

Perception Of Emergency Contraceptive Pills Among Married Women In Rural Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Unsafe abortion is a major public health problem in developing countries where women make several attempts to terminate unintended pregnancy before turning to health services and that constitute important cause of maternal mortality and morbidity. To prevent it, effective fertility control drugs like emergency contraceptive pills (ECP) are used. **Objective:** To study the perception of emergency contraceptive pills among married women in Mappedu, TamilNadu. **Methodology:**A cross sectional study was conducted among 62 married women in reproductive age of Mappedu for study duration of 3 months. The study population was selected by simple random sampling technique. Data was collected using pretested structured questionnaire and interviewing about the perception of Emergency contraceptive pills **Results:**The average age of women in the study population was 30.5 years. 84% were literate with education status of Primary education and more. Majority of study population were homemakers. About 8% have heard about ECP and source of information was mainly through education. However, where an ECP can be bought, how it acts to prevent fertilisation, how long after unprotected sex it can be used is not known by any. No one among study population used ECP. **Conclusion:** The awareness of ECP among study population is poor and there is a need to popularize ECP to avoid unwanted pregnancy and abortion with help of media, education, health care providers.

Key words: Perception, Emergency contraceptive pills, Mappedu, Married women

1. INTRODUCTION:

Globally, there are 250 million pregnancies each year and one third of these is unintended and one fifth of these undergo induced abortion. Unsafe abortion is a major public health problem in developing countries where women make several attempts to terminate unintended pregnancy before turning to health services and it constitutes important cause of maternal mortality and morbidity [1]. Unintended pregnancy also has important association with health, social and economic consequences [2]. Unintended pregnancy and early and frequent childbearing hinder young women's ability to pursue educational or vocational opportunities [3].

Emergency contraception (EC) refers to a group of birth control contraceptive modalities, which is indicated after unprotected sexual intercourse, following sexual abuse, misuse of regular contraception or non-use of contraception [4]. EC plays a vital role in preventing unintended pregnancy, which in turn helps to reduce unintended child birth and unsafe abortion, which are major problems of maternal health.

Two types of EC- oral pills and intrauterine devices (IUDs) are currently used. In case of IUDs, the protective effect is available if it is inserted within 5 days of unprotected sexual intercourse [5].

The Department of health and family welfare introduced 'Emergency Contraceptive Pills' (E-pills) in the national family welfare programme during year 2002-2003. Efforts are being made to utilise them at all levels of public health system [6]. Emergency contraceptive pills is said to be safe with minor side effects like nausea and vomiting.

Popular methods of ECP include administration of two doses of a combination of oestrogen and progestin pill (Yuzpe method); with estimated efficacies of 75 %. The Yuzpe regimen is not recommended due to nausea and other side effects. Currently, two 0.75mg doses of levonorgestrel are licensed for use within 72 hours of unprotected sex. Recent results have proved that 10 mg mifepristone at the time of presentation ingested up to 120 hours after intercourse showed good results [5].

The aim of the study is to assess the socio- demographic characteristics, knowledge, attitude and practices of the participants towards ECP.

2. METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study on knowledge, perception and practices of emergency contraceptive pills was conducted among married females in rural Tamil Nadu (Mappedu). The study includes 62 married women from 15-45 years of age. Simple random sampling method was done. After explaining the intention of study, married women of rural area of Mappedu were requested to fill out structured pretested questionnaire. To enhance the quality of the data, majority of the questions were adapted from previously conducted studies with some changes. The questions were based on the socio- demographic characteristics, knowledge, perception and practice of emergency contraceptive pills. Data was collected for a period of 3 months (January 2019-March 2019). Data entered in MS excel and analysed using SPSS software.

3. RESULTS:

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Details Of The Study Participants

TABLE 1: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS(N=62)		
VARIABLE	FREQUENCY(n)	PERCENTAGE (%)
AGE OF RESPONDENTS (Years)		
18-23	10	16.1
24-29	22	35.5
30-35	9	14.5
36-40	14	22.6
>40	7	11.3
EDUCATIONAL STATUS		
No schooling	10	16.1
Primary school	9	14.5
High school	34	54.8
Graduate	8	12.9
Post graduate	1	1
OCCUPATION		
Professional	1	1.6
Semi-professional	3	4.8
Unemployed	58	93.5

Majority belong to age group 24-29 years (35.5%) followed by 36-40 years of age (22.6%). 83.2% were literate with education status of primary education and more. Majority (93.5%) were unemployed.

Table 2: Variables related to pregnancy and marriage

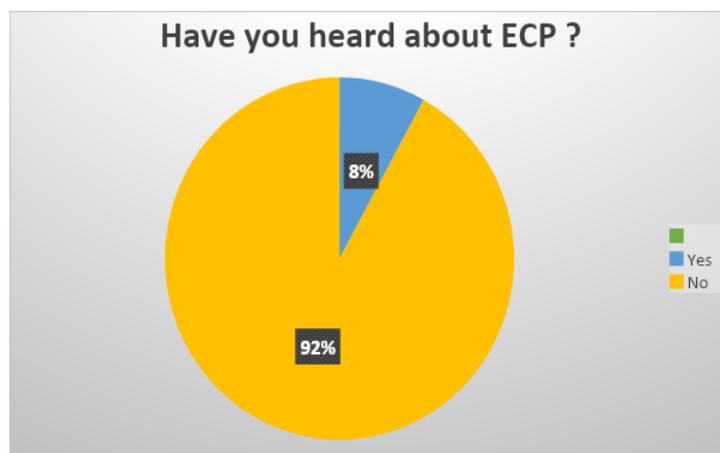
VARIABLE	FREQUENCY(n)	PERCENTAGE (%)
AGE OF MARRIAGE (Years)		
18-23	45	72.6
24-29	11	17.7
>30	6	9.7
AGE OF FIRST PREGNANCY (Years)		
18-23	43	69.4
24-29	11	17.7
>30	7	11.3
NO OF PREGNANCY		
0	1	1.6
1	28	45.2
2	27	43.5
>2	6	9.7
TYPE OF CONTRACEPTION		
Not using	35	56.5
Permanent sterilisation	27	43.5

With regards to age of marriage, majority were married at 18-23 years of age (72.6%) and also had their first pregnancy at age 18-23 years (69.4%).45.2% had only one pregnancy followed by 43.5% with two pregnancies. Nearly 56.5% of married women not using any contraceptive while others are using permanent method of sterilisation(tubectomy).

Knowledge and perception about Emergency contraceptive pills:

Regarding knowledge of ECP among 62 married women, only 8% (only 5 women among 62) have heard about ECP. (Figure1).

Figure 1: Knowledge about Emergency contraceptive pills



Source of information through education(n=4) and media(n=1).However, information regarding where an ECP can be bought, how it acts to prevent fertilisation, within how long of unprotected sex it can be used is not known by any.No one among study population used ECP.

As regards of association between education of women and knowledge of Emergency contraceptive pills, Chi-square test resulted into a p-value of .000003(p<0.05) indicating statistically significant association between two attributes. It is evident that as the education level increases, the proportion of women having knowledge of emergency contraception increases. (Table 3)

Table 3: Association between Education and Awareness

	Yes	No	Total
Graduate	4	4	8
Others	1	53	54
Total	5	57	62

4. DISCUSSION:

Emergency contraceptive Pills will definitely help to reduce unintended pregnancies as well as its consequences like induced abortions, complications which may arise during or after unsafe abortions etc.

It is also very useful option when there is failure of barrier methods. It's important for a woman to have correct knowledge about EC like when to use, its availability, correct dosage. This study was undertaken to know the knowledge, attitude & practice regarding EC among married women of rural TamilNadu.

According to our sample study, only 8% of 62 married women were aware of ECP. Similar studies conducted in Jammu and Kashmir by Gupta RK (2017)(1)and Gujarat by Jainam V Shah (2016)(5) showed that awareness of ECP among married women to be 90.6% and 97.17% which is much higher than our finding.

The levels of awareness among the respondents in the present study could be explained on the basis of their level of education which can have an influence on the awareness level of EC. Education plays a key role in understanding and creating awareness towards emergency contraception (8).It is believed that educated people are more concerned about their health and have a tendency to gather information in this regard.Following education, it is media being popular source of information of ECP.

ECP gives women last opportunity to protect her from unprotected intercourse.It has potential to achieve the goal of 'all pregnancy should be wanted' and handy tool to achieve the objectives of National population policy (7,9).

5. CONCLUSION

The awareness of ECP among study population is poor. Participants' contraceptive choices often were based on poor knowledge of basic fertility processes, randomly acquired information on available methods, and a shifting and unpredictable family planning accessibility landscape, and weighed the estimated costs of unwanted pregnancies against the necessity to preserve, or even demonstrate, future fertility (10). There is a need to popularise ECP to avoid unwanted pregnancy and abortion with help of media, education, health care providers. The information related to reproduction and contraception should be disseminated through media and reach masses. Health education session including sex education should be intensified so that false information and taboo doesn't put young women at risk of pregnancies and STIs. Awareness of community workers like ASHA and Anganwadi workers would also go along in changing the attitude of community towards contraception especially emergency contraception (11).

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None declared

ETHICAL CLEARANCE: Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Ethics committee. Written informed consent was obtained from the study participants and information sheet regarding the study was given to all the participants.

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