

# Pregnancy Coercion and Birth Control Sabotage in Western North Carolina

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**Objective:** Pregnancy coercion by male sexual partners, including birth control sabotage, is associated with unintended pregnancies. Our objectives were to assess the prevalence, awareness, and relationships of these behaviors.

**Study Design:** A cross-sectional survey was administered to reproductive age, English-speaking women seeking gynecologic care from June 2010 through March 2011.

**Results:** Participants completed 328 surveys (56.4% response rate). Of the 319 contraception users, 118 (37%, 95% CI, 33.3%-49.7%) reported pregnancy coercion: 8 (3%) emotional coercion; 62 (19%) birth control sabotage; 48 (15%) both. Only 28 women (9.8%, 95% CI, 6.1%-13.5%) reported sabotage of female-controlled contraception. Pregnancy coercion was associated with unwanted pregnancies ( $p=0.002$ ) and terminations ( $p=0.012$ ). Most women (181, 57.5%) learned about pregnancy coercion from this survey.

**Conclusion:** Pregnancy coercion occurred for 1 in 3 women in WNC. Physicians should screen for these behaviors when screening for intimate partner violence, prescribing contraception or treating women with poor adherence or unintended pregnancies.

Keywords: Reproductive coercion; Pregnancy coercion; Birth control sabotage; Unintended pregnancy