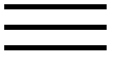


Women's satisfaction with birth control: a population survey of physical and psychological effects of oral contraceptives, intrauterine devices, condoms, natural family.

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Women's satisfaction with birth control: a population survey of physical and psychological effects of oral contraceptives, intrauterine devices, condoms, natural family planning, and sterilization among 1466 women

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Abstract

User satisfaction and the physical and psychological effects of five commonly used contraceptive methods were investigated in a population survey among 1466 West German women. The focus was on effects attributed by current and past users to these methods, rather than objectively assessed effects, to shed further light on personal experiences that are highly relevant to the user but often remain unknown to prescribers and unreported in the medical literature. Within the overall sample, 1303 women were

surveyed concerning their current or past use of oral contraceptives (OC), 996 regarding condoms, 342 with respect to intrauterine devices (IUD), 428 in regard to natural family planning (NFP), and 139 in relation to sterilization (respondents completed questions about each method used). It emerged that satisfaction was greatest with sterilization (92% of users), followed by OC (68% of ever users), IUD (59%), NFP (43%), and condoms (30%). Almost one in three NFP users had experienced an unwanted pregnancy during use of this method, as compared with one in 20 OC and condom users. The majority of users reported no mood changes during use of the methods studied. The percentages reporting negative mood changes (various items were scored) were up to 16% among OC users, 23% among condom users, and 30% among NFP users. The latter observations suggested that subjective side effects of a contraceptive agent on mood generally reflected, at least in part, the user's sense of confidence in the method concerned (notably, with regard to efficacy and safety). Oral contraceptives, IUD, and sterilization had a broadly positive impact on sex life, whereas that of condoms was often negative. Whereas OC users often reported less heavy and painful menstruation (in up to 56% of cases), IUD were associated with heavier, prolonged, and more painful menstruation (in up to 65% of cases), as also was sterilization, although to a lesser extent (in up to 32% of cases). Overall, the study findings indicated that OC and sterilization had less negative impact on physical and psychological functioning than the other methods studied, in contrast to what the general public often believes.



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Keywords

contraception; satisfaction; side effects; mood; sexuality; menstrual cycle

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