbands and only 3.5% (n=7) of them received motivation through medical professionals.

## DISCUSSION

Contraception is one of the major determinants of fertility levels. In the developing world an estimated 122.7 million people have an unmet need for contraception<sup>4</sup>. Almost half of the Asian countries have contraceptive prevalence of 60% or higher<sup>5</sup>.

In our study, even though 62% of the respondents had heard of contraception, the contraceptive use was only 58.4%. This is contradictory to that found in another study conducted in Khairpur where it was 29%<sup>6</sup> and in Lahore where it was 28%<sup>7</sup>.

The 202 respondents in this study were categorized into three age groups. In the first age group,

15-24 years, 48.5% were using contraception while in the second age group, 25-34 years, the contraception use was 56.3% while in the third age group, 35 and above, it was 65.8%. This shows that increasing age of women is directly related to the increased use of contraception. Similar findings were also observed in a study conducted at Lady Aitchison Hospital Lahore<sup>(6)</sup>. However, intensive efforts are needed to encourage the contraceptive use in young couples, which is the most fertile group.

Female education plays a key role in increasing awareness regarding the use of contraception<sup>9</sup>. This study also revealed that the use of contraception increased parallel to the level of education received by these women, with maximum usage within the most educated group and the least usage among the illiterate women. A study done in Tanzania also highlighted the same findings that education and number of children were the main factors affecting family planning<sup>10</sup>. The majority of respondents were housewives and their source of knowledge was their family. This can easily be explained through the social setup of a Pathan household where majority couples live in joint families. Similar results were found in the study conducted by Musarrat Jabeen et al in Kohat<sup>11</sup> as well as by Omo-Aghoja et al in Nigeria<sup>12</sup> where majority live in large combined families. Although the source of knowledge was family and friends but most of the women that used contraception were self motivated or motivated by their husbands i.e. 40% and 14.4% respectively.

One new child may increase the use of contraception by 7%<sup>13</sup>. In our study, in para 3 or less the contraception use was 58.3% while in para 4 to 5 it was 61.7% but in para 6 or above it dropped to 55.8%. The most common reason for not using contraception was the desire to increase the family followed by the wish to have a male child. This result was also shown in a study undertaken by Alagh et al<sup>14</sup>. This can also be explained through the socio cultural dynamics of the Pathans. Similar trend was observed in other studies done in South Asia, which showed that preference for a male baby accounts for the persistence of the desire for more births.<sup>12</sup>

As far as contraceptive methods are concerned, condoms were the most common method of family planning found in our study which is consistent with KAP study done in Karachi<sup>14</sup>. The higher use of temporary methods also reflects the desire to extend families.

## CONCLUSION

There are many misconceptions and misinformation regarding use of contraception. Majority of the women in this study are not practicing contraception in a desire to extend their families and more so to have male children. However those who have knowledge and are using contraceptive, most of them are self motivated. Educational level of women also influences the level of

knowledge attitude and practice of family planning. In short women education and proper counseling coupled with public awareness on mass level can prove to be powerful tools to increase use of contraceptive in our population.

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