
Abstract:

Objective: This study was conducted to assess prevalence and correlates of prior contraceptive use among hospitalized obstetric patients in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Study Design: Medically eligible (e.g., conditions not requiring urgent medical attention, such as eclampsia, or not imminently delivering [dilation ≥ 8 cm]) obstetric patients admitted to three Kabul public hospitals were consecutively enrolled in this cross-sectional study. An interviewer-administered questionnaire assessed demographic information, health utilization history, including prior contraceptive use, and intent to use contraception. Correlates of prior contraceptive use were determined with logistic regression.

Results: Of 4452 participants, the mean age was 25.7 years (SD, ±5.7 years), 66.4% reported pregnancy before the presenting gestation, 88.4% had ≥1 prenatal care visit and 82.4% reported the current pregnancy was desired. Most (67.4%) had no formal education. One fifth (22.8%) reported using contraception before this pregnancy. Among women with any pregnancy before the current gestation (98.6% of prior users), prior contraceptive use was independently associated with having lived outside Afghanistan in the last 5 years (adjusted odds ratio [AOR], 1.35; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1.12–1.63), having a skilled attendant at the last birth (AOR, 1.35; 95% CI, 1.07–1.71), having a greater number of living children (AOR, 1.30; 95% CI, 1.20–1.41), longer mean birth interval (years) (AOR, 1.21; 95% CI, 1.11–1.38) and higher educational level (AOR, 1.16; 95% CI, 1.09–1.22). Immediate desire for another pregnancy and spousal disapproval were the most common reasons for not utilizing contraception.

Conclusion: Prior contraceptive use is low among the women in Kabul, Afghanistan, particularly for younger less educated women. Programming in Kabul to strengthen postpartum contraceptive counseling should address barriers to contraceptive use, including immediate desire for pregnancy and spousal attitudes.

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