

RESEARCH BRIEF

Contraceptive use dynamics in India: A prospective cohort study of modern reversible contraceptive users

The Government of India is committed to increasing voluntary modern contraceptive use from 47.4% to 54.3% among married women by 2020. To do this, they intend to improve access, choice, and quality of family planning (FP) services. This study explored one-year contraceptive use dynamics of modern reversible method which included: oral contraceptives (OCs), injectables, interval IUDs, and postpartum IUDs (PPIUDs). Quality of care (QoC) received while obtaining the method, experience of side effects, changes in fertility intentions, method switching behaviors, and method-specific reasons for discontinuation were explored.



RECOMMENDATIONS



Expand the available mix of methods for women and couple to increase voluntary contraceptive use.



Improve the QoC offered, especially for low-income families and PPIUD users by training providers and monitoring quality improvement efforts.



Follow-up with new contraceptive users, provide support, and answer questions on side effects to help ensure continued voluntary use while needed.



Offer information on benefits of FP and the possibility to switch methods to avoid discontinuation if voluntary use is still needed.



Photo Credit: Population Council

India redesigned its FP program to reduce maternal and child mortality due to unhealthy spacing and improve access to voluntary contraception. This study explored the contraceptive use behaviors of Indian women.

FINDINGS

- There was considerable variation in contraceptive use behaviors. At one year, while 36% of women discontinued the method they initiated at the beginning of the study, only 13% discontinued contraception altogether.
- Across four domains of QoC, PPIUD users consistently reported receiving lower levels of QoC than users of OCs, injectables or interval IUD.
- Most women (77%) did not report experiencing side effects from the method that they initiated. The most common side effects were heavy bleeding, abdominal pain/cramping and no bleeding.
- Fertility preferences changed within the one-year study. Among the 59% of women who reported not wanting any more children at enrollment, 35% reported they wanted a child during follow-up. These results suggest that providers should be cautious how they use this measure in supporting women to choose a contraceptive method, especially when counseling on female sterilization.

METHOD

A longitudinal study enrolled 2,699 married women (aged 15-49 years) in the states of Haryana and Odisha, who initiated use of a reversible modern contraceptive method. Follow up surveys were conducted at four time points: within 1, 3, 6, and 12 months after initiation.

EVIDENCE

The Evidence Project uses implementation science—the strategic generation, translation, and use of evidence—to strengthen and scale up family planning and reproductive health programs to reduce unintended pregnancies worldwide. The Evidence Project is led by the Population Council

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