

Contraceptive Choices for Reproductive Age Women at Methadone Clinics in Western North Carolina

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Abstract

Objectives: To describe the preferences of women in methadone treatment for contraception and contraceptive counseling.

Methods: We conducted a voluntary, anonymous, incentivized, cross-sectional survey (35-item) of women at four methadone clinics in WNC. Data analysis was primarily descriptive.

Results: In all, 191 women completed surveys for a 77% response rate; the majority were white [183 (95.8%)] with a mean age of 31.2 ± 7.3 years. Most had children [161 (84.3%)]; 69 (36.1%) women reported an unwanted pregnancy in their lifetime. We identified 148 (77.5%) with intact reproductive systems. Of the 148: 15 (10.1%) were pregnant; 58 (39.2%) reported consistent contraceptive use; 52 (35.1%) reported inconsistent or no use of contraception; and 23 (15.5%) reported planning a pregnancy. The unintended pregnancy rate among the 15 pregnant women was 66.7% (10). Among the 125 candidates for contraception, 59 (47.2%) desired long acting contraception (LARC) or sterilization; 91 (72.8%) desired contraceptive education or counseling.

Conclusions: Overall, 103 (82.4%) of the women could potentially benefit from a contraception intervention as they are not current contraception users, have expressed interest in switching methods, or may be interested in the convenience of co-located contraception service delivery. Furthermore, 23 (15.5%) women would benefit from preconception counseling and education about neonatal abstinence syndrome. We are negotiating ways to offer these services in methadone clinics.

Key Words: Contraception, Methadone, Medication maintenance therapy