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## Research Article

# A study to assess contraceptive use among married women in urban and rural areas: a comparative study

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** A high level of unmet need for contraception persists among currently married women in South Asia. At least 1 in 5 currently married women in the countries surveyed want to stop or delay childbearing, but are not using contraception. Therefore, many countries consider limiting population growth as an important component of their overall developmental goal to improve living standards and the quality of life of the people. The aim of the study was to assess knowledge, attitude and practices about contraceptive methods among married women in two different settings.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in the outpatient department of obstetrics and gynecology at Shri Vasantrao Naik Government Medical College Yavatmal, Maharashtra for a period of two months from January 2012-February 2012. A total of 606 participants were surveyed in that two month duration. In Urban area-296 and in rural area, a total of 310 were covered.

**Results:** Majority of the study participants were in the age group of 26-35 contributing to 46% in rural area and 37% in urban area. Awareness about contraception was good among rural area (83%) than urban area (63%). Study shows that more than 50% of the participants in both the areas were using contraceptive methods, rural (63%) and urban (53%).

**Conclusions:** Promotion of contraceptive usage should be done by intense awareness campaigns.

**Keywords:** Awareness, Contraception, Rural, Urban

## INTRODUCTION

The Family Welfare Programme in India is recognized as a priority area, and is being implemented as a 100% centrally sponsored programme.<sup>1</sup> Family planning can reduce maternal mortality by reducing the number of pregnancies, the number of abortions, and the proportion of births at high risk.<sup>2,3</sup> A high level of unmet need for contraception persists among currently married women in South Asia. At least 1 in 5 currently married women in the countries surveyed want to stop or delay childbearing, but are not using contraception.<sup>4</sup>

A rapid population growth is a burden on the resources of many developing countries. Unregulated fertility, which contributes to such situations compromise the economic development and political stability. Therefore, many countries consider limiting population growth as an important component of their overall developmental goal to improve living standards and the quality of life of the people. This strategy is now enhanced by the availability of effective contraceptive methods since the 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

It has been estimated that meeting women's need for modern contraceptives would prevent about one quarter to one-third of all maternal deaths, saving 140,000 to

150,000 lives a year.<sup>6,7</sup> Even though there is wide availability of various types of contraceptives, the rate of population growth and unplanned pregnancies is still high. Use of contraceptives can prevent at least 25% of all maternal deaths by allowing women to prevent unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions, and protect themselves from sexually transmitting diseases including HIV.<sup>8</sup> Considering all these factors the present study was conducted to assess knowledge, attitude and practices among rural and urban married women. The aim of the study was to assess knowledge, attitude and practices about contraceptive methods among married women in two different settings and to impart health education about family planning methods.

## METHODS

A cross-sectional study was designed. The study was conducted in the outpatient department of obstetrics and gynecology at Shri Vasantrao Naik Government Medical College Yavatmal, Maharashtra for a period of two months from January 2012 to February 2012. A total of 606 participants were surveyed in that two month duration. Out of this 606 participant's, 296 were from urban area and 310 were from rural area. The selection criterion was married women between the ages of 18-45 years, living with their husbands at the time of interview. Those women who were pregnant, having a child younger than 2 years and who had any medical disorder were excluded from the study.

Institutional ethics committee permission was obtained. Informed consent was taken from every participant. At the end of the interview participants were given health education regarding family planning.

## Methodology

All married women who fulfilled the inclusion criterion, were interviewed with a pre-designed, pre-tested, structured questionnaire. After taking an informed consent, the information on age, educational status, knowledge and source of contraceptive methods, attitude towards contraception, practices towards contraception, and reasons for not using contraceptives was collected.

## Statistical analysis

The data was entered in MS Excel and analyzed. Chi-square test is applied for test of significance.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows that majority of the study participants were in the age group of 26-35 contributing to 46% in rural area and 37% in urban area. In both the study settings majority of the women were from Hindu religion catering to 87% in rural area and 71% in urban area. The literacy rate was good in both the areas. In rural areas 35% of the women were housewives and 40% in

urban areas. There was significant relationship between education and use of contraceptive methods which states that education plays very important role in creating awareness among community.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of the study subjects.**

Variable	Rural	Urban	Chi-square x <sup>2</sup> (p≤0.05)
Age (years)			
18-25	91 (29)	103 (35)	>0.05
26-35	143 (46)	110 (37)	
36-45	76 (25)	83 (28)	
Religion			
Hindu	270 (87)	210 (71)	<0.05
Muslim	23 (7.41)	37 (13)	
Christian	15 (5)	41 (14)	
Others	2 (0.6)	8 (3)	
Educational status			
Illiterate	22 (7)	17 (6)	<0.05
Primary school	19 (6)	36 (12)	
Middle school	83 (27)	54 (18)	
High school	42 (14)	40 (14)	
Intermediate	61 (20)	39 (13)	
Graduate	56 (18)	73 (25)	
Post graduate	21 (8)	23 (8)	
Professionals	6 (2)	14 (5)	
Occupation			
Housewife	108 (35)	118 (40)	<0.05
Unskilled	39 (13)	50 (17)	
Semi-skilled	51 (16)	24 (8)	
Skilled	35 (11)	31 (10)	
Clerical shops	44 (14)	29 (10)	
Semi professional	27 (9)	30 (10)	
Professional	6 (2)	14 (5)	

Table 2 shows that awareness about contraceptive methods was good among rural area (83%) than urban area (63%). When enquired about source of information, health worker was the main source of information in rural areas which was followed by TV (20%), health centre (16%) and newspaper (15%). In urban area, 42% of the participants got information from the television, health worker (33%), health centres (14%) and newspaper (11%). Near about 50% of the participants in both the areas were aware that use of contraceptives will be helpful in spacing between two children. In rural areas 17% said unwanted pregnancy can be prevented, 24% for limiting and 11% said STD's can be prevented which is same for urban area. The awareness about side effects in rural area was poor, only 30% were aware about it while in urban areas 42% knew about the side effects.

**Table 2. Awareness about contraceptive methods among study subjects.**

Variable	Rural	Urban	Chi-square $\chi^2$ (p≤0.05)
Awareness about contraceptive methods			
Yes	256 (83)	186 (63)	<0.05
No	54 (17)	110 (37.1)	
Source of information			
Health worker	149 (48)	98 (33.1)	<0.05
TV	62 (20)	123 (42)	
News paper	48 (15)	34 (11)	
Health centres	51 (16)	41 (14)	
Merits of using Contraceptives			
Prevention of unwanted pregnancy	52 (17)	27 (9)	<0.05
Preventing STD	33 (11)	38 (13)	
Spacing	152 (49)	163 (55)	
Limiting	73 (24)	68 (23)	
Awareness about side effects			
Yes	93 (30)	124 (42)	<0.05
No	217 (70)	172 (58)	

**Table 3: Practices about contraceptive methods among study subjects.**

Variable	Rural	Urban	Chi-square $\chi^2$ (p≤0.05)
Use of contraceptive Method			
Yes	196(63)	156(53)	<0.05
No	114(37)	149(50)	
Type of contraceptive method being used			
Condom	91(46)	104(67)	<0.05
Oral contraceptive pills	44(22)	35(22)	
Injectables	00	00	
Copper T	61(31)	17(11)	
Decision making in contraceptive use			
Husband	87(44)	65(42)	>0.05
Wife	56(29)	48(31)	
Both	53(27)	43(28)	
Encountered with side effects			
Bleeding per vagina	78(51)	69(44)	<0.05
Abdominal pain	21(14)	38(24)	
Headache	6(4)	14(9)	
Weight gain	11(7)	9(6)	
Giddiness	36(24)	26(17)	

Table 3 shows more than 50% of the participants in both the areas were using contraceptive methods, rural (63%) and urban (53%), which shows more use in rural area.

The method commonly used was condom. In rural area, 46% use condom, 31% copper T and 22% oral contraceptive pills. In urban areas, 67% use condom followed by oral contraceptive pills (22%) and 11% copper T. Among those who were using the commonest side effect which they encountered was bleeding per vagina contributing to 51% in rural area and 44% in urban area. Husband was the main decision making person in using the contraceptives in both the areas. In rural areas, 44% participants said husband only decides about the use, followed by wife 29% and 27% by both of them. In Urban areas, 42% of husbands decide about use of contraceptives methods, 31% by wife and 28% by both husband and wife.

Table 4 shows reasons for not using contraceptives, so in rural area, 32% said their husband's doesn't allow them to use, 30% fear of side effects, 25% want a child, 7% said they will lose fertility and 5% said religion doesn't allow them to use. In urban area, 51% of participants fear about the side effects, 21% want a child, husband's doesn't allow in 15% of cases, religion doesn't allow in 11% and 2% said they will lose fertility.

**Table 4: Reasons for not using the contraceptives.**

Reasons	Rural	Urban	Chi-square $\chi^2$ (p≤0.05)
Fear of side effects	34 (30)	76 (51)	<0.05
Want child	29 (25)	31 (21)	
Husband doesn't allow	37 (32)	23 (15)	
Religion will not allow	6 (5)	16 (11)	
Loose fertility	8 (7)	3 (2)	
Total	114	149	

## DISCUSSION

The present study shows majority of the study participants in the age group of 26-35 contributing to 46% in rural area and 37% in urban area. In another study maximum study subjects were in the age group of 25-29 years contributing to 25.3%.<sup>8</sup> In a study done by Zangmu S et al 48.5% belong to the age group of 26-35 years.<sup>9</sup> In both the study settings majority of the women were from Hindhu religion catering to 87% in rural area and 71% in urban area where as in another study majority of the subjects belonged to the Hindhu religion (92%).<sup>9</sup> The literacy rate was good in both areas, only 7% were illiterate in rural and 6% in urban area which was similar with another study.<sup>9</sup> In another study done by Lwelamira J et al the illiteracy rate was found to be 4%.<sup>10</sup> In rural areas 35% of the women were housewives and 40% in urban areas where as in one study 41.2% were housewives.<sup>9</sup>

The study finding shows that awareness about contraceptives was good among rural area (83%) than urban area (63%). In another study the awareness was found to be 95.2%.<sup>11</sup> In another study done by Mustafa R et al in rural area, 81% were aware about contraceptive methods.<sup>12</sup> In one study done in urban area, 52.2% were having awareness about contraceptive methods which shows that awareness is good in rural areas compared to urban areas.<sup>13</sup> When enquired about source of information, health worker was the main source of information in rural areas which was followed by TV 20%, health centre 16% and newspaper 15%. In urban area, 42% of the participants got information from the television, health worker 33%, health centers 14%. In another study source of information was health personnel contributing to 52.6% were as in another study 98.5% of the subjects got information from the health worker which is similar to our study.<sup>8,9</sup>

The findings showed that 50% of the participants in both the areas were aware that use of contraceptives will be helpful in spacing between two children. In rural areas 17% said unwanted pregnancy can be prevented, 24% for limiting and 11% said STD's can be prevented which was same for urban area. In another study 48.5% said contraceptives will prevent unwanted pregnancies while in another study 25.6% said it will be helpful in spacing between two children.<sup>8</sup>

The awareness about side effects in rural area was poor, only 30% were aware about it while in urban areas 42% knew about the side effects. In another study the awareness about side effects is much poorer than our study were only 10.5% knew about side effects due to contraceptive methods.<sup>8</sup> Regarding practices the study showed that more than 50% of the participants in both the areas were using contraceptive methods, rural (63%) and urban (53%), which shows more use in rural area. The method commonly used was condom. In rural area, 46% use condom, 31% copper T and 22% oral contraceptive pills. In urban areas, 67% use condom followed by oral contraceptive pills (22%) and 11% copper T. In one study 15.6% used condom where as in another study done by Mustafa R et al 33.9% used condom and in another done oral contraceptives pills were most commonly used contributing to 94.3%.<sup>10-12</sup>

Among those who were using the commonest side effect which they encountered was bleeding per vagina contributing to 51% in rural area and 44% in urban area.<sup>10</sup> Husband's were the main decision making person in using the contraceptives in both the areas. In rural areas, 44% participants said husband decide about the use, followed by wife (29%) and 27 % by both of them. In Urban areas, 42% of husband's decide about use of contraceptives methods, 31% by wife and 28% by both husband and wife. In one study 37.4% decision by husband, 21.4% by wife and 41.2% by wife.<sup>8</sup> In another study done by Kiran G et al 41.45% is by both, 30.77% husband and 26.07 by wife.<sup>14,10</sup>

When asked for not using the contraceptive methods they came out with many reasons such as in rural area, 32% said their husband's doesn't allow them to use, 30% fear of side effects, 25% want a child, 7% said they will lose fertility and 5% said religion doesn't allow them to use. In a study done in rural area near about 60% said because of husband's disapproval they don't use.<sup>11</sup> Whereas in another study 48% said lack of knowledge was the main reason for not using contraceptive method. In urban area, 51% of participants fear about the side effects, 21% want a child, husband's doesn't allow in 15% of cases, religion doesn't allow in 11% and 2% said they will lose fertility were as in another study they are afraid of side effects (21.3%) and 24% want a child.<sup>13</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The study showed more awareness in rural areas as compared to urban areas. The practices of contraceptive methods are more in rural areas than urban. The main reason for not using the contraceptive methods was due to fear of side effects in both the areas. The mass media should also be encouraged in community to the benefits of modern contraceptive methods. Health workers should educate the eligible couples for use of contraceptive methods in both urban and rural areas. Promotion of contraceptive usage should be done by intense awareness campaigns.

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