



## Knowledge, attitude and practices of emergency contraception among female medical students of Andhra Medical College, Visakhapatnam

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#### Abstract:

**Background:** Emergency contraception is contraception administered after unprotected sexual intercourse. However, despite increased access to emergency contraception over the past several years, many barriers still exist in regard to allowing emergency contraception to be widely available to women wishing to prevent unplanned pregnancies. The aim of the present study is to determine the knowledge, ever use and attitudes towards emergency contraception among the medical students in Visakhapatnam and compare the same between first MBBS and final MBBS female students.

**Objectives:** 1. To know the socio-demographic profile of study population. 2. To know the knowledge and attitude towards emergency contraception among female medical students. **Methodology:** A cross sectional study conducted in 150 final MBBS and 100 first MBBS female students. The students were administered a pre-tested questionnaire and the results were analysed with the help of personal computer. **Results:** A total of 250 female MBBS students [150 final year and 100 first year] have participated in the study. More than 50% of students belonged to upper middle class with parents having education Graduation and above. Among final MBBS students, 95.3% had good knowledge on contraception compared to 79% of first MBBS students. In final MBBS students, 98% heard about Emergency contraception and 68% had good knowledge whereas in first MBBS students only 37% were ever heard with 6% knowledge and is found to be statistically significant. None of the students had ever used emergency contraception. **Conclusion:** Awareness on emergency contraception among final MBBS students was good when compared to first MBBS students.

**Key words:** Attitude; Emergency Contraception; Knowledge; Practices; Sociodemographic profile

#### Introduction

According to the consortium on National consensus for Medical abortion in India, every year an average of about 11 million abortions take place

annually and around 20000 women die every year due to abortion related complications. Emergency contraception is a method to prevent pregnancy after an unprotected act of sexual intercourse and before

the potential time of implantation [1]. A worldwide study conducted by the WHO to assess the reproductive needs of the population found unexpected discrepancy between the young women's familiarity with modern contraception and on the other hand the high levels of unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortions experienced. Millions of women who could benefit from emergency contraception have never heard of it [2,4]. Unintended pregnancy poses a major challenge to the reproductive health of young adults in developed countries [3]. Increasing the use of emergency contraception is one means of reducing unwanted and teenage pregnancies [6]. Limited knowledge of emergency contraception among women has been identified, and campaigns have aimed to improve this [7].

Thus understanding of Knowledge, attitude and practice of Emergency contraception is critical for countries like India with a population policy aiming at reducing unwanted pregnancy. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted in this area in the country.

The aim of the present study is to examine the knowledge, attitude and practice of female medical students of final MBBS and first MBBS and compare them.

## Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted to assess Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of 150 final MBBS and 100 first MBBS students of Andhra medical college, Visakhapatnam. The study was conducted during November 2012.

Data was collected using a pre-tested semi structured self administered questionnaire which was anonymously developed. The questionnaire contained information about socio-demographic characteristics of the students (age, religion, native area, educational and occupational characteristics of parents), knowledge, practice and attitude towards emergency contraception. We determined the knowledge about contraception and emergency contraception using multiple choice questions and correct answers were given marks.

Data was collected, checked for completeness and consistency. Then data was entered and analysed using Microsoft excel sheet. For descriptive statistics results were expressed in terms of proportions or percentages and association between variables was calculated using chi-square test and p-value of <0.05 was considered as significant.

Consent was obtained from the respondents and brief explanation of aim of the study was explained to the respondents. Only those who volunteered were included in the study. Strict confidentiality was assured through anonymous recording and coding of questionnaires and placed in safe place.

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of the Students

Variable	First year	Final year
Age (In Yrs) Mean Age	18.42	23.06
Std Deviation	0.60603	0.904401
Native Place Urban	53%	62%
Rural	44%	36%
Religion Hindu	77%	82.7%
Christian	19%	11.3%
Muslim	4%	4.7%
Fathers Occupation Professionals	11%	21.3%
Graduates	54%	59.3%
Mothers Occupation Professionals	20%	12.7%
Graduates	54%	36%

## Results

A total of 250 female students have participated in the study. More than 50% of students belonged to upper middle class with parents having education of graduation and above. Most of the students (80%) are Hindus and above 60% are hailing from urban areas. Regarding knowledge on Contraception 95.3% among final MBBS and 79% among first MBBS had good knowledge. 98% among final MBBS students had heard of emergency contraception, their common source of information being the medical books mainly and 37% among first MBBS had heard of it source being peers or friends. Good knowledge on emergency contraception among final MBBS students was 68% while in first MBBS students it is only 6% and this is found to be statistically significant.

None of the students had said to have ever used the emergency contraception for their personal use.

Table 2: Knowledge and Attitude towards Emergency Contraception

Knowledge On Contraception Good	75%	95.3%
Satisfactory	24%	4.7%
Aware Of Emergency Contraception	37%	98%
Knowledge on Emergency Contraception - Good	6%	68%
Satisfactory	14%	25.3%
Wide spread use of EC pill will increase the prevalence of HIV or other STIs Yes	22%	14%
No	62%	85.3%
There is a role of emergency contraception pills in increasing the premarital sexual behaviour among teenagers? Yes	81%	87.3%
No	19%	12.6%
Suggest a friend to use EC pill in case of unintended sex Yes	77%	92%
No	23%	8%
Affects The Ongoing Methods Of Contraception Yes	67%	31%
No	33%	69.3%
Is It Advisable To Advertise In Tvs And Media? Yes	71%	80.6%
No	29%	19.4%
Opinion Regarding The Easy Availability Of EC Pills On The Counter? Good	28%	58.6%
Bad	62%	41.3%
Ever Use Of Emergency contraceptive Pills	Nil	Nil

## Discussion

Although emergency contraception is not recommended as a regular family planning method it is a useful method after unprotected sexual intercourse to reduce the chance of unwanted pregnancies.

The result from this study revealed that only two thirds (66%) of the respondents had heard of emergency contraception .This is lower than the reports on university students in Hong Kong (70%) and Jamaica (84%) and higher than the reports from Adama University (46.8%) and Philadelphia study (50%).

The positive attitude of respondents towards EC is slightly higher in final year students

when compared to first year students though a considerable proportion reported their concern on using it.

Though nearly 98% among final year had heard of emergency contraception, only 60% of them had identified the correct timing of administration of the pills after unexpected sexual intercourse. Several studies conducted in higher institutes in Uganda, South Africa, Cameron, Nigeria and other developing countries reported similar findings.

The main source of information about emergency contraception was medical books among the students.

The ever use of contraception in this study was compared to a study conducted among South Africa

secondary school students and Addis Ababa higher education students.

### Conclusion

This survey suggested that both final and first year MBBS students were generally very positive towards emergency contraception, but lacked correct knowledge about effectiveness, mechanism of action and specific information regarding time frame. Continuous efforts needed to ensure proper knowledge and practice of emergency contraception .and it is highly recommended that interventions intended to combat maternal mortality through contraception usage need to be aware of such information specific to the target groups.

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