

KNOWLEDGE, BEHAVIOR, ATTITUDES OF THE STUDENTS OF TIRANA AND VLORA ON THE USE OF ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES.

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Introduction: In our country the age of commencement of sexual intercourse has decreased significantly, therefore the main task of public health is to ensure youth protection in these relationships. Youth should be aware that protected sexual intercourse avoid unwanted pregnancies and depending on the type of contraceptive they use prevent STDs too, wich are increasing.

Purpose: The realization of this study was aimed at identifying information level of the students about the importance of the use of contraceptives as the safest way to prevent STDs and unwanted pregnancies.

Material and methods: There was conducted a cross-sectional study in two cities (Tirana and Vlora), from October to February 2013.

In this study participated 800 students from a casual selection, of whom 300 were females and 415 were males. The qualitative questionnaire contained structured questions divided in two sections: **1.** Socio-demographic data, **2.** Questions about the knowledge of existing types of contraception, and which of them serves only to protect from pregnancy and which protect from STDs too. The analysis was conducted through the statistical program SPSS version 20.0 to determine logistic regression, Chi-square (for categorical data) and anova or student test for continuous data.

Results: Students had an average age of 21 ± 1.2 years old. Females are more informed than males in relation to the types of contraceptives that can be used and that only condom protect from unwanted pregnancies and from STD at the same time. **P= 0.026.** But in practice, the use of condom in stable couples that had over an year together, was rare (5% of stable couples, when these occupied 37 % of the respondents).15 % of females that has had intercourse had used once the emergency contraception.

Conclusion: The interviewed population was aware of the importance of contraception but their attitudes are irregular and limited.

Keywords: student, contraceptive, STDs, unwanted pregnancy.

Introduction

1. What is contraception used for?

Contraception is used to prevent unwanted pregnancies and to protect from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). This means time planning when to have children ^[1] and the use of birth control ^[2] ^[3] and other techniques in order to realize this plan. Raising a child requires a lot of available time ^[7] and significant amounts of other resources: social, financial ^[8] and environmental. Planning can help ensure that these resources will be available.

Millions of people ^[10] are using contraceptive methods to avoid pregnancy; however they fail for several reasons. They might not have clear instructions on how to use the method properly, can not get a more adequate method for them or were not properly prepared for side effects. This people need a better assistance.

In the next 5 years ^[10] about 60 million boys and girls will reach sexual maturity. Generation after generation there will always be people who need to use contraceptives.

Methods of the use of contraceptives ^[12]

There are many different methods available to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

The decision ^[13] to use any method of contraception should be taken after the review of the current status of everyone. Some methods are more effective than others, some are easier and some others are difficult to use. Methods which are difficult to use may lose their effectiveness.

Comparing family planning methods



Taken from: A guide to family planning for community health workers and their clients, (WHO, Fourth Edition, 2012)

Combined oral contraceptives (COCs) ^[14]

Description: COCs are estrogen and progesterone synthetic preparations which are highly effective in preventing pregnancy.

Effectiveness: 0.1 pregnancies per 100 women each year, when taken consistently.

Progestin-only pill (POP) ^[14]

Description: POP is a hormonal oral contraceptive which contains only progesterone, in a smaller dose than COC.

Effectiveness: 0.5-0.10 pregnancies per 100 women in the first year, when taken every day at the same time.

Depo-Provera (DMPA) ^[14]

Description: DPMA is a three-monthly injection, which contains a synthetic progestin similar to female progesterone. Each dose contains 150 mg, which slowly distributed in the blood and provides a safe and effective form of contraception.

Effectiveness: usually less than 1 per 100 women per year.

Male condom ^[14]

Definition: Condom is a sheath or cover that must be consistent with the erect male sexual organ. Most of condoms are coated with a dry lubricant or spermicidal.

Effectiveness: Must be used correctly every time in order to achieve high efficiency. It is effective in preventing pregnancies and STDs.

Female condom ^[14]

Description: plastic cover which is placed in the vagina before sexual intercourse. It is a barrier that keeps sperm out of the vagina.

Effectiveness: Must be used correctly every time in order to achieve high efficiency. It is effective in preventing pregnancies and STDs.

Norplant ^[14]

Description: small capsules containing progesterone implanted subdermally in the upper arm and where slowly release its content over five years.

Effectiveness: the pregnancy rate is less than 1 per 100 women per year.

Intrauterine device (IUD) ^[14]

Description: a device in a T-shape, consisting of plastic material coated with copper, which is inserted into the uterus through the cervix.

Effectiveness: 1 pregnancy per 100 women per 1 year.

Lactational amenorrhoea method (LAM) ^[14]

Description: This method uses the temporary infertility that occurs during breastfeeding.

Effectiveness: It is very effective when used properly.

Standard days method ^[14]

Description: Includes keeping note of the days of the menstrual cycle, to identify the start and the end of the fertile days. It is also known as periodic abstinence method.

Effectiveness: varies from couple to couple. The risk for pregnancy is grater when couples have sexual intercourse during fertile days without using any other method. If it is used consistently and correctly, will occur five pregnancies in 100 women using this method, during the first year of use.

Knowledge of contraception methods of the population in Albania. ^[15]

A major objective of the 2008-09 ADHS was to measure the level of knowledge of the population about contraceptive methods.

Table.1 (ADHS 2008-09) indicates knowledge about methods of contraception among all respondents aged 15-49, currently married and sexually active. Knowledge about contraception methods in Albania are almost close the universal statistics, with 99 percent of females and 100 percent of males that know at least one method.

Table 3.1. Knowledge of contraceptive methods

Percentage of all respondents, currently married respondents, and sexually active unmarried respondents age 15-49 who know any contraceptive method by specific method, Albania 2008-09

Method	Women			Men		
	All women	Currently married women	Sexually Active unmarried women ¹	All men	Currently Married Men	Sexually Active Unmarried men ¹
Any method	98.6	99.5	99.7	99.8	100.0	100.0
Any modern method	64.2	94.4	68.9	96.5	95.3	99.9
Female sterilization	57.8	64.4	69.2	57.1	43.3	45.4
Male sterilization	15.5	15.5	41.1	32.4	75.7	29.9
Pill	24.7	26.3	93.0	59.4	61.9	73.9
IUD	34.7	41.1	43.9	9.1	11.0	11.0
Injections	57.3	63.6	67.6	23.0	22.3	27.0
Implants	6.5	6.6	16.0	3.3	6.0	8.1
Male condom	88.3	86.6	97.5	93.7	93.9	99.9
Female condom	15.2	14.4	27.7	8.5	3.9	15.1
Lactational amenorrhoea method (LAM)	78.4	37.0	73.7	12.0	18.8	4.7
Emergency contraception	78.7	26.4	58.6	32.7	31.7	52.2
Any traditional method	34.1	95.6	33.8	91.6	96.9	97.7
Ebverhan	18.6	20.7	31.2	25.8	32.9	30.1
Withdrawal	83.5	95.4	93.8	91.4	96.9	97.7
Folk method	0.3	0.3	0.9	0.4	0.7	0.3
Mean number of methods known by respondents 15-49	5.2	5.6	6.6	4.7	4.6	5.9
Number of respondents	7,584	5,007	154	5,014	1,703	409

¹ Had sexual intercourse within 30 days preceding the survey

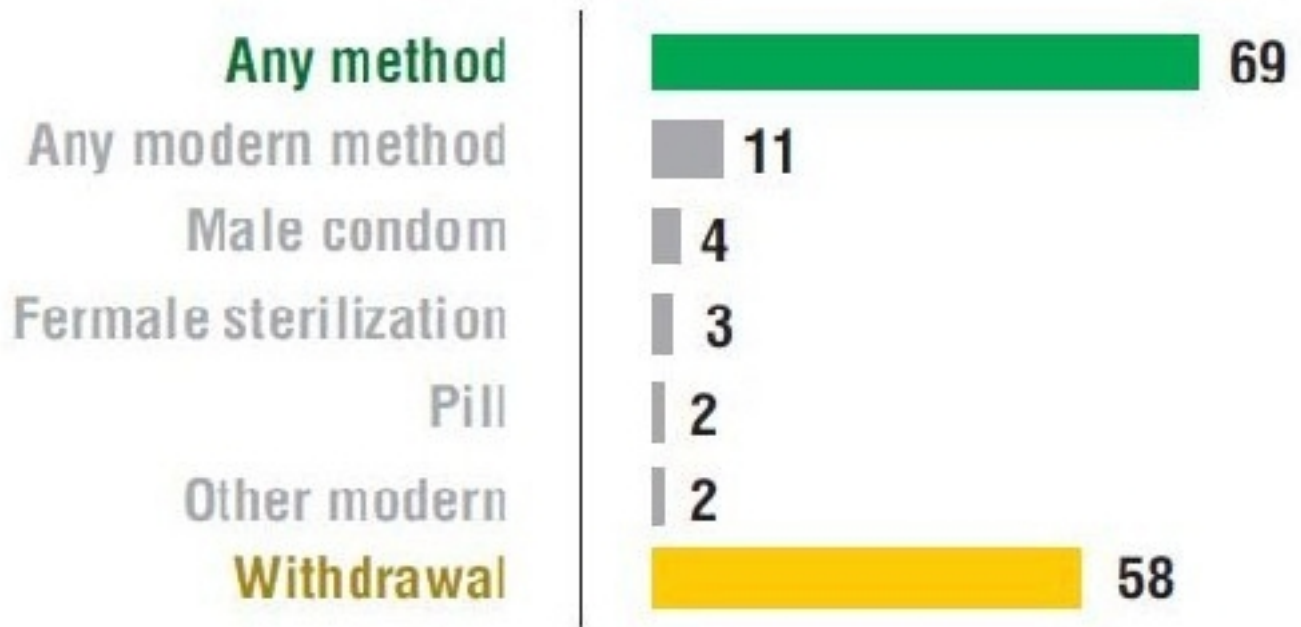
Taken from: (ADHS 2008-2009)

The use of contraceptive methods in Albania ^[15]

Currently the majority of married women in Albania is based on a traditional method (59 percent), it is more than five times the percentage of those who use the modern method (11 percent).(Graphic. 1 ADHS 2008-08)

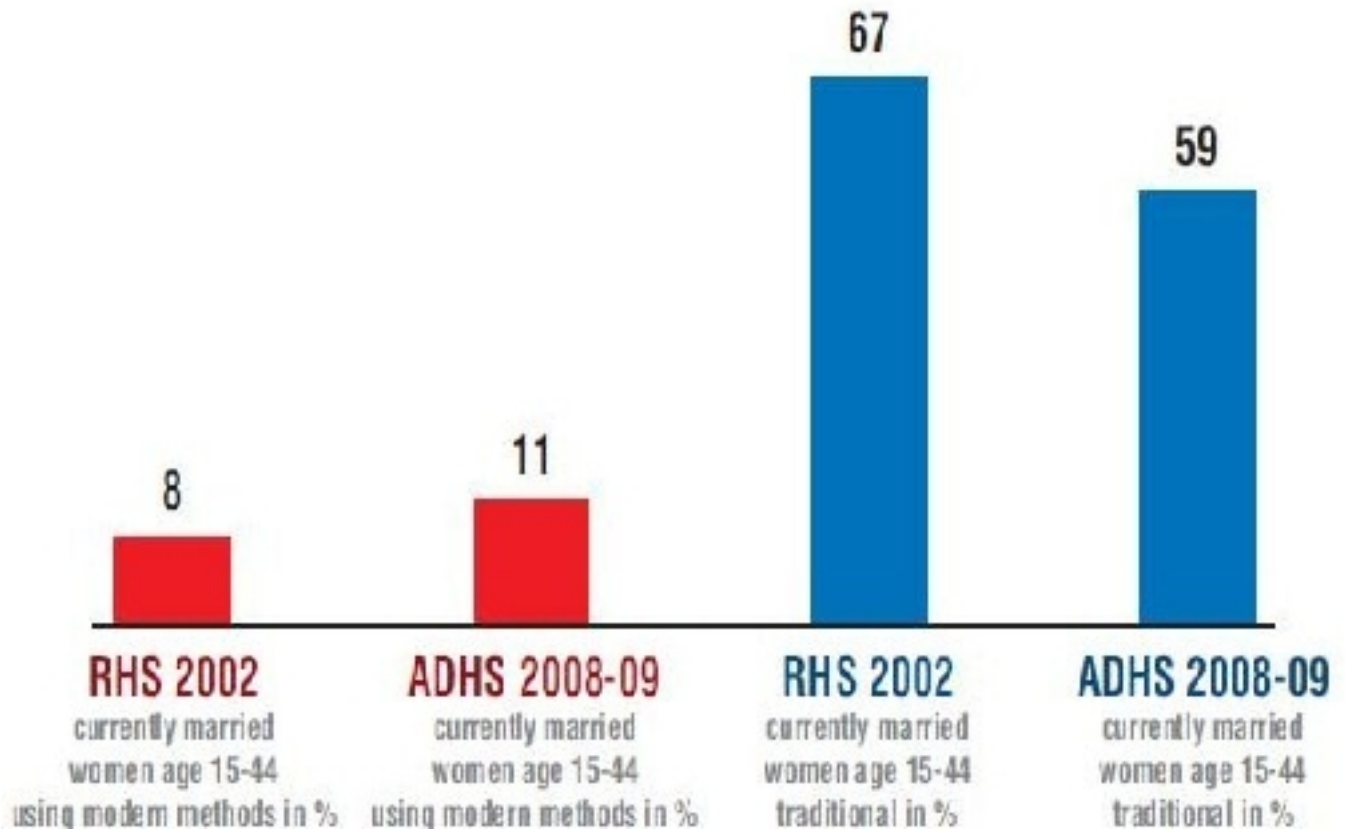
Current Use of Family Planning

*Percent of married women age 15-49
using family planning*



Graphic.2 Comparison of the use of contraceptive methods RHS 2002 dhe ADHS 2008-2009.

Comparison of use of contraception RHS 2002 and AHDS 2008-2009



Taken from: (ADHS 2008-2009)

Comparison with other countries in the region ^[15]

Compared with other countries in the region, the use of contraceptive methods among married women in the age group 15-49 is higher in Albania (69 percent) than in Moldova: 67 percent (NCPM and ORC Macro, 2006), Ukraine: 67 percent (UCSR, SSC, and Macro International, 2008), Armenia: 53 percent (NSS, MSH, and ORC Macro, 2006), and Azerbaijan: 51 percent (SSC, MSH, and Macro International, 2008).

Other data from Serbia: 41 percent (sors and SMMRI, 2007), Montenegro: 39 percent (MONSTAT and SMMRI, 2006), and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: 14 percent (SSO, 2007) show that the use of any method by married women is currently higher in Albania.

As regards modern contraceptive methods, the comparison shows a different view. As mentioned above, modern methods actually are used by 11 percent of married woman in Albania.

Thus, the use of modern methods by married women is lower in Albania than in Moldova: 46 percent (NCPM and ORC Marco, 2006), Ukraine: 48 percent (UCSR, SSC, and Macro International, 2008), Armenia: 20 percent (NSS, MSH, and ORC Marco, 2006), and Azerbaijan: 14 percent (SSC, MSH, and Macro International, 2008). Similarly, the results of MICS surveys in Serbia: 19 percent (sors and SMMRI, 2007) and Montenegro: 17 percent (MONSTAT and SMMRI, 2006) show elevated levels of use of modern methods of contraception. Only the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: 10 percent (SSO, 2007) has a lower level of use of modern methods than in Albania.

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Material and methods: There was conducted a cross-sectional study in two cities (Tirana and Vlora), from October to February 2013.

For this study were selected 800 students by a random selection from which, at the time of administration of the questionnaire, were present 300 females and 415 males. The questionnaire contained structured questions divided in two sections: 1. Socio-demographic data, 2. Questions regarding the recognition of existing types of contraception and which of them serves only to protect from pregnancy and which protect from STDs too, where they got the information about contraceptives, if they had consulted a doctor before starting a contraceptive method etc... The analysis was conducted through the statistical program SPSS version 20.0 to determine logistic regression, Chi-square (for categorical data) and ANOVA or test for continuous data.

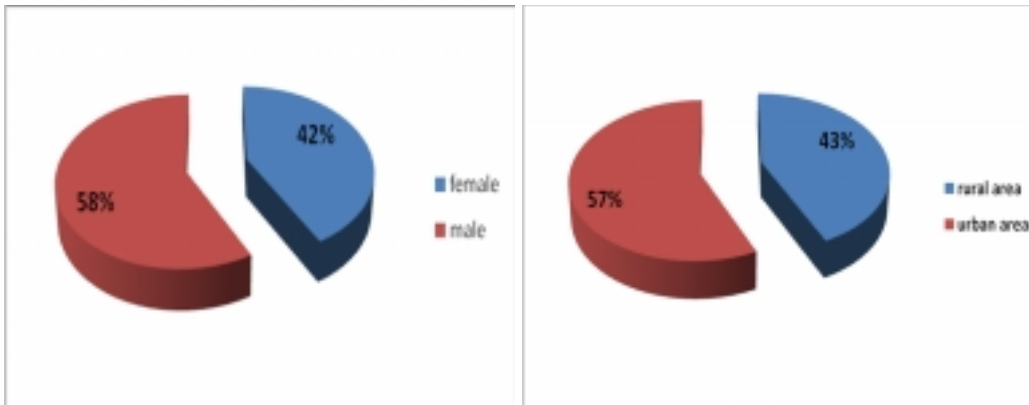
Discussion and Conclusions

In this study were involved 715 students who attended the University of Tirana and Vlora.

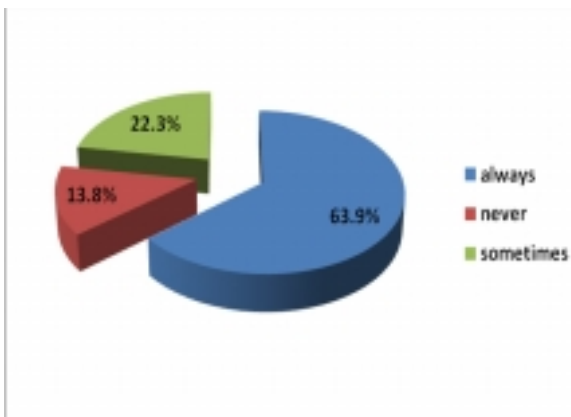
Students had an average age of 20 ± 1.2 years old.

In this study there were 42% females and 58% males. Females are more informed than males about the types of contraception that can be used and that condom is the only one to protect against unwanted pregnancies and STDs at the same time. $P = 0.026$, CI 95% (1.2- 2.3) OR= 0.9

57% of the respondents were from urban areas and 43% from rural areas. There was no difference in the use of contraceptives among students coming from rural and urban areas. $p > 0.05$

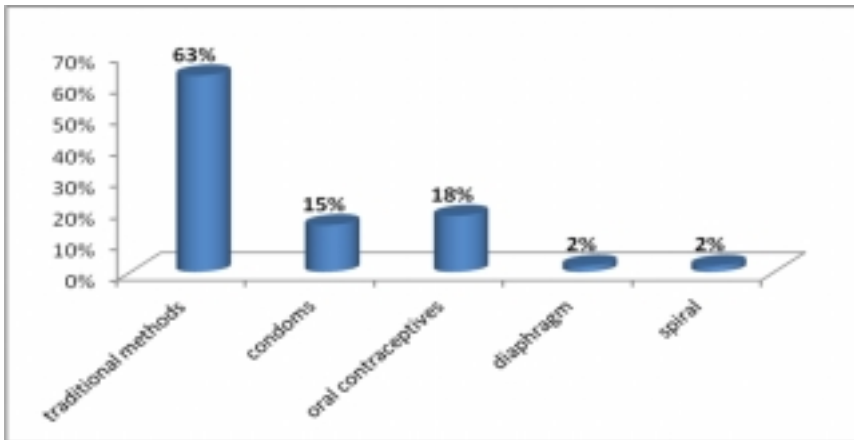


In the graphic number 3 we see that 63.9% of the students who have partners responded that they always used at least one contraceptive method, versus 13.9% that answered to this question with a no. While 22.3% responded that sometimes they use contraceptive methods.

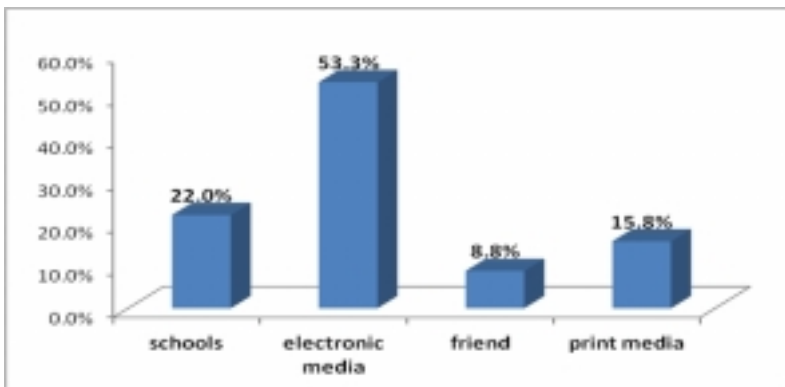


Graphic.3 Distribution based on the use of contraceptive methods

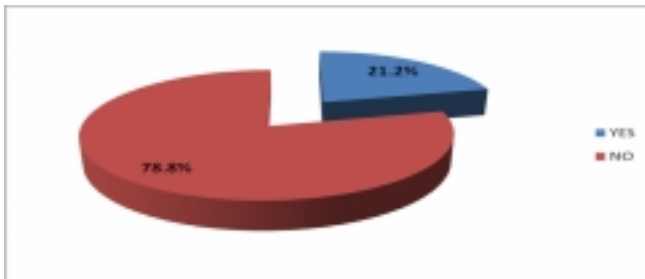
But in practice, the use of condom in stable couples that had over a year together was rare (5% of stable couples). 15 % of females that has had intercourse had used once the emergency contraception.



Graphic.4 It indicates the percentage of use for each method for those students who reported using protective methods.



Graphic.5 Shows the distribution according to the source of information where students have heard for the first time about contraception. Electronic media turned out significant perhaps because they have used them more. It is known that young people have a great attraction to television and internet.



Graphic.6

It shows the distribution according to consultation with a doctor about the use of contraceptives. So students have not yet awareness of going to the doctor before they start contraception. The economic situation of students resulted not significant. So the culture of the use of contraceptives is not affected by the economic situation.

Conclusions:

- The use of contraceptives by students is not affected by the economic situation.
- Electronic media are the main source of information for students about the use and types of contraceptives.
- Consultation with a doctor before starting a relationship or a contraceptive method is rare.

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- Knowledge of males that condom is the only method of contraception that protects from STDs and unwanted pregnancies were few in comparison with women.
- Students had enough knowledge about contraceptive methods but in practice they did not realize sufficiently.

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