



CONTRACEPTION KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES AMONG HISPANIC WOMEN

**Laura Sofia Ortega-Flores, Ana C. Sanchez-Birkhead, PhD, WHNP-BC, APRN
Department of Nursing**

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Unintended pregnancies are among the most troubling public health concerns and a major reproductive health issue in women's health (Yazdkhasti, Pourreza, Pirak & Abdi, 2015). Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended, with the highest rates among Blacks, Hispanics, and teenagers between the ages of 15 to 19 years of age (Craig, Dehlendorf, Borrero, Harper & Rocca, 2014). Unintended pregnancies mainly result from not using contraception and inconsistent or incorrect use of effective contraceptive methods (Tonlaar & Ayoola, 2014). In order to decrease rates of unintended pregnancies, we need to better understand the social and cultural influences, level of awareness and education, and barriers to access among all women (particularly those at higher-risk) about the use of contraception. Greater efforts to comprehend the reasons women experience unintended pregnancies will ultimately lower disparities and improve quality of life for all women. The purpose of this project was to better understand the facilitators and barriers of the use of contraception among a group of reproductive-age Hispanic women.

Methods: A semi-structured interview guide was developed and administered to eight primiparous Hispanic women, ages eighteen and older. The interview guide included questions about their use of contraception, awareness of various methods, level of education about birth control and the social/cultural, familial, and religious influences regarding their decision to use

contraception. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for data analysis. Recurrent codes and themes were identified by the bilingual, bicultural investigator and faculty mentor.

Results: Four main themes were identified including; family influence, education provided vs. needed, religious influence, and the women's role related to birth control. Hispanic women in this study reported that these factors influenced their decision to use or not use contraception.

Conclusion: This pilot study highlighted the important factors that affect contraception use and decision making among Hispanic women of reproductive-age. Although the findings from this small sample cannot be generalized for the whole population of Hispanic women in Utah, they shed light on important factors that should be considered by healthcare professionals in women's health. Exploring women's contraceptive knowledge and attitudes will allow clinicians to better educate and empower women with the necessary information for them to make the best informed choices and decrease the number of unintended pregnancies. These findings also contribute to the gaps in research in this critical area of women's health and help to inform efforts aimed at increasing health equity and decreasing health disparities.