Management of women who have continued to use Nexplanon® beyond the three year product licence

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A recently published multinational trial reports no pregnancies among 311 women who extended use of their existing Nexplanon® to four years and 204 women who continued to five years of use.[1]

These women were initially part of a randomised study comparing effectiveness of Nexplanon to that of the levonorgestrel implant. Of the 995 women who were randomised to Nexplanon in that study, three became pregnant during the first three years of Nexplanon use. Three hundred and ninety women from the study then consented to continuing to use the same implant beyond the product licence.

Similarly, McNicholas et al. (2015) reported that they observed were no pregnancies amongst 123 US women who extended Nexplanon use to four years and 34 women who extended use to five years.[2]

The CEU consider that evidence is currently insufficient to routinely recommend extended use of Nexplanon beyond the three year product licence. The numbers of women in these studies are small and few women over 70kg were included. The data are, however generally reassuring that the risk of pregnancy during the fourth and fifth years of use of Nexplanon is low. Clinicians can explain to women who present after unprotected intercourse (UPSI) during the fourth year of use of Nexplanon that the pregnancy risk is low and that emergency contraception is unlikely to be required. If a pregnancy test is negative, a woman in this situation can have the implant replaced immediately or can quick start combined hormonal contraception, the progestogen-only pill (or, if none of these are acceptable, the progestogen-only injectable). She must be advised to use condoms until the new method becomes effective and to have a further pregnancy test three weeks after the last UPSI.

The FSRH Emergency Contraception 2017 and Quick Starting 2017 guidelines will include recommendations relating to recently expired Nexplanon.

References
