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Determinants of Contraceptive Behavior among Adolescent Women: A Secondary Analysis of the Relationship Dynamics and Social Life Study (G1301)

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Abstract

In the United States, three in ten girls experience pregnancy by age 20. Prior to designing interventions aimed at decreasing the risk of adolescent pregnancy, researchers must first identify **the strongest and most consistent predictors of contraceptive behavior** among this age group. We propose to analyze data from the National Institutes of Health-funded longitudinal, cohort study entitled "Relationship Dynamics and Social Life" Study (RDSL). This recently completed study **prospectively** followed a **representative sample of 1,003 women aged 18-22 for 2.5 years,** and captured **weekly** measures of their relationship-, contraception-, and pregnancy-related behaviors. The primary aims of this study are: 1) to describe the contraceptive methods used and prevalence of *consistent use*, *inconsistent use and nonuse of contraception* among this group and; 2) to identify the personal, relationship and socio-familial factors most predictive of contraceptive behavior. As a secondary aim, we will perform a sub-analysis comparing the 196 women who **_experienced_** an unplanned pregnancy with the remaining 746 women who **_avoided_** an unplanned pregnancy. Our analyses will be based on 54,595 interviews with 942 women who provide sufficient data for analysis. To estimate models of consistent use, inconsistent use, and nonuse of contraception, we will use STATA-12 to conduct multilevel, multinomial logistic regression. To estimate individual-level models, we will use Ordinary Least Squares regression (OLS). This study will make important contributions to the existing body of knowledge regarding contraceptive behavior among young women. First, we will be using **time-varying data** collected **prospectively** with state-of-the-art survey methods. To our knowledge, the RDSL study is the first contemporary study (and thus includes measures of the most up-to-date contraceptive technology) to provide real-time, longitudinal repeated measures of reproductive behavior over an *extensive time period* among a *representative cohort* of young women. As a result, we will provide **new, dynamic estimates of contraceptive use and compliance** during the transition from adolescence to early adulthood. The RSDL database is rich with variables that provide detailed, contextual information about childhood experiences, peer and community norms, educational/career aspirations,

reproductive health attitudes and knowledge and partner characteristics. Therefore, we anticipate our analyses will give **new insights into the individual, relationship and socio-familial factors that contribute to variations in contraceptive behavior**. For example, we can examine the immediate effect of partner infidelity on subsequent condom use by examining subject reports the week after such an event. Finally, the study findings will inform a future project to *develop and validate a multi-dimensional, office-based tool* to assess individual contraceptive intentions over time and guide contraceptive selection and counseling.