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**Original article:**

**Assessment of knowledge and practice of contraceptives among women in reproductive age attending out patient department at a sub-urban centre in Pondicherry, India**

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**Abstract :**

**Introduction**: The use of contraceptive has been recognised as a key element in reducing fertility and control of population, which in turn is important for the development of the nation. Family planning means achieving the desired number of children with appropriate spacing and timing. Failure to plan a pregnancy can adversely affect the health of a woman by exposing her to high risk pregnancies, unsafe abortions, reproductive tract infections and sexually transmitted diseases. Our aim was to study various socio-demographic characteristics of women in reproductive age and assess their knowledge, acceptability and usage of contraception, and to find the unmet need.

**Methodology:** A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted among 524 married women between age group of 18-48 attending general OPD at Sri Lakshmi Narayana Institute of Medical Sciences (SLIMS), Bharath University, Pondicherry- 605502, INDIA by employing random sampling method. All the women willing to participate were interviewed with pre-tested questionnaire after obtaining informed consent. The data collected was analysed by SPSSversion 16.

**Results**: Out of 524 women studied, 65.9% were younger than 35 years of age. Most of the couple were literate, were from rural areas and belonged to lower socio-economic status. 81.6% participants were aware of one or the other types of contraceptives. 63.7% were in favour of use of contraception and 57.8% reported to have used one or the other methods of contraceptives. Permanent methods (52.8%) were preferred by most of the participants than temporary method (11.25%) of contraception. Age of participants, years of married life, education of the self and spouse, socio-economic status, religion, working status and parity had significant role in knowledge and attitude on family planning practices. The unmet need for spacing was observed in 25.5% cases and unmet need for limiting in 16.6% of the cases.

**Conclusion:** The results suggest a significant knowledge-application gap with regards to contraceptive usage. This indicates the need for more intense awareness campaign for promoting contraceptive usages. This can be brought about by facilitating access to more information, education and communication with couples in reproductive age. We also recommend sex and family education should be imparted from school years.

**Key words:** Contraception, knowledge, acceptance, practice, unmet need