

# Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Contraception among Postpartum Women Attending Kathmandu Medical College Teaching Hospital

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## ABSTRACT

### Background

Failure to plan a pregnancy can adversely affect the health of the family as a whole. High parity is related to increased maternal, perinatal and infant deaths and is associated with nutritional problems of both mother and child. Hence, good knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning among women are important. This study is aimed to determine the knowledge, attitude and practice of contraception among the postpartum women attending Kathmandu Medical College Teaching Hospital.

### Objective

To determine the knowledge, attitude and the practice of various contraceptive methods among the postpartum women.

### Method

A cross-sectional observational study was conducted in the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology on 400 postpartum women (within 42 days of delivery) who delivered and came for follow-up in this institution. All the postnatal women were interviewed with pre-designed questionnaire and information on sociodemographic variable, awareness and knowledge of various contraceptive methods, previous and current use of family planning methods, source of information, utilization and reasons for use/non-use of family planning methods were obtained. Data collected were entered and analyzed using SPSS 20. The results were presented as percentages, means, tables and charts.

### Result

Majority of the participants 363 (90.8%) were aware of contraceptive usage. Amongst 60.5% of women who had previously used contraception, OCPs were the commonest one. Maximum number of participants (60.35%) had used modern contraceptives in the past. The most common source of information on contraception was media (55.7%). The reason of using contraception was spacing between the subsequent pregnancies, while the most common reason of discontinuation or not willing to use family planning methods was husband being abroad, fear of side effects and not knowing which contraceptives to use.

### Conclusion

The contraceptive awareness and knowledge among the postpartum women was high but their usage was low. Hence, efforts should be made to educate the public about safety and convenience of modern methods of contraceptives. Health care personnels should also counsel the clients for adopting the contraceptives according to their need.

## KEY WORDS

*Contraception, knowledge, postpartum, practice*

## INTRODUCTION

Globally, an estimated 300,000 maternal deaths occur annually owing to causes associated with pregnancy, of which nearly 75% were preventable.<sup>1</sup> In developing countries, 55 million unintended pregnancies occur every year to women not using contraceptive method; another 25 million occur as a result of incorrect or inconsistent use of contraceptive method and method failure.<sup>2</sup> Failure to plan a pregnancy can adversely affect the health of the family as a whole and the health of mothers and children remain a subject of global concern.<sup>3,4</sup>

Different research had established that many postpartum women have an unmet need for contraception, and that much of unmet need falls within the general postpartum period.<sup>5</sup> In Nepal, the concept of family planning was introduced by the Family Planning Association of Nepal (FPAN), set up by a group of social workers in 1959, since then many strategies and planning have taken place and thus there was the development of National Family Planning Strategy in 2012 by Ministry of Health and Population, Family Health Division to further strengthen and address the existing gaps of family planning program in Nepal.<sup>6</sup> However, Nepal Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) 2011 has shown unexpected results on contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR). Although CPR of all methods increased from 48% in 2006 to 50% in 2011, there was a slight decrease in CPR of modern methods from 44.2% to 43.2% during the same period.<sup>7</sup>

In the effort to reduce maternal deaths in developing nations, family planning can be an important and effective step. Keeping this in mind, this cross sectional study was carried out to assess the level of knowledge/awareness about different types of family planning (FP) methods, attitude towards contraceptives and also to find out the practices of contraceptives among the postpartum women who had delivered in Kathmandu Medical College Teaching Hospital (KMCTH). All the post partum women were enrolled for the study because it offers the best environment within the hospital and best time period to discuss about the different family planning methods, correction of wrong perceptions about the contraceptives and use of correct contraceptive methods according to the need.

## METHODS

This cross-sectional and descriptive hospital based study was carried out in the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in Kathmandu Medical College Teaching Hospital (KMCTH). The study was carried out after obtaining the approval from the Ethical and Research Committee of KMCTH and after taking consent from the patients who were willing to participate. Non-cooperative women who

refused to furnish necessary information were excluded.

The sample size was determined by using the Kish's formula ( $N = Z^2 PQ/D^2$ ) and calculating the current contraceptive prevalence rate in Nepal according to Nepal Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) to be 50%.<sup>7</sup> The duration of the study was two months from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2014. The study population comprised of 400 postpartum women (taken both normal and cesarean deliveries within 42 days of postpartum period) who delivered in KMCTH and who came for follow up in the Gynecology outpatient department (GOPD) for child vaccination or for family planning counseling. They were interviewed with pre-designed questionnaire and information on sociodemographic variable, awareness and knowledge of various contraceptive methods (ocp, depot provera, IUCD, implants, condom, emergency contraceptives, vaginal foams or suppositories, female sterilization, male sterilization, breast feeding and traditional methods), previous and future use of family planning methods, source of information, utilization and reasons for use/non-use of family planning methods were obtained. Privacy and confidentiality, respect of respondent's rights were strictly considered and consent taken during data collection. Data collected were entered in Microsoft Excel 2007 and then analyzed by using SPSS 20 on personal computer and subjected to descriptive analysis. The results were presented in percentages, means, tables and charts.

## RESULTS

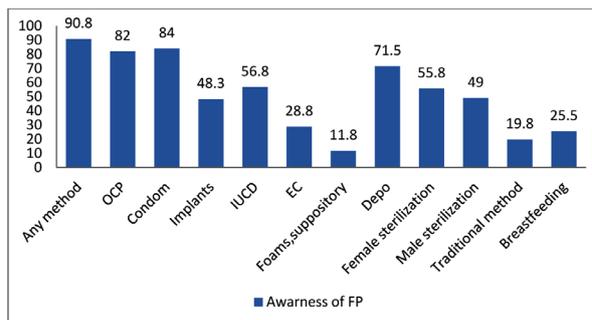
A total of 400 postpartum women were included in the study. Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants along with their knowledge and practice of family planning methods are summarized in Table 1. The age range of the participant's was 18 to 40 years with mean age of 25.83 years. Majority of the women (90.25%) were in the age group 20-34 years and majority of them were housewives (71.80%). Total 56.80% were primipara whereas 43.30% were multipara and the parity range was 1-4 with a mean parity of 1.4. Similarly, 68.30% were from urban area and 31.80% came from rural region. Upper caste (61.25%) constituted the major ethnic group and majority (37.80%) of the participant's educational level was above SLC. The study showed that more than 35 years were 100% aware of the family planning methods and adolescent had less knowledge (Table 1); urban women had slightly higher awareness than rural women. Laborers and housewives were less aware than women with other occupations. Upper caste group and relatively advantaged janajatis were more aware of the family planning methods in comparison with other ethnic groups. As education of the women increased to secondary and higher level, level of awareness also increased.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the study population with family planning knowledge and practice (N=400)**

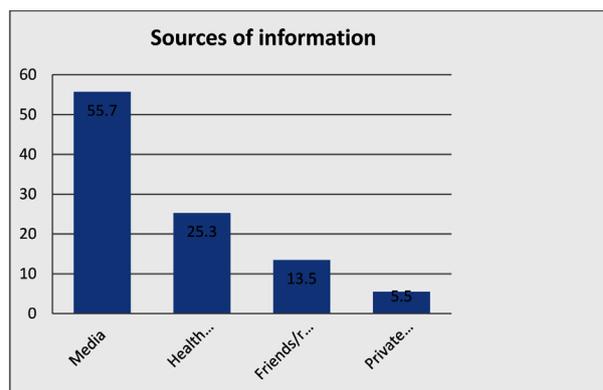
Characteristics	n	%	FP knowledge no. (%)	FP used in the past no. (%)
<b>*Age (years)</b>				
<19	21	5.25	12 (57.10)	3 (14.3)
20-34	361	90.25	327 (90.60)	140 (38.7)
35-40	18	4.50	18 (100)	8 (44.4)
<b>Mean: 25.83 yrs. (Range: 18-40 yrs.)</b>				
<b>**Area of residence</b>				
Urban	273	68.30	252 (92.30)	103 (37.9)
Rural	127	31.80	105 (82.70)	46 (36.2)
<b>Occupation</b>				
Housewife	287	71.80	247 (86.10)	106 (37)
Laborer	7	1.8	6 (85.70)	3 (42.90)
Service	66	16.50	64 (97)	25 (37.90)
Business	24	6	24 (100)	11 (45.80)
Others	16	4	16 (100)	5 (31.30)
<b>***Ethnicity</b>				
Upper caste group	245	61.25	231 (94.30)	86 (35.20)
Relatively advantaged janajatis	65	16.25	60 (92.10)	43.3 (28)
Religious minorities	10	2.50	4 (41.70)	2 (25)
Disadvantaged non-dalit terai	14	3.50	12 (85.70)	6 (42.90)
Disadvantaged janajatis	66	16.50	50 (76.60)	28 (41.90)
Dalit	-	-	-	-
<b>Education</b>				
Illiterate	28	7	18 (64.20)	15 (53)
Below SLC	112	28	96 (85.70)	73 (65.10)
Above SLC (higher secondary)	151	37.80	141 (93.30)	93 (61.58)
University (Masters level)	109	109	108 (99.08)	48 (44.03)
* Age is categorized according women's fertility and biological clock.				
** Area of residence: Rural (within VDC), urban (within municipality).				
*** Ethnicity categorized as per Central Bureau Statistic of Nepal (Caste, Ethnic & Regional Identity in Nepal, 2006)				

**Knowledge and source of information of different types of contraceptive methods**

Among different contraceptive methods (OCP, depot provera, condom, implants, IUCD, foams or vaginal, emergency contraceptives, female sterilization, male sterilization, breastfeeding and traditional methods) 90.80% of the participants were aware about at least one method. The most widely known contraceptives were condom (84%), oral contraceptive pills (82%) and injectables depot provera (71.50%) respectively (Fig. 1). Family planning information was obtained from media (55.70%), followed by health workers (25.30%), friends/relatives (13.50%) largely accounted for the sources of awareness of contraception (Fig. 2).



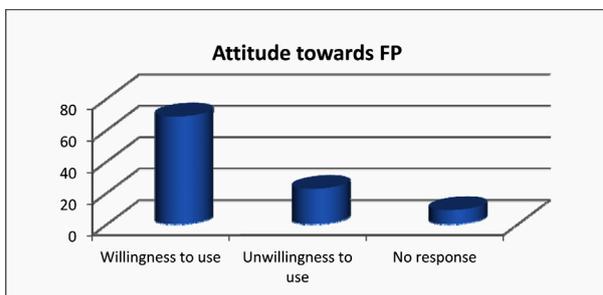
**Figure 1. Knowledge of different types of family planning methods**



**Figure 2. Media (TV, radio, newspapers), health workers (doctors, sisters), other sources (friends, neighbors, relatives), private sectors (NGOs)**

**Attitude towards contraception**

Total 274 (68.50%) women had positive attitude towards family planning and were ready to use it when needed or if appropriate methods available, while 90 (22.50%) women did not want to use any family planning methods and 36 (9%) women did not show any response or were unsure of using contraceptives (Fig. 3). The reasons for using and not using contraceptives are shown in (Table 2 and 3).



**Figure 3. Attitude of women towards family planning methods**

**Practice of contraception**

A total of 242 (60.50%) of the participants had used one form or the other methods of contraception in the past, while 158 (39.50%) had not used any methods. Among the total participants 241 (60.35%) participants had used modern temporary contraceptive methods at least once, pills being the commonest (23.80%) followed by depot

**Table 2. Willingness to use FP:**

Reason to use	n=274	%
Spacing between child	133	33.2
Husband's advise	35	8.8
Health reason	41	10.2
Financial difficulty	15	3.8
Doctor's advise	43	10.7
Complete family	7	1.8

**Table 3. Unwillingness/unsure to use FP:**

Reason for not to use	n=126	%
No specific reason	64	16
Husband abroad	29	7.3
Worried about side effects	16	4
Opposition from family	4	1
Wanted to have child	6	1.5
Could not access FP	5	1.2
Wants to have male child	2	0.5

provera (13.30%). About 68.50% of the participants wanted to use contraceptives in the future and the most preferred method for future use being depot provera (23%) shown in fig. 4.

**Relation of Level of education with future use of contraceptives:**

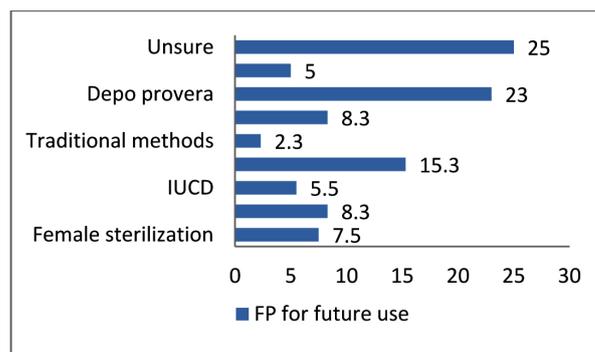
In this study, among 109 women doing their masters level, 92(84.40%) were willing to use contraceptives whereas among 28 illiterate women, 10(35.70%) women would like to use contraceptives in future.

It is seen from fig. 5 that as education level increases i.e. above SLC level, women wanted to use family planning methods to limit their pregnancies.

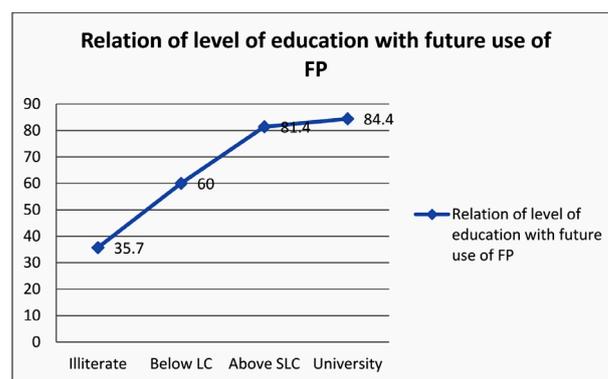
**DISCUSSION**

Contraception is an important aspect of reproductive health and plays a major role in the prevention of unwanted pregnancy. In the present study, majority of women (90.8%) had knowledge of at least one or other method of contraception. Similar to this study, SK Kausal and Shweta et al. found more than 90% awareness of family planning methods.<sup>8,9</sup> Though there is high level (90.80%) of awareness of contraceptives in this study, there is less usage i.e. only (60.50%). The main reason behind this is more than half of the participants had no knowledge regarding the types of contraceptives they should use according to their need. Another reason of not using contraceptives is fear of its side effects and most of the participant's husband being abroad. This high level of contraceptive awareness and low level of usage has also been previously established.<sup>10</sup>

Among the various family planning methods, knowledge of participants on family planning methods in our study



**Figure 4. Percentage of Family planning devices preferred for future use (N=400)**



**Figure 5. Comparison of mother's education level with future use of family planning methods.**

were condom 84% followed by OCPs 82%, Depot provera 71.50%, IUCDs 56.80% and female sterilization 55.80% respectively in decreasing order.

**Family planning awareness and future use by education level:**

The level of women's education had a significant impact on future use and non-use of postpartum contraception. Highly educated women were more willing to use contraceptives in this period as compared to uneducated women. This may be due to the fact that highly educated women are more likely to appreciate the advantages of fewer better educated children.<sup>11</sup> In this study, we observed women whose education level above SLC were aware of the contraceptives (93.30%) and those of master's level were willing to use them for future as well (84.40%). Another study done by Shah also reported women's education to be a significant variable, as the use increased from 43% in primary educated women to 70% in secondary and higher educated women.<sup>12</sup>

The findings of the present study suggest that rural parts and uneducated women are still lagging behind in regard to postpartum contraceptive use. It was observed that knowledge and awareness does not always lead to use of contraceptives among the couples. Family planning counseling needs to be universally and effectively included into routine antenatal activities and also during their postpartum period. Efforts should be made to educate the

public about safety modern, long term, reversible methods of contraception among both the

#### Source of information of family planning services:

In our study, out of 400, 223 (55.70%) women obtained information from media (TV, radio, magazines, newspapers), 179 (35.05%) from health personnel, 94 (23.50%) from friends, relatives or neighbors and 19(4.80%) from private sectors.

In contrast to this study, one of the Korean study revealed the main source of information to be health center or relatives and neighbors.<sup>13</sup> Another study done in Manipur, India also reported that the main source of knowledge was from friends (44%) followed by mass media which is only 22%.<sup>14</sup> Mass media exposure also plays a very important role in women's decision about whether to adopt contraceptives or not. Hence, more emphasis should be given to media in order to disseminate information among the general public.

#### Attitude of Women regarding contraceptive use:

In this study, out of 400 participants, 274 (68.50%) women had positive attitude regarding contraceptive use. Similarly, 36 (9%) had no response or neutral attitude (not willing to talk or discuss about the family planning methods) and 90 (22.5%) had negative attitude (opposed to use contraceptive methods) in this study. The reason behind their negative attitude towards contraceptive was because of the side effects of depot provera like irregular menstrual period, amenorrhoea, abdominal bloatedness, weight gain and headache.

#### Awareness and past use of family planning methods:

Present study showed 60.50% use of family planning methods in the past and 39.50% of the women had never

used any methods, in contrast to the high level of awareness i.e. 90.80%. This finding is similar with the study done in Nigeria, where an awareness rate is 92.50%, only 25.70% had used one form or the other form of contraception and 66.40% were willing to use the contraceptives in the future.<sup>15</sup>

In present study, it was found that only 0.50% used IUCDs which is quite low in comparison with the study done in Reba, India where 16.90% women used IUCDs.<sup>16</sup> The low use of IUCDs in this study was fear of complications like displacement, perforations and various other wrong myths regarding IUCDs. Hence, there is a need to educate women on knowledge of the various contraceptive methods, myths and realities about contraception in order to change the trend. This shows that improved counseling is needed about possible side effects and correct use of particular contraceptive.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, the contraceptive awareness and knowledge among the postpartum women was high but their usage was low. Hence, efforts should be made to educate the public about the safety, proper usage and convenience of modern, long-term, reversible methods of contraception. Health care personnel should also counsel the clients for adopting the contraceptives according to their need.

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