

Long-term Effects of Oral Contraceptives

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PICO Question

How does long-term use of oral contraceptives in females affect their future general health versus females who have never been prescribed oral contraceptives?

Key Methodology

- This quantitative, case-controlled study was done to assess the duration of oral contraceptive use in Jordanian women and the risk of breast cancer. ³
- This quantitative, correlational study was used to find out whether women who used oral contraceptives in adolescence (<19 years of age) showed an increased prevalence of depression in the long run versus women who used oral contraceptives in adulthood (19<) or women who never used oral contraceptives. ²
- This quantitative, descriptive study was performed to determine the correlation between thrombotic events and their identifiable risk factors including the use of combined oral contraceptives in Saudi Arabian women. ¹
- This quantitative, retrospective-cohort study compared body weight among hormonal and non-hormonal contraceptive users in a Malaysian cohort with a high prevalence of obesity. ⁴

Key Findings

- There is a correlation between the development of vascular thrombosis and oral contraceptives with 78% of participants developing vascular thrombosis ($p < 0.05$). ¹
- Women who first used oral contraceptives in adolescence had an increased prevalence for developing depression long-term. Adolescent women are also in a sensitive period of life where the risk for the development of depression is increased. ²
- With the regular use of oral contraceptives, there is an increase in the risk for developing breast cancer ($p = 0.002$); however, the duration of oral contraceptive use was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). ³
- Oral contraceptive use increases the risk of weight gain in women ($p < 0.001$). ⁴

Recommended Key Practices

- Review risks vs. benefits of oral contraceptive side effects with the patient's comorbidities and health history. Focus on patient-specific individualized care and what form of contraceptive is best for them. ⁴
- Educate on the side effects that could be expected with oral contraceptives. ³
- Educate and emphasize the need to report undesirable side effects to the provider rather than not reporting and experiencing life-altering events such as thrombus formation. ¹
- Consider increasing caution with prescribing oral contraceptives to adolescents as studies have shown they are more prone to developing depression with use. ²



References

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Figure List

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