Reasons for Termination of Pregnancy in Two Age Groups

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BACKGROUND & AIM
Australian women aged 20-24 represent the most frequent age group for termination of pregnancy (TOP)\(^1\). However, an increasing number of TOP is occurring among women \(\geq 35\)\(^2\). Our audit aimed to compare reasons for TOP and pre-TOP contraceptive use in these two age groups.

METHODS
The Women’s Clinic on Richmond Hill (WCRH) is a private termination service in Melbourne. 50 consecutive medical records of women \(\geq 35\) who attended for a TOP in February 2007 were examined and compared with 50 consecutive files of women \(\leq 25\) who had TOP during the same time.

RESULTS

Table 1: Key features and frequent reasons for TOP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason Frequently Given for TOP</th>
<th>(\leq 25) n (%)</th>
<th>(\geq 35) n (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Already have children</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>17 (34)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus on career/studies</td>
<td>19 (38)</td>
<td>17 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotionally unprepared for children</td>
<td>31 (62)</td>
<td>16 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial concerns</td>
<td>29 (58)</td>
<td>16 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed family</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons- following life plans, lacking support, have aged dependents, uncertain of paternity</td>
<td>28 (56)</td>
<td>9 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship issues</td>
<td>20 (40)</td>
<td>14 (28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Contraception before TOP

CONTRACEPTIVE USE PRE-TOP
12\% \(6/50\) of younger women’s medical notes and 42\% \(21/50\) of older women’s medical notes did not specify the contraceptive method used at the time of becoming pregnant.

76\% \(34/45\) of younger women and 69\% \(20/29\) of older women used some form of contraception pre-TOP, of which about half used non-hormonal methods of condoms, withdrawal or natural family planning (NFP).

DISCUSSION
• Women \(\geq 35\) had similar reasons for TOP as women \(\leq 25\), but having completed family, focussing on existing children, and not prepared for further child-rearing were also frequent reasons.

• Despite being in ongoing relationships, women \(\geq 35\) had either not used contraception or avoided highly effective methods such as Implanon and Intra uterine Device (IUD).

• This audit was limited by a lack of contraceptive data. It is unclear if women were not asked, if it was not recorded, or if it meant no contraception was used. Despite this, findings are similar to other studies\(^3, 5\).

• Further research is required:
  - why women \(\geq 35\) choose not to use contraception or avoid highly effective methods such as Implanon and Intra uterine Device (IUD)
  - if current family planning strategies for women \(\geq 35\) are appropriate or effective.

REFERENCES

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