

## Knowledge of Male Partners of Pregnant Females Presenting in Services Hospital Lahore Regarding Contraception

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### Abstract

**Objective:** To determine knowledge of male partners of pregnant ladies regarding contraceptive methods coming to services hospital Lahore.

**Methods:** A cross sectional study was carried out in Obstetrics & Gynecology department of Services Hospital, Lahore over a period of six months from 05-05-2018 to 04-11-2018. We interviewed 400 men accompanying their wives in Services Hospital, Lahore to determine their knowledge regarding contraceptive methods and use.

**Results:** Age of study participants ranged between 20-30 years of age with mean age of 25.4±6.1. There were 145 participants who don't have any children (36.3%) and 199 (49.7%) were having 1-2 children and 56 (14%) were having 3 or more children. 189 (47.3%) participants had education of matric or above, 152 (38%) were primary and 59 (14.7%) were uneducated. Majority of the patients were earning Rs.10,000-50,000 monthly. Mean number of children were 1.2±1.1. Adequate knowledge of contraception was reported 113 (28.2%). Stratification with regard to age, parity, education status, socioeconomic status was also carried out.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, limited adequate knowledge of male partners about method of contraception was found. Services of family planning in Pakistan can be strengthened significantly by continuous efforts to focusing on knowledge, fears, and misconceptions of men about contraception. Moreover, as this study found, Knowledge of the male partner regarding contraception can be significantly increased by increasing education and socioeconomic status. Involvement of Media and Religious bodies in promoting contraception can also increase knowledge of contraception. Increasing knowledge about contraception can lead to increased contraceptive prevalence rate.

**Key Words:** Male partner, adequate knowledge of contraception, contraceptive methods

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### Introduction

Contraception is the method used to prevent pregnancy by interfering in process of ovulation, fertilization and implantation. Contraception and family planning has huge impact on social and economic

growth of a country and is therefore requires urgent importance from government, healthcare providers and social services.<sup>1-6</sup> Pakistan has contraceptive prevalence rate of 34.2%,<sup>1</sup> as of 2018, which is drastically low, pointing out the huge unmet need for family planning.

Contraception Prevalence rate of Pakistan is lower as compared to other countries in South Asia or those with similar socioeconomic structure. Contraception Prevalence rate of India, Bangladesh and Nepal is 56.3%, 55.8% and 49.7% respectively.<sup>2</sup>

Different factors have been known to influence the use of contraception among couples. Which include knowledge, access, social acceptance, financial constraints and religious views. Of all the factors, the most

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important and influential one in Pakistani society is husband's willingness and support. Many studies have shown that male partner's knowledge regarding different methods of contraception has a huge impact on the prevalence of contraception. A study in Jordan showed 98% of male partners had somewhat knowledge regarding contraception and their contraception prevalence rate is as high as 61.2%.<sup>3</sup> Which shows a direct correlation between husbands' understanding of contraception and its prevalence in society. A study in Nigeria concluded that major factor in rejecting contraception is Husband's disapproval.<sup>7</sup> Study in urban area of Maharashtra, India concluded that male contraceptive measures are the least used methods.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately we could not find any formal study conducted in Pakistan that assesses the understanding of male partner regarding contraception and its use. A study conducted among university-educated men in Punjab Pakistan concluded that there is a lack of knowledge among married men regarding contraception. And those who have good knowledge have higher prevalence of contraception.<sup>4</sup> Another study in which married women visiting a hospital were interviewed about their knowledge regarding contraception, said that only 51% of the women that use contraception are supported by their families,<sup>5</sup> which is an alarming number.

Considering the importance of family planning and use of contraception in women's health and social progress along with the role of male partner in this regard, I have decided to conduct a research to assess the knowledge of male partners about contraception in Pakistan. It will be the local study of patients and data from this can be used to influence policies and it will help to increase contraception prevalence rate of our country.

## Methods

We conducted a descriptive cross sectional survey in Obstetrics & Gynecology department of Services Hospital, Lahore over a period of six months from 05-05-2018 to 04-11-2018. After informed consent 400 cases who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were enrolled in this study following non probability, consecutive sampling. Sample size of 400 calculated with level of confidence 95%, margin of error 5% and percentage of adequate knowledge in males as 51%.<sup>5</sup> Ethical approval for the study was provided by the IRB of the hospital. Those husbands with age group between 20-

30 years with any parity, presenting in Outpatient Department of Services Hospital, Lahore were enrolled in study. Husbands who refused to participate and those treated for subfertility were excluded. Demographic data was collected. Husbands of the selected patients were questioned using Questionnaire. Adequate Knowledge of the Husbands of the patients was assessed. Adequate knowledge was labelled as score of 8 or more according to questionnaire and low knowledge was labeled as score less than 8. All the information was collected on a pre-designed validated questionnaire. All the collected data were entered and analyzed through SPSS version 20. Mean and Standard Deviation was calculated for Quantitative Variables like age. Frequency and Percentages were calculated for Qualitative data like adequate knowledge. Effect Modifiers like age, educational status, and socioeconomic status were controlled through stratification. Post stratification Chi-square by taking  $p < 0.05$  as significant.

## Results

Patients ranged between 20-30 years of age with mean age of  $25.4 \pm 6.1$ . There were 145 participants who don't have any children (36.3%) and 199 (49.7%) were having 1-2 children and 56 (14%) were having 3 or more children. Matric and above education status participants were 189 (47.3%), Primary or above were 152 (38%) and uneducated were 59 (14.7%). Majority of the patients were earning Rs.10,000-50,000 monthly. Mean number of children were  $1.2 \pm 1.1$ . Adequate knowledge of contraception was reported 113(28.2%). Stratification with regard to age, parity, education status & socioeconomic status was also carried out.

## Discussion

Till date, no large scale study has been performed in Pakistan to evaluate knowledge, attitude and practices of male partners regarding family planning practices. Most large-scale surveys assessing family planning practices, knowledge, attitudes and practice surveys; Surveys on world fertility; Surveys on contraception prevalence of the world; and the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)<sup>8</sup> ignored male partners and focused on determinants of female use of contraceptive methods. Ignoring the men in contraceptive studies probably represents the limited involvement and options of men in contraceptive use.<sup>9</sup>

All the women should have autonomy in choosing contraceptive method, with or without cooperation of

**Table 1:** Basic Characteristics of Study Population  
n=400

Demographic Characteristics	N=400	Percentage (100%)
<b>Age of Male Partner</b>		
20-25	193	48.3%
26-30	207	51.7%
<b>Mean ±SD</b>	<b>25.4±6.1</b>	
<b>Number of children</b>		
Nil	145	36.3%
1-2	199	49.7%
3 or above	56	14%
<b>Education</b>		
Uneducated	59	14.7 %
Primary & above	152	38%
Matric & above	189	47.3%
<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>		
<10,000	68	17%
10,000 -50,000	258	64.8%
>50,000	73	18.3%

**Table 2:** Knowledge of Contraception

Knowledge of contraception	Number	Percentage
Yes (Score of 8 or more)	113	28.2%
No( Score less than 8)	287	71.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3:** Stratification for Age

Age	Adequate knowledge of contraception		Total	P value
	Yes	No		
20-25	39(20.2%)	154(79.8%)	193	P=0.001
26-30	74(35.7%)	133(64.3%)	207	

**Table 4:** Stratification for Parity

Number of Children	Adequate knowledge of contraception		Total	P value
	Yes	No		
Nil	5(3.4%)	140(96.6%)	145	P<0.001
1-2	81(40.7%)	118(59.3%)	199	
3 or above	27(48.2%)	29(51.8%)	56	

**Table 5:** Stratification for Educational Status

Educational status	Adequate knowledge of contraception		Total	P value
	Yes	No		
Matric & Above	81(42.9%)	108(57.1%)	189	P<0.001
Primary or Above	32(21.0%)	120(79%)	152	
Uneducated	-	59 (100%)	59	

**Table 6:** Stratification for Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status (Rs)	Adequate knowledge of contraception		Total	P value
	Yes	No		
< 10,000	0	68(100%)	68	
10,000-50,000	73(28.2%)	186(71.8%)	259	P<0.001
> 50,000	40(54.8%)	33(45.2%)	73	

husband; yet when both the partners are in harmony in seeking healthcare services, chances to seek family planning services are increased. In addition, by effective communication between couples about family planning services and taking men into mainstream can improve health parameters of entire family.<sup>8</sup> Over the past few years, there is increased recognition of the fact that involvement of men in the matters of reproductive health is of key importance. Both the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 had the recommendation that there should be community programs to involve both husband and wife in decision making related to reproductive health and to share the responsibilities related to this matter. Understanding men's knowledge, attitude and practices is the very first step in involving them in reproductive health.

In Pakistan, the decision makers are usually husbands and it is their knowledge, attitude and practice towards contraception that play a role in contraceptive prevalence rate of society. In present study, 28.2% males reported adequate knowledge of contraception while in a study by Zaidi et al demonstrated that 51% males had adequate knowledge regarding contraception.

Studies clearly showed that almost all men have heard of and talked of birth spacing, but don't have proper knowledge about the contraception. However, with increasing education, the knowledge about contraceptive methods increases. This is in harmony to nationwide studies.<sup>10,11</sup>

As education is a key factor in determining men's knowledge about contraception, structured education campaigns about contraceptive methods should be done to reach out for people having poor knowledge. In present day world, television, internet and social media can be used widely as a way to educate men about contraception and their use. Special emphasis should be laid on inculcating the reproductive education in schools and colleges to increase the knowledge of youth regarding family planning. Many studies in different cultures and demographics have pointed out that education is directly related to knowledge of contraception irrespective of cultural norms.<sup>8,12</sup> Moreover, a study has shown that men with good knowledge and education about contraception are more accommodative and supportive in choosing a contraceptive method for their partner.<sup>8</sup> A nationwide study in Egypt showed that sometime it is a fear of divorce that woman keep on bearing children irrespective of her own wish, with

a sense that with more children will keep her marriage intact.<sup>13</sup>

Religion is an important factor determining the overall contraceptive prevalence rate of a society and should not be ignored. In Pakistan, a country with majority Muslim population, the contraception is viewed with the eye of religion. Each contraceptive method is assessed according to Islamic law about its acceptability and consonance.<sup>14</sup> Since contraception is largely viewed in context of religion and Islamic scholars are looked upon for guidance in this matter, their involvement in large scale, well structured awareness program will be a game changer.

Contraceptive use is affected by factors like age, income, education and number of children both directly and indirectly. Attitude is a key factor in adopting a contraceptive method. Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics play a key role in attitude towards and awareness of contraceptive use. Also, the knowledge of contraceptive use is twice in people living in urban areas as compared to people living in rural areas. In addition, in addition, young people are more aware of contraceptive use and show a good attitude towards contraception, and this knowledge and attitude is directly proportional to education level. Furthermore, couples with more children have more use of family planning services as compared to their counter-parts.<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, limited adequate knowledge of male partners about method of contraception was found. Services of family planning in Pakistan can be strengthened significantly by continuous efforts to focusing on knowledge, fears, and misconceptions of men about contraception. Moreover, as this study found, Knowledge of the male partner regarding contraception can be significantly increased by increasing education and socioeconomic status. Involvement of media and religious bodies in promoting contraception can also increase knowledge of contraception. Increasing knowledge about contraception can lead to increased contraceptive prevalence rate.

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## Authors Contributions

**M.U:** data analysis, writing, reviewing and finalization

**M.R:** Review, writing of discussion

**A.N:** Review, results verification

**H.N:** Data Collection

**M.K:** Data Collection

**R.S:** Supervisor whole research