Contraindications to progestin-only oral contraceptive pills among reproductive-aged women.

BACKGROUND: Progestin-only oral contraceptive pills (POPs) have fewer contraindications to use compared to combined pills. However, the overall prevalence of contraindications to POPs among reproductive-aged women has not been assessed.

STUDY DESIGN: We collected information on contraindications to POPs in two studies: (1) the Self-Screening Study, a sample of 1267 reproductive-aged women in the general population in El Paso, TX, and (2) the Prospective Study of OC Users, a sample of current oral contraceptive (OC) users who obtained their pills in El Paso clinics (n=532) or over the counter (OTC) in Mexican pharmacies (n=514). In the Self-Screening Study, we also compared women's self-assessment of contraindications using a checklist to a clinician's evaluation.

RESULTS: Only 1.6% of women in the Self-Screening Study were identified as having at least one contraindication to POPs. The sensitivity of the checklist for identifying women with at least one contraindication was 75.0% [95% confidence interval (CI): 50.6%-90.4%], and the specificity was 99.4% (95% CI: 98.8%-99.7%). In total, 0.6% of women in the Prospective Study of OC Users reported having any contraindication to POPs. There were no significant differences between clinic and OTC users.
CONCLUSION: The prevalence of contraindications to POPs was very low in these samples. POPs may be the best choice for the first OTC oral contraceptive in the United States.