

Emergency contraception among adolescent girls

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Objectives: To determine the characteristics and background factors of adolescent requesting hormonal emergency contraception (EC).

Methods: 113 consecutive girls aged 15-19 years who visited adolescent gynecological outpatient clinic and youth center in 2001 requesting EC, were asked to fill in a questionnaire focused on demographic data, sexual and contraceptive behaviour, sources of information about EC, previous use of EC and the reason for the current need for EC. Emergency contraception was given with the Yuzpe regimen.

Results: The majority were high school students (77.9%) with mean age of 17.8 years, 23.0% have had sexual debut at 15 and 38.9% have 2 lifetime sexual partners. Adolescents requested EC in case of condom breakage or slipping (66.4%), after unprotected/unplanned intercourse (24.8%), or forgotten contraceptive use (4.4%). EC was requested 24 hours after intercourse (41.6%), 25-48 hours after intercourse (38.0%), and >48 hours after intercourse (15.9%). The most important source of information about EC was by friends (51.3%), journals (25.7%), and youth clinic (22.1%). EC had previously used by 17.7% of girls. More than one fifth of adolescents (21.2%) have concerns that EC could harm a health of women. Even more, 38.9% of girls believe that it could harm the health of baby if pregnancy occur.

Conclusions: It is very important to educate adolescents about hormonal EC as a method of prevention of unwanted pregnancies and allow the widespread use and availability of hormonal EC.