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A study on contraceptive knowledge, attitude and practices among adolescent gravidas in a tertiary hospital in the Philippines

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Objectives: The objectives of this study are as follows: 1) to describe the socio-demographic profile of Filipino adolescent gravidas, 2) to establish the baseline knowledge, attitude, and practices of these adolescent gravidas on contraception, 3) to determine if there is an unmet need for family planning in this age group, and 4) to identify the barriers, if any, to their use of contraceptives.

Methodology: This is a descriptive, survey-based, cross-sectional study on contraception using an adapted, validated, and pre-tested, structured questionnaire among 107 young gravidas (ages 19 and below) consulting or admitted in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Philippine General Hospital.

Results: The average age of all respondents was 17; 75% belong to the 17-19 age range. 59% of youth were out of school prior to getting pregnant while 24% were forced to stop during pregnancy. Menarche and coitarche on average were at 12.5 and 16 years, respectively. The latter was unplanned in 77% of cases. Pregnancy was unintended in 85%. For most of the participants, this was their first pregnancy while 8% have had a previous one. 66.4% of all respondents said they had some knowledge about contraception, while only 22.4% have ever used any method. The most commonly known methods were condoms (59%), hormonal pills (55%), injectables (24.3%), implants (23.3%), and withdrawal method (18.7%). 79% of women said they intended to use family planning after their present pregnancy, with 62.8% choosing subdermal implants as their choice of contraception.

Conclusions: Filipina adolescents are beginning to have sexual relationships and getting pregnant at a younger age. Because of their lack of knowledge on basic sexual and reproductive health, they are unprepared and unmotivated to use contraception despite wanting to delay childbearing. Knowledge on contraception poorly correlates to their actual utility. The use or non-use of family planning is greatly influenced by their partners so that an earlier orientation on sexual and reproductive issues may be warranted for young Filipinos, with emphasis on shared responsibility on decisions regarding contraception.

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