Reviewer's report

Title: The CHOICE study: women's perceptions and reasons for choosing the pill, patch or ring

Version: 2 Date: 13 December 2012

Reviewer: Rebecca Say

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Major compulsory revisions
1. They should include the study design (i.e. cross-sectional survey) in the title
2. The aim of the paper should be made clearer by re-writing the final paragraph of the introduction.
3. The authors should include information about how they developed, validated and piloted the questionnaire.
4. The authors need to clarify how women’s interest in using a CHC was ascertained and provide more information about how eligible women were identified.
5. It is unclear how data regarding confounding factors was obtained. Were they also collected in the questionnaire? The authors need to explain this and what instruments were used.
6. Descriptive data should be included. For example, the authors state that there was considerable variation in demographic variables between countries but do not include the data. This should be included as should data on previous contraceptive use which is also referred to.
7. Missing data should also be summarised.
8. Data should be summarised for each country, particularly as comparing between countries was an aim of this paper. On pages 11 and 12 numerical data should be included in relation to the most common reasons given for each country.
9. In all the tables numerical data should be included as well as the percentages.
10. The authors state that knowledge of contraceptive methods appeared to be a ‘major relevant factor’ but data on prior knowledge does not appear to have been collected. If it has this data should be summarised in the results or this should be removed.
11. The authors’ assumption that women retain more knowledge about the method they selected is not evidence-based. This should be removed or supporting data provided
12. Generalisability should be addressed in the discussion. As women considering other methods of contraception were also excluded I am unsure how valid the study findings are as many women will want to at least consider other
methods, particularly long acting reversible methods, in order to make an informed choice.

13. The authors should not conclude that providing structured information effects decision making as there was no control group.

14. Limitations to the questionnaire should be considered.

15. The authors should comment on the ethics of not informing women about these alternative methods. They suggest that including them would have made counselling 'too extensive and complicated' but counselling about all options is good practice (and essential to ensure women could make an informed choice) and leaflets which cover all the options are available (and commonly used in the UK).

16. It should be made clear if Merck, Sharp and Dohme had any role in the design of the study.

17. The authors should adhere to the STROBE guidelines when re-drafting the manuscript.

Discretionary Revisions

1. They should also include the questionnaire as an appendix to the study to enable readers to evaluate it (major compulsory).

2. It would have been useful to include a qualitative component in the study to explore women's attitudes and preferences in-depth. Depending on how the authors developed the questionnaire they may need to address this in the limitations of the study (discretionary).

3. It would also have been useful to include the counselling leaflet as an appendix to enable readers to evaluate it (discretionary).

4. It would have been useful to include a participant flow diagram and to describe how many participants were eligible (and how many were excluded because they wanted to consider other methods), recruited and completed the questionnaire.

5. The authors state that health professionals value particular characteristics of CHCs but do not reference these.

6. The results suggest that counselling being evaluated may have been unsatisfactory because of some of the beliefs women reported (for example, perceiving that the methods would differ in relation to regular menstrual bleeding) and they should comment on this.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.