

AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION OF EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVES AMONG FEMALE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN PORT HARCOURT RIVERS STATE.

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to determine the awareness, form and utilization of emergency contraceptives among female university undergraduates in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study was guided by three objectives and a null hypothesis. Related literatures were also reviewed. A sample size of 688 female students were drawn from a total population of 991 using Taro Yamane ($\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$) sample size formular. The sample comprised female university undergraduates residing in the University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Science and Technology hostels respectively. A validated and reliable questionnaire was used for data collection. Data collected were presented in tables and pie chart. Hypothesis was tested using Chi-square test at $P < 0.05$ significance. The results showed that 600 subjects representing 87.2% of the sample were aware of emergency contraceptives while 88 (12.8%) were not aware of emergency contraceptives. Moreover, 510 (74.1%) out of 600 female university undergraduates who were aware of emergency contraceptives, used it; while 90 (13.1%) did not use emergency contraceptives. Four types of Emergency Contraceptives were

used among the subjects; these were Levonorgestrel (58%); Combined pills (5%) combined pills and Intrauterine Copper Device (IUCD) (10%) and Intrauterine Copper Device only (1%). Notably, 26% of the students did not use Emergency Contraceptive. A significant relationship was recorded between age and type of Emergency Contraceptive utilized among the students ($X^2=158.0$, $P<0.001$ d.f =6). Levonorgestrel was used mainly by the teenage age range subjects while the Combining pills and Intrauterine Copper Device was used by those within the adult age range. Recommendations include; development of self control regarding sex and total abstinence from any form of sexual interaction. Female university undergraduates should get prescriptions as well as seek professional counseling on issues of contraceptives before usage.

Keywords - *Awareness, Utilization, Emergency Contraceptive, Female Undergraduates*

INTRODUCTION

The environment in higher institutions of learning is characterized by high levels of personal freedom and social interaction. Permissive sexual lifestyle in higher educational institution in Nigeria and a number of other countries have been documented as featuring a high level of risky sexual behaviors such as transactional sex,

multiple sexual partners, and unprotected casual sex. Such behavior often result to unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, disruption of education and secondary infertility (Ibekwe P.C, and Obuna J.A 2010).

According to Cleland, Zhu, Goldstuck, Cheng and Trussell (2012), Emergency contraception

is a birth control method used after having an unprotected sex, that is, if no birth control method was used or if the regular birth control failed. Depending on the type of emergency contraception, emergency contraception can be used within 3 days or within 5 days after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. Ezebialu I.E and Eke A.C. (2013}, defined Emergency Contraception as a therapy for women who have had unprotected sexual intercourse, including sexual assault and known or suspected contraceptive failure, and want to avoid pregnancy. Emergency contraception is the contraception administered to a woman after unprotected intercourse. In the past it has also been known as postcoital contraception or morning after pills. Emergency contraception

is needed when intercourse is unexpected and without prior contraceptive coverage. Other indications include failure of barrier methods like the slipping or breakage of condoms, and after rape. This emergency contraception may be an effective way to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies and induced abortions (Haspels, 1994).

Emergency contraception is essentially female driven, so its use and success rests mainly on how women perceive and practice it,(NPC and ICF Macro, 2009). Levonorgestrel-only pills and combined oral contraceptives are the most common emergency contraceptive methods available in Nigeria and they can be obtained over the counter from patent medical and

pharmaceutical shops. Unconventional techniques of emergency contraception are common among young women in our setting. As much as 75% of sexually active (14-19years) teenage girls have been reported to have some form of perceived contraception device such as laxatives, cooking salt, local potash, "white quinine" and menstrogen pills in the South-West geopolitical zone of the country. However, It has been reported by the Nigerian Population Commission (NPC) that knowledge of contraception is lowest among women with no education and greatest among women with more than secondary education (NPC and ICF Macro, 2009).

Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPS)

This is the type of emergency contraception that involves the use of pills. There are three types of ECPs: combined ECPs containing both estrogen and progestin, progestin-only ECPs, and ECPs containing an anti progestin (either mifepristone or ulipristal acetate). Only the progestin levonorgestrel has been studied for freestanding use as an emergency contraceptive. The original treatment schedule was one 0.75 mg dose within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse, and a second 0.75 mg dose 12 hours after the first dose. However, studies have shown that a single dose of 1.5 mg is as effective as two 0.75 mg doses 12 hours apart (Ezebialu I.E and Eke A.C.2013)

Copper-bearing IUDs

Implantation occurs 6-12 days following ovulation. Therefore, copper IUDs can be inserted up to 5 days after ovulation to prevent pregnancy. Thus, if a woman had unprotected intercourse three days before ovulation occurred in that cycle, the IUD could prevent pregnancy if inserted up to 8 days after intercourse? But IUDs are not ideal for all women. The latest WHO guidelines allow IUDs to be inserted up to day 12 of the cycle with no restrictions and at any other time in the cycle if it is reasonably certain that the patient is not pregnant (WHO, 2004).

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Young people generally are sexually active. Students of Tertiary institutions form an important high-risk group, often at the beginning of exploration of

their sexuality, very often free of any parental guidance, under great influence from peers and often indulge in alcohol or other influential harmful substances. Tertiary students, by virtue of their level of education and experience, probably form a group in any community that should have an overall higher level of awareness of available methods of contraception, including emergency contraception (Ozurumba, Obi and Ijioma, 2009). However, the study of Ezebialu I.E and Eke A.C. (2013), on knowledge and use of condom in Nigeria, indicated high rate of sexual activities as well as limited knowledge and use of the condom among the undergraduates students.

By reason of the extensive crude oil exploration activities by the

expatriates and non-expatriates in Port Harcourt, the social activities are very high with attendant results such as unprotected sex, induced abortions and sexually transmitted infections. Moreover, among the various forms of contraception, emergency contraceptives are the only one that can be used after sexual intercourse, offering a second chance to prevent unwanted pregnancy, hence, the study on awareness and utilization of emergency contraceptives among female university undergraduates in Port Harcourt, Rivers state.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to determine the awareness, type, and utilization of emergency contraceptives among

female university undergraduates in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Specifically, the study indicated:

1. The awareness of emergency contraceptives,
2. The utilization of emergency contraceptives.
3. The types of emergency contraceptives used by the subjects

Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the types of emergency contraceptive used and the age of female university undergraduates in Port Harcourt.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive survey that identified and measured the awareness,

type and use of emergency contraceptive among female undergraduate students in University of Science and Technology and University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The sample size was determined with Taro Yamane sample size formular. Taro Yamane ($\frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$) sample size formular is used in a study where the population is finite (a known population). The formular determines a sample size at 95% confidence interval. In this study, Six Hundred and eighty-eight (688) female students were drawn from a known population of 991 female students. The selection was such that 126 students were selected from 183 female students at Abuja campus hostel (Uniport), 153 students were drawn from 250 female students at Delta campus hostel (Uniport) and 80 students were drawn from 100 female students

at Choba campus hostel (Uniport). Also at SUT, the selection was such that, 120 students were selected from 170 students at Hostel B, 124 were selected from 180 students at Hostel C and 85 students were selected from 108 students at Hostel D. Ballot papers were written yes or No and were picked by the female students. Those who picked yes were selected and questionnaires were administered to them, while those who picked No were not. This was done for each selected hostel until the required number of students was selected. Data was collected using a four sectioned, validated and reliable questionnaire which sought information that addressed the objectives. The questionnaires were administered to the subjects with assurance of confidentiality. Completed questionnaires were

collected same day and used for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Frequency distribution was done for age variable and data were expressed as percentages of distribution. Pie Chart was constructed

for data obtained on the types of Emergency Contraceptive used and chi-square test was used to determine the level of significance which was interpreted as calculated value $>$ tabulated value at $P < 0.05$

RESULTS

Table.1: Age range distribution of the female undergraduate students of UST and UNIPORT in Rivers State.

Variables	Frequency (N=688)	Percentage (%)
Age range		
Teenagers	228	33.1
Younger Adults	425	61.7
Older Adults	35	5.2
Total	688	100
Marital Status		
Single	608	88.3
Married	80	11.7
Total	688	100
Total	688	100

Teenagers - 16-20 years

Young Adults- 21-30 years

Older Adults - < 30 years

The age distribution of the female university undergraduates was such that 228 (33.1%) were Teenagers (16-20 years), 425

(61.7%) were young Adult (21- 30 years), and 35 (5.3%) were Older Adults (< 30 years

Table.2: The Female undergraduates Awareness of E.C.

Variables	Frequency (n=688)	Percentage (%)
Awareness of Emergency Contraceptives		
Yes	600	87.2
No	88	12.8
Total	688	100

Table 2 presents the female university undergraduates awareness of emergency contraceptives. 600 subjects representing (87.2%) of the female university undergraduates were aware of Emergency Contraceptives while 88 subjects, representing 12.8% of the sample were not aware of Emergency Contraceptive.

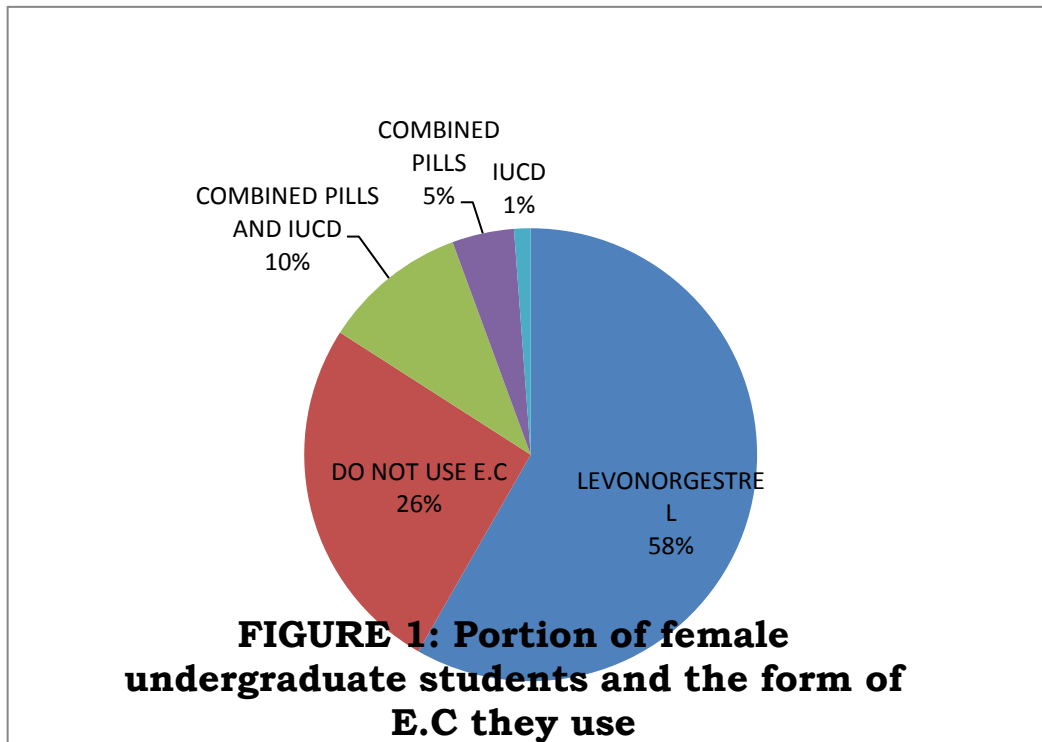
Table.3: Utilization of E.C among female university undergraduates in Port Harcourt Rivers State.

Variables	Frequency(n-688)	Percentage (%)
E.C Utilization		
Yes	510	74.1
No	178	25.9
Total	688	100
Number of brands used		
Used only one brands	500	72.6
Used more than one brand	10	1.5
Do not use at all	178	25.9

Total	688	100
Mode of utilization		
After every unprotected sex	208	30.2
Once in a menstrual cycle	302	43.9
Never used it	178	25.9
Total	688	100

The results in table 3 showed that 510(74.1%) female university undergraduates student used E.C out of which 500(72.6%) used one brand while 10(1.5%) use more than one brand. However, 178(25.9%) do not use E.C at all. Furthermore, data on mode of utilization shows that 208(30.2%) female university undergraduates used E.C after every unprotected sex, 302 (43.9%) use E.C once in a menstrual cycle 178(25.9%) never used E.C.

Awareness and Utilization of Emergency Contraceptives among Female University Undergraduates in Port Harcourt Rivers State.



Levonorgestrel pill 400 (58.1%) were the predominant E.C used by the female undergraduate students. Combined pills (progesterone/oestrogen pills) another form of E.C was used by 30(4.4%) female undergraduate students. 70(10.2%) used combined pills and copperIUD while 10 (1.4%) female undergraduate students used only copper IUD. However, 178(25.9%) female undergraduate students do not use E.C.

Table 4: Relationship between Age and Type of E.C. Utilized.

Ages of group of participants	Frequency (%)	TYPES OF E.C USED BY THE STUDENTS			
		Levonorgestrel (%)	Combined Pills (%)	IUD (%)	Comb pills /IUD (%)
Tenagers	218(42.7)	210(96.3)	8(3.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)

Adults	180(35.2)	100(55.2)	22(12.2)	0(0.0)	58(32.3)
Older adults	112(32.4)	90(80.3)	0(0.0)	10(8.9)	12(10.8)
Total	510(100.0)	400(28.4)	30(5.8)	10(1.9)	70(13.9)

$X^2=158.0$, $P < 0.01$, d.f. =6

Levonorgestrel pills were predominately used among the female university undergraduates. 210(96.3%) teenage female university undergraduates used levonorgestrel pills while 8(3.7%) teenage female university undergraduates used combined pills.

Among adults females, 100(55.5%) used levonorgestrel pills, 22(12.2%) used combined pills and 58(32.3%) used combined pills/IUD. Also among the older female adult university undergraduates, 90(80.3%) used levonorgestrel pills, 10(8.9%) used IUD and 12(10.8%) used combined pills/IUD.

Statistical Analysis showed a significant relationship

between age and forms of E.C utilized among the female university undergraduates in Port Harcourt Rivers State ($X^2=158.0$, $P < 0.01$, d.f =6), as levonorgestrel pills was mostly used by mainly the younger age groups.

DISCUSSION

The results from this study recorded high knowledge of emergency contraceptives among the female undergraduate students in Rivers state. 87.2% of the students were aware of emergency contraceptives. This result is not consistent with the 2008 Nigeria Demographic Health Survey which reported contraceptive prevalence of 6.5% in Rivers state where the study was carried out (National Population

Commission (NPC) 2008). The fact that a majority of respondents in this study were singles could explain the reason for the difference. In this study 74.1% of the female undergraduate students use emergency contraceptive which is about two third of the sample population of the students. This is however, similar to the study of Bilkisu, Sanusi, Kullima and Bako (2016) which reported 71.5% utilization of emergency contraceptives. It has been documented that the most common methods of contraception among teens and young adults are condoms and oral contraceptives (Forrest and Singh, 1990; Mosher, 1990) In the present study, the most common form of emergency contraception used was Levonorgestrel (postinor-2) the reason for this might be because it can be obtained over the counter without

prescription. Insertion of IUCD may be considered by young adult as been made for married women requiring long acting reversible contraception and therefore not suitable for them.

The present study showed a significant relationship between age and forms of E.C used among the female university undergraduates ($X^2=158.0$, $P = <0.01$, d.f. = 6). Levenorgestrel pills were predominantly used by teenage female university undergraduates. and this may be as a result of self prescription or prescription by friends. Combined pills with IUD were mostly used by adult and older adult female university undergraduates and may have been prescribed by professional health practitioners. The findings of Fasanu, Adekanle, Adeniji and Akindele 2014, is in-line with the result of the

present study which revealed that adult reproductive females mostly use IUD and combined pills to prevent pregnancy from occurring.

CONCLUSION

Female undergraduate students in Rivers State have knowledge of emergency contraceptives. There is adequate utilization of Emergency Contraceptives among the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations include; development of self control regarding sex and total abstinence from any form of sexual interaction. Considering the fact that improper usage and of course, long term effect of any of these drugs could pose a major danger to the user by way of hindering conception; female university undergraduates should get prescriptions as

well as seek professional counseling on issues of contraceptives before usage. Improvements on information strength of health personnel should be done by training on how to link reproductive health counseling to other health services in the university health centers.

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Awareness and Utilization of Emergency Contraceptives
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