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FPA Planner November - December 2012

Season's greetings providers, referrers, and friends:

As we approach the end of 2012 and look forward to 2013, the landscape of healthcare and the field of family planning is definitely changing. I have included the following articles to highlight how our view of some very common medical issues and treatments may change in the future as we learn more about current patient conditions.

“**Stressed, Depressed Women Terrible at Using Birth Control**” is an informative article about proper use of birth control with women who show signs of stress and depression. The article goes on to explain the importance of a provider's role in counseling their patients with mental health issues.

The second article, “**Black Women More Likely to Die From Breast Cancer: Report**” is based on a CDC report showing that although breast cancer rates have dropped during the past 20 years, **not all groups of women are benefiting equally.**

Lastly, “**OB-GYN Group: Birth Control Pill Should Be on Shelves**” is an article about the recent stance of the **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)** on allowing birth control for over-the-counter use. The group says that the aim is to reduce the amount of unintended pregnancies.

Wishing you all a safe and happy holiday season!

Irving M. Feldkamp IV, MD
President

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Stressed, Depressed Women Terrible at Using Birth Control

By Rachael Rettner, MyHealthNewsDaily

October 30, 2012

SAN FRANCISCO – Depression and stress can cause lapses in proper use of contraception, a new study suggests.

In the study, women with moderate to severe depression and stress symptoms were less likely to use contraception consistently — that is, use it each time they had sex — compared to women with mild or no symptoms. Women with depression or stress were also more likely to say they did not use contraception at all in the past week compared to women with less severe symptoms.

The findings, presented here on Monday at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association, are concerning because, although preventing unplanned pregnancies is important for all women, it may be especially important for women with mental health issues, said study researcher Kelli Stidham Hall. “Perhaps an unintended pregnancy for these women could make things even worse,” said Hall, of the University of Michigan's Population Studies Center.

Family planning providers should consider mental health symptoms when they counsel their patients, Hall said.

In addition, women with depression and stress who do not want to become pregnant in the near future may be good candidates for long-acting reversible contraception, such as an IUD — highly effective methods of birth control that women do not need to remember to use everyday or each time they have sex, which may be burdensome for some, Hall said.

Hall and colleagues analyzed information 689 non-pregnant women ages 18 and 19 living in Michigan. Participants first answered questions about their mental health. Then, for the next year, they filled out weekly journal entries that included the number of times they had sex in the past week, and whether they used contraception when they had sex.

Full article can be found at http://todayhealth.today.com/_news/2012/10/30/14808120-stressed-depressed-women-terrible-at-using-birth-control?lite

Black Women More Likely to Die From Breast Cancer: Report

By Steven Reinberg, HealthDay

November 14 2012

WEDNESDAY, Nov. 14 (HealthDay News) -- Doctors have made great strides in fighting breast cancer, but not everyone is benefiting equally: Black women, in particular, are 40 percent more likely to die from the disease than any other racial or ethnic group.

So said health officials from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in a special report released Wednesday.

Although breast cancer rates have been dropping during the past 20 years, "black women are diagnosed with breast cancer at lower rates than white women, and yet [blacks] have higher death rates," CDC deputy director Ileana Arias said during a noon press conference.

"As a public health official and as a woman, I find these disparities in breast cancer deaths unacceptable," she added.

Arias said two main factors account for this disparity. First, "there are unacceptable gaps in timely, adequate and appropriate health care," she said. "The second is the difficulty women have in navigating our complex health care system."

Find the full article at <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/news/articles/2012/11/14/black-women-more-likely-to-die-from-breast-cancer-report>

OBGYN Group: Birth Control Pill Should Be on Shelves

Kim Painter, USA TODAY

November 21, 2012

9:08AM EST November 21, 2012 - Birth control pills are so safe and important to women that they should be sold on drugstore shelves, without a doctor's prescription, says a group representing many of the doctors who prescribe them.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) takes the perhaps-surprising stance in an opinion released today and published in the December issue of Obstetrics & Gynecology.

The group says its aim is to reduce unintended pregnancies. And it says it does not expect to lose patients if the switch ever occurs — something that experts agree will not happen quickly.

"Oral contraceptives are very safe, and data show women can make these decisions for themselves," says Kavita Nanda, a physician with FHI 360 (formerly known as Family Health International) in Durham, N.C., and a member of the committee that wrote the opinion. Many reproductive health advocates are "pleasantly surprised and excited" that a major physicians group is endorsing an idea some have been pushing for years, says Kirsten Moore, president of the non-profit Reproductive Health Technologies Project, Washington, D.C.

Some doctors have expressed reservations about the idea in the past, citing concerns that women might skip Pap smears and other care if they don't need to go to doctors for reliable birth control. Others have expressed safety concerns.

For full article, please visit <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/11/20/gynecologists-birth-control-pills/1717151/>

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