

ABSTRACT. *Background:* Studies probing the knowledge, attitude and patterns of hormonal contraceptive (HC) use for gynecologic and contraceptive indications among Filipino women are lacking. This study aims to examine how frequently Filipino women use HC for reasons other than birth control. *Methods:* A face-to-face questionnaire collected demographic information and issues related to knowledge, attitude and experience in the use of HC among Filipino women aged 15-45 years old (n=244) seen at the Outpatient Department who reported use of HC. *Results:* Filipino women showed positive attitudes towards the efficacy and safety of HC, which positively correlated with the patterns of use. Majority of the respondents felt they possessed little knowledge regarding the use of OCPs (82%) and injectables (56%). The major reasons for using contraceptives were for contraception (46%) and regulation of menses (26%). Pills (77%) were the most common HC utilized followed by injectables (25%). A doctor's recommendation (67%) primarily influenced choice of HC. *Conclusion:* Although Filipino women have limited knowledge on hormonal contraceptives, they have positive attitude towards, and have utilized hormonal contraceptives for both gynecologic and contraceptive purposes. *Keywords:* Attitude, Hormonal contraceptives, Knowledge, Practices

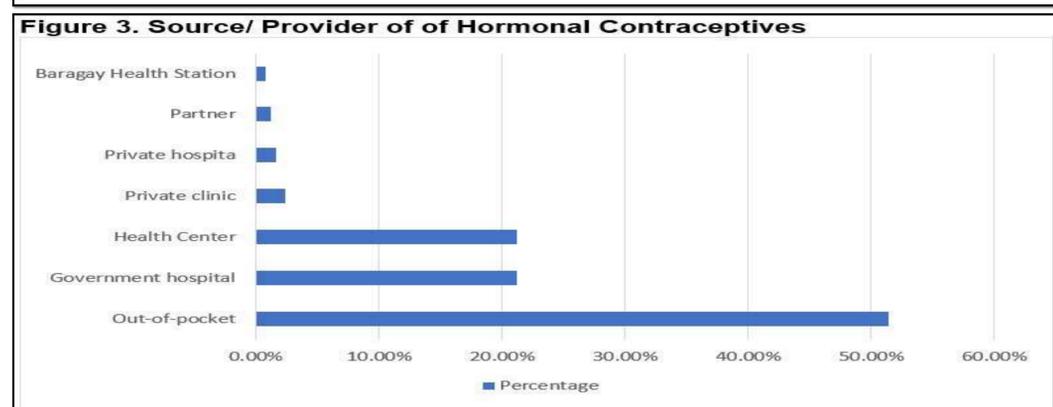
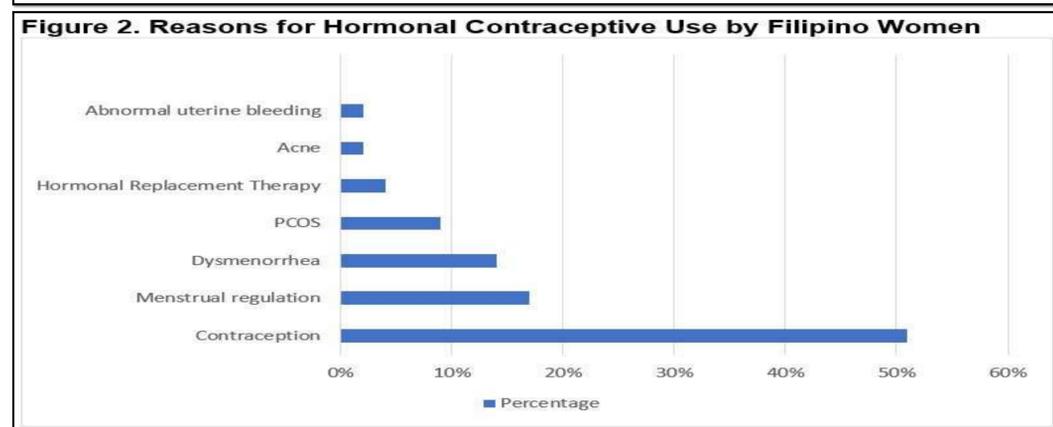
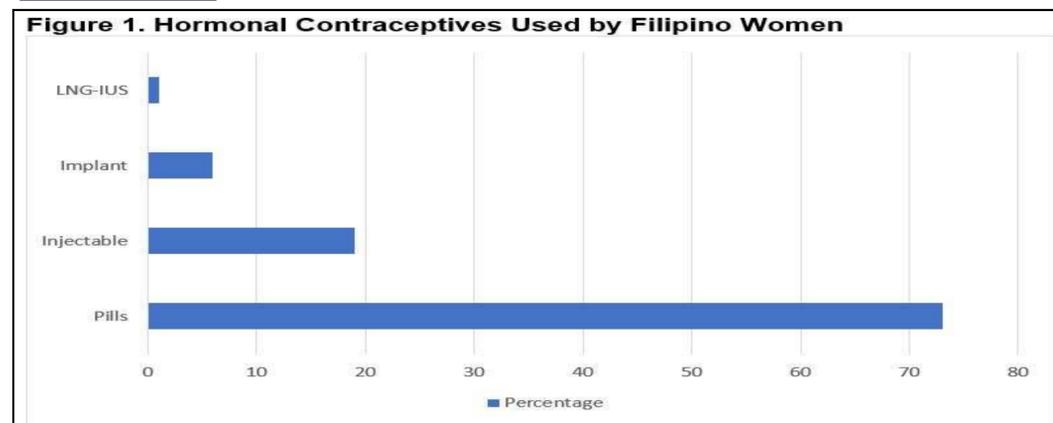
BACKGROUND

Hormonal contraceptives (HC) are known to many to prevent pregnancy. However, few studies have been made. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology lists noncontraceptive uses including amenorrhea induction, menstrual cycle regulation, prevention of menstrual migraines, treatment of acne, hirsutism, menorrhagia, myoma, dysmenorrhea, endometriosis, and premenstrual syndrome. In the Philippines, the extent to which HC are used for reasons other than birth control is unknown.

METHODS

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study involving hospital-based (Project 1) survey. Project 2 will be community-based. The questionnaire is an adaptation of two instruments - the Georgia Reproductive Health Survey (RHS) 2005 and The Fog Zone (A Survey of Young Adults 2009). Project 1 involved 244 women aged 15-45 years old seen at the out-patient clinics. All interviews were face-to-face and on a one-is-to-one ratio. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize general and clinical characteristics of participants.

RESULTS



- 95% believed that sex education should be taught in schools and start at 14 years of age.
- Parents have talked to them about menstrual cycle (69%), pregnancy (63%), and premarital sex (67%); but did not have conversations with a parent regarding contraceptives (56%), HIV/AIDS (57%), and STIs (58%). School taught regarding menstrual cycle (75%), pregnancy (73%), and premarital sex (70%).
- Women who have ever been pregnant comprised 78% of the respondents. Majority (83%) wanted to get pregnant then. Six (3%) women had induced abortion.
- Only 43% received a contraceptive after pregnancy.
- Majority felt they possessed little knowledge regarding OCP (82%) and injectables (56%).
- 45% of the couples still desired future pregnancies.
- Only 25% knew about the fertile period.
- Majority of women opined that the Filipino family should have 1-2 offspring (57%).
- In a hypothetical scenario of an unwanted pregnancy, 93% thought that a woman should keep the pregnancy.
- About 82% supposed that both partners should decide on the number of offspring.
- The doctor was named as best source of information about HC by 62%.
- About 64% received professional healthcare during the past year, and 92% have ever received a doctor's advice regarding HCs.

CONCLUSION

Despite the knowledge gap, Filipino women have positive attitude towards and robust utilization of HC for gynecologic purposes. A positive experience will increase positive attitude towards both contraceptive and noncontraceptive use. HC should be made free through local health units. The Reproductive Health Law should expand to provide HC used for gynecologic indications.

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