

Press Release

August 23, 2007

50% women think a woman can have at least 2 sex partners in her lifetime Open-minded in sex yet lack sound contraception knowledge Specialist urges the adoption of contraceptives

Hong Kong single women are increasingly open-minded on sex due to higher education, better job prospect, and stronger financial power. A survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong has found that women generally found it acceptable to start having sex at the age of 18. They also considered sexual satisfaction important to women and believed women could have at least two sex partners in their lifetime. An O&G specialist urges women to pay attention to birth control before having sex, such as adopting the highly reliable oral contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancy.

In order to understand local single women's attitude towards sex and contraception, Bayer Schering Pharma has commissioned the Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong for a phone survey conducted between July and August 2007. 502 single women aged 18 to 40 were successfully interviewed. The survey findings were presented by Ms. Karie Pang, the Programme Manager of HKUPOP, in today's press conference.

HK single women are increasingly open-minded on sex

The survey revealed that 47 per cent of the respondents found it acceptable to start having sex at 18 while 10 per cent said 17 or under. Only 3 per cent thought they would have sex only after marriage. These figures reflected nowadays, Hong Kong single women were more open-minded towards sex.. Besides, 54 per cent of the respondents expressed that a woman could have more than one sex partner in her lifetime; 60 per cent expected having sex more than once a week; and 73 per cent considered it important to have satisfaction during sexual intercourse. Interestingly, 4 per cent of the respondents accepted a sexual relationship without love while 90 per cent held an opposite view.

HK single women need more education on contraception

Oral contraceptive is a better birth control measure for women who need contraception due to its higher reliability, while condom can be used for protecting against sexually transmitted diseases. Yet, the survey revealed that 70 per cent of the respondents had perceived condom to have dual purposes in preventing pregnancy and venereal diseases; 17 per cent have mistakenly perceived condom to be for birth control only; 46 per cent have mistakenly perceived condom to have a higher reliability in contraception than oral contraceptives. A total of 57 per cent of the respondents used condom for contraception.

Although 48 per cent of the respondents agreed that oral contraceptives were safe and reliable regarding contraception, only 17 per cent used it for birth control, which was lower than the 25% of those who adopted external ejaculation. This suggests that Hong

Kong women need more education in this area.

Moreover, the survey revealed that respondents did not have a good grasp of the benefits of oral contraceptives as 85 per cent thought oral contraceptives were harmful to health and 58 per cent had no clue about its benefits other than contraception.

Specialist urges adoption of oral contraceptives

Dr. Dominic Li, an obstetrics and gynecology specialist, explained that condom is mainly for preventing sexually transmitted diseases by avoiding direct contact of reproductive organs. But its failure rate of contraception can be as high as 15% due to human application errors. In contrast, oral contraceptives are better and more self-directed birth control means for women due to its high reliability (99.8%).

“The survey shows there is a pressing need for local women to enhance their knowledge on oral contraceptives, which have been introduced for medical use for many years, and there should be no doubt about its safety profile. In fact, apart from the high reliability of birth control, oral contraceptives have other additional health benefits such as lower incidence of iron-deficiency anemia, shorter and lighter periods, relief of PMS and a better cycle control. Further, it helps reduce the risks of developing ovarian and endometrial cysts and ovarian cancer,” Dr. Dominic Li said.

With regard to side effects, Dr. Dominic Li adds that some women may experience nausea, breast tenderness, or spotting. Yet according to Dr. Li, these symptoms are usually mild and would not affect daily activities. Also, these symptoms usually happen in the first three months of taking the pills, and they are transient, and will subside once the body get used to the new hormonal level.

Dr. Dominic Li suggests women to take oral contraceptives and use condom at the same time for birth control and preventing sexually transmitted diseases.

The newest generation of contraceptives promises no weight gain, better skin and cycle

According to Dr. Dominic Li, most contraceptives cause weight gain due to a high level of estrogen that increases water retention level in the body. The latest contraceptive have no such side effect as it contains the novel Drospirenone (DRSP) that resembles natural progesterone, which counteracts estrogen-mediated water retention based on mild anti-mineralocorticoid effect. Women can then prevent pregnancy with no worry of gaining weight. Other than that, the latest contraceptive can help improve skin quality via reducing sebum and the formation of acne due to its antiandrogenic progestogen. It also improves cycle control. All these help enhance the quality of life of modern women.

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