

Effects of Contraceptives on Sexually Transmitted Disease Rates and Unintended Pregnancy Rates

Issue: Liberalized contraceptive policies and increased contraceptive use encourage a growth in sexual activity. This opens the door for a number of risks including STDs and unintended pregnancies.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

- A 2013 study showed that over-the-counter access to emergency contraception led to an increase in STD rates, both overall and for females.¹
- Easy access to emergency contraception is associated with an increased willingness to engage in risky sexual behavior.²
- Researchers found that women who use hormonal contraceptives are more than three times as likely to become infected with chlamydia or gonorrhea over the course of a year.³
- UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS), historically an advocate of condom distribution, acknowledged, "Prevention campaigns relying primarily on the use of condoms have not been responsible for turning around any generalized epidemic."⁴
- While countries such as South Africa that focused on encouraging condom use saw their rates of HIV infection rise, countries like Uganda and Kenya that focused on promoting abstinence saw a two-thirds decline in casual sex and HIV infection.⁵
- From 1996 to 2007, Zimbabwe witnessed a nearly 50 percent drop in the number of people living with AIDS. During this period, the national prevalence of condom use remained stagnant, but casual, commercial, and extramarital sex all declined considerably.⁶



Unintended Pregnancies

- Increased access to emergency contraceptive pills has not been shown to reduce the rate of unintended pregnancies.⁷
- Unintended pregnancies proceed more and more from failed contraception.⁸
- A Spanish study showed that as contraceptive use increased, so did abortion rates;⁹ likewise, an Indian study found that having used contraception is associated with increased odds of procuring an abortion.¹⁰
- Among abortion-seeking adult women, 55 percent conceived despite self-reporting contraceptive use.¹¹
- 80 percent of children conceived due to condom-failure pregnancies are aborted, compared to 75.3 percent of those conceived with oral contraceptives, 50.1 percent with IUDs, and 32.9 percent with sterilization.¹²

Conclusion: Increased sexual intercourse is associated with a rise in the rate of STDs and unintended pregnancies. MARRI research available online¹³ shows that effective policy will promote sexual monogamy and fidelity rather than contraceptive use and casual sex.

¹ Christine Piette Durrance, "The Effects of Increased Access to Emergency Contraception on Sexually Transmitted Disease and Abortion Rates," *Economic Inquiry* 51, no. 3 (2013)

² Sourafel Girma and David Paton, Nottingham University Business School, Nottingham, United Kingdom, "The Impact of Emergency Birth Control on Teen Pregnancy and STI's," *Journal of Health Economics* 30 (2011): 373-380.

³ Morrison, Charles S et al., "Hormonal Contraceptive Use, Cervical Ectopy, and the Acquisition of Cervical Infections," *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, September 2004 Vol. 31, No. 9, p. 561-567

⁴ Thomas Armstrong, "Abstinence in Africa," (December 1, 2009), accessed: January 7, 2013, <http://www.examiner.com/africa-headlines-in-national/abstinence-africa>.

⁵ Matthew Hanley, "Reducing Risk, Increasing AIDS," *First Things* (June 2010), accessed January 7, 2013, <http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2010/06/reducing-risk-increasing-aids>.

⁶ Matthew Hanley, "Zimbabwe's 'Surprising' AIDS success," *The Catholic Thing* (June 2011), accessed: January 7, 2013, <http://www.thecatholicthing.org/columns/2011/zimbabwes-surprising-aids-success.html>.

⁷ EG Raymond, J Trussell, and CB Polis, "Population Effect of Increased Access to Emergency Contraceptive Pills: A Systemic Review" *Obstet Gynecol* 1, no. 109 (2007): 181-8

⁸ Joseph Burke and Catherine Pakaluk, "Private Acts and Public Policy: The Economics of Contraception and Abortion," presented at the Society of Catholic Social Scientists Annual Meeting, De Sales University, October 24-25, 2008.

⁹ J. Dueñas, I. Lete, R. Bermejo, A. Arbat, E. Pérez-Campos, J. Martínez-Salmeán, I. Serrano, J. Doval and C. Coll, "Trends in the use of contraceptive methods and voluntary interruption of pregnancy in the Spanish population during 1997-2007," *Contraception* 83, no. 1 (January 2011): 83, 85.

¹⁰ J. Edmeades, S. M. Lee-Rife and A. Malhotra, "Women and Reproductive Control: The Nexus between Abortion and Contraceptive Use in Madhya Pradesh, India," *Studies in Family Planning* 41, no. 2 (2010): 82.

¹¹ William A. Fisher, S. Sukhbir Singh, Paul A. Shuper, Mark Carey, Felicia Otchet, Deborah MacLean-Brine, Diane Dal Bello and Jennifer Gunter, "Characteristics of women undergoing repeat induced abortion," *CMAJ - Canadian Medical Association Journal* 172, no. 5 (March 1, 2005): 638.

¹² D. L. Wang, H. Yan and Z. J. Feng, "Abortion as a Backup Method for Contraceptive Failure in China," *Journal of Biosocial Science* 36, no. 3 (2004): 281.

¹³ www.marri.us For example, "Context and Effects of Contraception: Pleasure-Seeking at the Cost of Intimacy"