
Developing Emergency Department–Based Education About Emergency Contraception: Adolescent Preferences

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OBJECTIVES: The objective was to identify adolescent preferences for emergency department (ED)-based education about emergency contraception.

METHODS: This was a cross-sectional computerized survey, using adaptive conjoint analysis (ACA). Patients were eligible if they were females ages 14 through 19 years old and were seeking care in one of two urban EDs. Patients were excluded if they were too ill to participate in the survey or if they were non-English speaking. Participants completed a computerized survey that used ACA, a technique that can be used to assess patients' relative preferences for services. ACA uses the individual's answers to update and refine questions through trade-off comparisons, so that each respondent answers a customized set of questions. The survey assessed preferences for the following attributes of emergency contraception education: who should deliver the education, if anyone (e.g., nurse, doctor); how the education should be delivered (e.g., by a person or via video); how often the education should be offered if patients were to frequent the ED (e.g., every time or only when asking for it); length (e.g., 5 minutes, 10 minutes); and chief complaint that would trigger the education (e.g., headache or stomach pain).

RESULTS: A total of 223 patients were enrolled (37.2% at Hospital 1 and 62.8% at Hospital 2). The mean (\pm SD) age of the participants was 16.1 (\pm 1.3) years. Just over half (55%) reported a history of sexual activity; 8% reported a history of pregnancy. Overall, the participants preferred education that was delivered by a person, specifically a doctor or nurse. They preferred a slightly longer education session and preferred education directed at patients seeking care in the ED for complaints potentially related to sexual activity.

CONCLUSIONS: Adolescents have specific preferences for how education about emergency contraception would best serve their needs. This information can inform clinicians as they work to improve adolescents' knowledge about pregnancy prevention and emergency contraception in particular.

Authors:

Mollen CJ, Miller MK, Hayes KL, Wittink MN, Barg FK

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