

FREE COMMUNICATIONS

FC-01 • Knowledge, perception and use of contraception among young people in Moldova*

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Goal: to identify the myths, misconceptions and negative beliefs, their sources and the barriers that youth face in accessing contraceptives. The **objectives** of the study were: 1. To evaluate the level of knowledge about contraception methods among young people in the Republic of Moldova; 2. To evaluate the level of knowledge about contraception methods among medical students; 3. To identify the most common myths about contraception and their source. **Methods:** An Internet-based survey was distributed via Facebook and other social-media channels to young people 15-24 years old. Additionally, the unanimous, self-administered questionnaire was distributed to students from the State Medical University in their 5th year of study. In the questionnaires, participants were asked about their attitude toward contraception, their experience using or not using it, their opinion about contraceptives, the source of the information, and barriers faced in using contraception. **Results:** We received 332 answers from young people 15-24 years old via the online survey and 170 answers from medical students. The majority of them (69%) think that condoms are the best method, 59% prioritize coitus interruptus and only 23.3% - COC. At the same time, only 28% of sexually active youth used a condom at last sexual intercourse. Surprisingly, the level of knowledge among medical students is not any higher. The majority (66%) believe coitus interruptus is the best method, 60.9% - condoms and 21.7% - the calendar method. Only 39% of them used a condom at last sexual intercourse. There were many myths about modern methods of contraception among participants, including: 38.30% of medical students and 36.70% of online participants think that COC is harmful. 8.30% of students and 8.70% of online participants believe that COC protects against sexually transmitted diseases. 36.6% of students and 21.80% of online participants believe that contraceptives cause weight gain. 18.30% of students and 6.50% of online participants consider that contraceptives cause child malformations. 3.30% of students and 4.70% of online participants consider that contraceptives induce abortion. Many were exposed to these myths on the Internet. **Conclusions:** We can conclude that the level of knowledge about contraception methods among young people, including medical university students, is very low. Medical students have placed coitus interruptus as the preferred and most commonly used method. We have identified several new myths about contraception circulating on the Internet, which need to be addressed through existing educational family planning programs.

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