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Knowledge, attitude and practices of health school students in Bitlis Eren University about the emergency contraception and the associated factors

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the knowledge, attitude, practice and factors affecting the emergency contraception of the students of Health School of Bitlis Eren University. This study was conducted by using the cross-sectional research model among analytical research models on Health School students studying at Bitlis Eren University during the fall semester of 2016-2017 academic year. The researchers applied the questionnaire to 398 (82.9%) out of 480 students studying in Health School of Bitlis Eren University during the fall semester of 2016-2017 academic year under observation. The data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0 package program. In the statistical evaluation, percent distributions and chi-square significance test were used and the value of $p < 0.05$ was accepted as significant. 398 students from the departments of Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetic and Social Services at Health School participated in the study. It was found that 43.3% of the students included in the study were male and 56.7% were female. Mean age of the sample group was 21.1 ± 2.3 . It was determined that 67.4% of the students stated that they did not hear any contraceptive method to use after an unprotected sexual intercourse. The level of knowing the emergency contraception in this group who was studying in Health School and would provide health service and guide people in future was very low. These methods can be integrated into national education programs, especially health and medical schools, family planning programs and emergency health services.

Keywords: Emergency contraception, students, knowledge, attitude, sexual health

Introduction

The World Health Organization defines the age group of 10-19 years as adolescent, the age group of 15-24 years as “Youth”, and the age group of 10-24 years as “Young People” [1].

According to the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI), as from the end of 2016 in Turkey, the young population in the age group of 15-24 years is 12 million 989 thousand, which constitutes 16.3% of the population [2].

Young people face with sexual health risks such as unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV / AIDS [3].

According to the Sexual Health and Reproductive Health 2006 report of Sexual Education, Treatment and Research Association (CETAD), the first sexual intercourse age in Turkey is reported as 19 in males and 19.5 in females [4].

In adolescence period, interest in sexuality increases and young people start sexual life with inadequate knowledge [5].

Among the sexual health risks seen during the youth period, unintended pregnancies are an important problem that threatens reproductive health and are expressed as unmet needs in family planning [6].

Emergency contraception is reported as methods used to prevent pregnancy within the first few days following the intercourse in the situations like unprotected sexual intercourse, failure or improper use of the contraceptive [7].

Emergency contraception is a second chance method. This method can prevent curettage, abortion and unwanted births but it is not adequately known by the healthcare professionals and the women who use the contraception method since its use is not widespread [8,9].

The aim of this study is to determine the knowledge, attitude, practice and factors affecting the emergency contraception of the students of Health School of Bitlis Eren University.

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Material and Methods

This study was conducted by using the cross-sectional research model among analytical research models on Health School students studying at Bitlis Eren University during the fall semester of 2016-2017 academic year.

In the study; 15 questions about the socio-demographic characteristics, habits of the students, 17 questions about family structure and parents' situation, definition of sexual health, information about sexual health information, methods of family planning and information about the morning after pills, use and provision of the morning after pill a questionnaire consisting of 32 questions were used.

Approval was received via decision of Bitlis Eren University Ethics Committee Directorate dated 29.11.2016 and numbered 2016/15-V. Pre-test was carried out before the research.

The researchers applied the questionnaire to 398 (82.9%) out of 480 students studying in Health School of Bitlis Eren University during the fall semester of 2016-2017 academic year under observation. Reasons for not being able to reach some students were as follows; refusal of the questionnaires and dropping out the school during the study period.

The data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0 package program. In the statistical evaluation, percent distributions and chi-square significance test were used and the value of $p < 0.05$ was accepted as significant.

Those who did not answer the question asked in the assessments were not included but only those who answered the question mentioned were evaluated.

Results

398 students from the departments of Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetic and Social Services at Health School participated in the study.

It was found that 43.3% of the students included in the study were male and 56.7% were female. Mean age of the sample group was 21.1 ± 2.3 (Table1).

It was determined that 45.9% of the students in the nursing department were male and 54.1% were female; 35.0% of the students in the Nutrition and Dietetics department were male and 65.0% were female; 48.2% of the students in the Social Service department were male and 51.8% were female.

It was determined that 22.8% of the students in the sample group were in the age group of 17-19 years, 72.9% were in the age group of 20-24 years, and 4.3% were in the age group of 25-35 years.

It was found that 28.1% of the male students participating in the study expressed that they stayed in dormitories, 50.3% resided at home with their friends, 4.7% resided at home with their relatives, 6.4% resided at home alone, and 10.5% expressed that they lived with their families at home.

It was determined that while 92.6% of the students staying in dormitories were in the state dormitories, 7.4% stayed in the

private dormitories.

In women, this rate was 80.4%, 8.5% 0.9%, 1.3%, and 8.9%, respectively.

It was found that 95.7% of the students were single. 71.5% of the students were from nuclear family, 27.0% from extended family, and 1.5% from fragmented family.

It was determined that 19.0% of the students had 9 or more siblings, 33.7% had 6-8 siblings, 38.2% had 3-5 siblings, and 9.1% had 0-2 siblings.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics

	n	%
Gender		
Man	171	43.3
Woman	224	56.7
Department		
Social Service	137	34.4
1st Year	20	21.1
2nd Year	22	26.5
3rd Year	52	46.8
4th Year	43	39.4
Nursing	137	34.4
1st Year	37	38.9
2nd Year	29	34.9
3rd Year	37	33.3
4th Year	34	31.2
Nutrition and Dietetics	124	31.2
1st Year	38	40.0
2nd Year	32	38.6
3rd Year	22	19.8
4th Year	32	29.4
Year		
1st Year	95	23.9
2nd Year	83	20.9
3rd Year	111	27.9
4th Year	109	27.4
Age Group		
17-19	89	22.8
20-24	285	72.9
25-35	17	4.3
Marital Status		
Married	17	4.3
Single	379	95.7

It was found that 35.8% of the students participating in the study stated that they lived in the city center, 38.1% in the district center and 26.2% in the village for the longest time (Table 2).

When the students' status of hearing about the protection with the morning after pills was examined, 43.9% of the nursing students, 23.6% of the nutrition and dietetics students, and 32.5% of the social service students stated that they heard about the protection with the morning after pills. A significant difference was found between their department and their status of hearing about the morning after pills ($p < 0.05$, $\chi^2 = 14.978$, $df = 2$) (Table 3).

Table 2. Comparison of the department of the students participating in the study and their status of hearing about the morning after pills

Status of hearing about the morning after pills and the departments of the students							
Department	I heard		I did not hear		Total		Statistics
	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*	
Social service	51	32.5	84	36.5	135	34.9	p<0,05 x²=14.978 df=2
Nursing	69	43.9	60	26.1	129	33.3	
Nutrition and Dietetics	37	23.6	86	37.4	123	31.8	
Total	157	40.6	230	59.4	387	100.0	

* Column percentage

Table 3. Comparison of the gender of the students participating in the study and their status of hearing about the morning after pills

Gender and the status of hearing morning after pills							Statistics
Gender	I heard		I did not hear		Total		
	n	% *	n	% *	n	%*	
Male	81	51.9	85	37.3	166	43.2	p<0,05 x²=14.978 df=2
Female	75	48.1	143	62.7	218	56.8	
Total	156	40.6	228	59.4	384	100.0	

* Column percentage

It was found that 51.9% of the male students and 48.1% of the female students stated that they heard about the morning after pills. A significant difference was determined between the gender and the status of hearing about the morning after pills ($p<0.05$, $x^2=8.092$, $df=1$) (Table 4).

It was determined that 13.4% of the 1st year students, 23.6% of the 2nd year students, 22.9% of the 3rd year students and 40.1% of the 4th year students stated that they heard about the morning after pills. A significant difference was found between the year and the status of hearing about the morning after pills ($p<0.05$, $x^2=28.689$, $df=3$) (Table 5).

It was determined that 18.6% of the students in age group of 17-19 years, 45.5% of those in age group of 20-24 years, and 70.6% of those in age group of 25-35 years stated that they heard about the morning after pills. A significant difference was determined between the age groups and the status of hearing about the morning after pills ($p<0.05$, $x^2=26.349$, $df=2$) (Table 6).

The rate of the students who had girlfriend or boyfriend and heard about the morning after pills was 74.0%. There was a significant difference between having a girlfriend or boyfriend and the status of hearing about the morning after pills ($p<0.05$, $x^2=20.403$, $df=1$) (Table 7).

Table 4. Comparison of the year of the students participating in the study and their status of hearing about the morning after pills

Year and status of hearing the morning after pills							
	I heard		I did not hear		Total		Statistics
	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*	
1st year	21	13.4	70	30.4	91	23.5	p<0.05 x ² =28.689 df=3
2nd year	37	23.6	44	19.1	81	20.9	
3rd year	36	22.9	71	30.9	107	27.6	
4th year	63	40.1	45	19.6	108	27.9	
Total	157	40.6	230	59.4	387	100.0	

* Column percentage

Table 5. Comparison of the age group of the students participating in the study and their status of hearing about the morning after pills

Age group and the status of hearing about the morning after pills							Statistics
Age group	I heard		I did not hear		Total		
	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*	
17-19 years	16	18.6	70	81.4	86	100.0	p<0.05 x ² =26.349 df=2
20-24 years	126	45.5	151	54.5	277	100.0	
25-35 years	12	70.6	5	29.4	17	100.0	
Total	154	40.5	226	59.5	380	100.0	

*Row percentage

Table 6. Comparison of the marital status of the students participating in the study and their status of hearing about the morning after pills

Marital status and the status of hearing about the morning after pills							
	I have a girlfriend/boyfriend		I have no girlfriend/boyfriend		Total		Statistics
Hearing about the morning after pills	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*	
Yes	114	74.0	40	26.0	154	100.0	p<0.05 x ² =20.403 df=1
No	114	50.9	110	49.1	224	100.0	
Total	228	60.3	150	39.7	378	100.0	

*Row percentage

Table 7. Comparison of the age group of the students participating in the study and their status of hearing about the morning after pills

Age group and the status of hearing about the morning after pills							
	I heard		I did not hear		Total		Statistics
Marital Status	n	% *	n	%*	n	% *	
Married	14	82.4	3	17.6	17	100.0	p<0.05 x²=14.281 df=2
Single	143	38.9	225	61.1	368	100.0	
Total	157	40.8	228	59.2	385	100.0	

*Row percentage

It was found that 82.4% of married students said that they heard about the morning after pills. A significant difference was found between the marital status and the status of hearing about the morning after pills (p<0.05, x²=14.281 df=2) (Table 8).

hearing were examined, 92.9% of the students who heard about the morning after pills at school were nursing students and 7.1% were social services. It was determined that 67.4% of the students stated that they did not hear any contraceptive method to use after an unprotected sexual intercourse.

When the students' sources of hearing about the after morning pills

Table 8. Comparison of the department of the students participating in the study and their sources of hearing about the morning after pills

Sources of hearing about the morning after pills and the departments of the students									
	Nursing		Nutrition and Dietetics		Social Service		Total		Statistics
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
TV/ Radio	6	23.1	12	46.2	8	30.8	26	100.0	p<0.05 x²=8.771 df=2
Friend	17	35.4	11	22.9	20	41.7	48	100.0	100.0 p>0.05 x²=2.605 df=2
Newspaper/Magazine	7	53.8	4	30.8	2	15.4	13	100.0	p>0.05 x2=1.980 df=2
Medical staff	14	45.2	9	29.0	8	25.8	31	100.0	p>0.05 x²=0.971 df=2
Internet	12	34.3	10	28.6	13	37.1	35	100.0	p>0.05 x²=1.266 df=2
School	26	92.9	0	0.00	2	7.1	28	100.0	p<0.05 x²=36.237 df=2
Pharmacy	1	100.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.00	p>0.05 x²=1.364 df=2

* Column percentage

Discussion

The International Family Planning Federation's Declaration on Reproductive and Sexual Rights emphasizes that young people should have knowledge and education on sexuality and should have the best possible sexual and reproductive health services [10]. In the present study, 40.6% of the students stated that they heard about the morning after pills to use for contraception after an unprotected sexual intercourse (Table 2).

According to the 2007 Youth and Reproductive Health Survey, 27% of the youth said that they heard about the emergency contraception. The results of the present study were higher than this rate which may be associated with by the fact that the students had education about sexual health [11]. In their study, Koluacik et al., showed that 40.8% of the university students had knowledge about the morning after pills which was similar to the results of the present study [6]. In a study conducted in Turkey, 14.3% of the university students stated that they had knowledge about the emergency contraception [12].

In a study conducted by Kaya et al., on first-year students of education faculty, 19.4% of the students stated that they had knowledge about the morning after pills [13]. These results may be lower than results of the present study, which may be due to the fact that while Yapıcı et al., studied the first-year students, Kaya et al., studied the university students. In a study conducted in Uganda, it was found that 45% of the university students stated that they heard about the emergency contraception pills [14]. In a study conducted in Nigeria, 72.6% of the university students stated that they had knowledge about the emergency contraception [15]. It was reported that 23.1% of the university students in the South India heard about the emergency contraception [16]. In the study conducted in Cameroon, 63% of the students heard about the emergency contraception [17]. A study conducted in Switzerland revealed that 52% of the university students used emergency contraception pill [18].

In the studies conducted abroad, the results of the studies in Uganda, Nigeria, Cameroon and Switzerland were higher than results of the present study. This may be associated with the differences in working years, regions, cultures, sexual life styles, and presentation of the reproductive health services.

When the status of hearing about the protection with the morning after pills was examined, 43.9% of the nursing students, 23.6% of the nutrition and dietetic students, and 32.5% of the social service students stated that they have heard about the protection with the morning after pills. A significant difference was found between their department and their status of hearing about the morning after pills (Table 2). The difference between the departments may be caused by that fact that the courses about the sexuality and reproductive health and family planning methods were more intensive for the nursing students compared to the other students studying in the other departments.

It was reported in a study conducted by Yapıcı et al., in Mersin, Turkey that there was a positive correlation between the status of knowing the morning after pills and receiving the education of health sciences [12]. In the study conducted by Çelik et al. in 2007 with the nursing and midwifery students, 54.3% of the students

were reported to hear about the morning after pills [19]. In a study conducted with university students in India, it was determined that while the rate of hearing emergency contraception was 23.1%, the rate of hearing any emergency contraception method was 41% in another study conducted with nursing students [16,20].

In another study conducted with medical students in India, 100% of the students knew about the morning after pills [21]. In a study conducted in Brazil, 96% of the nursing students stated that they heard about the emergency contraception [22]. The studies support the fact that there was a correlation between the status of having health education and hearing about the emergency contraception. 51.9% of male students and 48.1% of female students stated that they heard about the morning after pills. There was a significant difference between gender and the status of hearing about the morning after pills (Table 3). This may be due to the fact that male students accessed to the internet and information sources more easily, they can talk to their friends about sexual subjects, and they were more inquisitive and curious about the sexual matters. It is thought-provoking that the women who will experience pregnancy and take measures if necessary heard about the morning after pills less than men.

In a study investigating the knowledge, attitude, and behaviors of the university students about the sexual health, it was reported that men had more active sexual lives than girls, most of the students wanted to receive education about sexual health issues, and the gender was effective in determining knowledge, attitude, and behaviors about the sexual health [23]. In Koluacik et al.,'s study, 45.2% of the male students and 35.1% of the female students knew the morning after pills. [6]. In the postgraduate thesis of Çolakoglu, 47.3% of the male students and 35.2% of the female students were reported to have knowledge about emergency contraception methods [24].

In the study conducted by Uzuner et al., with women in the reproductive age, they reported that the rate of those who said that they heard one of the expressions of emergency contraception, morning after pills or emergency contraception method was 31.7% [9]. According to the 2007 Youth and Reproductive Health Survey, the awareness rate of morning after pills was 64.7% among males and 52.5% among females [11]. In a study conducted on adolescents aged between 13-25 years in San Francisco, 86% of women and 70% of men expressed that they heard the emergency contraception [25]. In a study conducted with 1st year medical students in India, 100% of male students and 100% of female students stated that they heard about the emergency contraception [21].

In a university in Italy, 74% of the students said that they were active in terms of sexuality, 66.4% stated that they used contraceptive method, and 31.1% stated that they used emergency contraception. The rate of using emergency contraception in female students was 21.8% [26].

13.4% of the 1st year students, 23.6% of the 2nd year students, 22.9% of the 3rd year students and 40.1% of the 4th year students stated that they knew the morning after pills. A significant difference was found between the year and the status of hearing the morning after pills (Table 4). The reason for this may be the completion of education in the higher classes and an increase in

knowledge of sexuality with increasing age.

In the study conducted by Koluçak et al., in 2011 with university students in Malatya, it was found that while the rate of hearing about the morning after pills was 33.7% in 1st year students, it was 46.1% for the 4th year students [6].

It was determined that 18.6% of the students in age group of 17-19 years, 45.5% of the students in age group of 20-24 years, and 70.6% of the students in age group of 25-35 years expressed that they heard about the morning after pills. A significant difference was found between the age groups and the status of hearing about the morning after pills (Table 5).

In the study conducted by Koluçak et al., in 2011 with university students in Malatya, the rate of knowing the morning after pills for the students in age group of 15-19 years was 26.2%; whereas, this rate was 43.2% for the age group of 20-24 and 54.4% for the age group of 25 years and over [6].

The rate of the students who had girlfriends or boyfriends and heard about the morning after pills was 74.0%. There was a significant difference between the status of hearing about the morning after pills and having girlfriend or boyfriend (Table 6).

It was determined that 82.4% of the married students stated that they heard the morning after pills. A significant difference was found between the marital status and the morning after pills (Table 7).

It was 92.9% of the students who heard about the morning after pills at school were nursing students and 7.1% were social services. Participation in health sciences education and the inclusion of courses such as sexuality and reproductive health and family planning methods within the scope of the curriculum may have an impact on the knowledge of the morning after pills.

In a study conducted in Britain to investigate the tendency about the emergency contraception of 16-44 year-old women, it was reported that the use of emergency contraception was gradually increasing and single ones used emergency contraception more compared to the married ones [27].

Conclusion

The level of knowing the emergency contraception in this group who was studying in Health School and would provide health service and guide people in future was very low. Women knew emergency contraception less than man.

All people in the reproductive age, especially women and girls, have the right to access to emergency contraception for unintended pregnancies.

These methods can be integrated into national education programs, especially health and medical schools, family planning programs and emergency health services.

Short public service advertisements can be provided that would increase the awareness level of emergency contraception.

Planned educations can be conducted for the young people studying at high school and university level.

Counseling and support centers open to the needs of young people in need can be established.

By creating health pages for the students in the web sites of the universities, informing about the health and reproductive health can be made.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interest

Financial Disclosure

The financial support for this study was provided by the investigators themselves.

Ethical approval

Before the study, permissions were obtained from local ethical committee.

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