
ORIGINAL ARTICLE**Knowledge and Attitude of Married Women in the Reproductive Age Group Regarding Emergency Contraception in Selected Rural Areas of Udupi District***Preethi Fernandes¹, Sonia R.B.D'souza¹, Sushmitha Karkada^{1*}**¹Department of Maternity Nursing, Manipal College of Nursing, Manipal University, Manipal-576104, (Karnataka), India***Abstract:**

Background: Unwanted pregnancy is still a major problem in the modern world despite the widely available contraception services. This study was conducted to determine the knowledge and attitude of married women in the reproductive age group regarding emergency contraception in selected rural areas of Udupi district, India. *Material and Methods:* The study group comprised of 350 married women in the reproductive age group residing in rural areas of Udupi district, India. A structured questionnaire and an attitude scale were used to assess the knowledge and the attitude. *Results:* Majority, 69.1% of the married women belonged to Hindu religion, 46.9% had an educational qualification of 10th standard and below. About 13.1% of the married women had undergone abortion. Nearly 96.9% of the married women had heard about emergency contraceptives and only 2% of the married women had used emergency contraceptive pills. About 63.7% out of 339 married women had got information about emergency contraceptive pills from health personnel and about 77.7% from television. Majority 84% had poor knowledge on emergency contraception. About 99.7% had favourable attitude on the use of emergency contraceptives. There was a significant association between knowledge scores and selected variable like education, knowledge and the attitude scores had a correlation. *Conclusion:* The study identifies the knowledge and attitude of the rural married women regarding emergency contraception, hence to help them to plan future pregnancies and prevent any unwanted or unintended pregnancies.

Keywords: Knowledge, attitude, emergency contraception

Introduction:

Abortion is widely used as a solution to the management of unwanted pregnancy but is unsatisfactory in

terms of economic, emotional and social aspects. Nearly 90% of unsafe abortions are performed in developing countries where around 80,000 women die annually due to abortion-related complications. Unsafe abortions account for 12% i.e. one in eight of all maternal deaths worldwide, or approximately 200 deaths per day. In India, 11 million abortions take place annually and around 20,000 women die every year due to abortion related complications [1]. Effective methods of postcoital contraception are available, but although they have the potential to prevent unwanted pregnancy, they have not made any impact on the number of terminations, which is increasing day by day [2].

Emergency contraception, which prevents pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse, has the potential to significantly reduce the incidence of unintended pregnancies and the consequent need for abortion [3]. There will always be a need for a post-coital medication to prevent pregnancy at least for women who wish to regulate their fertility. Condoms can tear; women sometimes forget to take their birth control pills, diaphragms will occasionally slip, and rape and forced incests are on the rise. Sometimes, in the rush of the moment, people will not use a condom which is a safe and effective contraceptive [4].

Material and Methods:

Data collection to determine knowledge and attitude of married women in the reproductive age group regarding emergency contraception was conducted in selected rural areas of Udupi District. In this study,

350 married women were selected by non probability convenient sampling. Baseline proforma, structured knowledge questionnaire to assess the knowledge of the rural married women and an attitude scale to assess the attitude of the rural married women were used. Chi square test was performed using SPSS version 16 to measure the association between the variables and the knowledge scores. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to find the relationship between the knowledge and attitude scores.

Results:

Sample characteristics

Data were collected from 350 married women residing in rural areas of Hoode PHC, Udupi Taluk and District, India, majority of the married women 69.7% were in the age group of 26-35 years. Majority (69.1%) of the married women belonged to Hindu religion, 46.9% had an educational qualification of 10th standard and below. Majority of the women (78.9%) were unemployed, 57.4% had only one child each, (62.3%) were from a nuclear family. About 13.1% of the married women had undergone abortion. Majority (96.9%) of the married women had heard about emergency contraceptives and only 2% of the married women had used emergency contraceptive pills. Majority (63.7%) out of 339 married women had got information about emergency contraceptive pills from health personnel and about 77.7% out of 339 married women from television (Table1).

Description of knowledge scores regarding emergency contraception:

The data collected revealed that majority of the married women 84% had poor knowledge on emergency contraception (Fig 1).

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Sample Characteristics (N=350)

Sample Characteristics	(No)	(%)
Age (in years)		
18 - 25	58	16.6
26 - 35	244	69.7
36 - 45	48	13.7
Religion		
Hindu	242	69.1
Christain	075	21.4
Muslim	033	09.4
Education		
Graduate and above	059	16.9
PUC and Diploma	127	36.3
10th standard and below	164	46.9
Occupation		
Employed	074	21.1
Unemployed	276	78.9
Number of Living Children		
None	027	7.7
One	201	57.4
Two	110	31.4
More than two	012	03.4
Type of Family		
Nuclear	218	62.3
Joint	110	31.4
Extended	022	06.3
Underwent Abortion		
Yes	046	13.1
No	304	86.9
Heard of Emergency Contraceptive Pill		
Yes	339	96.9
No	011	03.1

Sample Characteristics	(No)	(%)
Have you Used Emergency Contraceptive Pill		
Yes	007	02
No	343	98
Received Prior Information on Emergency Contraceptive Pills		
Yes	339	96.86
No	011	03.14
Information Regarding Emergency Contraceptive Pills from Personnel		
Health personel	223	63.7
Family Number	061	17.4
Friends	031	08.9
Neighbours	012	03.4
Teachers	012	03.4
Information Regarding Emergency Contraceptive Pills from Mass Media		
Newspaper	027	07.7
Magazines	026	07.4
Television	272	77.7
Radio	014	04.0

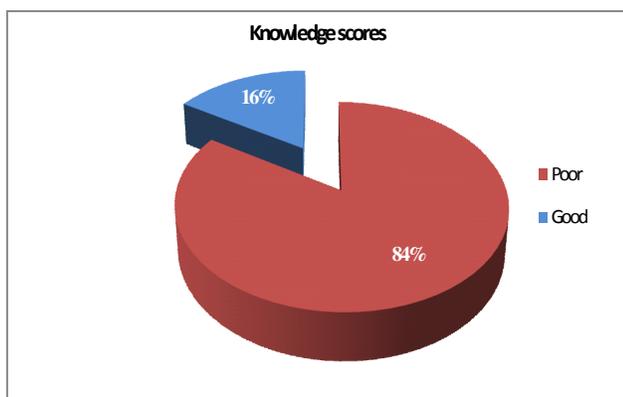


Fig1: Pie Diagram Showing Knowledge of Married Women Regarding Emergency Contraception (N =350)

Description of attitude regarding the use of emergency contraceptives:

The data revealed that majority of the married women 99.7% had favourable attitude on the use of emergency contraceptives and only 0.3 % of the married women had unfavourable attitude regarding the use of emergency contraception (Table 2).

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of attitude towards the use of emergency contraception (N = 350)

Attitude	No	%
Favourable	349	99.7
Unfavourable	1	0.3

Association between knowledge scores on emergency contraception and selected variables

The data collected revealed that there was a significant association (p=0.002) between education and knowledge regarding emergency contraception. Only one selected variable like education showed (likelihood ratio, $\chi^2 = 12.934$, p=0.002), There was a significant association between knowledge scores and selected variable like education, while other variables did not have any association with the knowledge scores (Table 3).

Relationship between knowledge and attitude scores of married women regarding emergency contraception

Relationship between knowledge and attitude was studied in all 350 women. As the knowledge score increased there was a favourable attitude towards the use of emergency contraception. The spearman’s correlation co-efficient p was 0.208 and the probability was less than 0.001 which was statistically highly significant.

Table 3: Association Between Knowledge Scores & Selected Variables (N=350)

Sample characteristics	Knowledge Scores		χ^2 (Likelihood ratio)	df	p value
	Poor	Good			
Age (in years)					
<30	151	23	2.002	1	0.157
≥30	143	33			
Religion					
Hindu	199	43	3.699	2	0.157
Christian	64	11			
Muslim	31	02			
Education					
Graduate and above	040	19	12.934	2	0.002*
PUC and Diploma	108	19			
10th standard and below	146	18			
Occupation					
Employed	057	17	3.161	1	0.75
Unemployed (house wife)	237	39			
Number of children					
None	025	02	2.170	3	0.538
One	169	32			
Two	090	20			
More than 2	010	02			
Type of family					
Nuclear	182	36	3.024	2	0.220
Joint	091	19			
Extended	021	01			
Received prior information regarding emergency contraceptive pills (N=339)					
Source of information (personnel)					
Health personnel	189	34	7.015	4	0.135
Family members	050	11			
Friends	023	08			
Neighbours	012	00			
Teacher	011	01			
Source of information (mass media)					
Newspaper	022	05	5.070	3	0.167
Magazines	022	04			
Television	227	45			
Radio	014	00			

* Significance less than 0.05

There is significant correlation between knowledge & contraception (n=350, p=0.208, p-value=0.001)

Discussion

Knowledge regarding emergency contraception is very essential to prevent unwanted and unintended pregnancies; a favourable attitude towards the use of emergency contraceptives also contributes to the prevention of unwanted pregnancies.

Majority of the married women (96.9%) had heard about emergency contraceptives and among them only 2% of the women had used emergency contraceptive pills. Sixty three percent had information about emergency contraceptive pills from health personnel and 77.7% from television. Omo-Aghoja L.O et al [3] have found in their study that level of contraceptive awareness has been high in the majority (92.3%) of the respondents. Friends/relatives (40.6%) followed by nurses (31.7%) and then doctors' (17.3%) were the common sources of contraceptive awareness [4]. Obi SN et al [5] have found that 51% of the women have heard of emergency contraception. Among them 16.9% women have known the correct meaning of emergency contraception and these have been mainly with higher educational qualification, previous unwanted pregnancy, or have had used modern contraception (p<0.05). Only 20% had ever used emergency contraceptives. The two most common sources of information about emergency contraception have been mass media (49.2%) and friends (28.8%).

This study has revealed that the majority of the married women (84%) had poor knowledge on emergency contraception.

Nigam A et al [6] have found that, among 300 married women in the reproductive age group in Uttar Pradesh, only six married women (2%) have been

aware of emergency contraceptive pills. Once the respondents have been aware of the availability of this method, all the women have had expressed their willingness to use the emergency contraceptive pills in future, if the need arose. R Sharma, Choudhary SK et al [7] have found that level of contraceptive awareness though high (92.3%) the specific knowledge of emergency contraception has been poor.

The factors associated with low contraceptive usage have been poor level of training and ineffective conveyance of relevant information to the clients by health personnel, low literacy levels, extremes of reproductive age and extremes of parity. Others have the fear of side effects, lack of knowledge, and lack of spousal consent [8]

This study has revealed that majority of the subjects (99.7%) have had favourable attitude on the use of emergency contraceptives and (0.3%) have had unfavourable attitude on the use of emergency contraceptives. Obi SN et al have found that (67%) of the respondents have favoured the use of emergency contraception by unmarried women. Opposition to the use of emergency contraception by unmarried women has been because of the belief that it has some adverse health effect (12.1%), induces abortion 13.4% in future and for religious reasons (7%) [5]. This study has revealed that, there is a significant association (p=0.002) between education and knowledge regarding emergency contraception. Myer L et al have found that knowledge of emergency contraception has been independently associated with the higher education, being married, and living in an urban setting [9]. Ward KK et al have also found that, education (p<0.001) was positively associated with the awareness of emergency contraception [10].

Conclusion:

Knowledge regarding emergency contraception is poor among rural married women although its existence was known over 95% of married women. It is essential to educate the rural married women regarding emergency contraception and help them to prevent unwanted and unintended pregnancies.

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