



Study on Contraceptive Practices among Women Seeking Termination of Pregnancy in a Government Facility

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ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among 93 women seeking termination of pregnancy at a government facility with the objective of determining their contraceptive practices. The study found that 35.4% respondents were in the age group of 21-25 years with mean age of 25.9 years. 91.4% respondent was Muslim and 69.9% was housewives. 94.6% was married and mean age of marriage was 15.65 years. 93.5% respondents had amenorrhoea between 6-10 weeks and mean duration of amenorrhoea was 7.7 weeks. 84.9% of them were using contraceptive methods at the time of conception and most commonly used methods were oral pills (38.0%) followed by injections by 28.0% respondents. 87.0% respondent's use of contraceptive was jointly decided with their husbands. Among the 15.1% women who did not use any contraceptive method half of them mentioned that their husband did not want any contraceptive method. Most common cause of termination of pregnancy was that they did not want any more children (36.6%) followed by did not have money to raise children (23.7%). 92.0% married women jointly decided with their husband to terminate the pregnancy. Almost forty percent women had previous history of termination of pregnancy and 13.5% among them had terminated twice before. Most common method of termination was menstrual regulation (75.1%) followed by ayurvedya (8.1%). 97.8% respondent did not know about emergency contraceptive pill or post-coital pill. The reasons for contraceptive failure need to be investigated and the women should be informed of emergency contraceptive pills.

Keywords: *contraception; abortion; emergency contraception; contraceptive practices; pregnancy.*

INTRODUCTION

Millions of women every year have unwanted pregnancy. Some unwanted pregnancies are carried to term, others are terminated. Induction of pregnancy before the viability (capable of living independently) of the foetus is called termination of pregnancy. Methods of termination of pregnancy include vacuum aspiration and dilatation and evacuation. Pregnancy can be terminated to save the life of the mother, for social reasons and for eugenic causes that is if there is risk of the child being born with serious physical and mental abnormalities so as to be handicapped in life.

Termination of pregnancy may be legal or illegal. Pregnancy termination was illegal in Bangladesh prior to 1970s except when a woman's life was endangered by the pregnancy. Since 1979 abortion remains illegal but menstrual regulation (MR). Which is considered an interim method of establishing non pregnancy" for a woman at risk of being (but not known to be) pregnant ¹. The procedure is allowed up to 10 weeks since last menstrual period but in practice, it is sometimes provided up to 12 weeks^{2, 3}. Menstrual regulation services are available at all major government hospitals and health facilities and are legal for pregnancies of 6-10 weeks. Women who do not use menstrual regulation services may resort to abortion, which is sometimes induced by inserting a foreign object into the uterus or by indigenous oral medicine⁴.

Globally an estimated 50 million abortions are performed each year and approximately 20 million of them are carried in unsafe condition leading to some 78,000 deaths and millions of lifelong disability and pain or complicated future pregnancies ⁵. The primary cause of abortion is unwanted pregnancy. Rapidly changing socio-economic factors such as shift from rural to urban life styles, overcrowded housing conditions, high unemployment rates may also contribute to greater abortion cases. In Bangladesh currently about 28,000 women die each year due to causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Common causes of maternal death include post-partum hemorrhage, abortion, eclampsia, puerperal sepsis and obstructed labour. Maternal death due to abortion is 21% ⁶.

The number of pregnancy termination performed in Bangladesh, either through legal or traditional means is unknown'.

According to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 2% of currently married women mentioned termination of an unwanted pregnancy; two-thirds of these terminations involved menstrual regulation⁸. A study revealed that among the unintended pregnancies that are due to contraceptive failure, 31% undergo menstrual regulation, 4.9% seek for induced abortion⁹.

A Seventh to eight week of gestation is the optimal time for pregnancy termination. Risk of death is higher for women who terminate pregnancy in second trimester. Mortality and morbidity associated with complications of unsafe abortion practice affects the reproductive health of women in Bangladesh. Effective contraception can reduce unwanted pregnancy and therefore need for termination of pregnancy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Majority of the adolescents in Bangladesh who undergo menstrual regulation are contraceptive non-users due to unawareness of contraceptive methods or lack of knowledge about where to get them in one-third of respondent and due to unwillingness of husband in another one-third respondents¹⁰.

A study on pregnancy termination in a rural sub-district found that only five out of forty one women had been using a contraceptive regularly when they became pregnant; most frequent cause of termination reported by the respondents was that they did not want any more children or wished to space births¹¹.

A study conducted in New Zealand found that 61% women were using a contraceptive method in the month of conception while 30% were not. Condom was used by 48% and oral pill by 42%. 78% of the respondents knew about emergency contraception and 34% had used it previously¹².

Another study in China revealed the presence of contraceptive failure in 71.9% where the mean age of abortion seekers was 26.9 years, 57.3% had no children. 61.7% of the pregnancies were as a result of nonuse of contraception or timely recognition of contraceptive failure. Highest proportion of contraceptive failure was due to condom, followed by IUD (23.5%), and rhythm (15.9%)¹³.

Considering all, a study was conducted to determine the socio-demographic characteristics and contraceptive practices among women seeking termination of pregnancy in a government facility.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted with the following objectives-

General objective:

- To determine the contraceptive practices among women seeking termination of pregnancy in a government facility

Specific objectives:

- To assess the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents
- To determine the age at marriage
- To determine obstetrics history of the respondents
- To determine the contraceptive practice during time of conception
- To identify the reason for termination of pregnancy
- To find out past history of termination of pregnancy
- To determine knowledge and use of emergency contraceptive pill

METHODOLOGY

Type of study: This was a descriptive type of cross-sectional study.

Place of study: The study was carried out in a government facility- Mohammadpur Fertility Services and Training Center situated in Mohammadpur, Dhaka.

Study population: All the women who came for termination of pregnancy at the center.

Study period: The study was conducted from 13/07/07 to 16/1 1/07.

Sample size: A total of 93 women were selected purposively for the study.

Sampling technique: All the women who came to seek termination of pregnancy at the center during the presence of the interviewer were selected purposively for the study.

Data collection instrument: A -structured questionnaire was used for data collection.

Data collection method: A formal written permission was taken from the Director of the center for conduction of the study prior to data collection. After taking verbal consent from the respondents, data were collected by face-to-face interview. One questionnaire was used for each respondent for data collection.

Data analysis: Data were compiled and analyzed manually. Tables and graphs were used to present the data.

RESULTS

A total of 93 women were interviewed for the study.

Age of the respondents:

Age of the respondents varied from 16 to 40 years. Mean age was 25.9 years with a standard deviation of 5.17 years. Most of the women (35.4%) were in the age group of 21-25 years. Table 1 shows distribution of the respondents by age group.

Table-1: Distribution of the respondents by age (N=93)

Age group	Frequency	Percent
16-20	17	18.3
21-25	33	35.4
26-30	29	31.2
31-35	12	12.9
36-40	2	2.2
Total	93	100.0

Educational level of the respondents:

36% respondents were illiterate. Educational level of the respondents is shown in the figure below.

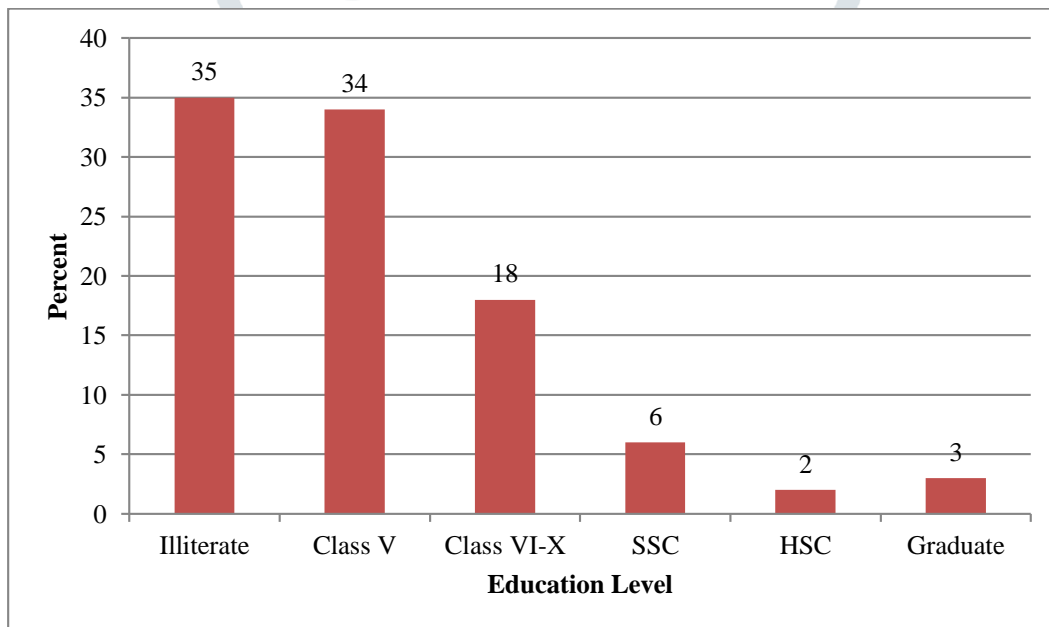


Figure 1: Educational level of the respondents

Religion of the respondents:

Most of the respondents were Muslim. Religion of the respondents is shown in the figure below.

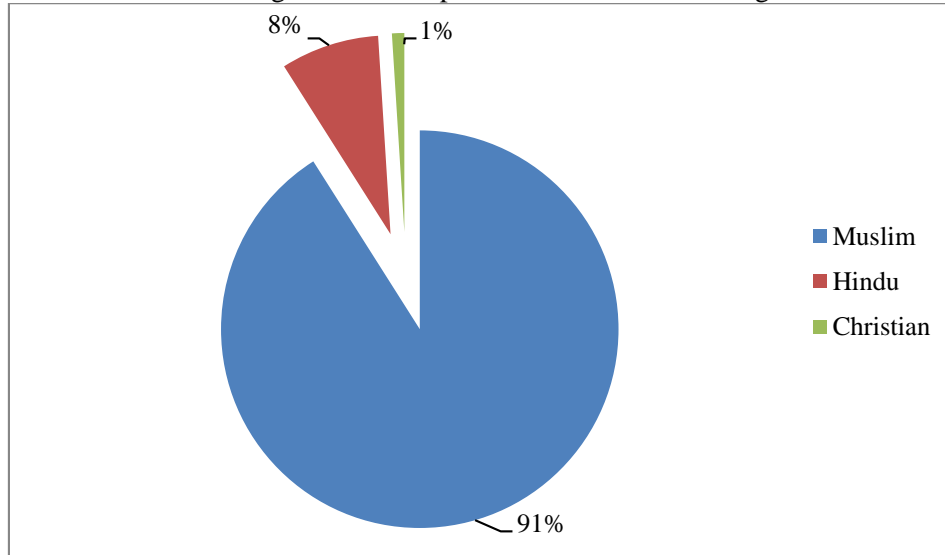


Figure 2: Religion of the respondents

Occupation of the respondents:

Majority of the respondents (69.9%) were housewives. Occupations of the respondents are given in table 2.

Table-2: Distribution of the respondents by occupation (N=93)

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Housewife	65	69.9
Garment factory worker	15	16.1
Maid servant	7	7.5
Service holder	4	4.3
Student	1	1.1
Aya	1	1.1
Total	93	100.0

Marital status of the respondents:

88 (95%) respondents were married. 2 (2%) respondents were divorced and separated each. Remaining one (1%) was unmarried.

Husband's age:

Among 88 married respondents, husbands' age varied from 20 to 48 years with mean age 33 years. Age of majority of them (47.7%) was in the age group of 31-40 years. Age of the husbands is given in table 3.

Table-3: Age of the husbands (N=88)

Husbands age	Frequency	Percent
20 years	1	1.2
21-30 years	39	44.3
31-40 years	42	47.7
41-50 years	6	6.8
Total	88	100.0

Educational level of the husbands:

Nearly one-fourth of the husbands were illiterate. Educational level of the husbands is shown in figure 3.

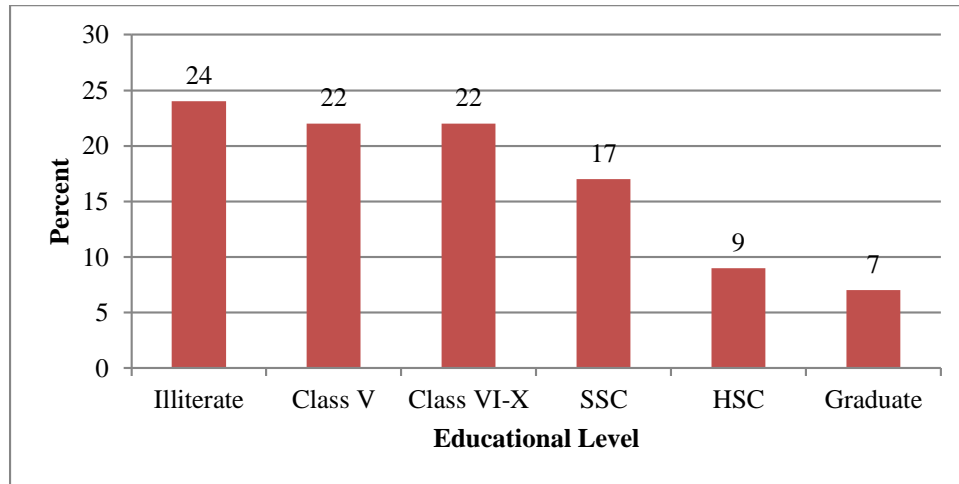


Figure 3: Educational level of the husbands

Occupation of the husband:

Majority (29.5 %) of the respondent's husbands was service holder followed by day labor (27.3 %). Occupation of the husband is given in table 4.

Table-4: Occupation of the husbands (N=88)

Husband's occupation	Frequency	Percent
Service holder	26	29.5
Day labor	24	27.3
Rickshaw puller	13	14.8
Business	8	9.1
Unemployed	5	5.7
Garment worker	5	5.7
Others	7	7.9
Total	88	100.0

Age of the respondents at marriage:

Respondents' age at marriage varied from 8-24 years with mean age of 15.65 years. Distribution of the respondents by age at marriage is given in table 5.

Table-5: Distribution of respondents according to age at marriage (N=92)

Age at marriage	Frequency	Percent
10 years	3	3.3
11-15 years	44	47.8
16-20 years	39	42.4
21-25 years	6	6.5
Total	92	100.0

Monthly family income:

Monthly family income of the respondents varied from Tk.1000 to Tk. 1 8000. Three respondents were dependent on their parents and had no income. Distribution of the respondents by monthly family income is given in table 6.

Table-6: Distribution of the respondents according to monthly family income (N=90)

Monthly family income	Frequency	Percent
1000-5000 Tk.	40	44.4
>5000-10.000 Tk.	42	46.7
> 10.000-15,000 Tk.	7	7.8
> 15.000 Tk.	1	1.1
Total	90	100.0

Number of pregnancies of the respondents:

Seven respondents were pregnant for the first time. Number of pregnancy varied from one to six. Distribution of respondents by number of pregnancies is given in table 7.

Table-7: Distribution of respondents according to number of pregnancies (N=93)

No. of pregnancy	Frequency	Percent
1	7	7.5
2	18	19.4
3	25	26.9
4	24	25.8
5	13	14.0
6	6	6.5
Total	93	100.0

Living children and their sex distribution:

82 (95.3%) respondents had living children. Number of living children according to sex is given in table 8 and table 9.

Table-8: Distribution respondents according to number of living son (N=61)

No. of living son	Frequency	Percent
1	41	67.2
2	13	21.3
3	7	11.5
Total	61	100.0

Table-9: Distribution of respondents according to number of living daughter (N=65)

No. of living daughter	Frequency	Percent
1	40	61.5
2	22	33.8
3	2	3.1
4	1	1.6
Total	65	100.0

Age of last child:

Age of last child varied from 2 months to 10 years with mean age of 3 years. Distribution of respondents according to age of last child is given in table 10.

Table-10: Distribution of respondents according to age of last child (N=82)

Age of last child	Frequency	Percent
2 years	31	37.8
> 2 — 4 years	33	40.2
>4—6 years	15	18.3
> 6 years	3	3.7
Total	82	100.0

Duration of amenorrhoea:

Duration of amenorrhoea ranged from 5-12 weeks. Majority of the respondents (93.5%) had amenorrhoea between 6-10 weeks. Distribution of the respondents according to duration of amenorrhoea is given in table 11.

Table-11: Distribution of respondents according to duration of amenorrhoea (N=93)

Duration of amenorrhoea	Frequency	Percent
< 6 weeks	3	3.2
6 - 10 weeks	87	93.5
11- 14 weeks	2	2.2
> 14 weeks	1	1.1
Total	93	100.0

Use of contraceptive at time of becoming pregnant (current):

Majority of the respondents (84.9%) were using contraceptive when they conceived for their current pregnancy. Different methods of contraceptives used by the respondents at that time are given in table 12.

Table-12: Distribution of respondents according to use of contraceptive methods (N= 79)

Type of Contraceptive	Frequency	Percent
Oral pill	30	38.0
Injections	28	35.4

Condom	8	10.1
Oral pill and injection	8	10.1
Oral pill and condom	3	3.8
Intrauterine device (ILTD)	1	1.3
Periodic abstinence	1	1.3
Total	79	100.0

Decision making of using family planning method:

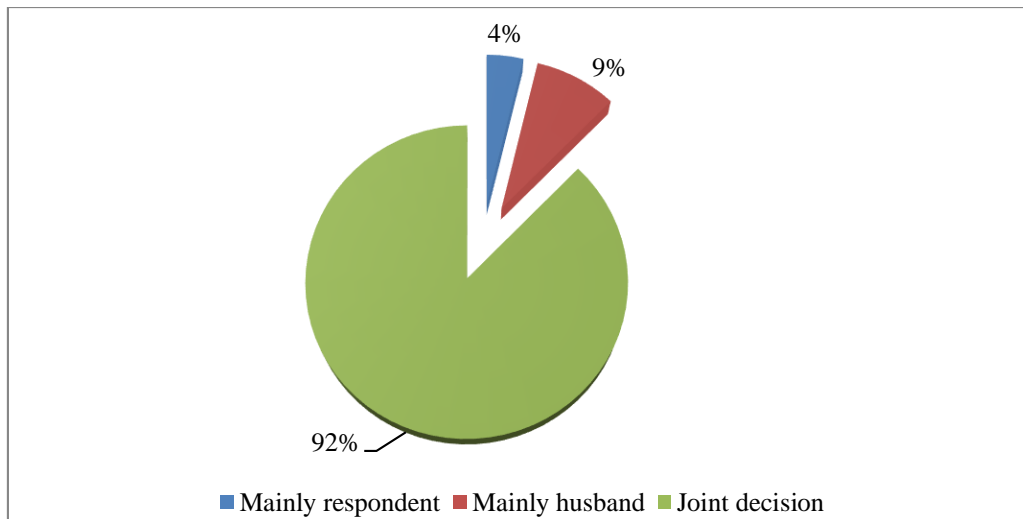


Figure 4: Decision maker of family planning method use

Reason for terminating current pregnancy:

Most common reason mentioned by the respondents for termination of pregnancy is that they do not want any more child (36.6%) followed by do not have money to raise child (23.7%). Distribution of respondents by reason for terminating pregnancy is given in table 14.

Table-14: Distribution of respondents by reasons for terminating pregnancy (N=93)

Reason for terminating pregnancy	Frequency	Percent
Do not want any more child	34	36.6
Do not have money to raise child	22	23.7
Do not want child now	18	19.4
Youngest child is very young	4	4.3
Do not want any more child and youngest child is very young	3	3.2
Do not want any more child and do not have money to raise child	3	3.2
Do not want any more child and have physical problem	3	3.2
Divorced	2	2.2
Separated	1	1.1
I am unmarried	1	1.1
Dependent on parents	1	1.1
Do not want child now and youngest child is very young	1	1.1
Total	93	100.0

Decision of termination of pregnancy:

Majority of the respondents (92%) jointly decided with their husbands to terminate the pregnancy. Distribution of the respondents according to the decision of termination of pregnancy is given in table 15.

Table-15: Distribution of the respondents according to the decision for termination of pregnancy (N=88)

Decision of termination of pregnancy	Frequency	Percent
Mainly respondent	1	1.1
Mainly husband	6	6.9
Joint decision	81	92.0
Total	88	100.0

Previous history of termination of pregnancy:

37 (39.8%) respondents had history of previous termination of pregnancy. Distribution of respondents according to number of previous termination of pregnancy is given in table 16.

Table-16: Distribution of respondents according to number of previous termination of pregnancy (N=37)

No. of termination	Frequency	Percent
1	32	86.5
2	5	13.5
Total	37	100.0

Different methods of previous termination of pregnancy are given in table 17.

Table-17: Methods of termination of pregnancy (N=37)

Method of termination of pregnancy	Frequency	Percent
MR	28	75.1
Avurvedya	3	8.1
Homeopathy	2	5.4
Abortion	1	2.7
MR and abortion	2	5.4
MR and ayurvedya	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0

Knowledge and use of emergency/post-coital contraceptive pill:

Only 2 (2.2%) respondents had heard of post-coital pill and only one of them had used it before. 91 (97.8%) respondents had not heard of the post-coital pill.

DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to determine the contraceptive practices of women seeking termination of pregnancy at a government facility. It was a cross-sectional descriptive type of study conducted among 93 women attending Mohammadpur Fertility Services and Training Center situated in Mohammadpur, Dhaka. The following section attempts to discuss the important findings of the study and tries to highlight those in comparison to other studies.

Majority of the respondents (35.4%) were in the age group of 21-25 years. Mean age was 25.9 years. This finding is quite similar to the finding in China where mean age of abortion seekers was 26.9 years ¹³ 94.6% respondent was married while 91.4% was Muslim. Most of them (69.9%) were housewives. Mean age at marriage was 15.65 years.

Duration of amenorrhoea varied from 5 weeks to 24 weeks and mean duration was 7.7 weeks. Majority of the respondents (93.5%) had amenorrhoea between 6-10 weeks.

84.9% respondents reported using contraceptive methods at the time when they conceived current pregnancy. Most commonly used contraceptive method was oral pill (38.0%) followed by injections (28.0%). 8.0% respondent used condom while another 8.0% used both oral pill and injection. The reason for contraceptive failure needs further investigation to see whether it is due to failure of the method or non-compliance of the users. Most of the respondent's (87.0%) use of contraceptive was jointly decided with their husbands. Among the 14 (15.1%) women who did not use any contraceptive method, half of them mentioned that their husband did not want any contraceptive method. A study on pregnancy termination in a rural sub-district found that only five out of forty one women had been using a contraceptive regularly when they became pregnant and all of them had been using condoms; twelve women said they had stopped using contraceptive because of side effects and four did not use any method because of fear of side effects ¹¹. A lower proportion (61%) of women in New Zealand was using a contraceptive method in the month of conception while 30% were not: condom was used by 48% and oral pill by 42% ¹². 61.7% pregnancies in China were also found to be result of

nonuse of contraception or contraceptive failure; and highest proportion of contraceptive failure was due to condom (29.7%), followed by IUD (23.5%)¹³. But in our study the highest proportion of contraceptive failure is found to be oral pill followed by injections.

87.0% of the respondents mentioned that termination of the pregnancy was a joint decision with their husbands. This finding is similar to the finding of a study in rural sub-district¹¹.

Most of the adolescents in Bangladesh are contraceptive non-users in the six months prior to becoming pregnant due to unawareness of contraceptive methods or lack of knowledge about where to get them in one-third of respondent and due to unwillingness of husband in another one-third respondents¹⁰.

Most common reason for terminating pregnancy among our respondents was that they do not want any more child (36.6%) followed by do not have money to raise children (23.7%). 92.0% married women jointly decided with their husband to terminate the pregnancy. A study on menstrual regulation clients in Matlab found that majority of them was motivated by a desire to space births, and a minority wished to limit overall family size³. Another study conducted in rural sub-district of Bangladesh found that termination pregnancy was most frequently sought because the respondents did not want any more children or wished to space births: other reasons mentioned are economic costs of raising children. Costs of female children including meeting dowry for their marriage and physical weakness¹¹.

Nearly forty percent women mentioned previous history of termination of pregnancy and 13.5% among them had terminated twice before. Most common method of termination was menstrual regulation (75.1%) followed by ayurvedya (8.1%).

97.8% of our respondents did not know about emergency contraceptive pill or post-coital pill. Between the two respondents who knew about it, only one reported use of it previously. This finding is dissimilar to the finding in New Zealand where 78.0% respondents knew about emergency contraception and 34.0% had previously used it¹². If our respondents knew about the emergency contraceptive pill, they could have used it in time of need and avoided the pregnancy.

RECOMMENDATION

Unwanted pregnancies can be prevented by using contraceptive methods. Emergency contraceptive pill/ post-coital pill can also be very helpful in this regard. Moreover, increased age at marriage can also help in reducing pregnancy related morbidity and mortality. Based on the findings of the study following measures can be taken:

1. Encouraging use of contraceptive measures and raising awareness to compliance of the methods. Husbands should be involved in family planning and reproductive programmes.
2. Providing information on emergency contraceptive pills so that women can use it in times of need and prevent unwanted pregnancy.
3. Raising public awareness to increase age at marriage.
4. Further comprehensive study to investigate contraceptive failure cases and to point out the reasons for it.

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