

Polish Gynaecological Society



Statements of panel experts from the Polish Gynaecological Society
regarding Natural Family Planning Methods
for contraception

Poznań, 14th of November 2010

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Panel experts belonging to the Polish
Gynaecological Society

Chairman:

prof. dr. hab. Marian Szamatowicz (Białystok)

Members:

prof. dr. hab. Agata Karowicz – Bilińska (Łódź)

prof. dr. hab. Jan Kotarski (Lublin)

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The above Panel experts attended a meeting on the 14th of November 2010 and after analyzing the literature, statistics and testimonials provided the following expert opinions.

Introduction

The primary functions of contraception is the prevention of unwanted pregnancy

- Age (too young or too old)
- Economics (lacking the means of guarantying appropriate status for the family)
- Health (probability of deteriorating in the woman's health)
- Genetics (possibility of giving birth to a child with an incurable genetic disease)
- Worldview (an unplanned pregnancy)

The fundamental criteria, but not limited to, in the evaluation of contraception methods is "effectiveness", because the result of non effective method is unwanted pregnancy, which either will be accepted or terminated. Tertium non datur.

Natural contraception methods are prevention by sexual abstinence in the fertile phase of the women's cycle.

The universal measure for the effectiveness of contraception methods is the "Pearl index", which measures the number of pregnancies per 100 couples using a particular method within 1 year. The lower the value the better effectiveness.

The Pearl index in natural contraception methods varies from 0,6 to 25. WHO does not include natural contraception method as contraception.

Natural contraception methods shall be recommended to:

- women who due to their worldview do not accept other contraception methods
- when a medical condition exists or an unwillingness for using other contraception methods – mainly hormonal.
- women who accept pregnancy as it happens

The obvious inconvenience of natural contraception methods is sexual abstinence lasting 9 – 18 days which limits satisfaction and spontaneity in a relationship when either the man or women has increased libido. Coitus interruptus which has a Pearl index of 8-17 is often wrongly classified as natural contraception method. There are many methods which identify fertile days in a women's cycle.

Natural contraception methods

Calendar – base (Ogino – Knaus) method

In order to evaluate the fertile phase, women must know how long her longest and shortest cycle lasted. The first day of the fertile phase is identified by subtracting 20 from the shortest cycle and the last fertile day by subtracting 11 from the longest cycle. This method is classified as highly unreliable with a Pearl index 20-24.

Thermal method

Daily accurate temperature measurements in the oral cavity or vagina (always in the same place) just after awaking. In the second phase of the cycle, after ovulation, the temperature increases by 0,4 C and on the forth day after the temperature increase the unfertile days are starting. The interpretation of temperature measurements is better interpreted by diagrammatic representation. Abstinence period shall last about 8 days. The Pearl index for this method is 1-2.

Mucus observation method by Billing's

This method consists of observing mucus changes in terms of its quantity, stickiness, glitter, clearness and viscosity. Ovulation occurs on the day when mucus is lavish, transparent and viscous. The abstinence period is 4 days before and after ovulation. The method is characterised by a large variable Pearl index of between 1 and 12.

Thermal and mucus observation method

This method is combination of temperature measurement and mucus observation

Tests methods

In order to indentify the fertile and infertile days some tests are available in drug stores, for example:

- PC 2000 – An optical tester for observation of mucus and saliva
- Clear Blue – A tester which helps to evaluate luteine hormone in urine
- Persona – A tester which analyses the content of luteine hormone and progesterone in urine. In the first cycle the test has to be done 16 times and in next cycle 8 times.

Many factors affect the results, the main factors are: inflammation of the vagina, sickness and medications. The Pearl index for all these methods varies from 4 to 6.

Computer evaluation of temperature measurement

Computer analysis of women's cycles combined with basal body temperature measurements provided a simple means to monitor the changes in women's cycle which then lead to effective application of natural family planning for contraception purposes.

In Poland the following devices are available on the market:

- BIOSELF – everyday basal body temperature + Calendar – base method combined together provides effective pregnancy prevention, accurate to 95-98% (Pearl index 2-5)
- LADY-COMP, BABY-COMP and PEARLY – medical devices for highly accurate tracking fertile and unfertile days based on everyday temperature measurements (Pearl index 0,6-0,7). Each device uses sophisticated statistical gathering methods, as well as a comprehensive database generated by observations in changes of BBT. Based on over 1 million cycles during 25 years of production. During the first 2-3 cycles the devices are "learning" to define fertile days based on an algorithm built on a validation group. Basal body temperature is measured everyday in the mouth directly after awaking using a special sensor (integral part of the device). The main feature of these cycle computers is to accurately predict the fertile phase and its prediction for 6 days before ovulation taking into account 5 days of spermatozoon vitality. Due to the mathematical model which can learn and adapt to the user the results are non-susceptible to irregular changes in lifestyle such as infections, stress or lack of certain measurements. Medical survey conducted in Poland in 2010 on group of 510 women who have been using the devices for over 13 months confirmed the effectiveness of this contraception method with a Pearl index of 0,64. The same highly accurate and low Pearl index 0,6-0,7 was obtained in medical research conducted in Germany.

In conclusion, panel experts of the Polish Gynaecological Society claimed that for women who chose sexual abstinence during the fertile phase as a method of preventing unplanned pregnancy, the most effective method to establish the fertile period is cycle computers analysing BBT and cycle lengths.

The panel experts opinions in the above subject matter is valid on the day of preparation of the hereby analyze and Polish Gynaecological Society experts retain the right to update an re evaluate in the case of new or crucial scientific reports.

None of the experts announce conflict of interests while preparation of hereby elaboration.

Signed by:

prof. dr. hab. Agata Karowicz – Bilińska (Łódź)

prof. dr. hab. Jan Kotarski (Lublin)

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