

Obstetrician-gynecologists' views on contraception and natural family planning: a national survey

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OBJECTIVE: The objective of the study was to characterize beliefs about contraception among obstetrician-gynecologists.

STUDY DESIGN: National mailed survey of 1800 US obstetrician-gynecologists .Criterion variables were whether physicians have a moral or ethical objection to, and whether they would offer, 6 common contraceptive methods. Covariates included physician demographic and religious characteristics.

RESULTS: One thousand one hundred fifty-four of 1760 eligible obstetrician-gynecologists responded (66%). Some obstetrician-gynecologists object to intrauterine devices (4.4% object, 3.6% would not offer), progesterone implants and/or injections (1.7% object, 2.1% would not offer), tubal ligations (1.5% object, 1.5% would not offer), oral contraceptive pills (1.3% object, 1.1% would not offer), condoms (1.3% object, 1.8% would not offer), and the diaphragm or cervical cap with spermicide (1.3% object, 3.3% would not offer). Religious physicians were more likely to object (odds ratio, 7.4) and to refuse to provide a contraceptive (odds ratio, 1.9).

CONCLUSION: Controversies about contraception are ongoing but among obstetrician-gynecologists, objections and refusals to provide contraceptives are infrequent.

Key words: birth control, contraception, ethics, natural family planning, religion