

## **Reasons for Not Practicing Contraception in a Rural Population of Dehradun District**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study was undertaken to find out the reasons for not using the contraception among Ever Married Women aged 15-49 years in rural population of Dehradun District and to study the factors for discontinuation of contraceptive methods among women who had ever used any method.

A Cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among 2278 Ever Married Women aged 15-49 years in 20 villages from Doiwala block of Dehradun District, Uttaranchal. A multistage sampling technique was used for the selection of villages. Personal interview method with house-to-house visit was adopted as the study method.

In this study, Knowledge of any method of contraception was almost universal (96.9%) among ever-married women but 61.81% of the couples had ever used while only 49.9% were currently using any method of contraception. Most common reasons for not using contraception were the desire for more children (21.5%) or particularly a male child (5.4%) followed by religious reasons (9.1%) and opposition by husband or family members (3.3%).

Present study revealed that awareness about contraceptive methods is almost universal but counseling of eligible couples on importance of small families and assisting them in making informed choice is needed to remove the obstacles in practicing contraception.

**Key Words :** Ever Married Women, Contraception, Ever Users, Current Users.

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## INTRODUCTION

The National Health Policy (NHP)<sup>1</sup>, 1983 aimed at demographic goal of achieving a Net Reproduction Rate (NRR) of one by year 2000 (which is not achieved). The demographic goal can only be achieved if the Couple Protection Rate (CPR) exceeds 60%<sup>2</sup>. According to National Family Health Survey II (NFHS-II) only 43% of eligible couples are using any method of contraception in the newly formed hilly state<sup>3</sup> as compared to 48.2% in India. Hence, the study was designed to find out obstacles in practicing the contraception in rural population of the capital city of newly formed state. Study results may help the Family Welfare Workers and the planners to enhance the use of contraceptives in rural areas of the district in particular and the state at large.

### Material and Methods

The study was conducted among ever-married women in the age group of 15-49 years in 20 villages of Doiwala block of Dehradun district during October 2003 to March 2004. Villages were selected using multistage stratified random sampling. From each village 20% of the estimated Ever Married Women (EMW) were covered by random sampling. Personal interview method with house-to-house visit was adopted and the data were collected on a pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire. The analysis was done using SPSS package.

### RESULTS

A total 2278 Ever Married Women (EMW) in the age group of 15-49 years were studied. Out of the total, 1070

(46.97%) EMW were of less than 30 years of age. Religion wise; 73.3% were Hindus, 20.7% Muslims, 6.0% Sikhs and Christian. Out of the total, 78.2% were from nuclear families and remaining 21.8% from joint families. Literacy rate amongst women was found to be 58.3%, whereas, it was comparatively higher (74.1%) among husbands. Most of the women (73.7%) belonged to lower socio-economic class.

96.9% of the EMW were aware of atleast one method of contraception. Maximum women (93.9%) knew about condoms, followed by pills 91.97%, 90.61% female sterilization, while vasectomy was known to 87.4% of women. IUD was the least known method among EMW (87.2%). Only 71 (3.1%) women had never heard of any contraceptive method.

Table 1 shows that out of 2278 women, 1408 (61.8%) had ever used any contraceptive method. Out of the ever users, maximum women (46.7%) had accepted female sterilization. Male sterilization had been adopted by only 3.2% of the couples. Modern spacing methods such as condoms, pills and IUDs had been used by 28.1%, 12.9% and 7.0% of the couples respectively. Out of 2278 women interviewed 1136 (49.9%) were current users of contraception at the time of the study. Out of the current users, 57.9% of the women were sterilized and only 4.0% of the women reported that their husbands were sterilized. Modern temporary methods such as condoms, pills and IUDs had been used by 23.4%, 9.6% and 3.4% of the couples respectively.

**Table 1: Use of Contraceptive Methods among Married Women**

Contraceptive Method	Ever Users (n=1408)		Current Users (n=1136)	
	Number	%	Number	%
Condoms	395	28.1	266	23.4
Oral Pills	182	12.9	109	09.6
IUCD	99	7.0	39	03.4
Tubectomy	658	46.7	658	57.9
Vasectomy	45	3.2	45	4.0
Others	29	2.1	19	1.7

**Table 2: Reasons for Not Using Contraception**

Reasons	Age < 30 yrs (752)		Age >30 yrs (390)		Total (1142)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Pregnant	153	18.9	23	5.5	176	14.3
Want more children	248	30.6	16	3.8	264	21.5
Want male child	48	5.9	18	4.3	66	5.4
Husband / Family member objects	17	2.1	24	5.7	41	3.3
Religious Reasons	25	3.1	46	11.0	71	5.8
Health Reasons	5	0.6	20	4.8	25	2.0
Supply/ Service N/A	38	4.7	45	10.8	83	6.8
Fear/Side Effects	9	1.1	5	1.2	14	1.1
Infertility/ Perceived Infertility	20	2.5	29	6.9	49	4.0
Breast Feeding	187	23.1	41	9.8	228	18.6
Menopause	0	0.0	62	14.8	62	5.0
Other	61	7.5	89	21.3	150	12.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>811*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>418*</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1229*</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Multiple Responses

Table-2 shows the reasons for not using contraception (multiple responses were accepted). Out of the total of 1142 nonusers, 330 (26.9%) women told that they did not use any contraception

because they wanted either more children (21.5%) or a male child (5.4%) particularly. Not surprisingly, this reason was more common among women under age 30 years (36.50%) than

among those who were 30 years or older (8.1%). 9.1% of women reported that contraception was either against their religion (5.8%) or their husbands or family members were against the use of contraception (3.3%). A higher proportion of older women (16.7%) gave these reasons than younger women (5.2%). 14.3% of the women were pregnant and 18.6% women said breastfeeding as a reason for not using contraception. A proportion of older women (6.94%) also reported their actual or perceived infertility as a reason for not using contraception. Whereas, only 1.1% told fear or side effect as a reason for non use and the other reasons (husband was away, widow, using traditional methods, not aware) were mentioned by 12.21% of the women.

Table 3 reveals that among ever users, 272 (19.3%) women discontinued the use of contraception. The most common reason mentioned for discontinuation was desire to have child (34.9%) or that the method created side effects (19.5%), 11.0% of the women discontinued the use because their husbands were away.

**Table 3: Reasons for Discontinuation of Contraceptive Methods**

Reasons	Number	%
Created Side Effects	53	19.5
Wanted to have a Child	95	34.9
Menopause	6	02.2
Husband is Away	30	11.0
Others	88	32.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Rest of the women explained other reasons (did not like the method, failure of contraceptive method, health reasons, services not available) for discontinuation.

## DISCUSSION

In the present study, Knowledge of any method of contraception was almost universal (96.9%) among ever-married women and finding were comparable to 97.4% in NFHS-2, Uttaranchal<sup>3</sup>, The best-known modern method of contraception in this study was condoms (93.9%) followed by pills (92.0%) and tubectomy (90.6%), Vasectomy (87.4%) and IUDs (87.2%) respectively in comparison to tubectomy (95.8%) and Vasectomy (89.9%) as the best-known method of contraception in NHFS-2 Uttaranchal<sup>3</sup>. This reason for lower knowledge about spacing methods in later study may be attributed to larger Muslim women who generally show disinterest in permanent methods of contraception. Of all, 61.8% of married women had ever used any contraceptive method but only 51.9% in NFHS-2 Uttaranchal<sup>5</sup> and 60% in rural South Africa reported so<sup>4</sup>.

The desires for more children or a male child particularly were the main reasons for not using contraception (26.9%) as also in ICMR task force study (34.6%)<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, 9.3% of the ever users discontinued the use of contraception for want of children (34.9%), side effects (19.5%), husband away (11.0%) discontinuation as compared to NFHS-2,

India<sup>3</sup> findings of want more children (29%), side effects (21%) and husband away (13%).

It can be concluded that awareness about contraceptive methods was almost universal but counseling of eligible couples on importance of small families and assisting them in making informed choice can minimize the obstacles in practicing contraception. The well planned advocacy campaign can reduce gender bias in the community.

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