

Knowledge of oral contraceptives among Norwegian adolescents by provider

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Objective: To study whether contraceptive consultations with public health nurses or general practitioners (GPs) are associated with improved knowledge about oral contraceptives (OC) among Norwegian teenagers ages 16-18.

Methods: 1789 female high school students (response rate 76%) returned a questionnaire about communication on contraception and knowledge about OC. Eligible for analyses were 688 OC users. Knowledge about OC was assessed through 15 questions comprising three separate indices and a total index. Logistic regression analyses were used to examine contraceptive consultations and profession of provider as predictors of high scores on knowledge indices.

Results: Most females (87%) discussed contraception at least monthly with their friends. Few subjects discussed contraception with parents or health workers. Logistic regression analyses yielded that high scores on knowledge about physical changes during OC use (index I), the pill's relative efficacy compared to other methods (index II), risk of cancer and thromboembolism (index III) and about OC in general (total index score) could neither be predicted by contraceptive consultations nor profession of provider.

Conclusion: Our results indicate that information about OC conveyed by medical professionals during consultations contribute little to adolescents' knowledge about OC. More information is disseminated through frequent discussions on contraception with peers or through school education and written information (magazines, brochures and packet information).