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Original Research Article

The study of knowledge, attitudes and practices of husbands accompanying patients at obstetrics clinics of a tertiary care center about contraception

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ABSTRACT

Background: Contraceptive practices are the main tool we have in controlling the ever increasing population. It also has a huge role in preventing sexually transmitted infections. The present study was undertaken to find the knowledge, attitudes and practices of husbands accompanying patient at obstetrics clinics of a tertiary care center about contraception.

Methods: The study population was 100 husbands accompanying patients at obstetrics clinics of a tertiary care center. A simple questionnaire of 26 questions regarding knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding contraception was provided to the consenting husbands. The results were then analyzed.

Results: Vast majority have adequate knowledge about male contraception (93%), vasectomy (85%) and sexually transmitted diseases (72%). Most of the husbands do not have adequate knowledge about female contraception (only 59%) and emergency contraception (only 27%). 70% of the husbands do not know about the free contraceptives provided by the Government of India. A staggering 74% do not participate in effective contraception. Also, 77% agreed that they would remain contented with a single child.

Conclusions: This cross-sectional study clearly shows that husbands accompanying patients at obstetrics clinic of a tertiary care center have adequate knowledge about male contraception, vasectomy and sexually transmitted diseases. It is worth noting that most of the husbands do not have adequate knowledge about female contraception, emergency contraception and free contraceptives provided by the Government of India. Very few couples participate in effective contraception despite wanting to adopt a small family norm. This is a pointer towards the ineffectiveness of the family planning program of our country.

Keywords: Attitude, Contraception, Knowledge, Male, Practice

INTRODUCTION

India, home to 1.3 billion population, is the second most populous country in the world. Set to rule the world in this regard by 2030, the need of the hour is effective contraceptive practices to be used comfortably and frequently by couples.¹ India was the first country in the

world to launch an official population policy and family planning program in 1952, which remains the mainstay of family planning efforts. More than half a century has passed but universalization of small family norm remains a dream.² During 2007-08, only about 54 percent of the currently married women aged 15-49 years or their husbands were using a contraceptive method to regulate

their fertility. These disappointing statistics also continued in the next decade, where there has been only a marginal increase in the contraceptive use to 66.4%, as per NFHS -4 survey.¹ Interestingly, all these studies have revealed that the knowledge about contraceptive practices remains very high at 99.2% in rural areas and 99.6% in urban areas. The reason for the discrepancy between the knowledge and contraceptive use is not hard to find. The factors hypothesized are lack of adequate knowledge, side effects associated with their use, cultural and religious beliefs, lack of motivation to use contraceptives, to name a few.³⁻⁶ Another troubling statistic is the ever increasing number of sexually transmitted infections in the community, an alarming 16.2% (excluding HIV/AIDS) in the general population.⁷ STDs and HIV are the main cause of healthy life lost in men in the age group of 15-40 years almost ranging to 15%. Currently, India has 3rd highest number of HIV infected patients.^{8,9} In our study, we aim to study the knowledge, attitude and practices of the husbands accompanying patients at obstetrics clinics at a tertiary care center about contraception.

The aim was to study the knowledge, attitude and practices of the husbands accompanying patients at obstetrics clinics at a tertiary care center about contraception.

The objectives of this study was to know if the husbands, accompanying patients at obstetrics clinics at a tertiary care center, have adequate knowledge about male contraception, female contraception, advantages and disadvantages of common contraceptives, ideal family size/number of children, adequate knowledge about sexually transmitted infections and medical termination of pregnancy. To know how many of the couples (male/female/both) participate in regular contraceptive practices. To know how many of the husbands, accompanying patients at Obstetrics clinics at a tertiary care center, are willing to endorse the use of contraceptives to their friends/family members.

METHODS

Total 100 husbands accompanying the patients to the obstetric clinics at tertiary care hospital were chosen, after taking informed written consent. Men who were not interested to participate in the study were excluded from the study.

Inclusion criteria

- The husbands accompanying patients at obstetrics clinics, who consent to the study.

Exclusion criteria

- Non-consenting husbands at obstetrics clinics.

Cross-sectional study during four weeks (15 January - 15 February 2019).

Consenting husbands were provided with a questionnaire with 26 questions in three languages (English, Hindi and Marathi) to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the individual regarding contraception. Simple language was used and most of the questions were objective. The questionnaires were filled by husbands themselves. Assistance, if required, was provided.

Statistical analysis

The data from the study was analyzed. Statistical analysis was done where factors such as adequate knowledge about male contraceptive, female contraceptive, STDs, free contraceptives, vasectomy, emergency contraceptives, MTP were treated as dichotomous variable (Have adequate knowledge/ No adequate knowledge).

Data entry was done using Excel and the percentage of people having adequate knowledge was calculated. The percentage of people who do not have adequate knowledge was also calculated. Based on the results, tables and bar charts were made for easy analysis and description. The practice of using regular contraceptives was also treated as a dichotomous variable (Yes/No). The percentage of individuals participating in regular contraception and those who do not were calculated and the data was represented in the form of a table and a bar chart. Ideal number of children was treated as a polychotomous variable (1/2/3/4/more than 4). The percentage of couples wanting a single child, two children, three children, four children and more than four children were calculated. This data was represented in the form of a table and a pie chart. Subsequently, inferences were made from the results obtained.

RESULTS

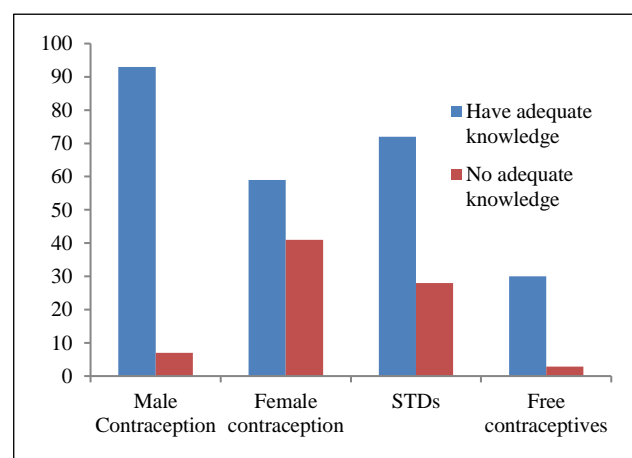


Figure 1: Knowledge about contraceptives.

The results of the study as follows. 93% of the husbands have adequate knowledge about male contraception.

About 7% do not have adequate knowledge about contraception. 59% of the husbands have adequate knowledge about female contraception, 41% do not have adequate knowledge regarding the same.

The knowledge about STDs was good as 72% of the husbands had adequate knowledge about this. 28% of the husbands do not have adequate knowledge about the same. 70% of the population did not know about the free contraceptives provided by the Government of India. 30% did not know about the same (Figure 1).

Table 1: Knowledge about vasectomy and emergency contraception.

	Vasectomy	Emergency contraception
Have adequate knowledge	85	27
Do not have adequate knowledge	15	73

Table 2: MTP and regular contraception.

	Consider MTP as a method of contraception	Practice regular contraception
Yes	11	26
No	89	74

85% of the husbands have adequate knowledge about vasectomy, 15% do not have adequate knowledge regarding vasectomy. Only 27% of the husbands have adequate knowledge about emergency contraception, 73% do not have knowledge about the same (Table 1).

About 11% of the husbands consider medical termination of pregnancy as a method of contraception, 89% do not do so. 26% of the couples practice regular effective contraception. 74% of the couples do not practice regular contraception (Table 2).

Table 3: Ideal number of children.

Ideal number of children	No. of study subjects
1	77
2	16
3	6
4	1
4/More	0

On inquiring the number of children they would like to have, 77% said that they would be contented with a single child, 16% wanted two children, 6% wanted 3 children and 1% wanted 4 children. None of them wanted more than four children (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

From the cross-sectional study of 100 husbands attending the obstetrics clinics at a tertiary care center, certain inferences can be made. Vast majority have adequate knowledge about male contraception (93%), vasectomy (85%) and sexually transmitted diseases (72%). These results are in line with a similar study conducted in Southeast Nigeria where they found the knowledge among men about male contraception, including vasectomy, to be 66.5%.¹⁰ Very few lag behind in this regard. It is also worth noting that most of the husbands do not have adequate knowledge about female contraception (59%) and emergency contraception (only 27%). The study from Uganda also gives the same result where they found men have limited accurate knowledge about female contraception and emergency contraception. The study also stated that family planning services in Uganda could be significantly strengthened by renewed efforts to focus on men's knowledge, fears, and misconceptions.¹¹ Not far from home, a study conducted in Uttar Pradesh where they recorded the knowledge about emergency contraception among women and men to be 2% and 3% respectively.⁶ It is also clear from the study that 70% of the husbands do not know about the free contraceptives provided by the Government of India. This is a pointer towards the ineffectiveness of the family planning program of our country. A staggering 74% do not participate in effective contraception. This remains a major obstacle in realizing the dream of a universal small family norm. Similar results were obtained from the study conducted in Pune where they estimated the prevalence of regular contraceptive use to be low. 30% enquiring the husbands about the number of children they would like to have, 77% agreed that they would remain contented with a single child, as supported by the analysis of NFHS-III.¹² This is an interesting statistic to be kept in mind. Though couples may want a single child, but many of them conceive for the 2nd time owing to the lack of practice of regular contraception, as revealed in our study. Limitation of this study was the filling of demographic information on the questionnaire was optional. Hence, this information was not available for analysis. The study was purely based on the urban population and did not have adequate representation from rural areas.

CONCLUSION

This cross-sectional study clearly shows that husbands accompanying patients at obstetrics clinic of a tertiary care center have adequate knowledge about male contraception, vasectomy and sexually transmitted diseases. It is worth noting that most of the husbands do not have adequate knowledge about female contraception, emergency contraception and free contraceptives provided by the Government of India. Very few couples participate in effective contraception despite wanting to adopt a small family norm. This is a

pointer towards the ineffectiveness of the family planning program of our country.

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Conflict of interest: None declared

Ethical approval: The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee

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