

Global trends in use of birth control methods

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Context

There is a variety of available contraceptive methods that a young woman can choose from.

Objective

The aim of the study was to compare applied birth control methods among young, educated women from different geographical and cultural backgrounds.

Methods

It was a cross-sectional survey study. The questionnaire was distributed among female students studying in Austria, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Italy, Kosovo, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom. Answers from 4340 students concerning sexual activity, gynecology visits and contraception use were analyzed.

Patients

The study group consisted of academic female students aged 20-25 years old.

Interventions

All study group was obliged to fill in a short questionnaire.

Main outcome measure

63% of respondents were sexually active. 61% of women after sexual initiation reported use of contraception.

Results

Barrier method was the most frequently reported form of contraception, reaching over 90% of cases. 1/3 of condom users apply additionally one or more other birth control methods. 73% of women stated use of hormonal pills. Other contraceptive methods were applied as frequently as follows: intrauterine device – 4%, vaginal ring – 4%, hormonal injection or implant – 2.5%, transdermal hormonal system – 2.5%.

Differences between countries were observed concerning the percentage of sexually active women and frequency of applied methods. Use of intrauterine devices ranged from no cases in countries like Kosovo or Romania to 6% of studied population in France. Similarly, vaginal rings were most popular in Italy (6% of women using contraception), but nobody reported use of vaginal rings in Romania, Macedonia, Indonesia or Kosovo. The most frequent use of transdermal hormonal systems was observed in Austria, reaching 11% of women using contraception.

Conslusions

There are differences in applied birth control methods, especially in case of long-term ones, which depend on patient's religion and country of residence.

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