

Pilot Evaluation of an Internet-Based Natural-Family-Planning Education and Service Program

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Purpose: The purpose of this pilot study is to evaluate an online natural-family-planning (NFP) education and service program that is administered by health professionals through a university-based NFP center.

Participants: The Web site was piloted with two hundred volunteer women who were seeking NFP services to avoid or achieve pregnancy. The participants were between the ages of 22–41 and had an average of 1.97 children. Most (83 percent) were white, married (86 percent), and Roman Catholic (88 percent). Thirty-two percent of the women were post-partum breastfeeding, and 41 percent were experiencing regular menstrual cycles of 25–35 days in length.

Outcomes: The Web site was automatically evaluated online by use of a ten-item fertility quiz and a ten-item satisfaction survey administered at one, three, and six months of use. Intended and unintended pregnancies were monitored by professional nurses by use of an online self-assessed pregnancy evaluation form.

Results: Mean knowledge scores increased significantly from initial use (9.00, SD=0.18) to one month (9.50, SD= 0.14), $t = 3.50$, $p < 0.001$. Satisfaction item scores ranged from a low of 3.33 with item number 6 = “decreased anxiety about pregnancy” to a high of 5.17 with item number 10 = “chances of avoiding pregnancy” out of a possible range of 0–7. The twelve-month correct-use unintended-pregnancy rate (N=122) was 0, and the total unintended-pregnancy rate was 0.067.

Conclusion: The online NFP system seems to provide adequate knowledge of fertility and the ability to meet pregnancy intentions.