

## The most Preferred Method of Contraception by Libyan women

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### ABSTRACT

Several methods are used as tools for family planning and to avoid unintended pregnancies. It is important for healthcare providers to consider various factors when discussing contraceptive options with patients. This study explored the most commonly preferred methods of contraception by Libyan women. A short questionnaire was sent through a link to Google forms website to 48 Libyan doctors. According to these participants, the majority of Libyan women preferred Combined Oral Contraception (COC) as a method of sterilization prevention. Age of the women and number of children as well as women's education were the most significant factors that influence selection of the contraception method. Results of the current study emphasized the need for more family education programs that provide more details about new methods of contraception as Libyan women seem to use more traditional methods of contraception.

**KEYWORDS:** *Methods of contraception, Libya, Combined Oral Contraception.*

## INTRODUCTION

Effective family planning is crucial in promoting reproductive health, reducing unintended pregnancies, and improving maternal and child health outcomes. Patient preference plays a key role in the choice of contraceptive methods, as individual needs, values, and lifestyles vary widely.

There are several key factors that influence a patient's preference for a specific contraceptive method. Such factors include, but are not limited to: age of the patient, health status of the patient, their level of education, number of children, desire to have more children in future and husband' preference. Other factors such as effectiveness and side effect profile of the contraception method are also important when patients or their doctors select the most appropriate method of fertilization prevention.[1, 2]

It is important for healthcare providers to consider these various factors when discussing contraceptive options with patients, in order to help them make informed decisions that align with their individual preferences and needs. Research studies have indicated that these factors can significantly impact the acceptance and continuation of contraceptive use. Understanding these influences can guide healthcare professionals in providing personalized care and support to patients seeking contraceptive options.[1]

Patient involvement in decision-making regarding contraception is essential to address individual preferences and needs.[3] Healthcare providers should consider factors such as efficacy, safety, side effects, ease of use, and personal preferences when discussing contraceptive options with patients.[4] Understanding patients' perceptions and attitudes towards different methods, as well as their medical history and lifestyle factors, can help tailor recommendations to meet their specific needs. Additionally, healthcare providers should address any misconceptions or concerns patients may have about contraceptives to ensure informed decision-making. By offering comprehensive information and guidance, providers can empower patients to make informed choices that align with their reproductive goals and overall well-being.[4] This study was conducted to explore types of contraception methods that are commonly used by Libyan women.

## METHODS

This is a cross-sectional study. Involved 48 physicians. They were asked to report their views on two aspects. Firstly, what are the most commonly used methods of contraception by Libyan women. Secondly, what are the reason(s) behind method selection. The questionnaire was posted on Google Forms website and a link was shared for participation. The participants were recruited during regular visits to gynecological clinics in the middle regions of Libya, which involved 54 physicians. The 48 who agreed to participant in this short study were send the participation link through their mobile phone. They were told that the survey will take less than 5 minutes and no personal data will be collected. The study questionnaire contained three questions. The first and the second questions were about the preferred method of contraception and the reasons for the

selected method, respectively. The third question offered them an opportunity to add their comments.

There were no incentives provided and the participation was completely voluntarily.

Ethical approval was obtained from Elmergib University Ethical Committee (No 24;37).

The study tool did not collect any personal or demographic data of the participants. This strategy was used to minimise the time required for answering the study question, in order to obtain a high response rate.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 48 physicians who followed the link and visited the website, one of them did not answer any question so he/she was excluded. Response rate was 87.03% (47 out of 54). This high response rate was probably a result of the study strategy of having a very short questionnaire and no personal or demographic data were collected.

Regarding the first part of this survey, the most preferred method of the contraception among Libyan women was Combined Oral Contraception (COC) reported by 31 (65.95%). This is probably because COC are the most popular within the Libyan population, cost-effective, convenient and easy to use. In addition, patients can obtain them without a new prescription. High patient preferred of COC was also reported by Kaplan et al. who found 80% of their particiapntes preferred this method of sterilization.[5] In the present study. the "Other methods" option (i.e. male condom and withdraw) was the lowest selected option for this question. Probably these methods were not preferred by husbands. These results are in contrast with a study by Kahraman and colleagues. who reported that the most preferred method was Intrauterine device, and COC was the lowest preferred option.[6] Moreover, they reported that male condom was preferred by 19.2%. This is inconstancy between our result and theirs may be explained by culture differences, and probably male condom in their study may be was used for other purposes rather than contraception such as preventing of sexually transmitted disease. See Table (2) for more details.

Table (1) The most preferred method of contraception by Libyan women

Method of contraception	No	%
Combined Oral Contraceptive	31	65.96
Nonoral Hormonal Contraceptives	6	12.77
Progestin only oral contraceptive	5	10.64
Long-Acting Reversible Contraception	3	6.38
Other methods	2	4.26
Total	47	

The second part of this study explored reasons behind the selection of contraceptive method. The responses were scattered between patient' education (25.53%), age of the patient 23.40% and number of children (19.15%). Other important factor was husband' preference. See Table (2) for more details.

The final part of the questionnaire collected participants' comments. They used this part to justify the reasons behind selection of the contraception method. The comments were as follows:

Respondent (no 3) "older women with three or more children tend to use the combined pills more than younger or those with one or two children"

Respondent (no 10) "older and more educated patients usually ask for the pills"

Respondent (no 6) "younger women usually prefer the method with less side effects, some of them think hormonal method may cause infertility!"

Respondent (no 47) "patients with past medical history.eg. dvt (Deep vein thromboses) usually avoid hormonal methods"

The above results are in consist with other results reported by similar previous studies. For example, Ukegbu and colleagues reported that the as the family size increases women would be more likely choose COC.[7] Another study found that the more educated women used COC more frequently than other methods.[6]

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Table (2) Factors influence patients' preference of contraception method

Factor	No	%
Patient' education	12	25.53
Age of the patient	11	23.40
Number of children	9	19.15
Husband' preference	8	17.02
Patient health status	5	10.64
Desire to have children in future	1	2.13
No reason provided	1	2.13

The association between age of the women as well as number of children with the use of COC may be justified as these women may have a stronger desire to avoid pregnancy so they preferred the most effective method regardless to side effects. While younger women may prefer a method with minimum side effects regardless of efficacy, as they may not worry too much to have another child.

## CONCLUSION

According to sample of Libyan doctors, the COC was the most preferred method of contraception by Libyan women. Older women, particularly those who have three or more children tend to use this method more than younger women who preferred nonhormonal methods. Long-Acting Reversible Contraception seems unpopular within Libyan women. This may necessitate more family planning programs to introduce pros and cons of newer methods of contraception.

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