Reviewer’s report

Title: A survey of knowledge, attitude and practice of emergency contraceptive pills among university students in Cameroon

Version: 2 Date: 9 May 2007

Reviewer: Margareta Larsson

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General
The problem on unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions kill many women in the world every year. It is therefore important to investigate and promote emergency contraception, the only method that can be used after an unprotected intercourse providing "a second chance". In order to use the method in case of need both women and men need to know about it and also be able to access it. This paper investigates knowledge, attitudes and use in a student population in Cameroon. The paper is well written but would benefit from some improvements.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Background:
1. Be consistent with the use of terminology and abbreviations. EC is most often used for emergency contraception which includes all methods and ECP for emergency contraceptive pills.
2. Morning-after-pills are ECPs and postcoital contraception can be both ECP and IUD insertion which is not clear. Those terms are still used so I would suggest deletion of “in the past”.
3. Emergency contraception include hormonal contraceptive pills, IUDs and mifepristone. Emergency contraceptive pills can be both hormonal pills of different kinds and also mifepristone, because they are also pills.
4. The authors state that an important proportion of maternal deaths in Asia, Africa and Russia occur in relation to induced abortion. But are these unsafe or legal abortions in the health care system?
5. I do not think drugs brand names should appear in scientific papers. Use generic names of the drugs and mention that there are two different trademarks approved in the country.
6. Are abortions legal or illegal in Cameroon? What is known about the number of abortions?

Methods:
1. The sample is unclear. In abstract it is called random but in the methods section it is called convenience. Please explain. How were students invited? Were all 7000 invited? Why is it mentioned that 500 live in the dormitories? It is stated that all students who gave their consent where eligible, but who had the opportunity? Those who were found in the campus? Where were all the other students?
2. Why include a power analysis when it appears that the study was conducted by just asking everyone present on one occasion to participate? What was the expected variance based on?
3. Why were no tests regarding statistical differences conducted? In the result as well as in the tables results have been presented by gender groups, by students with adequate and inadequate knowledge and by ECP users vs non-users but no tests regarding differences have been conducted. I suggest that those should be done and shown in the tables.

Results:
1. Generally results are presented both in tables and texts. I suggest that the authors choose either text or tables with just the referral and some explanatory sentences to the tables in the text.

Discussion: The part on Synergon is not clear. Is Synergon used to induce abortion?

References are few and could be expanded and updated. Much research has been done on ECP later than the references in the paper in countries such as UK, Sweden etc. There are also some reviews that could be included.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. The conclusion in the abstract is different from the conclusion in the paper in that the information sources mentioned are different.
2. How was the questionnaire amended after the pretesting and how was the pretesting done?
3. The questionnaire had been used in other countries but no reference is provided. Please add!

Discussion: The authors state that one limitation is the convenience sampling. What are the other
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Are authors contributing only to the final approval of the manuscript entitled to be in the authors list?

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests