



Contraceptive practices adopted by women attending an urban health centre in Punjab, India

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: An estimated 215 million women in the world who want to avoid pregnancy are not using an effective method of contraception, despite increases in use in recent years. Studies to determine the socio-demographic factors responsible for adopting contraceptive methods by the eligible couples would help us in planning for effective management of family planning services as we would focus our resources towards places which are neglected and those which will give us the best results.

Objectives: 1. To determine the prevalence of different types of contraceptive usage among eligible couples (aged 15-45 years). 2. To study different variables affecting the prevalence of contraceptive use among eligible couples.

Materials and Methods: Cross-Sectional descriptive study by interview method of 260 Eligible couples from January to December 2011 was done.

Results: Contraceptive prevalence was found to be 53.84%. Among the permanent sterilization methods, the most commonly used method was Tubectomy (4.23%) while only 0.7 % of the eligible couples opted for Vasectomy. Among the spacing methods Condoms, Oral Contraceptive Pills and Intra-Uterine Devices were used by 41.6%, 28.4% and 8.0% of the eligible couples respectively. The percentage of family planning methods used by Hindus and Sikhs were almost equal i.e. 54.96% and 56.52% respectively. A huge contrast was seen in the context of socio-economic status.

Conclusion: Increased usage of contraceptives requires continuous motivation and the factors affecting the prevalence rates of usage should be found in the local community.

Key words: *contraception, eligible couples, sterilization*

Introduction

The single most important problem that developing countries like India are facing today is uncontrolled growth of population. With population of 1.21 billion, India is second most populous country of the world, second only to China, whereas seventh in land area with only 2.4% of land area [1]. The projections for India made by the Technical Group constituted by the National Commission on Population (NCP) under the Chairmanship of Registrar General, India, reveals that the country's population would reach 1.4 billion by 2026 [2]. In 1952, the Indian Government was one of the first in the world to launch a National Family Planning Program with the objective of reducing the birth rate to the extent necessary to stabilize the population at a level consistent with requirement of national economy. The use of contraceptive measures

constituted the backbone of the program. Birth control pills, condoms, sterilization, IUD (Intrauterine device) etc. are most commonly practiced Family Planning methods in the country. The efforts of the Government in implementing the Family Planning Program in the country have significant impact [3]. In spite of availability of a wide range of contraceptives and mass media campaigns & IEC (Information, Education and Communication) program, the population control remains a distant step to achieve. The extent of acceptance of the Family Planning methods still varies within societies and also among different castes and religious groups [4].

Government of India has adopted a National Population Policy in February, 2000. The main objective is to provide or undertake activities aimed to achieve population stabilization, at a level consistent with the needs of

sustainable economic growth, social development and environment protection, by 2045 [5].

Total fertility of the world has declined to 2.6 children in 2005-2010 [6]. Smaller families are slowly becoming the norm in India too. Fertility in India has declined to 2.7 children, mainly due to increased use of contraception in women. In spite of this, India is yet above the replacement level, with contraceptive prevalence rate for married women being only 56 % and total unmet need being 12.8% [7]. As per NFHS III data, messages about family planning are not reaching all youth. Many youth have not heard of available modern contraceptive spacing methods in spite most of the youth desiring a small family and having a positive attitude towards contraception [8].

An estimated 215 million women in the world who want to avoid a pregnancy are not using an effective method of contraception, despite increases in use in recent years [9]. Keeping above said factors in mind, this study was carried out in a field practice area of Urban Health Centre in Punjab to identify the factors influencing the contraceptive acceptance pattern in the area. The information gathered by using interview survey methodology will help us to understand the current status of practice of use of contraceptive measures to avoid unwanted births and regulate the interval between pregnancies and determine the number of children in the family. Moreover the key focus area of this study was to determine the socio-demographic factors responsible for adopting contraceptive methods by the eligible couples in this area. The results from this study would help us in planning for effective management of family planning services as we would focus our resources towards places which are neglected and those which will give us the best results. Since, this is an urban area of the city Patiala; the results can also be generalized for other parts of city and state with the required adjustments.

Objectives

1. To determine the prevalence of different types of contraceptive usage among eligible couples (aged 15-45 years).
2. To study different variables affecting the prevalence of contraceptive use among eligible couples.

Materials and Methods

It was a Cross-Sectional descriptive study by interview method conducted at Urban Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Centre, Tripuri, Patiala. It is the urban field practice area of Government Medical College, Patiala. The

Department of Community Medicine has been providing Family Planning and other health care services in the area through a team of doctors, interns, ANM's and social workers. About 284 Individual members from Eligible Couples who were attending MCH centre, Tripuri were interviewed from January 2011 to December 2011. Out of the 284 persons interviewed 21 were pregnant, one reported primary infertility and two reported secondary infertility. Thus, a total of 260 people constituted the study sample.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Ethics committee prior to the start of the study. Utmost care was taken to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

Information about scientific contraceptive method being used was asked and conventional methods like Rhythm, Calendar and Withdrawal were collectively labelled as others. Data was collected on a pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire. Informed consent was taken before each interview and data was entered into Microsoft Excel for results.

Results

Contraceptive prevalence was found to be 53.84%. Among the permanent sterilization methods, the most commonly used method was Tubectomy (4.23%) while only 0.7 % of the eligible couples opted for Vasectomy but these are less prevalent in acceptance than state averages as per NFHS-3. Among the spacing methods Condoms, Oral Contraceptive Pills and Intra-Uterine Devices were used by 41.6%, 28.4% and 8.0% of the eligible couples respectively. The percentage of family planning methods used by Hindus and Sikhs were almost equal i.e. 54.96% and 56.52% respectively. A huge contrast was seen in the context of socio-economic status where most of the families belonging to the upper socio-economic status were using one or the other contraceptive method while it was only one third of the eligible couples belonging to the lower socio-economic status. Proportion of use of contraceptive methods in the age group of 15-19 years is a serious matter of concern.

As shown in Table:1, among 260 eligible couples, 71.79% of the couples aged between 30 -34 years and 65% contraceptive coverage in age group of 35-39 years which are the most crucial period in the reproductive span were using at least one of the method of contraception.

Table: 2 reveals that contraceptive utilization rate was higher among Sikhs(56.52%) as compared to Hindus (54.96%). The use of contraception was only 21.43 %

among Muslims which is far below 53.84%, the average of this study.

As observed from Table: 3, the 100% of Upper class uses some kind of contraceptive method but only 30 % of those in Lower SES use any contraceptive method. The rates of contraceptive usage has shown consistent downwards trends with decrease in socio-economic status of the families whom the eligible couple belongs.

Table 4 shows that 72.73% of the eligible couples with two children use some kind of contraception. Important finding is that none of those 16 couples having more than 3 children have adopted any terminal method. So, this area requires immediate attention and concern.

Table: 1. Age wise distribution of current use of contraceptive methods among eligible couples

Socio-demographic character (Age Groups in years)	Total No. of Eligible Couples	No. of eligible couples using any method	Condom	OCPs	IUDs	Tubectomy	Vasectomy	Others
15-19	4	1 (25%)	1	0	0	0	0	0
20-24	82	36 (43.9%)	18	10	6	1	0	1
25-29	109	56 (51.57%)	31	14	5	2	0	4
30-34	39	28 (71.79%)	12	8	4	2	0	2
35-39	20	13 (65%)	3	1	3	5	1	0
40-44	6	6 (100%)	1	1	2	1	1	0
TOTAL	260	140	66	34	20	11	2	7

Table: 2. Religion wise distribution of current use of contraceptive methods among eligible couples

Socio-demographic character (Religion)	Total No. of Eligible Couples	No. of eligible couples using any method	Condom	OCPs	IUDs	Tubectomy	Vasectomy	Others
Hindu	131	72 (54.96%)	34	16	10	5	2	5
Muslim	14	3 (21.4%)	0	2	1	0	0	0
Sikh	115	65 (56.52%)	32	16	9	6	0	2
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	260	140 (53.84%)	66	34	20	11	2	7

Table: 3. Socio-Economic status wise distribution of current use of contraceptive methods among eligible couples

Socio-demographic character Socioeconomic Status (Modified Kuppuswami's SES scale)	Total No. of Eligible Couples	No. of eligible couples using any method	Condom	OCPs	IUDs	Tubectomy	Vasectomy	Others
Upper	3	3 (100%)	3	0	0	0	0	0
Upper Middle	25	19 (76%)	11	4	0	2	1	1
Lower Middle	62	38 (61.2%)	20	10	3	3	0	2
Upper Lower	150	74 (49.33%)	29	18	17	6	1	3
Lower	20	6(30%)	4	2	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	260	140 (53.84%)	66	34	20	11	2	7

Table: 4. No. of living children wise current use of Contraceptive Methods among eligible couples

Socio-demographic character (No. of living children)	Total No. of Eligible Couples	No. of eligible couples using any method	Condom	OCPs	IUDs	Tubectomy	Vasectomy	Others
0	20	4 (20%)	2	1	1	0	0	0
1	94	41 (43.62%)	24	10	5	0	0	2
2	99	72 (72.73%)	35	18	8	5	1	5
3	31	18 (58%)	4	2	5	6	1	0
>3	16	5 (31.25%)	1	3	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	260	140 (53.84%)	166	34	20	11	2	7

Discussion

Total CPR in our study population was found to be 53.84% as compared to 40.4 % of India and 46.2 % of the state of Punjab as in the year of 2011 [2,12] out of which eligible couples using permanent methods of family planning were only 5%, which suggests a lot of motivation and education is further required. It was further observed that most of the eligible couples between the age groups of 20-29 years preferred barrier method (condom) as the most favoured mode of contraception. The families belonging to upper

socio-economic status were among the highest users of contraceptive methods. Lower usage among muslim couples (21.4%) is consistent with other studies [10]. Non-involvement of the male members of the family in muslim families is a matter of great concern which requires motivation of male partners and community leaders [11].

Conclusion

Increased usage of contraceptives requires continuous motivation and the factors affecting the prevalence rates of

usage should be found in the local community. These should be taken care of with the help of multi-faceted interventions that aim at countering negative perceptions in needy sections of society.

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