

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of the Use of Contraceptives Among Female Students in Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State

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ABSTRACT

Background: Contraceptives, primarily used by women aged 15–49 years, include methods, substances, or procedures designed to prevent pregnancy and improve reproductive health. They are crucial in reducing unintended pregnancies, lowering maternal and newborn mortality, and enhancing reproductive outcomes. In Nigerian higher institutions, contraceptive use remains a concern as unintended pregnancies can lead to unsafe abortions and disrupt academic and career progress. Despite their importance, many female students hold negative attitudes or have limited knowledge due to misconceptions, past experiences, and socioeconomic factors.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted using a three-stage multistage sampling technique. A total of 316 female students at Bingham University participated by completing a standardized self-administered questionnaire (paper and electronic), achieving a 100% response rate. Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 27.

Results: Respondents demonstrated good knowledge of contraceptives, especially condoms (85.4%) and pills (62.7%). Attitudes were generally positive, with 68% considering contraceptive use very important and over half viewing it as morally acceptable. However, 31% reported feeling pressured to use them, indicating social influence. Despite high awareness, usage was low: only 25.3% had ever used contraceptives, while 74.7% had never used any method.

Conclusion: Female students at Bingham University exhibited high awareness and generally positive attitudes toward contraceptives but low utilization. The institution's faith-based environment and delayed sexual debut may partly explain this gap. Focused educational interventions, improved counseling, and addressing misconceptions are essential to bridge the knowledge–practice, divide and strengthen responsible reproductive health behaviors.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Female Students, Contraceptives

