Fertility Considerations and Attitudes About Family Planning Among Women with Cystic Fibrosis

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Our objective was to explore knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about pregnancy and contraceptive decision-making among reproductive-aged women with cystic fibrosis. In this qualitative study, we used purposive sampling of reproductive age women enrolled in the Adult Cystic Fibrosis program at Penn Medicine. We conducted semistructured one-on-one interviews lasting 30-60 min. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. We interviewed 24 women. Participants described shortened life span, personal health status and impact of cystic fibrosis on a potential child as three factors that were central to family planning. Future pregnancy intentions, perception of fertility including misconceptions and provider counseling influenced related contraception utilization. Women with cystic fibrosis described thoughtful considerations about desired pregnancies to be planned during times of optimal health. Gaps in knowledge may limit a woman's ability to make the most informed family planning decisions. Having cystic fibrosis directly affects women's decisions around pregnancy and family planning. Understanding what motivates women with cystic fibrosis to use or not to use contraception can improve family planning care delivery to this population.

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