

A quality improvement project investigating the choice of emergency contraception by young women in Walsall

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Background

Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH) guidelines recommend that females should be offered all methods of emergency contraception (EC) [1]. It specifies the Cu-IUD as first-line, as it is the most effective [1, 2]. This quality improvement project aimed to identify the most popular method of EC in adolescent females, and to compare the provision of EC in three healthcare practices in Walsall.

Aims

- To identify any disparities between FSRH guidelines and actual clinical practice
- To highlight any potential areas for service improvement

Current Guidelines

The guidelines used in this quality improvement project were produced by the FSRH:

- Adolescents who need EC should be offered all methods of EC including the Cu-IUD
- EC providers should advise women that the Cu-IUD is the most effective method of EC
- Women requesting EC should be given information regarding all methods of ongoing contraception and how to access these

Methods

Study type: Quality improvement project

Study settings: Portland Medical Practice, Lloyds Pharmacy and the Walsall Integrated Sexual Health (WISH) clinic

Data collection systems: EMIS, Lillie

Data collected: Between 01/03/2019 - 01/03/2020

- Age: 15-18 year olds
- Sex: Female
- Cu-IUD offered
- EC method chosen
- Future contraception discussed

Electronic patient records were used to select a patient population of 15-18 year old females who had sought EC from three service providers between March 2019-20.

Selected patients were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their experiences of contraceptive services. Healthcare providers were questioned on their usual practice of providing EC, using a pre-set questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Results

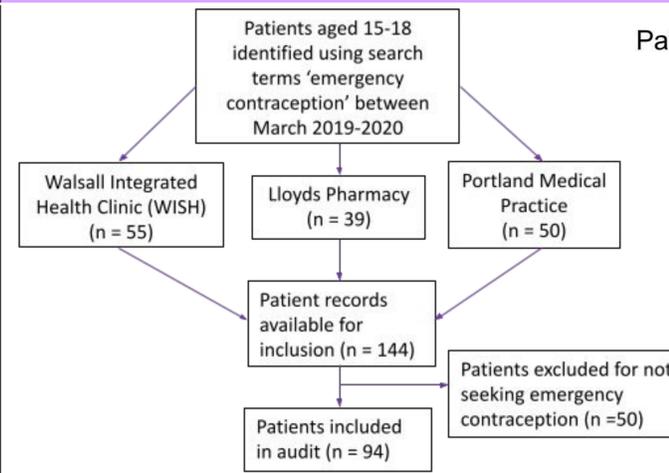


Figure 1. Data collection flowchart

Patients obtaining emergency contraception between March 2019-20

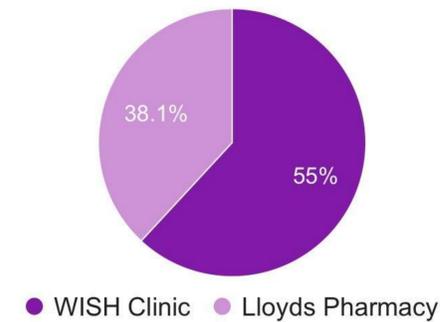


Figure 2. Patients obtaining EC in March 2019 - 2020

Form of emergency contraception chosen at each of the three healthcare practices

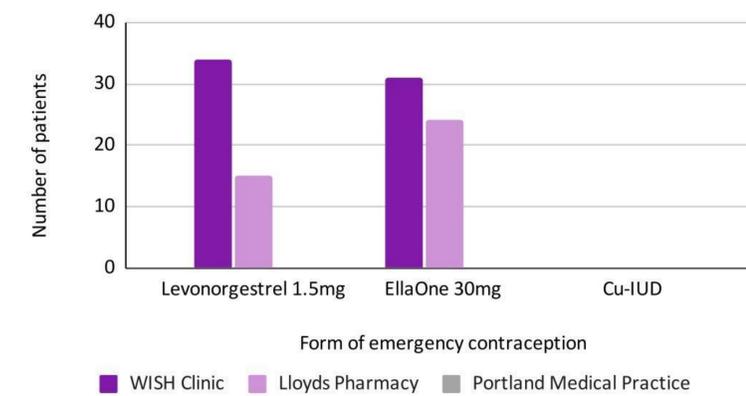
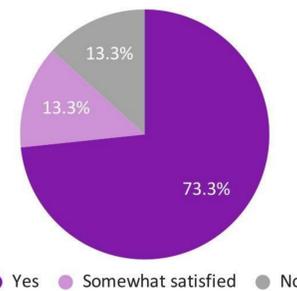


Figure 3. Form of emergency contraception chosen

Patient Questionnaire

Were you satisfied with your experience of getting emergency contraception?



Did you feel confident knowing where to seek emergency contraception?

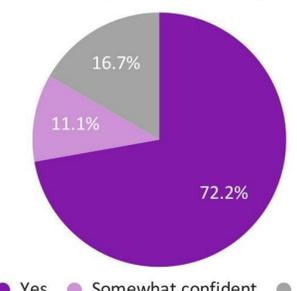


Figure 4. Questionnaire responses

Of the 27 responses, 61.5% selected a pharmacy due to increased convenience and anticipating 'less judgement' from staff. 23.1% chose the WISH clinic through word of mouth and knowledge that it was a free service. Most patients (73.3%) were satisfied with their experience, 13.3% were not (figure 4). This was attributed to long waiting times and having to travel to multiple service providers.

Patient suggestions:

- Improve availability of EC providers
- Reduce stigma attached to requesting EC in this age group
- Use concealed packaging to allow for anonymity
- Shorter waiting times

Discussion and Conclusion

- Surprisingly, no patients sought EC from Portland Medical Practice. Thus, all primary data was collected from WISH clinic and Lloyds Pharmacy (figure 2).
- As predicted, all patients opted for oral EC instead of the Cu-IUD, despite this being a less effective method (figure 3).
- At the WISH clinic, 94.5% patients were offered the Cu-IUD and 80% were advised on its effectiveness. All consultations discussed future contraception options.
- Conversely, only 1 patient at Lloyds Pharmacy was offered a Cu-IUD. 87% discussed future contraception and were provided with a method.

Recommendations

- Provide education for practitioners and patients on the effectiveness of the Cu-IUD and offer it to all eligible women as EC
- Educate pharmacists on offering Cu-IUD as first line
- Clearly document any reasons for women declining Cu-IUD
- Re-audit annually to reassess improvement

References

- Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare. Emergency Contraception Clinical Guideline [Internet] [London]. FSRH; 2017 [updated December 2020]. Available from: <https://www.fsrh.org/standards-and-guidance/emergency-contraception-march-2017/>
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Contraceptive services for under 25s [Internet] [London]. NICE; 2014. Available from: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph51>