Does the expectation or perception of noncontraceptive benefits lead to higher rates of contraceptive continuation for adolescents and young adult women?

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**BACKGROUND**

- Short-acting reversible contraception (SARC) continuation rates among young women are abysmal
- Many SARC methods have noncontraceptive benefits
- Although it is known that many adolescents and young adults discontinue SARC when they perceive adverse effects, less is known about continuation when they perceive noncontraceptive benefits
- Patients have higher satisfaction rates with medical care when they expect benefits

**DESIGN & METHODS**

Objective: To determine if SARC continuation rates are higher 6 months after initiation when women expect noncontraceptive benefits or perceive benefits

Prospective cohort study:
- Enrolled young women ages 13-24 initiating SARC in adolescent-only family planning clinic
- Immediate post-visit surveys included directed and open-ended questions about anticipated noncontraceptive benefits.
- Participants contacted six months later by phone and answered identical survey
- We examined:
  1. Continuation between those who expected benefits and those who did not
  2. Continuation between those who reported experiencing benefits and those who did not
  3. Concordance between expectations & reported experiences.

**RESULTS**

243 participants; 67% followed-up:
- Majority selected OCPs (Fig. 1) and continued their method at six months (Fig 2)

**Figure 1**

**Figure 2**

**Figure 3: Expectation of benefits at initiation and continuation rates**

**Figure 4: Perception of benefits at 6 months and continuation rates**

**RESULTS**

- None of the benefits we surveyed at baseline were associated with 6-month continuation (Fig. 3)
- The following perceptions at six months were associated with continuation (Fig. 4):
  - Any benefit listed by participant (OR 2.9, 95% CI 1.2, 6.6)
  - Less mood changes (OR 0.5, 95% CI 0.2, 1.0)
  - Less bloating (OR 2.2, 95% CI 1.0, 5.0)
  - Less acne (OR 2.2, 95% CI 1.0, 4.8)
- There was poor concordance between expectation and perception (Kappa=0.2)

**DISCUSSION**

- The perception of noncontraceptive benefits is associated with contraceptive continuation for adolescents and young adult women at six months, but the expectation of such benefits is not
- Women who expected noncontraceptive benefits when initiating were not more likely to report experiencing them
- Many women who did not expect benefits reported experiencing them and were more likely to continue

**CONCLUSION**

- Setting up expectations for noncontraceptive benefits, (e.g. through counseling) may not improve continuation
- New contraceptive development should include consideration of tangible and reliable noncontraceptive benefits