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Cecilia Bahamon

*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

Katherine G. Leung

*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

Luu D. Ireland

*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

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# Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Contraceptive Use in Young Women

Cecilia Bahamón, BS; Katherine Leung, MPH; Luu D. Ireland, MD, MPH

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Massachusetts Medical School and UMass Memorial Medical Center



## Introduction

- Young women, aged 15 to 24, have the highest rates of unintended pregnancies in the United States.
- Black and Latina women are at highest risk.
- Few studies have examined reasons for these disparities.

## Objective

- To determine whether there are differences in contraceptive use and contraceptive counseling by race and ethnicity among young women in the United States.

## Materials and Methods

- Study Design: This analysis used data from the 2011-2013 National Survey of Family Growth
- Subjects: One thousand fifty two women aged 15 to 24 years who had sexual intercourse within the past year, and were not pregnant or seeking pregnancy.
- Primary outcome: Contraceptive use and contraceptive counseling within the past 12 months.
- Statistical analysis: Pearson Chi-Square, linear and logistic regression as appropriate. P-values of <0.05 were considered statistically significant (and are indicated with a \*).

## Results

- There were no differences between races in age, education, or marital status; there were differences in religion, poverty status, employment status, and immigration status (Table 1)
- Young women who identify as Hispanic (H) or non-Hispanic Black (NHB) are less likely to report current contraceptive use than their non-Hispanic White (NHW) or non-Hispanic Other (NHO) counterparts (Table 2, Figure 1).
- This finding remains statistically significant among NHB women after controlling for confounders (Table 2).
- There were no differences in birth control counseling received by race/ethnicity; however, NHW and NHO were more likely to have been issued contraception within the last 12 months (Table 3).

**Table 1. Sociodemographics**

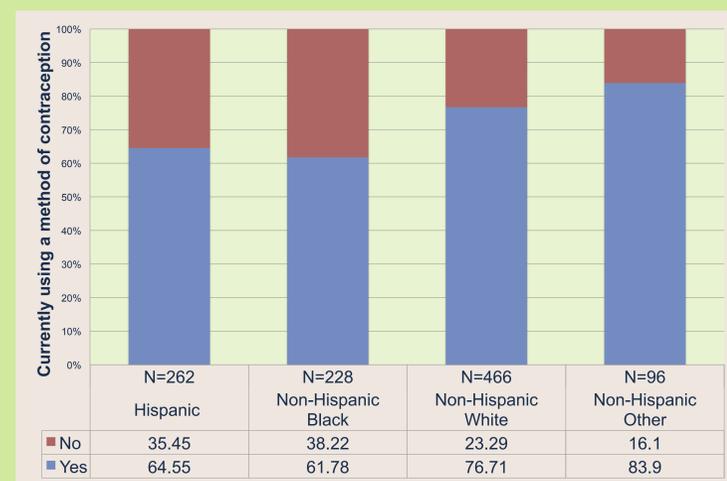
Variable	Hispanic n (%)	Non-Hispanic Black n (%)	Non-Hispanic White n (%)	Non-Hispanic Other n (%)
Age (mean ± SE)	20.5 ± 0.23	20.4 ± 0.21	20.4 ± 0.16	20.6 ± 0.22
Education				
Did not complete high school	81 (26.9%)	73 (28.6%)	118 (22.9%)	26 (17.9%)
Some college	71 (31.1%)	63 (33.0%)	158 (36.6%)	38 (39.3%)
College complete or more	10 (7.4%)	14 (8.6%)	61 (13.4%)	8 (9.7%)
Marital Status				
Married	29 (8.2%)	6 (2.6%)	46 (9.2%)	8 (7.2%)
Co-habiting	47 (19.6%)	28 (13.0%)	87 (19.9%)	16 (27.3%)
Not married	186 (72.1%)	194 (84.4%)	333 (71.0%)	72 (65.6%)
Religion*				
No Religion	55 (20.5%)	26 (14.4%)	158 (34.2%)	20 (16.6%)
Catholic	137 (54.3)	13 (3.7%)	80 (17.2%)	13 (16.7%)
Protestant	63 (23.2%)	180 (76.4%)	200 (41.0%)	47 (42.6%)
Other	7 (2.1%)	9 (5.5%)	28 (7.6%)	16 (24.1%)
Poverty status*				
0-99% of poverty level	138 (44.8%)	119 (48.8%)	129 (24.2%)	36 (46.5%)
100-199% of poverty level	69 (32.1%)	53 (25.1%)	102 (21.2%)	18 (16.1%)
200-299% of poverty level	29 (9.4%)	25 (11.5%)	88 (17.8%)	18 (17.1%)
300% of poverty level or greater	26 (13.7%)	31 (14.6%)	147 (36.7%)	24 (20.3%)
Current employment status*				
Employed	130 (50.6%)	105 (53.7%)	290 (66.2%)	58 (58.1%)
Unemployed	132 (49.5%)	123 (46.3%)	176 (33.8%)	38 (41.9%)
USA-born*				
Yes	204 (80.7%)	216 (91.2%)	459 (99.0%)	82 (89.8%)
No	58 (19.3%)	12 (8.8%)	7 (1.0%)	14 (10.3%)

**Table 2. Odds Ratios for Current Contraceptive Use**

Race	N (%)	Unadjusted		Adjusted <sup>1</sup>	
		OR ± SE	95% CI	OR ± SE	95% CI
Non-Hispanic White	466 (54.3%)	1 (Ref.)		1 (Ref.)	
Hispanic	262 (20.8%)	0.55 ± 0.15*	0.33 – 0.93	0.57 ± 0.17	0.32-1.02
Non-Hispanic Black	228 (15.0%)	0.49 ± 0.12*	0.30-0.80	0.51 ± 0.13	0.31-0.82
Non-Hispanic Other	96 (9.9%)	1.58 ± 0.47	0.88-2.83	1.91 ± 0.67	0.96-3.81

<sup>1</sup>Adjusted for variables with significant differences in Table 1 (religion, poverty status, current employment status, and USA-born)

**Figure 1. Current Contraception Use Status\***



**Table 3. Contraceptive Counseling**

Variable	Hispanic n (%)	Non-Hispanic Black n (%)	Non-Hispanic White n (%)	Non-Hispanic Other n (%)
Received counseling or information on birth control in last 12 months				
Yes	85 (28.9%)	75 (30.3%)	142 (33.4%)	30 (34.1%)
No	177 (71.1%)	153 (69.7%)	324 (66.6%)	66 (66.0%)
Obtained a method or prescription for method of birth control in last 12 months*				
Yes	119 (49.6%)	118 (49.0%)	286 (60.1%)	61 (64.8%)
No	143 (50.4%)	110 (51.0%)	180 (39.9%)	35 (35.2%)

## Conclusions

- Young Hispanic and non-Hispanic black women are using birth control less frequently than non-Hispanic whites, despite similar rates of contraceptive counseling.
- The difference persists despite controlling for socio-economic differences.
- Future studies should investigate reasons for lower contraceptive uptake among young Hispanic and non-Hispanic black women.

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## References

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Contact information: Cecilia Bahamón  
[cecilia.bahamon@umassmed.edu](mailto:cecilia.bahamon@umassmed.edu)