

Embargoed until 4pm, 27th April

Top 10 most important research issues in contraception are identified by patients and healthcare professionals

Effective interventions to increase contraception uptake and continuation ranks the highest among concerns; robust methodology was used to arrive at top 10 to inform future research into contraception

Individuals who use, have used or have considered using contraception as well as healthcare professionals who provide contraceptive care have come together to define the most important research issues in contraception. These are questions which are crucial for patients and healthcare professionals alike, but are only partially or not-at-all answered by science to date. The top 10 is the outcome of a two-year project led by the Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare (FSRH), the Contraception Priority Setting Partnership (Contraception PSP). The aim was to identify what individuals across the sexual and reproductive health community deem to be the most important unaddressed research concerns in contraception in order to inform future research in this area. This is the first time that FSRH has taken a systematic approach to ask users and healthcare professionals what kind of research they think should be conducted on contraception. It is an invaluable opportunity to set priorities which might have been overlooked by researchers themselves or the pharmaceutical industry.

The Contraception PSP followed a robust methodology entailing surveys and workshops; the surveys have been answered by more than 700 respondents combined. The process was overseen by the James Lind Alliance (JLA), a non-profit internationally recognised for its robust process for shared priority setting, supported by NHS' National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). FSRH also partnered with key actors in sexual and reproductive healthcare, such as the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), the Family Planning Association (FPA), British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS), Marie Stopes International, Primary Care Women's Health Forum, Institute of Health Visiting (IHV) and Brook.

The top 10 research issues are being launched today during FSRH's [Annual Scientific Meeting](#) (ASM) in Cardiff, UK, 27-28 April. The meeting brings together a range of experts and practitioners from the sexual and reproductive sector to explore the latest developments in evidence-based research.

Top 10 research issues in contraception	
1	<i>Which interventions (decision support aids, ease of access, motivational interviewing) increase uptake and continuation of effective contraception including long-acting methods (implants, injections and intrauterine contraceptives)?</i>
2	<i>What is the risk of side effects (vaginal bleeding, mood, weight gain, libido) with hormonal contraception (pills, patches, rings, implants, injections and hormonal intrauterine system)?</i>
3	<i>What are the long-term effects of using contraception (pills, patches, rings, injections, implants, intrauterine) on fertility, cancer and miscarriage?</i>
4	<i>What models of care increase access and support decision-making for vulnerable groups (such as young people, people who don't speak or read English)?</i>

5	<i>Which interventions are safe and effective for women who have irregular bleeding on long-acting hormonal contraception?</i>
6	<i>Does pharmacy provision of contraceptive services increase uptake and/or continuation of contraception?</i>
7	<i>What are the risks or benefits to using combined hormonal contraception (pill, patch or ring) continuously to stop or reduce periods?</i>
8	<i>What factors (advice from friends, family, professionals, beliefs, experience) influence women making decisions about contraception?</i>
9	<i>Are there tests or factors such as age that can reliably identify women who no longer require contraception around the menopause (including women using methods which can stop periods such as implants, hormonal coils, pills)?</i>
10	<i>Are there effective new methods of contraception available for men?</i>

Dr Judith Stephenson, chair of FSRH's Clinical Studies Group and Margaret Pyke Professor of Sexual & Reproductive Health, commented:

“As far as I know this is the first time anywhere that people who use contraception have been asked systematically about the kind of research they want us to do on their behalf. There are interesting differences between the priorities of patients and healthcare professionals, so reaching consensus on the top 10 priorities has been a really useful process to guide future research into contraception.”

Join the conversation on Twitter by using the hashtags #ContraceptionTop10, #FSRHASM and following @FSRH_UK

Ends

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Notes to editors:

- The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare is the largest professional membership body working in sexual and reproductive health in the UK. It supports healthcare professionals to deliver high quality care. Its vision is of a world where quality SRH is accessible to all. It grants diplomas, certificates, fellowships and equivalent recognition of specialist knowledge and skills in family planning and reproductive health care. It has nearly 16,000 members - doctors and nurses of whom over 10,000 are general practitioners. It promotes conferences and lectures, provides members with an advisory service and publishes *The Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care*. For more information please visit www.fsrh.org
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