

Sexual and reproductive health: what we really know

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: In the last decades sexual and reproductive health has been considered a human right. It is vital to provide adequate information about the different contraceptive methods in order to allow women to participate actively in their choice^[1-4]. **OBJECTIVES:** Analyze women's knowledge towards various aspects of sexual health and contraception and correlate it with sociodemographic variables. **METHODS:** Observational, descriptive, cross-sectional and analytical study, obtained through the application of a questionnaire. Population: women between the ages of 18 and 40, followed in Family Planning consultation in a Family Health Unit (N=972). Sample size was calculated through the Epi InfoTM7.2 program: 275 women. Sample of convenience: women consulted between 10/10/2018 and 01/31/2019. Variables: sociodemographic, knowledge about the fertile period, contraceptive methods, preventive care and sexual transmitted diseases (STDs). Statistical treatment was carried out on SPSS22.0® using statistical tests suitable to the variables in study (Pearson and ANOVA coefficient). **RESULTS:** 276 surveys, average age of 30,5 years, 69,1% with higher education, 45,4% grew up in rural areas, 50,5% single and in 50,5% cases the doctor/nurse are the main information source. A correlation between age and degree of knowledge was not verified ($r^2 = 0,035$), nor differences in correct answers among women regardless of where they grew up ($p = 0,314$), schooling degrees ($p = 0,974$), marital status ($p = 0,176$) or source of information ($p = 0,836$). Between 1/2 and 2/3 recognize the woman's fertile period. Most are clear about the contraceptive mechanism of the pill, but are unaware of their drug interactions, non-contraceptive benefits and how to proceed after forgetting a take. Half shows knowledge about the female condom, up to 1/3 is clarified about the intra uterine device, vaginal ring and subcutaneous hormonal implant. About half is informed about emergency contraception. As to STDs the majority is well aware of the symptoms, treatment and prevention forms but believes in fallacies about potential transmission ways. About prevention, more than 2/3 acknowledges the vaccine against the Human Papilloma Virus to be important in the cervix cancer prevention, but state

that cytology allows to diagnose STDs. **CONCLUSION:** Even in high graduated patients sexual and reproductive health literacy is moderately low. Many myths and questions are still alive, despite the effort of the medical staff to enlighten the patients. This study shows the need for health professionals to define new strategies in order to transmit information more effectively allowing patients to live their sexuality in a healthy, responsible and informed way.

Keywords: Reproductive and sexual health, health literacy

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