

Knowledge and Perceptions about Contraceptives among Postnatal Women Attending a Government Hospital, Mangalore

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Background

Family planning methods are used by many women in developing countries to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Lack of knowledge about contraceptives acts as a barrier to use contraceptives among many women leading to unplanned pregnancies. The current study is proposed to explore knowledge, perception about contraceptive among the postnatal women attending government hospital.

Aims & Objectives

To study knowledge and perceptions related to contraceptive use among women having unplanned and planned pregnancies.

Material & Methods

A Cross sectional study conducted among postnatal mothers during postnatal stay in the hospital. A total of 165 postnatal women were included in the study of which 55 women had unplanned pregnancy and 110 planned pregnancies.

Results

Most mothers were below 30 years and the number of illiterates was higher among the women with

unplanned pregnancy (10.9%) as compared to women with planned pregnancies (2.7%). Women with unplanned (78.2%) and planned (90.9%) pregnancies were aware that contraceptives were used for birth control. Knowledge related to Emergency contraceptives, Male sterilization and Female sterilization were found to be significant higher among women with planned pregnancies as compared to women with unplanned pregnancies. Main sources of information were friends, staff nurses, AW, ASHA's. More number of women with planned pregnancy (44.5%) as compared to unplanned (32.7%) felt that contraceptives may have negative effects on menstrual cycles. Most of the women with unplanned (60%) pregnancy and 74.6% with planned pregnancy perceived OCPs to have many side effects. Around 30% of women under both groups found use of Copper T to be convenient.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that postnatal women lack knowledge about family planning methods and also have misconceptions about family planning methods. Hence, the need is to effectively utilize the period of postnatal stay in the hospitals to provide information and resolve misconceptions related to contraceptives.

Keywords: Postnatal women; Unplanned pregnancy; Contraceptive use.