KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION AMONG FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES IN A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY.

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OUTLINE.

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Emergency contraception (EC) is a method used to avoid pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse unlike the regular methods of contraception that are taken before sexual contact.

It has the potential, as the last resort, to prevent unwanted pregnancy and therefore abortion; a desirable goal especially when abortion is illegal.

Oral contraceptive pills and intrauterine contraceptive devices (IUCDs) are mainly used as emergency contraceptives.

Studies have shown that three out of every four potential pregnancies can in fact be prevented by emergency contraception.
INTRODUCTION.

- Nigeria has a high incidence of unwanted pregnancies and incomplete and unsafe/septic abortions, particularly among adolescents and youths.

- Despite programmes and messages encouraging delayed sexual debut and abstinence, many youth have unplanned intercourse.

- Consequences of unprotected sex, such as unintended pregnancy and unsafe abortion, can be prevented by access to contraceptive services including emergency contraception.

- This is especially significant for female youths that may find abstinence a difficult option and their sexual behavior is rather unplanned, erratic and irregular.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- University students mostly reside on their own for the first time. This gives them freedom and opportunity for unplanned and unprotected sexual experiment. This could lead to unwanted pregnancy.

- Combining pregnancy with academic work poses a great challenge. The shame associated with such challenges in religious circles could be possible reasons why unwanted pregnancies are eventually aborted.

- In cases of sexual assault, most ladies keep the information to themselves or even their trusted friends and relatives who may not give them well informed advice. They therefore do not seek medical help only to discover at a later date that they are pregnant.
Unlike in the past, many Nigerian youths are now marrying late, are more interested in acquiring a formal education and are increasingly having premarital sex.

Therefore, allowing the existing gap between contraceptive need and contraceptive utilization to be left unfilled will result in a dramatic rise in the prevalence of unsafe abortions.

Other than identifying at-risk groups that are often unaware of contraception, a comprehensive study of the knowledge and use of EC and of societal views and misconceptions about it is highly needed hence, this study.
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.

AIM

• To assess knowledge and use of emergency contraception among female undergraduates in a Nigerian University.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

• To assess knowledge and misconceptions about emergency contraception

• To determine factors associated with knowledge of emergency contraception

• To determine proportion of students that has ever used emergency contraception and the factors associated with the use.
Research Questions.

1. What do female undergraduates know about emergency contraception?

2. What is the pattern of use of emergency contraceptives among them?

3. Do they want to know more about it?
METHODOLOGY.

STUDY LOCATION:
The study was carried out at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun state, south-west Nigeria. Established about 50yrs ago, it has a vibrant academic and social atmosphere and also a high international reputation.

STUDY POPULATION.
The study was conducted among female students in Obafemi Awolowo University.

STUDY DESIGN.
Descriptive cross-sectional design.

STUDY DURATION.
The study was conducted between July and September 2010.
METHODOLOGY.
SAMPLING METHOD:
- The sampling was done using Multi-stage sampling technique. A total of 400 respondents participated in the study.

DATA COLLECTION:
- A pretested, semi-structured, self-administered questionnaire with specific questions designed to test their knowledge was used.
- The questionnaire was divided into three sections:
  * Socio-demographic characteristics.
  * Knowledge about emergency contraceptives.
  * Sexual exposure and use of emergency contraceptives.
RESULTS.

- The age range of respondents was 16 to 30 years with a mean age of 21±2.59 years.

- 73% of respondents are aware of emergency contraception, 70% of them had poor knowledge about it.

- Sources of information
  - Female friends (38.5%)
  - School (22.5%)
  - Internet (14.2%)
  - Lovers (13%)
  - Male friends (12.2%)
  - Hospitals (10.8%).

- About a fifth of the respondents (21%) wrongly reported that mid period of their menstrual cycle is safe and sexual exposure at that point does not warrant emergency contraception while 23.8% of them are not sure.

- More than one third of the respondents (34.5%) have had sexual intercourse.
SOURCE OF INFORMATION OF EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVES.
Results (cont’d)

- Has ever used emergency Contraception
- Has never used emergency Contraception

74%

26%
Misconceptions about E.C include
- can protect against STI (16.2%),
- can induce abortion (20.6%),
- may harm fetus if it fails (73.2%).

Situations that can warrant the use of E.C
- Missed pills (15.6%)
- Sexual assaults (25.4%)
- Condom tear (26.8%)
- Unprotected sexual intercourse (32.1%)

A quarter of the sexually active ones (26%) has used emergency contraception before.

‘Postinor’ was the most frequently used (87.3%) but 16% of them used it after a missed period.

Other materials used are:
- intrauterine contraceptive device (3.6%),
- purgatives (1.8%)
- alcohol mixed with lime (5.4%).
CONCLUSION.

- Awareness about emergency contraception is high among female students but knowledge is poor.

- There are still a lot of misconceptions about the use of E.C.

- Use of E.C among sexually active female students is low.

- Being a student in health related field (health sciences and pharmacy) was significantly associated with good knowledge about emergency contraception when compared with students from other faculties (P<0.05).

- Those students that are relatively new in the school (first and second years) had significantly poorer knowledge about emergency contraception when compared with those in higher levels (p<0.05)
RECOMMENDATIONS.

- There is a need to educate young people about emergency contraception since it may be the last chance of preventing unintended pregnancies.

- Health education programmes should emphasize available methods, correct timing, and clarifications about misconceptions.
RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Priority be given to students:
  - From non-health faculties
  - In lower levels of study in the higher institutions of learning in case of limited resources.

- Emergency contraception should be made readily available at:
  - University Health centre,
  - Youth friendly health centres,
  - Campus pharmacies
  - Family planning clinics
  - As part of School health programmes
Thank you for listening!

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