

Kharkiv National
Medical University

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

of Young Scientists and Medical Students

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25-27

May

2026

Kharkiv, Ukraine



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Chebotenko Olha, Surhai Anastasia

ASSESSMENT OF AWARENESS AMONG WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE REGARDING THE RISKS OF SIDE EFFECTS AND SAFETY OF COMBINED ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES

Kharkiv, Ukraine

Kharkiv National Medical University

Department of Pharmacology and Medical prescription

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Combined oral contraceptives (COCs) contain synthetic estrogens and progestogens and are capable of altering the levels and functions of endogenous female sex hormones. They are widely used for contraception and for the treatment of hormonedependent gynecological disorders, including endometriosis, menstrual disorders, acne and others. But COCs can cause of adverse reactions, such as neurological, vascular, gastrointestinal, and metabolic disorders, which can negatively affect patients' quality of life and lead to treatment discontinuation.

Insufficient awareness among women regarding the potential risks, adverse effects, and contraindications of COCs may result in improper use of these medications, underestimation of complication symptoms, and delayed medical consultation. The aim of the study was to assess the level of awareness among women of reproductive age regarding the aspects of prescribe, efficacy and safety of COCs, the risk of COC-related adverse effects through a survey conducted using a Google Forms questionnaire. A questionnaire consisting of 21 items was developed using the Google Forms format for the purposes of the study which regarding the indications for COC prescription, patients' awareness of the efficacy, adverse effects, contraindications, and safety aspects of COCs. Statistical, analytical, and logical research methods were applied to analyze the obtained results. A total of 159 women of reproductive age participated in the study. Analysis of the obtained data demonstrated that, despite the sufficient efficacy and good tolerability of COCs, these medications are capable of causing adverse effects. The main indications for COC use included contraception (50%), menstrual disorders (29%), polycystic ovary syndrome (27%), endometriosis (17%) and other conditions. Among the respondents 57% reported adverse reactions, including emotional changes (42%), decreased libido (36%), headache (32%), edema (31.1%), heaviness in the legs (20.2%), and leg pain (22.8%) and etc. The level of awareness regarding the risks of COC-related adverse effects was heterogeneous:

75.3% of respondents assessed their knowledge as sufficient or high, whereas approximately 20% rated it as moderate or low. According to our survey data while 98% of women believe that medical consultation is necessary before initiating COCs, only 25,2% reported undergoing any form of laboratory assessment. This discrepancy highlights a critical gap between recommended clinical practice and real-world patient behavior, reflecting insufficient awareness and risk assessment. So, the study demonstrated a heterogeneous level of awareness among women regarding the safety profile and potential risks of COCs, as well as insufficient compliance with recommended pre-treatment clinical assessment.

These findings highlights the need to improve patient education, counseling, and monitoring in clinical practice in order to enhance the safe and rational use of COCs.