Postpartum Contraceptive Use Among Adolescent Mothers in Thailand

Introduction:

In Thailand, an average of 355 women under the age of 20 give birth every day (Public Health Statistics, 2012). 11.7% of mothers aged 15-19, or 6.4 per 1,000, gave birth more than once or were pregnant for a second time before age 20. Repeat adolescent pregnancy implies a failure in reproductive health services, especially in terms of advising adolescent mothers to start using birth control immediately after giving birth.

Purpose:

To understand contraceptive use among Thai adolescent mothers.

Methods:

26 adolescent mothers. Data were collected at 4 hospitals in Northern Thailand (June - November 2015). All participants and their parents provided written informed consent. This study was approved by the Chiang Mai University Faculty of Nursing Research Ethics Committee.

Procedures:

The research instruments included a semi-structured interview guide, which explored a broad range of contraceptive use before pregnancy and after birth.

In-depth interviews were used to understand the factors influencing adolescent mothers’ postpartum contraceptive use.

Data analysis

Data were categorized using content analysis. Emergent themes were identified. Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the participants.

Results:

The median age of participants was 17 (range 15-19). All (100%) participants were primigravid. Twenty-four participants (92.31%) used contraception at the time of conception, whereas, two participants (7.69%) did not use any contraception. Twenty participants (76.92%) reported that the pregnancy was unplanned.

The 5 contraceptive methods used included: condoms, birth control pills, contraceptive injections, external ejaculation, and emergency contraceptive pills.

Factors contributed to adolescent pregnancy:
Lack of knowledge and misinformation about sex, and contraceptive methods.
Forgetting to use contraception. Condoms reduce pleasure for the male.
Believed that external ejaculation prevented pregnancy.
Lacked adult supervision.

The primary reasons for selecting or changing a method of contraception postpartum: convenience, perceived effectiveness, familiarity, and side effects.

Conclusion:

Patterns of contraceptive use among adolescent mothers place them at high risk of rapid repeat pregnancy. Understanding adolescent mothers’ contraceptive use and the influencing factors is important for developing effective programs for interventions.