

## **Contraception with amenorrhoea - an international study on acceptability**

A.F.Glasier (1), K.B.Smith (1), Z.M.van der Spuy (2), P.C.Ho (3), L.Cheng (4), K.Dada (5), K.Wellings (6), D.T.Baird (1)

Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Edinburgh (1),  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Cape Town (2),  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Hong Kong (3),  
Shanghai Institute of Family Planning Technical Instruction, Shanghai,  
People's Republic of China (4), Centre for Research in Reproductive Health,  
Ogun State University, Sagamu, Nigeria (5), London School of Hygiene and  
Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London (6)

**Introduction:** The inventors of the combined oral contraceptive pill designed a regimen incorporating a monthly withdrawal bleed perceiving regular 'menses' as vital to acceptability of the method. Increasingly in Western Europe women are choosing to take the pill continuously to avoid a withdrawal bleed. In contrast studies undertaken by WHO in the late 1970s suggested that contraceptives which induced amenorrhoea were unacceptable to women in many developing countries. Potential new methods of contraception which confer amenorrhoea are often criticised as being unacceptable to many women.

**Aims and Methods:** To test the hypothesis that attitudes are changing and that women perceive amenorrhoea as a benefit of contraception even in developing countries, we undertook a questionnaire study of 289 providers and 1000 women attending family planning clinics in Edinburgh, Shanghai, Cape Town, Hong Kong and Sagamu (Nigeria).

**Results:** There were significant demographic differences between the centres in terms of age, marital status and parity of the FP clients and their past current contraceptive use. With the exception of black African women the majority in each centre did not like having periods and would prefer to bleed less often than once per month. In all except the Chinese centres a majority of women would consider using a method which induced amenorrhoea and even in China one third would do so. In Shanghai and Nigeria there was a significant disparity between providers willingness to recommend a method which caused amenorrhoea and womens' willingness to try one.

**Conclusions:** Contraceptive methods which confer amenorrhoea may be highly acceptable to many women even in developing countries.