EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION: KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES AMONG MARRIED MALAY WOMEN STAFF AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract. There is a high rate of unintended pregnancies in Malaysia due to low contraceptive use. Only 30% of married women use modern contraceptive methods. Emergency contraception (EC) is used within a few days of unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. The purpose of this study was to investigate the knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding EC pill use among Malay women. A cross sectional study was conducted among married female staff using stratified random sampling from 15 faculties in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Data about sociodemographic factors, reproductive health, knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding EC use were gathered using validated self-administered questionnaire. The response rate was 87%. Half the 294 subjects who participated had a low knowledge, 33.0% a moderate knowledge and 17.0% a good knowledge about the EC pill. Eighty-eight percent of respondents had a positive attitude and 12.0% a negative attitude toward EC. Eleven percent of respondents had previously used EC. Unplanned and unwanted pregnancies were reported by 35.0% and 14.0% of respondents, respectively. Most respondents lacked knowledge about the indications for using EC, its mechanism of action, when it can be used and its side effects. Our findings show a need to educate women about EC.

Keywords: emergency contraception, knowledge, attitude, practice, Malaysia

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