Predictors of inconsistent contraceptive use among adolescent girls: findings from a prospective study.

PURPOSE: To assess the independent effects of various behavioral and psychosocial antecedents on contraceptive use among a sample of low-income African-American adolescent females.

METHODS: Stepwise logistic regression was used to calculate odds ratios for baseline predictors of inconsistent contraceptive use six months later. Study participants include 375 nonpregnant African-American girls aged 14-18 years who reported sexual activity in the previous six months. Data were collected using a self-administered survey, individual interview and urine pregnancy test.

RESULTS: Adolescents who were inconsistent contraceptive users at follow-up were more likely to have reported a desire for pregnancy, previous inconsistent contraceptive use, less frequent communication with their partners about prevention issues, and an increased number of lifetime sexual partners at the baseline assessment. Of equal importance was the finding that a previous pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection did not influence future contraceptive behaviors.

CONCLUSIONS: Clinicians can play an important role in counseling adolescents about sexual health and dispelling misperceptions that hinder consistent contraceptive use. Findings from this research could have significant implications for the development of effective sexually transmitted
infection (STI) and pregnancy prevention programs for adolescents and can help in guiding clinicians toward relevant treatment practices.


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