

Knowledge, Attitude and Practices towards the use of Emergency Contraceptive Pills among Females aged 15-25 Years in Tororo General Hospital, Tororo District. A Cross-sectional Descriptive Study.

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Abstract



Background:

The purpose of this study was to determine the knowledge, attitude, and practices towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years in Tororo general hospital, Tororo district.

The specific objectives of the study were to determine the: knowledge, attitude, and practices towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years.

Methodology:

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design with a simple random technique as the sampling technique on a sample of 50 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires with semi-structured and open-ended questions written in the English language; data was later analyzed manually and presented in tables, bar graphs, and pie charts using Microsoft word.

Results:

Practices towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills showed that the majority (82%) of the respondents preferred having unprotected sex, most (64%) of the respondents have never used emergency contraceptive pills, and among the respondents who have ever used ECPs, most (68%) of them used postinor, most (60%) obtained the ECPs from a pharmacy and more than half (56%) used the ECPs once in a month.

Conclusion:

Generally, the researcher concluded that the knowledge about emergency contraceptive pills is inadequate, and the attitude towards the use of the ECPs is not good since most respondents thought they were unsafe for usage and also thought it was not effective in the prevention of unwanted pregnancies, the practices towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills is also not good since most of the respondents have never used ECPs at all.

Recommendation:

The researcher recommended that; Tororo general hospital administration should sensitize and create awareness about the use of emergency contraceptive pills to create a better attitude and increase practices toward the use of the EC.

Email: chiriadclinton66@gmail.com Date Submitted: 16th/04/2022 Date Accepted: 11th/05/2022

1 Background of the study

According to a World Health Organization report (2020), globally it is estimated that emergency contraception can prevent up to over 95% of pregnancies if taken within 5 days after intercourse. Furthermore, postinor 2 will prevent 85% of expected pregnancies. 95% of expected pregnancies will be prevented if taken within the first 24 hours, declining to 58% if taken between 48 hours and 72 hours after unprotected intercourse.

The global emergency contraceptive pill market is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 1.64% from 2021 to 2025 (Globe Newswire 2021). The widespread use of emergency contraceptive pills worldwide has led to the emergency of apps such as virtuwel, lemonaild, and nurx that allow users to select the type and brand of emergency contraception pills by giving a variety of options (UNFPA, 2021).

In the US, ECs were introduced in the mid-1960s as a treatment for rape victims to prevent unintended pregnancies, early 1970s the Yuzpe method was introduced which combined estrogen and progestin as opposed to the high dose estrogen method used up to that point. In 1998, the FDA approved the marketing of the first EC, and then a year later in 1999, the FDA approved the first progestin-only morning-after pill known as Plan B, it was made available by prescription only however, in August 2006 FDA approved Plan B for over-the-counter sale with no age restrictions (NURX).

It is estimated that 53 million young African women need contraception because they are married or are unmarried and sexually active and do not want a child for at least two years. Four-point six million are using modern contraceptives. The most common method is male condoms accounting for 4 in 10 users. However, the utilization of Emergency Contraceptive Pills is still very low accounting for only 1 in 10 users (Guttmacher institute 2019).

Emergency contraceptive pills were officially introduced in Uganda by MoH in November 1998 to improve reproductive health. Currently, various brands are available in Uganda and these include Postinor-1, Postinor-2, Norgestrel, and Norlevo. Other emergency contraceptive methods include the copper IUCD. However, the utilization has been low whereby in 2021 at least 9.3% of unmarried women used EC pills, in 2019 the percent-

age rate was 7.6% while in 2018 it was 4.5% (MoH 2020). The specific objectives of the study were to determine the: knowledge, attitude, and practices towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years.

2 Methodology

Study design

The study will be descriptive and cross-sectional and the researcher will employ quantitative methods. The design is preferred because it will enable the description of the facts discovered without interruption from the researcher.

Study area

The study will be carried out from Tororo General Hospital, Tororo district in Eastern Uganda. Tororo General Hospital also known as Tororo Government Hospital, Tororo district hospital, or Tororo main hospital is located in the central business district of the town of Tororo in Tororo district, in the Eastern region of Uganda, approximately 46 kilometers south of Mbale Regional Referral Hospital. This location is approximately 132 kilometers east of Jinja Regional Referral Hospital. The hospital receives referrals from nearby health centers such as Mukuju health center IV, Bison health center II, Kasoli health center II and Morukatipe health center II. Tororo General Hospital receives an average of 300 patients per day with several departments such as; OPD, inpatient, ART, dental, pharmacy, laboratory, antenatal care, and pediatrics. The researcher selected Tororo General Hospital because it is a facility with a variety of women receiving various medical services and the hospital is within the researcher's reach.

Study population

The study will focus on women aged 15-25 years seeking medical services at the outpatient department in Tororo General Hospital. Women within that age bracket will be selected because most of them are sexually active and not married.

Sample size determination

Burton's formula (1965) will be used to determine the sample size;

$$\text{Sample size (n)} = QR/O$$

Where; Q: Total number of days taken for data collection

R: Maximum number of respondents to be interviewed

O: Maximum time took on each respondent per day

Q = 5 days, R = 10 respondents and O = 1 hour

Therefore, $n = (5 \times 10)/1$

$n = 50$

Therefore, the sample size will be 50 respondents.

Study variables

Use of Emergency Contraceptive Pills is the dependent variable whereas knowledge, attitude, and practices are the independent variables.

Inclusion criteria

This will be composed of women aged 15-25 years attending Tororo General Hospital who will consent to participate freely in the study.

Sampling technique

The researcher will use the simple random technique to choose respondents to participate in the study. The technique is selected because it is not biased in that the respondents will be selected by chance and it is also easy to use.

Data collection tools

The researcher will collect data using a pretested semi-structured questionnaire with open and closed questions written in English language and later translated into the local language (Japadhola, Kiswahili, and Luganda) for respondents who will not understand the English language. The questionnaire will provide detailed information such as an investigation of knowledge, attitude, and practices towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among women aged 15-25 years.

Pretesting of questionnaire

Before data collection, a pretest of the questionnaire will be employed among 5% (10 women) of the study sample in Mukuju health center IV and the information gathered will be used to rectify and update the data collection tool. The results from the pre-tested questionnaires will not be considered in the main study.

Data collection procedures

A letter of introduction will be obtained from Kampala School of Health Sciences and it will be taken to Tororo General Hospital to obtain permission from the hospital administration. When permission is granted, two research assistants will be trained on the subject in question and the data collection procedures they will use; before conducting the process, the researcher and the research assistant will introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the study to the respondents.

Numbers will be written on small papers, rolled up then mixed appropriately, and put in the box so that every respondent who will pick an even number will be given the questionnaire to fill in. Respondents will be requested to pick numbers from an enclosed box and those who will pick odd numbers shall be requested to take part in the study until the sample size is achieved. The respondents will be asked questions following the designed questionnaire to avoid being biased. After the interview, each respondent will be thanked for participating in the study.

Data management

After collecting data, the questionnaires will be checked for completeness and accuracy. Those that will be inaccurately or incompletely filled will be completed before the respondents move away. Data collected will be stored with passwords on electronic media and a safely locked box.

3 Data analysis and presentation

Data will be analyzed manually by use of tally sheets and will be entered in the Microsoft excel computer program and results will be presented in frequency tables, bar graphs, and pie charts.

Quality control

Two research assistants with good communication skills, and knowledge will be trained on how to interview and collect data, right respondents will be selected through the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Ethical consideration

Before the commencement of the study, ethical clearance; a letter of introduction will be obtained from Kampala School of Health Sciences and addressed to the medical superintendent of Tororo General Hospital, Tororo district, requesting permission to conduct the study on knowledge, attitude, and practiced towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among women aged 15-25 years in Tororo General Hospital, Tororo district. Once permission is granted, the researcher and his assistants will introduce themselves to the respondents, explain the purpose of the study, informed consent will be sought and respondents shall be assured of utmost confidentiality. No names will be written on the questionnaire.

Study Findings

Demographic characteristics

Table 1. Shows the distribution of respondents by their age (N=50)

Age (years)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
15-16	10	20
17-19	21	42
20-22	12	24
23-25	07	14
Total	50	100

From the table above, most (42%) of the respondents were in the age range of 17-18 years, while the least (14%) were in the age range of 23-25 years.

From the table above, most (36%) of the respondents were Catholics while the least (12%) were Muslims.

From the table above, most (34%) of the respondents were peasants while the least (06%) had other occupations like teaching and cooking.

From the table above, most (32%) of the respondents never went to school, while the least (18%) had a tertiary/university level of education.

From the table above, most (64%) of the respondents were single and the least (4%) were widows.

Knowledge of the use of emergency contraceptive pills among the females aged 15-25 years

From the figure above, most (56%) of the respondents were not aware of emergency contraceptive pills, while the least (44%) were aware of emergency contraceptive pills.

From the figure above, most (40%) of the respondents had obtained information about emergency contraceptive pills from their friends while the least (8%) obtained their information about ECPs from other sources like teachers and partners.

According to the figure above, most (56%) of the respondents have heard about none of the ECPs, while the least (8%) have heard about the combined oral contraceptives (COCs).

From the figure above, most (64%) of the respondents did not know when the emergency contraceptive pills are supposed to be taken, while the least (6%) thought that ECPs are supposed to be taken before sex.

From the figure above, most (60%) of the respondents did not know the recommended time for the use of emergency contraceptive pills whereas least (8%) said ECPs are taken after a month of unprotected sex.

From the figure above, most (54%) of the respondents did not know the recommended number of

doses of ECPs while the least (10%) said three doses of ECPs are taken.

Attitudes towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years

From the figure above, most (66%) of the respondents thought that emergency contraceptive pills are not effective in terms of prevention of unwanted pregnancies, and the least (34%) thought that the ECPs are effective in the prevention of unwanted pregnancies.

From the figure above, most (68%) of the respondents would not use emergency contraceptive pills, and the least (32%) would use emergency contraceptive pills after unprotected sex.

From the figure above, more than half (52%) of the respondents said they would not use ECPs because they do not work, while the least (10%) said they would not use ECPs because it is against religion.

From the figure above, most (62%) of the respondents thought ECPs are not safe for usage, while the least (38%) thought that they are safe for usage.

From the figure above, the majority(72%) of the respondents reported that widespread use of ECPs will increase the risk of STIs including HIV while the minority (28%) reported that it would not increase the risk of STIs including HIV.

From the figure above, most (58%) of the respondents would not recommend ECPs for their friends while the least (42%) would recommend them for their friends.

Practices towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years

From the figure above, the majority (82%) of the respondents preferred having unprotected sex while the minority (18%) preferred having protected sex.

From the figure above, most (64%) of the respondents have never used emergency contraceptive pills while the least (36%) have ever used ECPs.

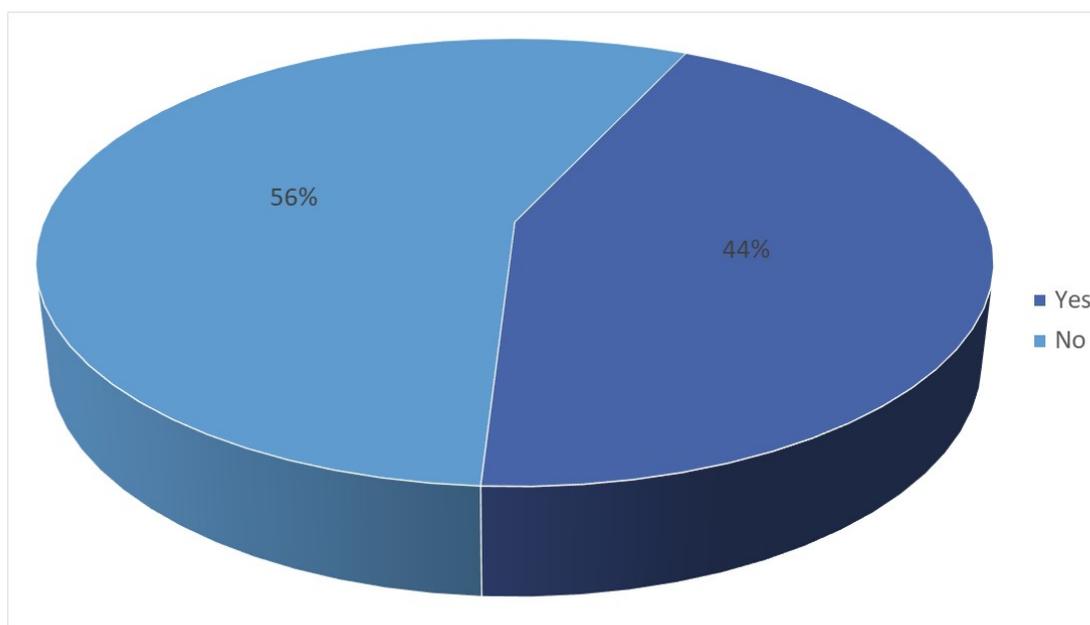


Figure 1. Shows respondents' distribution by awareness of emergency contraceptive pills (N=50)

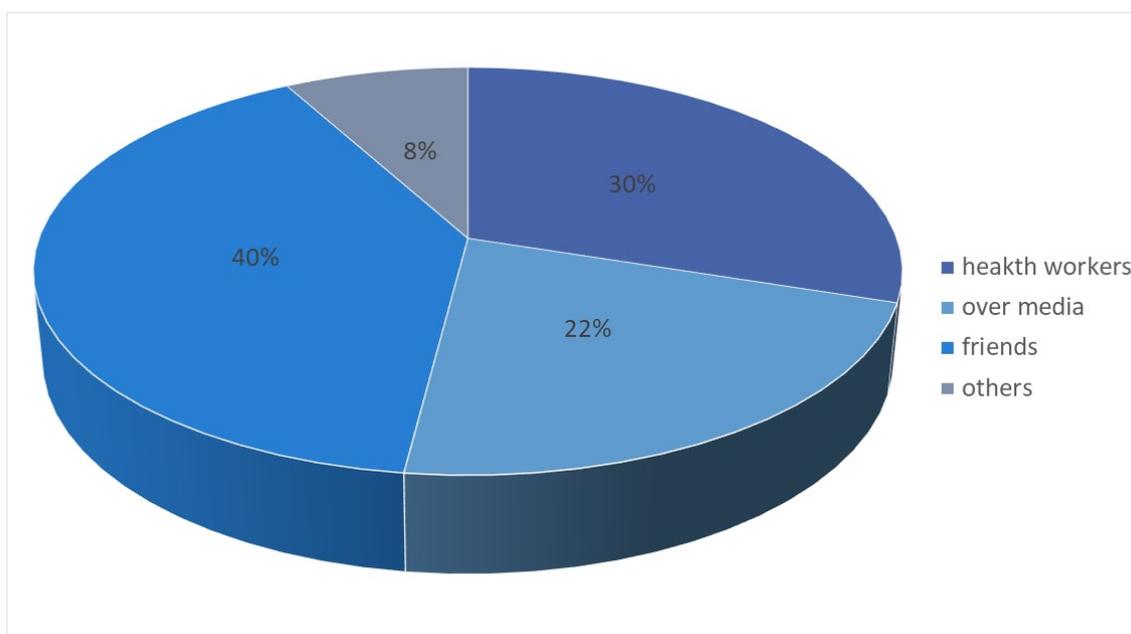


Figure 2. Shows the distribution of respondents according to their source of information regarding the use of emergency contraceptive pills.

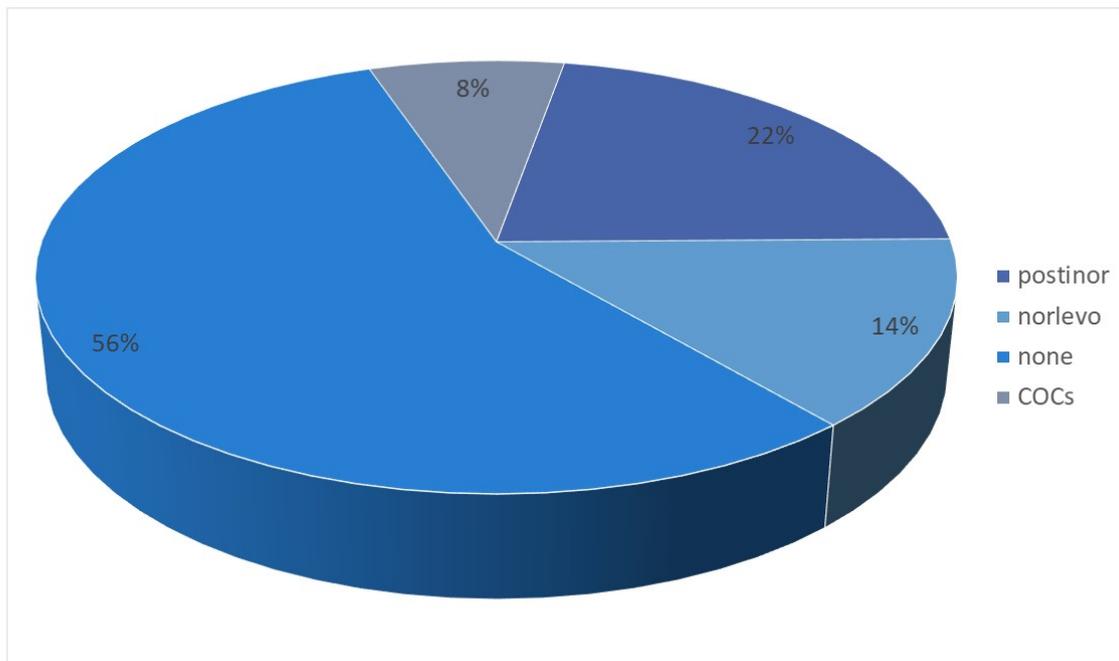


Figure 3. Shows the distribution of respondents according to the emergency contraceptive pills they have ever heard about (N=50)

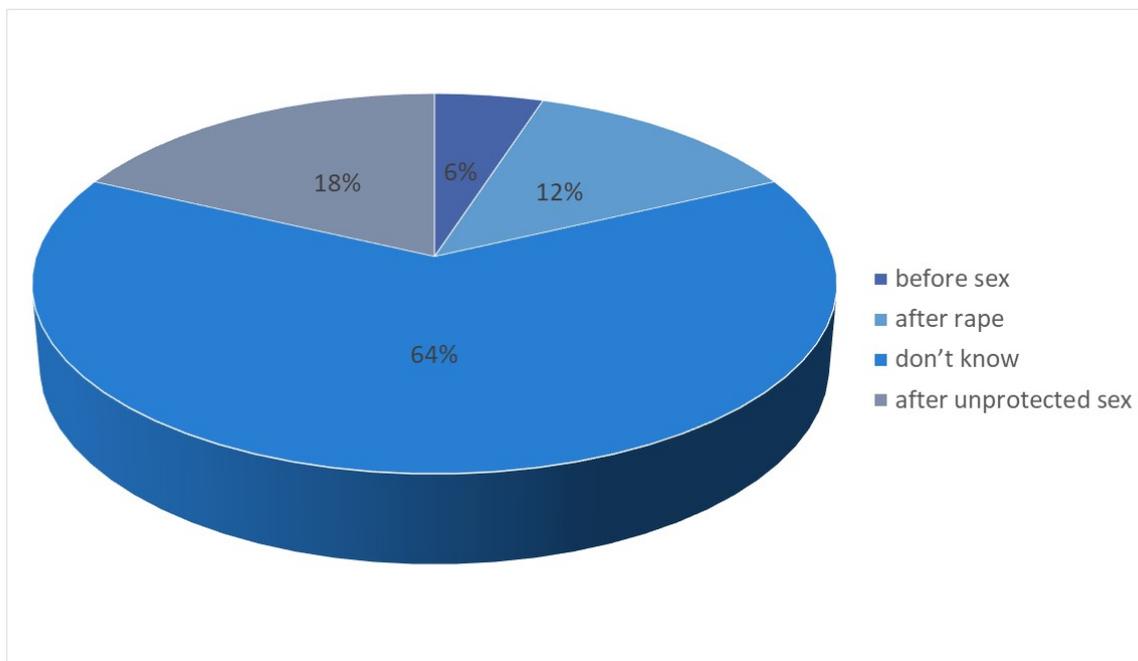


Figure 4. Shows distribution of respondents according to knowledge on when emergency contraceptive pills are used (N=50)

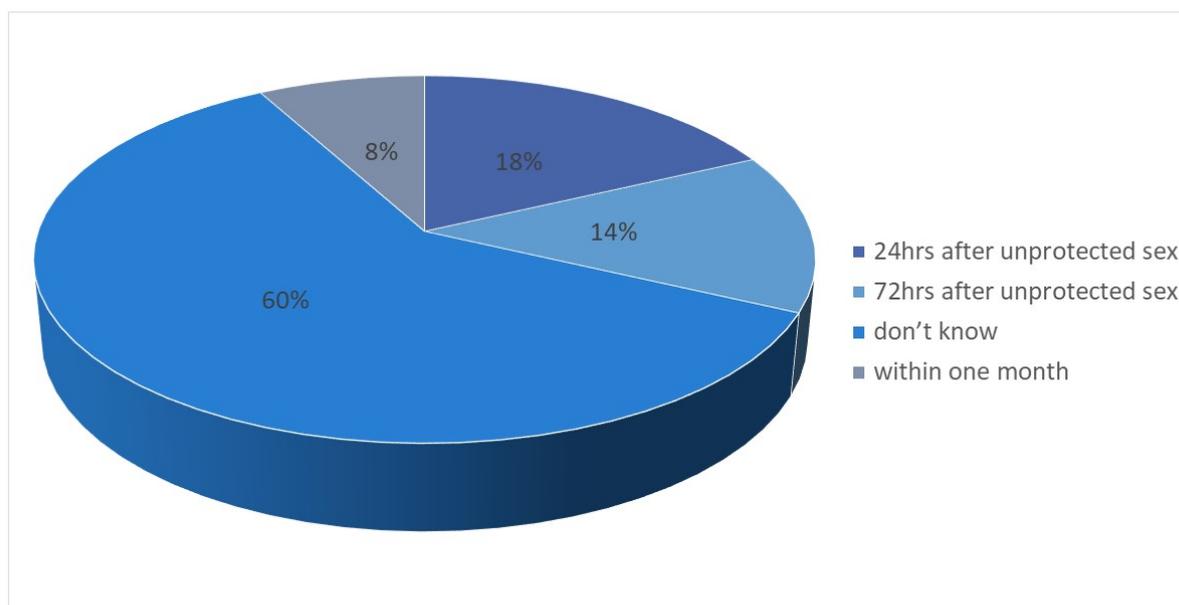


Figure 5. Shows distribution of respondents according to their knowledge of the recommended time for use of emergency contraceptive pills (N=50)

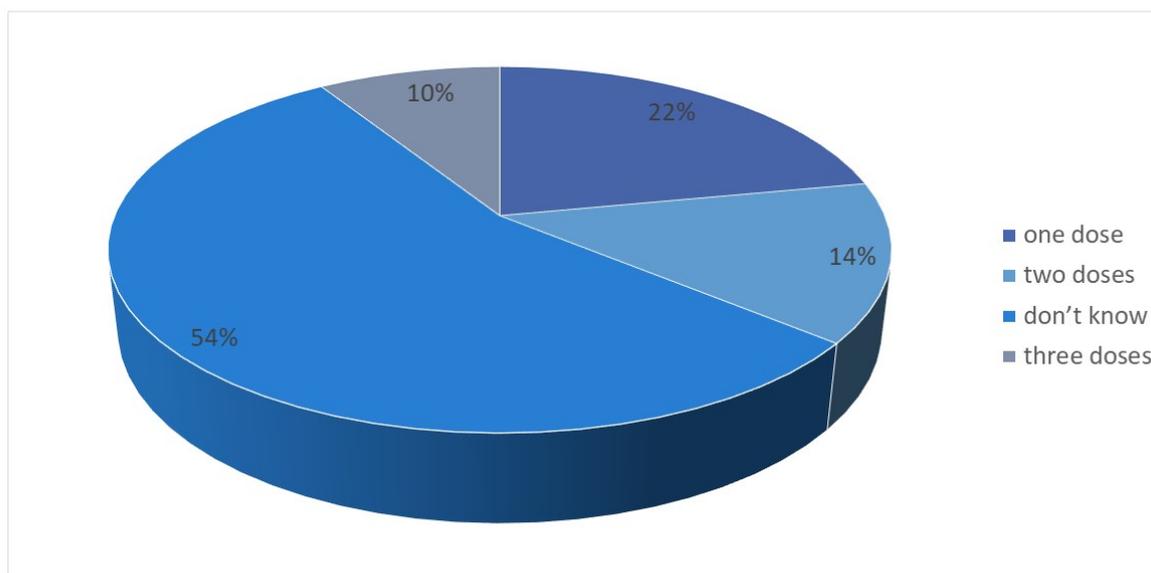


Figure 6. Shows the distribution of respondents according to their knowledge of recommended number of doses of emergency contraceptive pills. (N=50)

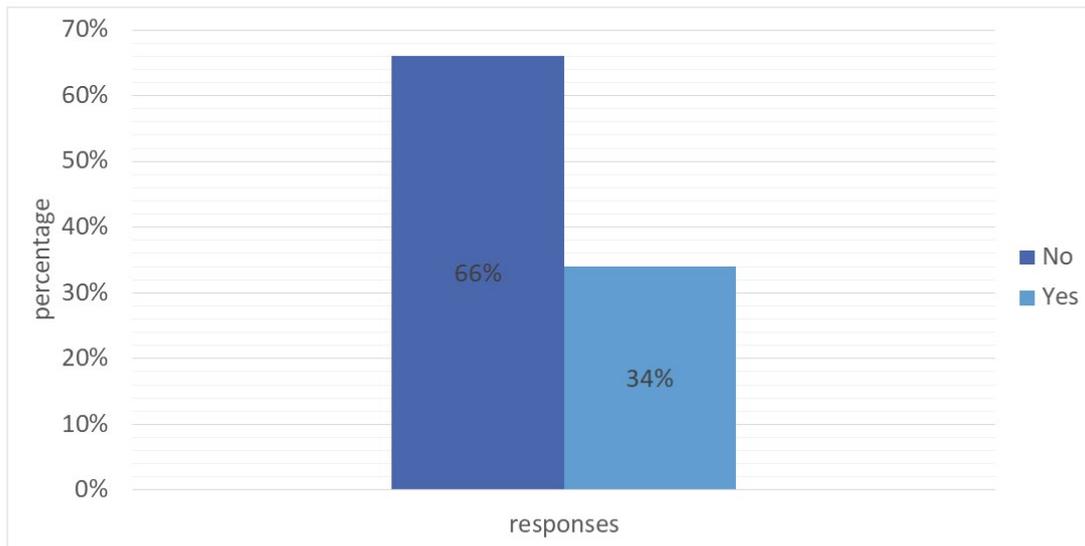


Figure 7. Show respondents' distribution by their thoughts on the effectiveness of emergency contraceptive pills in the prevention of unwanted pregnancies (N=50)

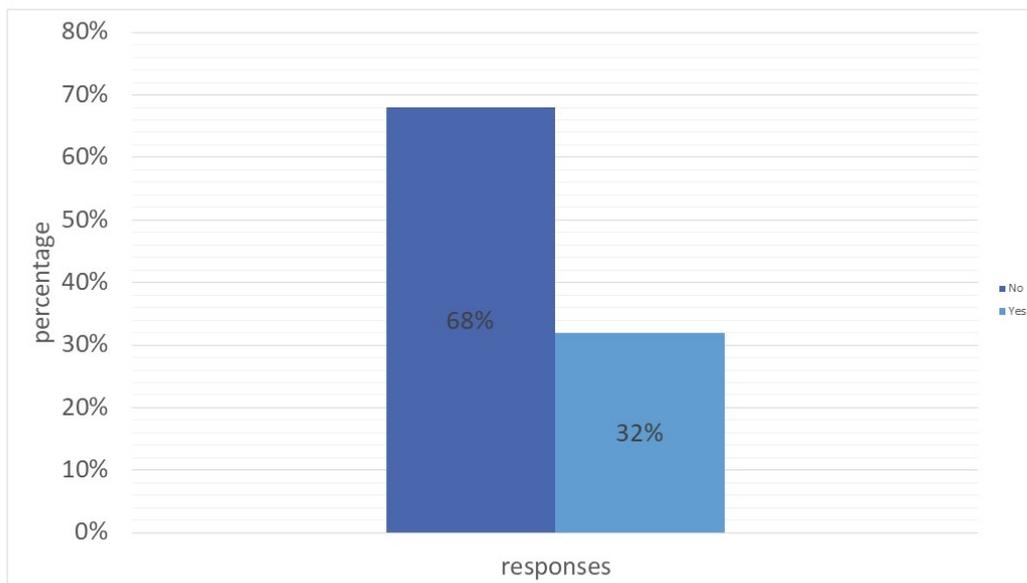


Figure 8. Shows the distribution of respondents who would or would not use emergency contraceptive pills after unprotected sex. (N=50)

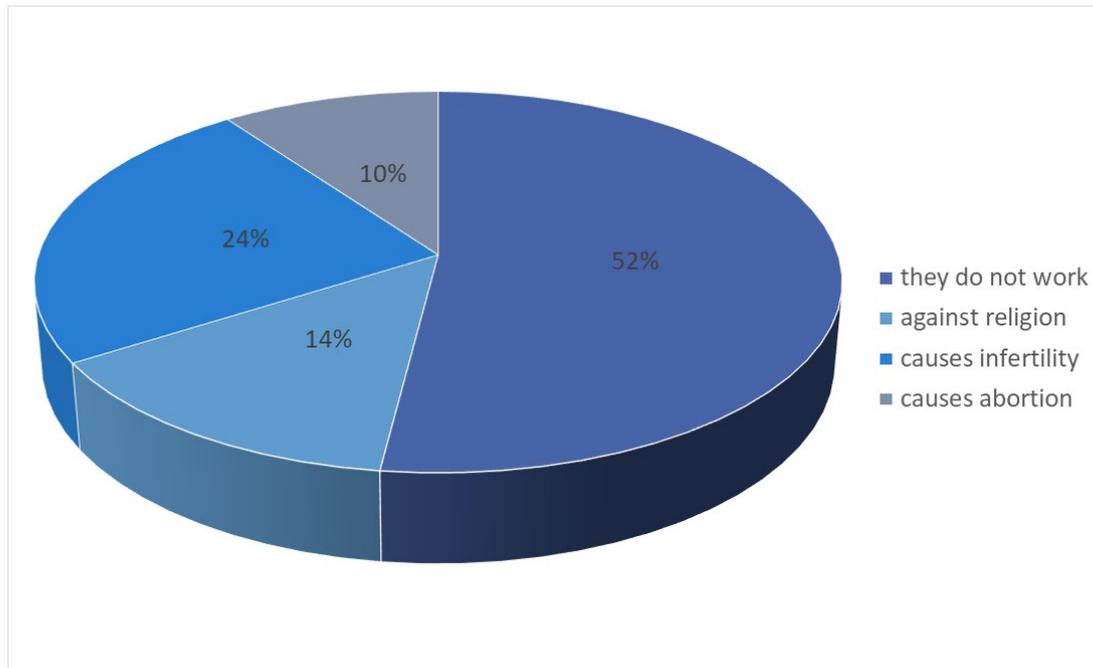


Figure 9. Shows distribution of respondents according to reasons as to why they would not take emergency contraceptive pills after unprotected sex (N=34)

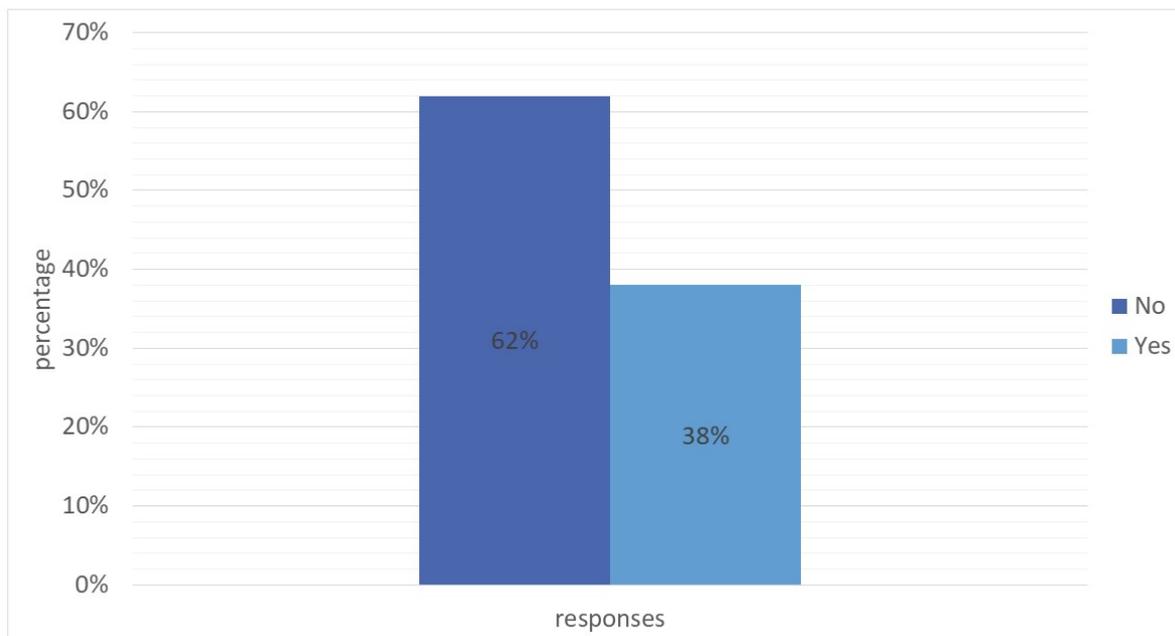


Figure 10. Shows respondents' distribution by thoughts on the safety of emergency contraceptive pills for usage (N=50)

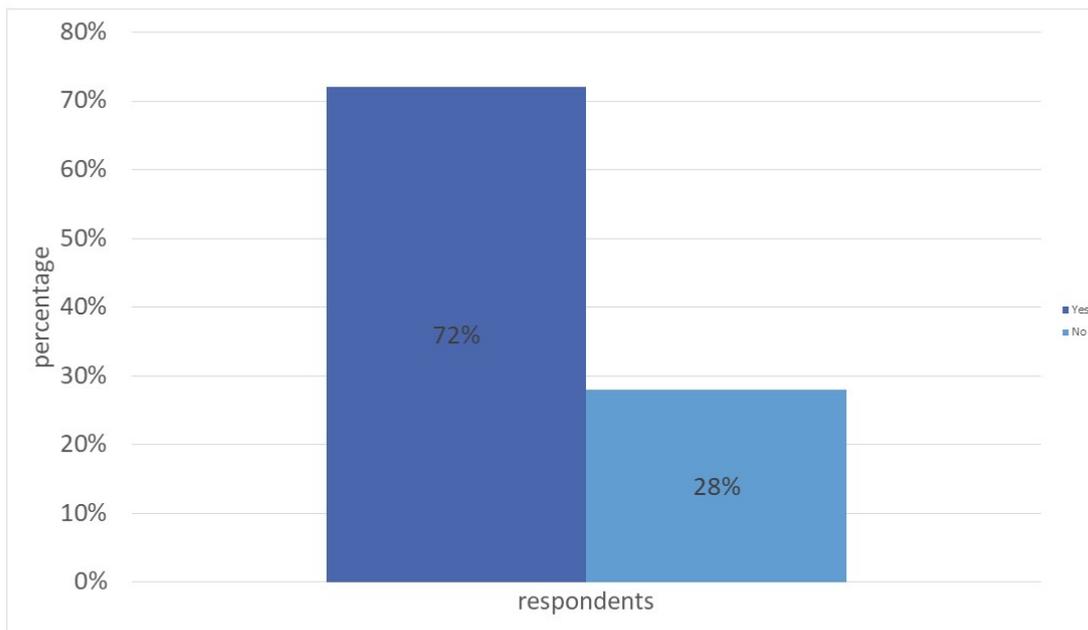


Figure 11. Shows distribution of respondents according to their view on whether widespread use of emergency contraceptive pills will increase the risk of STIs including HIV (N=50)

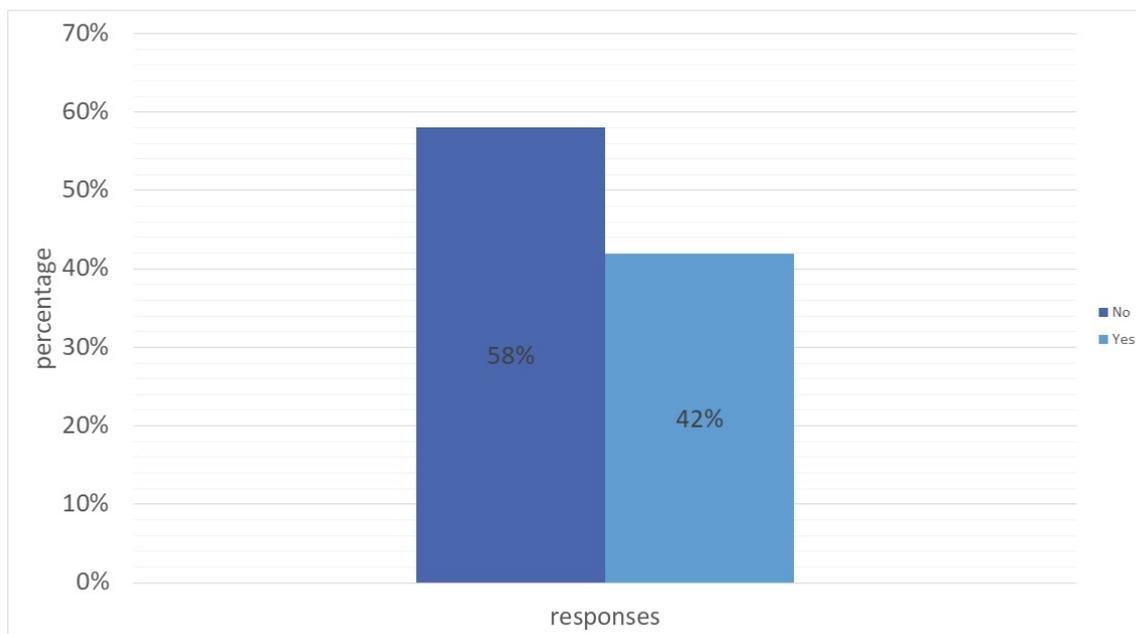


Figure 12. Shows respondent's distribution according to whether they would recommend emergency contraceptive pills to their friends (N=50)

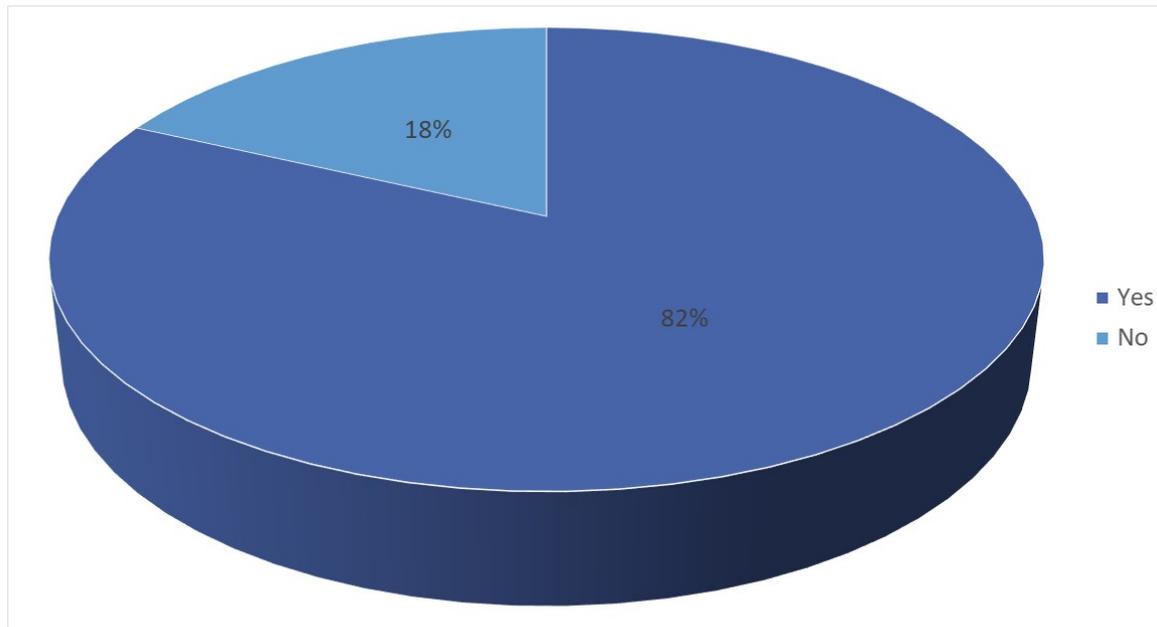


Figure 13. Shows distribution of respondents by preference towards having unprotected sex (N=50)

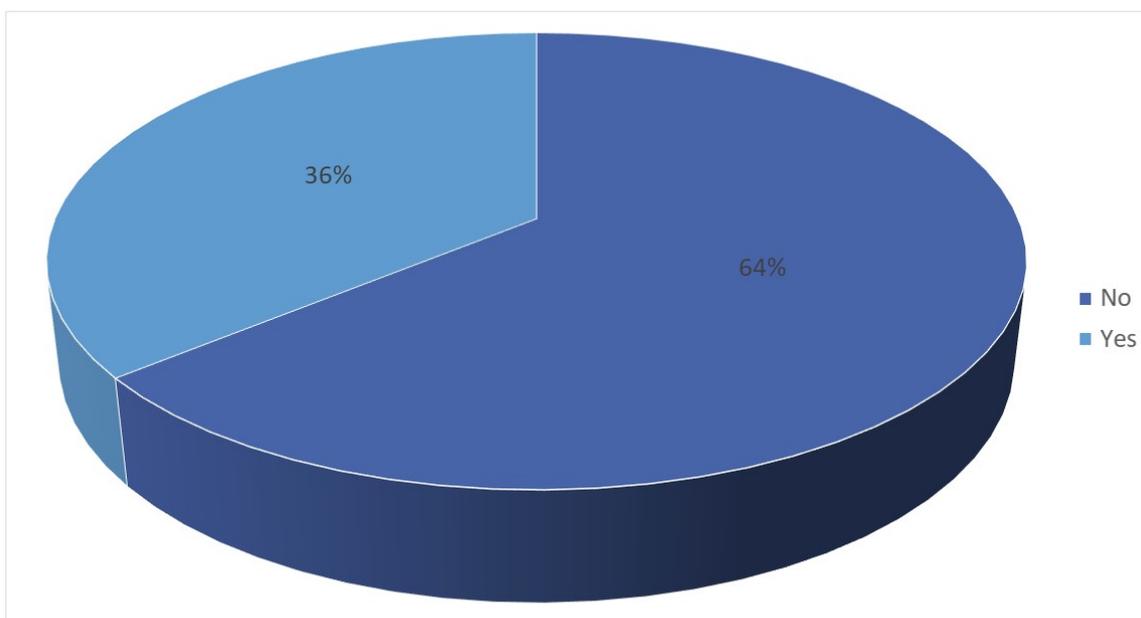


Figure 14. Shows distribution of respondents according to those who have ever used emergency contraceptive pills (N=50)

Table 2. Shows the distribution of respondents by religion (N=50)

Religion	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Anglican	10	20
Catholic	18	36
Muslim	06	12
Others	16	32
Total	50	100

Table 3. Shows the distribution of the respondents by their occupation (N=50)

Occupation	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Peasants	17	34
Business	10	20
Students	13	26
Others	03	06
Total	50	100

Table 4. Shows the distribution of the respondents by their level of education (N=50)

Educational level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Primary	11	22
Secondary	14	28
Tertiary/University	09	18
Never went to school	16	32
Total	50	100

Table 5. Shows the distribution of respondents according to their marital status (N=50)

Marital status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Single	32	64
Married	16	32
Widowed	02	04
Total	50	100

From the figure above, most (68%) of the respondents who have never used ECPs have never used them due to unawareness while the least (8%) have never used ECPs due to fear of social stigma.

From the figure above, most (68%) of the respondents who had ever used ECPs had used postinor while the least (8%) had used the combined oral contraceptive pills.

From the figure above, most (60%) of the respondents who have ever used emergency contraceptive pills got them from a pharmacy and while the least (14%) got the ECPs from a clinic.

From the figure above, most (56%) of the respondents who had ever used ECPs used them once a month while the least (4%) used the ECPs regularly.

4 Discussion , conclusion, and recommendation:

5 Discussion:

Knowledge of the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years

In the study, more than half (56%) of the respondents were unaware of emergency contraceptive pills. This is due to low sensitization from health

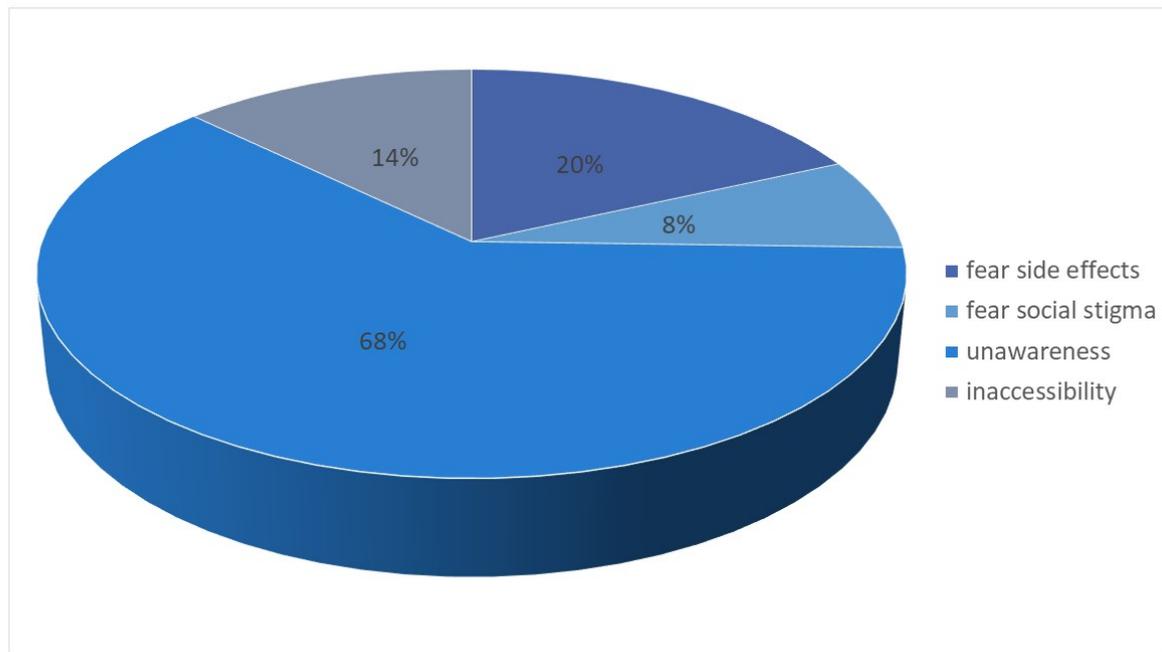


Figure 15. Shows the distribution of respondents by the reasons as to why they have never used emergency contraceptive pills (N=32)

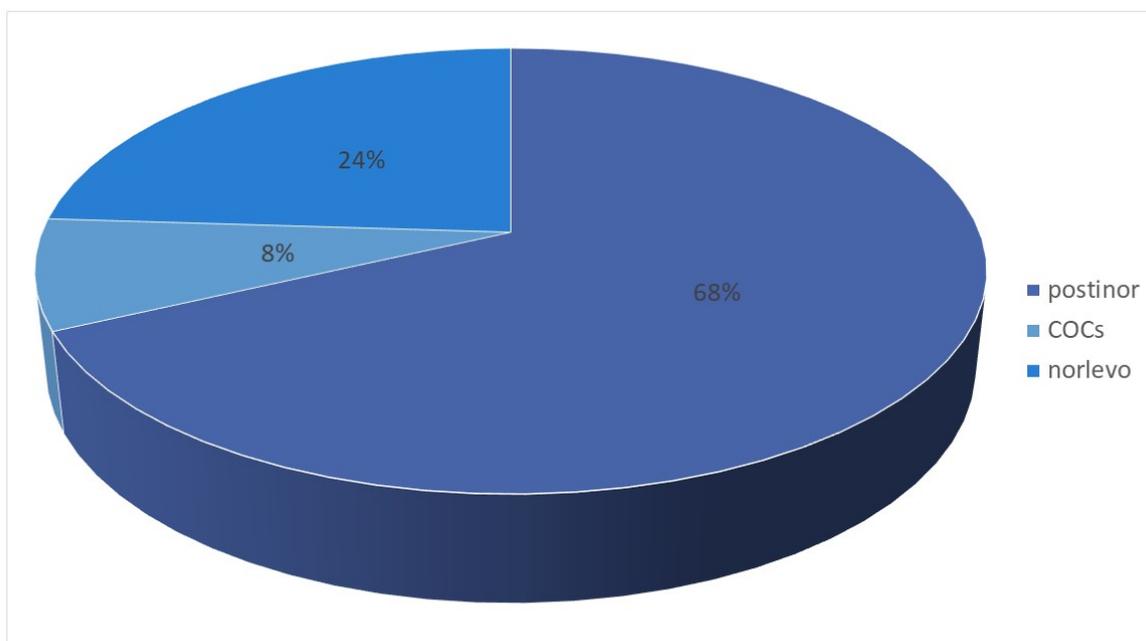


Figure 16. Shows distribution of respondents according to the type of emergency contraceptive pills used by those who had ever used the pills (N=18)

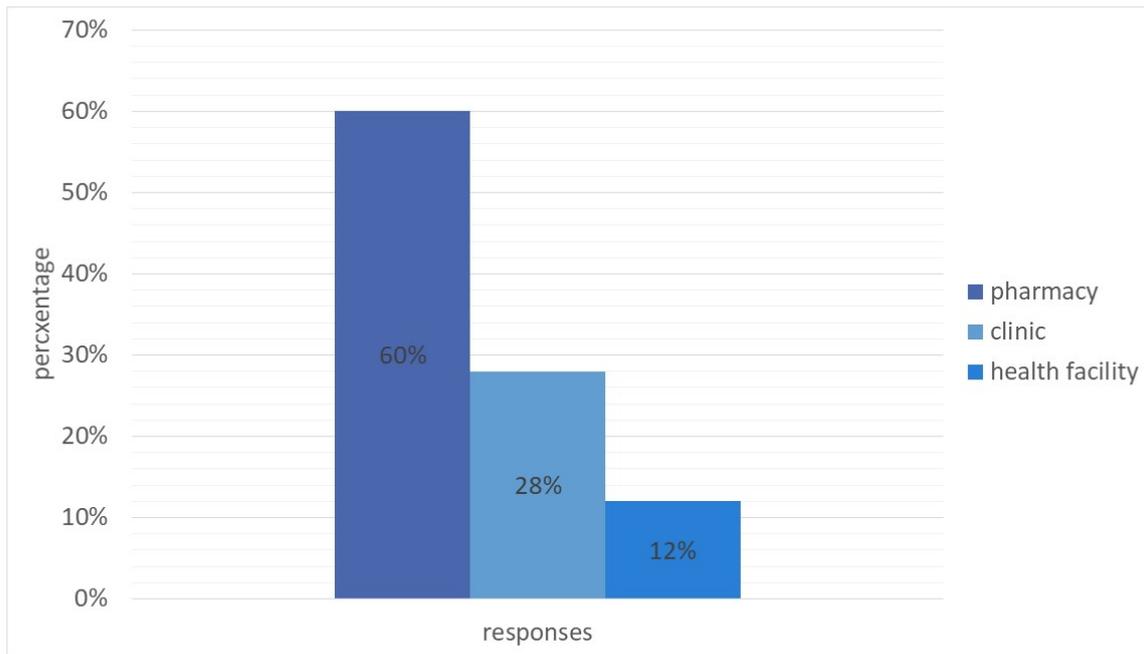


Figure 17. Shows the distribution of respondents according to the source of emergency contraceptive pills used (N=18)

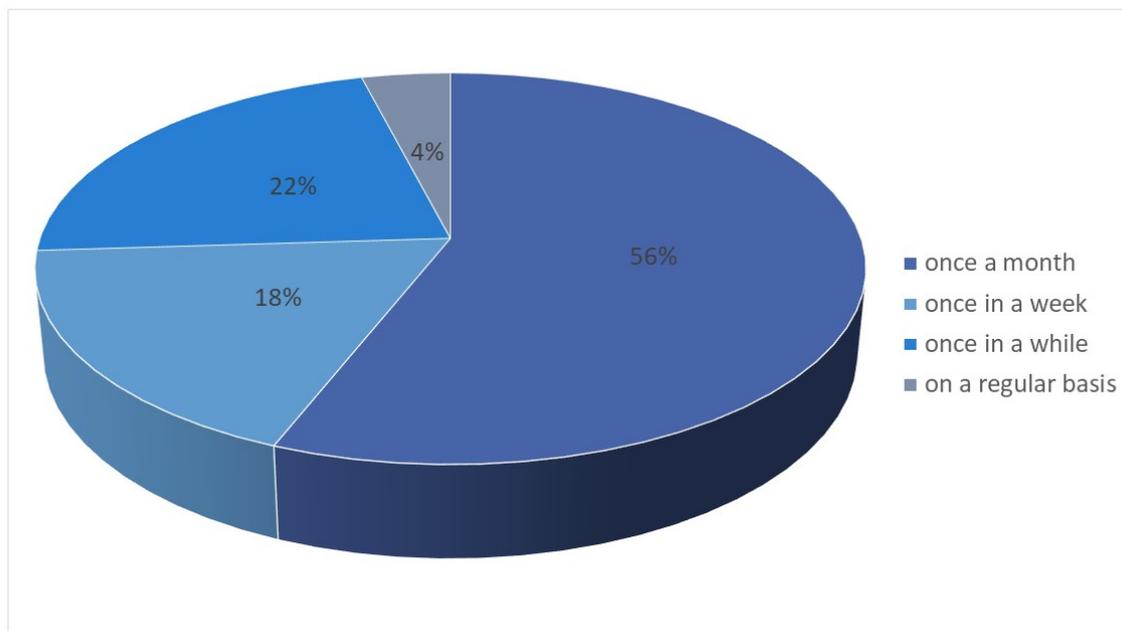


Figure 18. Shows how often the respondents who have ever used emergency Contraceptive pills use them (N=18)

facilities hence the gap in the knowledge about emergency contraceptive pills. These study findings were in agreement with the study conducted by Obiechina et al (2019) which stated that most (68%) of the respondents were unaware of ECPs due to a lack of sensitization from the health facilities.

Findings from the study also revealed that most (40%) of the respondents who had ever heard of emergency contraceptive pills obtained the information from friends. This finding was in line with a study conducted by Byamugisha et al (2016) which showed that most (34%) of the respondents had obtained their information about ECPs from their friends.

The study showed that among the respondents who had ever heard about ECPs, half (50%) had heard of postinor. This is because postinor is the most common emergency contraceptive pill. This finding was in agreement with a study conducted by Obiechina et al (2019) which stated that postinor was the most known ECP (45%).

Study results showed that most (60%) of the respondents do not know the recommended timing for the use of emergency contraceptive pills, this is due to the lack of knowledge about the ECPs. This study finding was not in agreement with the study conducted by Stefania et al (2019) which showed that most (65%) of the respondents could identify the correct timing for use of ECPs.

About the study, more than half (54%) of the respondents did not know the recommended number of doses of ECPs to be taken. This finding was not in agreement with the study carried out by Mesfin et al (2020) which stated that most (40.5%) of the respondents knew the correct number of recommended doses of ECPs.

Attitudes towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years

The study showed that most (66%) respondents thought emergency contraceptive pills are not effective in terms of the prevention of unwanted pregnancies. The study findings were not in agreement with the study conducted by Girma et al (2018) which stated that most (63.3%) of the respondents agreed that ECPs can be effective in preventing unwanted pregnancies.

Findings from the study also revealed that; most respondents (68%) of the respondents would not use ECPs after having unprotected sex. The study

findings were not in agreement with the study conducted by Nisha et al (2020) which stated that the majority (72.2%) of the respondents agreed to use emergency contraceptive pills if the need arose.

About the study, the majority (72%) reported that widespread use of emergency contraceptive pills will increase the risk of STIs including HIV. This finding was in line with the study conducted by Asmare et al (2018) which stated that most (68.7%) of the respondents agreed to the likely promotion of STIs including HIV when the use of ECPs in the society is increased.

The study also revealed that; most (62%) of the respondents said that ECPs are not safe for usage because of various reasons like it can cause infertility in the future. The study results were consistent with that of Olanyika et al (2018) which showed that most (69.5%) of the respondents said that the use of ECPs would cause infertility in the future.

Findings from the study revealed that more than half (54%) of the respondents would not recommend ECPs to their friends. The findings were in agreement with the study conducted by Vinta et al (2017) which showed that only 3.6% of the respondents said they would recommend ECPs to their friends.

Practices toward the use of the emergency contraceptive pill among females aged 15-25 years

Results from the study showed that most (64%) of the respondents have never used emergency contraceptive pills due to various reasons such as unawareness, drug unavailability, and fear of social stigma. The study findings were in agreement with the study conducted by Abebe et al (2019) which stated that most (65.5%) of the respondents had never used ECPs because of drug unavailability, unawareness, and fear of social stigma.

The study demonstrated that among the respondents who had ever used ECPs, most (68%) used postinor. This finding was in line with the study conducted by Olanyika et al (2018) which revealed that among the respondents who had ever used emergency contraceptive pills, most (65.6%) used postinor.

Findings from the study also showed that among the respondents who had ever used ECPs, more than half (56%) used them on a once-a-month basis. The study findings were not in agreement with the study conducted by Abinet & Messay (2017) which stated that among the respondents who had ever

used ECPs, most (61%) used them on a once in a weekly basis.

Study limitations:

Some respondents were not willing to participate in the study.

The study required a lot of resources and funds to be carried out.

Emergency contraceptive pills are a sensitive topic and therefore, some women could not have been honest with their responses. However, the researcher will try to allay any fears by assuring confidentiality of their information.

6 Conclusion

From the study findings, the following conclusions were made by the researcher:

Knowledge of the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years was low since more than half (56%) of the respondents was not aware of emergency contraceptive pills, and most (60%) of the respondents did not know the recommended time for the use of ECPs and more than half (54%) did not know the recommended number of doses of ECPs required.

Attitude towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years was bad since most (66%) of the respondents reported that ECPs are not effective in preventing unwanted pregnancies, most (62%) said ECPs were unsafe for usage, most (68%) said they would not use ECPs after unprotected sex and more than half (58%) said they would not recommend ECPs to their friends.

Practices towards the use of emergency contraceptive pills among females aged 15-25 years were not good since most (64%) of the respondents had never used ECPs mostly (68%) due to unawareness, among those that had ever used ECPs, most (68%) used postinor, most (60%) obtained the ECPs from a pharmacy and more than half (56%) used them once a month.

Recommendations:

The government of Uganda through the ministry of health should put more effort into a massive sensitization campaign by making educative adverts on local radios, televisions, magazines, and newspapers and also in health facilities to create more awareness about emergency contraceptive pills to curb the issue of unwanted pregnancies affecting especially girls of school-going age.

Health workers in Tororo general hospital should carry out community outreaches to sensitize the females in the communities about emergency contraceptive pills.

Tororo general hospital administration should continue to extend and strengthen health education sessions for females in the hospital on proper usage of emergency contraceptive pills to give them knowledge about ECPs.

7 List of abbreviations/ acronyms

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CAGR: Compound Annual Growth Rate

EC: Emergency Contraceptives

ECPs: Emergency Contraceptive Pills

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IUCD: Intra-Uterine Contraceptive Device

MoH: Ministry of Health

OCPs: Oral Contraceptive Pills

STDs: Sexually Transmitted Diseases

UAHEB: Uganda Allied Health Examination Board

UBOS: Uganda Bureau of Statistics

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF: United Nations International Child Emergency Fund

US: United States

WHO: World Health Organization

Operational definitions

Abortion: Refers to the loss or expulsion of the products of Conception before the age of viability that is to Say before 28 weeks of gestation.

Attitude: This refers to a person's affective feeling of like or dislike in this case emergency contraceptive pills.

Emergency Contraceptives: Refers to methods that women can use to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse.

Knowledge: Refers to facts and understanding of information that a person acquires either through experience or education.

Life term risk of maternal death: Is the probability that a 15-19 years old girl will die from complications of pregnancy or childbirth over her lifetime.

Maternal mortality: The death of women while pregnant or within 42 days of the termination of pregnancy, from any cause related or aggravated

by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental causes.

Practices: The actual application or use of an idea, belief, or Method opposed to theories about such application.

Unplanned pregnancy: Mis-timed pregnancy that occurs sooner than desired and can be wanted or unwanted.

A Publisher details:

Publisher: Student's Journal of Health Research (SJHR)
(ISSN 2709-9997) Online
Category: Non-Governmental & Non-profit Organization
Email: studentsjournal2020@gmail.com
WhatsApp: +256775434261
Location: Wisdom Centre, P.O.BOX. 148, Uganda, East Africa.



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