

Associations Between the Use of Contraception and the Psychological Well-being of Women

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Introduction. Reproductive events have a complex impact on women's lives. The possible effects of endogenous and exogenous gonadal hormones on women's psychological status are matters of debate. **Aims.** This research aims at examining mood and sleep symptoms of women in different reproductive stages and in association to contraceptive use. **Methods.** Data were collected at the Centralized Family Planning of the City of Helsinki (March 2012-February 2013) through a questionnaire regarding participants' reproductive features, psychiatric history and current psychological status at baseline and after 3 months. **Results.** A total of 208 women (18-50 years) accepted to participate: 52 (25.0%) starting contraception, 68 (32.7%) stopping or changing to a different method, 62 (29.8%) continuing with their current method, and 26 (12.5%) breastfeeding women. The response rate at follow-up was 73%. Psychiatric symptoms during the previous month were commonly reported both at baseline and follow-up (sleep symptoms: 86.1% and 80.3%, respectively; anxiety and depressive symptoms: 61.8% and 55.6%; death and suicide thoughts: 10.1% and 5.3%), with no differences between the contraceptive groups. At follow-up, women who continued with their contraception had higher risks of early awakening and tiredness (OR=3.312 and OR=2.942; $p<0.05$), and breastfeeding women of tiredness (OR=5.716, $p<0.05$), in comparison with women who stopped/changed their contraception. The type of contraceptive method did not influence the results. The contraceptive group was not significantly associated with the other, more severe psychiatric symptoms. **Conclusions.** Sleep, anxiety and depressive symptoms are common among women; the use of contraception seems to only marginally associate with these symptoms.