

## **What do women want? Offering the Standard Days Method to women in Istanbul**

D. Cebeci, S. Kalaça, S. Calu, O. Kesmezacar, M. Karavus, S. Hidiroglu, Y. Gürbüz, S. Unaldi

Marmara University, School of Medicine, Turkey

This study assesses the effect of offering instruction in a simple fertility-awareness based method of family planning on women in Istanbul, Turkey. The Standard Days Method (SDM) is a new simple method of family planning, developed by the Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University. The study was designed to assess the interest and acceptance of the SDM by couples using withdrawal, other traditional methods, or no family planning method. The study was funded by the World Health Organization.

**Methods:** Using cluster sampling we selected 657 women in the Umraniye neighborhood of Istanbul, who were using withdrawal, a traditional method of family planning, or no family planning method. These women were informed about the SDM and screened to determine that they are in reproductive age and in stable union, that they wish to avoid pregnancy, and that their cycles are usually 26-32 days. Some 132 eligible women accepted the method, were taught the method and given the string of beads. They were followed for a period of four months.

**Results:** Most of the women who accepted the method (70.4%) were still using it at the end of one month, and many (44.0%) were using it four months after the method was provided, and were satisfied with it. Of those women who stopped using the method during the study period 17 (12.8%) did so to start using a modern family planning method, attributing this to their increased knowledge of fertility. Others stated that they preferred to continue using withdrawal, or that their fertility preferences have changed. Only six women got pregnant during the study period.

**Conclusion:** The SDM is an appropriate, acceptable family planning alternative for couples in Umraniye.