

Assessment of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice towards Family Planning in Saudi Arabia, 2017

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ABSTRACT

Background: Understanding the knowledge and conceptions of Saudi population regarding family planning methods is important for increasing the public awareness and maintaining the health of the women. **Objectives:** Evaluating the knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) regarding the family planning methods in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Methods: A cross-sectional community questionnaire based study was conducted among 560 adult married subjects in Saudi Arabia, from March to July 2017.

Results: The most of included subjects had college degree, less than 3 children and were employee. The majority of subjects had good knowledge regarding the meaning, types and uses of contraceptives which resulted in high attitude and good practice pattern as 65.4% of subjects had good KAP toward family planning. **Conclusion:** The use of contraceptive types was quietly high among the Saudi subjects and this could be due to that most of the subjects had high educational degree.

Keywords: knowledge, attitude, practice, family planning, contraceptives, kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

INTRODUCTION

The women's health is a significant issue of many researches as improving the maternal health and the sense of autonomy among women is associated with good family planning methods^(1, 2). Also, family planning is considered as a developmental step of a community^(3, 4).

The use of contraceptives is not only for limiting the family size and regulating the spaces between births but also can be used as an indicator of health and women's liberation⁽⁵⁾.

In Islamic countries including Saudi Arabia the use of contraceptives is still low⁽⁶⁾ and this could be attributed to the traditional of Islamic society for having many children^(7, 8).

A gap was found among Saudi subjects regarding the knowledge and the real use of contraceptives during the reproductive period. Also, most of them use contraceptives for making space between births instead of using the contraceptives for decreasing the family number^(6, 8).

AIM OF THE STUDY

Evaluating the knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) regarding the family planning methods in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

METHODS

A cross-sectional questionnaire community based study that was conducted in KSA from the period of March to June 2017 after obtaining approval from the research committee of Umm Al-Qura University. A simple random sample consisted of 560 subjects were interviewed in 20

shopping malls distributed in different parts of KSA. The inclusion criteria were Saudi Adult subjects and can read and write. All the respondents answered the questions of the questionnaire and gave a written approval for participating in the study.

Study tools

The questionnaire was developed after reviewing the search engines including Science Direct, Scopus, Pubmed ...etc. The questionnaire was then validated by three supervisors in the Family Medicine Department. The questionnaire included 4 parts regarding subject's demographics, knowledge, attitude, and practice of family planning methods.

Statistical analysis:

The SPSS version 20 was used for data entry and processing. The quantitative data were shown as frequency and percentage. The KAP of the respondents was calculated where the correct answer takes 1 and wrong answer takes 0.

RESULTS

Demographics of the studied subjects:

The age of included respondents ranged from 20-45 years old with a mean of 39 years old. The level of education was high among most of the subjects as 60.7% had a bachelor degree, 33.4% had gone to secondary school while 5.9% of subjects had a primary school. About 66.2% of subjects were employee but 33.8% were jobless or retired. More than half of the respondents (57.9%) had one or two children and 42.1% had 3 children or more (Table.1).

Table (1): Demographic Characteristics of included subjects (560)

	Mean ± SD	Range
Age (years)	39± 2.1	20-45
Educational Level	No.	Percentage (%)
College	340	60.7%
Secondary School	187	33.4%
Primary School	33	5.9%
Working status		
Employee	371	66.2%
Jobless or retired	189	33.8%
Parity		
0-2 children	324	57.9%
3 children or more	236	42.1%

Assessment of knowledge regarding the family planning:

The awareness of the respondents about family planning was presented in Table 2. All of the subjects have heard about contraceptives and 87.4% knew the complete meaning of contraceptives as a method for family planning as well as prevention of unwanted pregnancy. Most of the respondents rated hormonal contraceptives, intrauterine devices and condoms as the most common types of contraceptives while only 28.9% stated that spermicides are contraceptives. Also, 80.7% had adequate knowledge regarding the long term effects of contraceptives pills. On the other hand, most of subjects (60.9%) had misconceptions about the mode of action of oral pills through killing sperms. Most of subjects has good knowledge about the need for education about contraceptives (73.4%) and agree about the effect of emergency contraceptives (63.4%).

Table (2): Awareness regarding the contraceptives role in family planning:

Have you ever heard of contraceptives?	No.	Percentage (%)
Yes	560	100
No	---	---
What are contraceptives?		
Method for family planning	31	5.5
Method for prevention of pregnancy	40	7.1
All of the above	489	87.4
I don't know	---	---
What are the types of contraceptives you know		
Hormonal pills and injections	497	88.8
Intrauterine devices	344	61.4
Spermicides	162	28.9
condoms	508	90.7

Contraceptive pills have long term side effects		
Yes	452	80.7
No	108	19.3
Oral contraceptive pills acts through		
Killing sperms	341	60.9
Stop follicular development	116	20.7
Increase the thickness of cervical mucus thus it is difficult for sperms to pass through	88	15.7
I don't know	15	2.7
There is a need for more health education about contraceptives		
Yes	411	73.4
No	149	26.6
Emergency contraceptives could prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex		
Agree	355	63.4
Disagree	99	17.7
I don't know	106	18.9

- Evaluating the subject's attitude:

The attitude of the subjects was good regarding the usefulness of contraceptives (44.8%) and performing family planning (64.1%). However, 72.3% had negative attitude toward the adverse effects of contraceptives and 62.3% don't tend to use condoms as family planning method (Table. 3).

Table (3): Attitude of respondents toward family planning (n=560)

What do you think about contraceptives?	No.	Percentage (%)
Useful	251	44.8
Harmful	109	19.5
Useful but have some side effects	200	35.7
Contraceptives are the most types associated with adverse effects?		
Yes	405	72.3
No	155	27.7
Contraceptive method?		
Yes	211	37.7
No	349	62.3
Do you want to perform family planning		
Agree	359	64.1
Disagree	201	35.9

Practice pattern of included subjects

The health practice pattern showed that 58.6% of the subjects currently used contraceptives for family planning. Only 19.1% were prevented from using contraceptive methods while 80.9% were not prevented from using contraceptive methods. However, 77.3% of the subjects suffered from side effects of contraceptive pills. Only 48.2% of the subjects used barrier methods for avoiding the complications of hormonal contraceptives (Table 4).

Table (4): respondents' practice toward family planning (n=560)

1. Current use contraceptives for family planning	328 (58.6%)	232 (41.4%)
2. Do you prevent your wife from using contraceptive methods?	107 (19.1%)	453 (80.9%)
3. History of contraceptive pills side effects including bleeding, weight gain, changes in the mood	127 (22.7%)	433 (77.3%)
4. I use barrier methods to avoid complications of hormonal contraceptives?	270 (48.2%)	290 (51.8%)

Level of KAP among the respondents

The KAP of included subjects was good among 65.4% while it was insufficient among 34.6% of the subjects (Table 5).

Table (5): Respondents' KAP of family planning

KAP level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Good	366	65.4
Poor	194	34.6
Total	560	100.0

DISCUSSION

Family planning is a baseline for health of the family with many benefits for women's health, mood and the sense of autonomy⁽⁹⁻¹¹⁾.

The KAP of Saudi adult participants was good among most of them also most of them were highly educated, employees and have 1 or 2 children showing a high practice pattern for family planning among the Saudi subjects. On the same contest, the knowledge and practice of

family planning was higher in highly educated subjects^(12, 13).

Accordingly, there was adequate knowledge regarding the types of contraceptives among Saudi subjects especially the oral pills^(14, 15).

Also, in Pakistan⁽¹⁶⁾ and India⁽¹⁷⁾, adequate knowledge was found regarding the use of contraceptives and the concept of family planning.

However, contrast studies in KSA⁽⁸⁾ and in Jordan⁽¹⁸⁾ showed a low level of knowledge regarding the contraceptive uses and methods. Also, other studies showed an inadequate knowledge about barrier methods as well as emergency contraceptives^(19, 20).

Most of the Saudi subjects reported current use of contraceptives (58.6%) which was comparable to other studies among Arab population as it was 60% in Egypt, 47% in Syria, 61.8 in Bahrain, 43.2% in Qatar. While a lower prevalence of using contraceptives was found in 23.1% in Yemen and 27.5% in Emirates⁽²¹⁾. Also, most of women in KSA were using contraceptive methods including pills, intrauterine devices⁽²²⁾.

Other contrast studies reported adequate awareness, attitude but low practice pattern regarding the use of contraceptives^(23, 24).

The present study has some limitations as the KAP was evaluated for only one of the couples, we didn't compare between the KAP of included males and females. Also, most of included subjects were educated which don't represent the whole population.

CONCLUSION

The use of contraceptive types was quietly high among the Saudi subjects and this could be due to that most of the subjects had high educational degree. Thus, large prospective studies concerning the KAP of Saudi adults must be conducted including higher sample size and older populations.

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