

# Study of Family Planning among Antenatal Patients Attending a Tertiary Care Hospital in Goa

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Family planning allows women to attain their desired number of children and spacing of births, thereby limiting family size. Promotion of family planning – ensuring access to preferred contraceptive methods for women and couples is essential in securing maternal and infant health, as well as autonomy of women and limits population size.

**Aim:** The aim of the study to assess the level of awareness of family planning methods among antenatal patients attending antenatal clinic and reported use of family planning methods before pregnancy.

**Subjects and Methods:** The study was conducted between February and March 2018. Ethical clearance was obtained from Ethical Review Committee of Hospital before the commencement of the study. 196 antenatal patients seeking antenatal care at the Outpatient Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in Goa Medical College were selected through systematic random sampling. A descriptive cross-sectional study using predesigned semi-structured questionnaire to assess the awareness and reported use of family planning methods before pregnancy was carried out.

**Results:** All 196 respondents in the study were aware of family planning (100%), among which the best known was female sterilization. It was observed that 48 respondents (24.4%) reported using family planning method to space births or to prevent pregnancy, with 44% of them using oral contraceptive pills, and 29% using condoms, and 27% using intrauterine device. Among the respondents who did not report use of contraception before pregnancy, the most common reason reported was desire to have child (41%). Majority of the respondents got information about family planning from health-care staff (39%).

**Conclusion:** Despite high awareness of family planning methods among the respondents surveyed, utilization of family planning method was poor. Primary health-care staff and mass media would need to play a major role in improving women's knowledge of family planning. Family planning needs to be emphasized in antenatal clinics. Continued research into newer methods of contraception and its importance in improving quality of life is required.

**Key words:** Antenatal, Family planning, Hospital

## INTRODUCTION

Family planning allows women to attain their desired number of children and spacing of births, thereby limiting family size. Promotion of family planning – ensuring access to preferred contraceptive methods for women and couples is essential in securing maternal and

infant health, as well as autonomy of women and limits population size.

It is well established that countries with high contraceptive prevalence rate have lower maternal and infant mortalities.<sup>[1]</sup> Globally, 600,000 women die annually due to pregnancy-related causes, and 75,000 die as a result of unsafe abortions with 99% of these deaths occurring in developing countries.<sup>[2-4]</sup> In India, about 8% of maternal deaths are attributed to unsafe abortion. A significant proportion of unwanted pregnancies are aborted more than half under unsafe condition in India.<sup>[5]</sup>

India 53.5% of married women make use of family planning methods (National Family Health Survey-4),<sup>[6]</sup>

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while in Goa, 26.3% use family planning which is much lower than that in India.<sup>[7]</sup> The concept of unmet need points to the gap between women's reproductive intentions and their contraceptive behavior. The indicator is useful for tracking progress toward the target of achieving universal access to reproductive health. In Goa, the total unmet need for family planning is only 17.5% whereas unmet need for spacing is only 8.3% in Goa.<sup>[7]</sup>

Uncontrolled fertility, which would contribute to increase in population growth, is a worldwide problem. India has a growth rate of 16 million per year, which ranks second after China.<sup>[8]</sup> Lower family planning usage can lead to unwanted pregnancies or close spacing which can pose a threat to maternal health and increase abortion rates. Hence, the present study was undertaken to assess the awareness and practice of family planning methods before pregnancy in antenatal patients seeking antenatal care at tertiary care hospital.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To assess the level of awareness of family planning.
- To assess reported use of family planning before current pregnancy.
- To elicit reasons for not using family planning methods.

## SUBJECTS AND METHODS

The study was conducted between February and March 2018. A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out at the Outpatient Department (OPD) of Obstetrics and Gynecology of Goa Medical College. The respondents consisted of 196 antenatal patients who attended antenatal OPD irrespective of their gestational age. The women were interviewed with the help of pre-designed semi-structured questionnaire adapted to assess the awareness toward family planning while attending antenatal clinic. Information was obtained on variables, such as awareness and knowledge of family planning, age, religion, marital status, place of residence, educational level, occupation, and parity, sources of information of family planning use of family planning methods were assessed by asking the respondents whether before the current pregnancy, they had used family planning methods to space births or to prevent pregnancy. The respondents who did not use family planning methods were asked reasons for their refusal.

### Inclusion Criteria

All pregnant women between 15 and 49 years receiving antenatal care in the hospital and willing to participate were included in the study.

### Exclusion Criteria

Women did not consent for the above study.

### Sampling Technique

The sample size was calculated from the expression of  $n = Z^2pq/d^2$ , where  $z$  is the normal standard deviation set at 1.96, confidence level set at 95%, the tolerable error margin at 7%, and taking prevalence at 50%, and sample size of 196 was obtained. A systematic random sampling technique was used to select women who consented to participate in the study and were not ill.

Using average weekly attendance as 600 at the clinic as the sampling frame, sampling interval of 3 was obtained. Subsequently, an eligible pregnant woman that registered with the department was recruited by adding sampling interval to preceding pregnant women's number. This was continued until the sample size was achieved.

### Ethical Consideration

The study proposal was approved by the Institute of Ethics and Research Committee of Goa Medical College and informed consent was obtained from the participants. The participants were assured of confidentiality and that non-participation in the study would not in any way affect the care they would receive.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were entered and analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences version 22.0 and categorical variables were summarized using frequencies and percentages. The chi-square test was used for evaluating the association between categorical variables.

## RESULTS

A total of 196 pregnant women were enrolled in the study. Of 196 respondents, only 48 respondents (24.4%) reported that before present pregnancy, they were using family planning methods to space births or to prevent pregnancy, with 44% of them using oral contraceptive pills, and 29% using condoms, and 27% using intrauterine device. Respondents did not report use of any other method of family planning.

It can be observed from Table 1, most of the respondents in this study belonged to age group of 20–24 years were married, lived in rural areas, Hindu by religion, and received secondary education and were unemployed. It was also observed that respondents using family planning methods were less in number as compared to respondents

**Table 1: Distribution of pregnant women according to sociodemographic profile**

Variable	Use of family planning		Total n (%)
	No (%)	Yes (%)	
Age			
20–24	53 (72.6)	20 (27.4)	73 (100)
25–29	55 (79.7)	14 (20.3)	69 (100)
30–34	30 (76.9)	09 (23.1)	39 (100)
35–39	08 (61.5)	05 (38.5)	13 (100)
≥40	02	0	02 (100)
Marital status			
Married	146 (75.3)	48 (24.7)	194 (100)
Unmarried	02 (100)	0	02 (100)
Place			
Rural	96 (75.6)	31 (24.4)	127 (100)
Urban	52 (75.4)	17 (24.6)	69 (100)
Religion			
Hindu	99 (72.8)	37	136 (100)
Muslim	31 (79.5)	08	39 (100)
Christian	18 (85.7)	03	21 (100)
Education			
Illiterate	21 (80.5)	05 (19.2)	26 (100)
Primary	20 (95.2)	01 (4.8)	21 (100)
Secondary	70 (72.9)	26 (27.1)	96 (100)
Higher secondary	21 (70)	09 (30)	30 (100)
Graduation and above	16 (69.6)	07 (30.4)	23 (100)
Employment			
Unemployed	101 (82.8)	21 (17.2)	122 (100)
Employed	47 (63.5)	27 (36.5)	74 (100)
Parity			
Primigravida	74 (77.1)	22 (22.9)	96 (100)
1–2	63 (71.6)	25 (28.4)	88 (100)
≥3	11 (91.7)	01 (8.3)	12 (100)

who did not use any method of family planning before pregnancy in all age groups, and almost in all the variables included in the study. Respondents reported low use of family planning method before current pregnancy irrespective of parity.

All the respondents in the study were aware of at least one method of family planning method and the best-known method of contraception was female sterilization (93%), followed by oral contraceptive pills (86%), condoms (83%), intrauterine device (78%), injections (26%), and implants (9%). More than half of the respondents were aware of benefits of family planning.

The most common source of information about family planning was from health-care staff while the least common source was from family and friends as highlighted in Table 2.

As highlighted in Table 3, the remaining 148 respondents who did not use any method of contraception before pregnancy and were asked reasons for not using them. The most common reason given by respondents for not using family planning methods was the desire for a child (41%), and the least common reason was religious beliefs such as breaking away from religion (3%).

## DISCUSSION

In the present study, 48 respondents (24.4%) reported that before the current pregnancy, they were using family planning methods to space births or to prevent pregnancy, with 44% of them using oral contraceptive pills, and 29% using condoms, and 27% using intrauterine device. Similar findings have been reported in a study done in Nigeria,<sup>[9]</sup> wherein only 29% had used family planning methods, and types varied from injectables to female condoms with injectables being the most commonly used method (29%). In another study done in Indonesia,<sup>[10]</sup> 36.03% had used family planning method, from which injection was most frequently used (53.27%) method of family planning.

In the present study, 100% respondents reported knowledge of at least one method of family planning with best-known method of family planning being female sterilization. Although the use of modern temporary method has increased recently, the present finding highlights that there is a constant cultural diffusion of sterilization knowledge and practice in Indian families across generations.<sup>[11]</sup> Family planning services offered through public sector primarily focus on promoting permanent methods of family planning.<sup>[12]</sup> This suggests that family planning services promoted through mass media could be strengthened in communities to inform women and couples of the effectiveness of short-term reversible methods and its advantages in terms of spacing between births and associated protective effects for maternal and child health survival.

Most of the respondents obtained information about contraception from health professionals, the findings in the current study were similar to a study conducted by Nansseu *et al.*<sup>[13]</sup> in which primary health-care physicians were cited as main source of information, contrarily school and friends/relative,<sup>[14]</sup> or media<sup>[15]</sup> were the main sources of information cited as source of information in other studies.

The most common reason for not using contraception in the present study was the desire for more children (30.6%), which is similar to study done in Indonesia.<sup>[10]</sup> Other reasons of refusal being lack of information (15.3%), fear of side effects (4.08%), opposition by family and husband (6.12%), and using natural methods of contraception (9.18%). In a study done by Ghike *et al.*,<sup>[16]</sup> it was observed that the main reason for non-use of contraception was because of the disapproval from family (59%). In the present study, husbands and family disapproval was also reported as a reason (6.12%) for not using contraception. Thus, probably when women are educated and motivated to use contraception the man's negative attitude will always

**Table 2: Distribution of sources of information on family planning**

Sources of information*	n (%)
Tv source	73 (37)
Newspaper and magazine	45 (23)
Health-care staff	77 (39)
Family and friends	29 (15)

\*Multiple responses allowed

**Table 3: Reasons for not using family planning methods before pregnancy**

Reasons	n=148(%)
Desire for child	60 (41)
Lack of information	30 (20)
Fear of side effects	08 (5)
Breaking religion/belief	04 (3)
Husband out of town	16 (11)
Already using natural method	18 (12)
Prohibited by husband and family	12 (8%)

influence the use of contraception. Lack of attention to the role of men in fertility decisions has been found to be shortcoming of family planning programs. A big contributor to the low use of family planning methods has been a lack of knowledge about various available options, combined with misconceptions about the use of contraceptives.

## CONCLUSION

The level of awareness of family planning methods was high among the respondents surveyed, but utilization was poor. Primary health-care providers and mass media would need to play a major role in improving women's knowledge of family planning. Family planning needs to be emphasized in antenatal clinics. Continued research into newer methods of contraception and its importance in improving the quality of life is required.

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