



# Sexual Education and Contraceptive Use Perception

## Introduction

1/4 of female identifying individuals are not aware of over-the-counter emergency contraceptives.<sup>1</sup>

Only 31% of those who are aware of emergency contraception know where to access them.<sup>1</sup>

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists emphasizes the relationship between exposure to previous education and the outcome of access to birth control, with the status quo where 56% of women identified oral contraceptives to be as destructive to their health as pregnancy overall.<sup>2</sup>

### Study Objective:

To assess how sexual education impacts students' perception and access to contraceptives in order to provide guidance on how to improve sexual education in the USA.

## Methods

**Exposure:** Sexual Education received during High School (singular class, 1-2 years, 2+ years, or no classes)

### Study Design

Over a 4-week long data collection period, we posted flyers with QR codes linked to online surveys. Flyers were posted in high-density areas in UC San Diego Central Campus (ex. Geisel Library, Price Center, Women's Bathrooms)

117 participants who fit the inclusion criteria that consisted of: Biological Female Sex, Aged 18-25, and UC San Diego Undergraduate Student

The data was collected via **Google Forms**. **Descriptive Statistics** with a **Bivariate Comparison** was used to determine the relationship between years of sexual education students received in high school to 1) their attitudes and 2) their confidence in accessing birth control.

## References and Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Dr. Ciborowski and our TA's Jenny and Vivian for her expert guidance in this process.

<sup>1</sup> Beimi Fredericksen UR, 2022 N. Contraception in the United States: A closer look at experiences, preferences, and coverage. KFF: <https://www.kff.org/womenshealth-policy/report/contraception-in-the-united-states-a-closer-look-at-experiences-preferences-and-coverage/>. Published November 18, 2022. Accessed February 23, 2023.  
<sup>2</sup> Kalaria R, Lopez LL, Nelson AL. Women's perceptions of contraceptive efficacy and safety - contraception and Reproductive Medicine. *BioRxiv*. Central. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2017.06.04.15170446>. Published June 20, 2017. Accessed February 23, 2023.

## Results

### Is there a correlation between sexual education classes in high school and contraceptive use perception in college students?

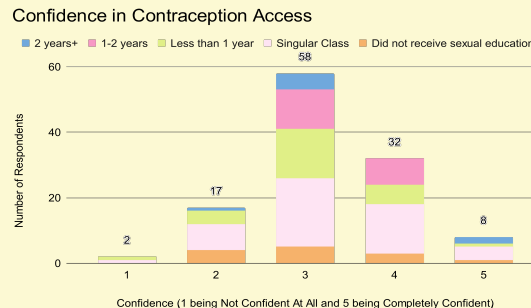


Figure 1: This distribution shows respondents' confidence levels regarding access to contraception. Most participants indicated a neutral sentiment towards access to contraception, as reflected by the peak at the midpoint of the confidence scale.

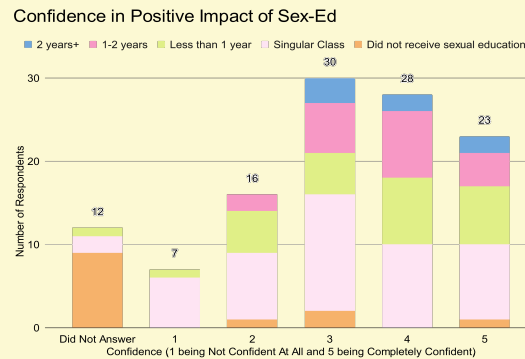


Figure 2: This illustrates respondent's confidence in the positive impact of sex education on their perception of contraception. The results demonstrate significantly high levels of confidence, with a notable concentration towards the upper end of the confidence scale.

## Correlation Analysis

Spearman's Rho	Years	Perception	
		Years	Perception
		1	-0.013
			0.888
			116
			116
			1
			0.888
			116
			118

Figure 3: This chart presents the results of a correlation analysis examining the relationship between the number of years of sexual education received and individuals' perception of birth control. There is a negative correlation.

Spearman's Rho	Years	Accessibility	
		Years	Accessibility
		1	0.09
			0.338
			116
			116
			1
			0.09
			0.338
			116
			117

Figure 4: This chart presents the results of a correlation analysis examining the relationship between the number of years of sexual education received and individuals' access of birth control. There is a negative correlation.

Our correlation coefficient showcased a negative correlation, indicating that increased sexual education years led to decreased confidence in birth control access and positive interpretation of contraceptives. However, there were **no statistically significant differences** found between years of sexual education to confidence levels ( $p=0.200$ ) and students' attitudes ( $p=0.888$ ) towards accessing birth control.

## Conclusion

### What our study revealed:

Majority of college students did not feel that their previous sexual education curriculum provided them with enough knowledge to properly access and utilize birth control, suggesting that this may be a contributing factor to the poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes among U.S. young adults.

This led us to question if the quality of sexual education is more significant to improving perception of contraceptive use.

### Limitations:

- Not statistically significant correlation possibly due to small sample size
- Independent variable measured number of years, not quality of education

### Future Directions:

Upcoming research should address how to improve the American sexual education system and how to improve reproductive and sexual health outcomes for young adults.

### Policy Implication:

We recommend a more comprehensive sexual education curriculum to be required for all high school students in order to better prepare them in accessing and using birth control. It is recommended to establish a policy to standardize a comprehensive sexual education curriculum across the United States.

### A comprehensive curriculum is:

One that provides young people with knowledge on:

- Birth control methods
- How to say no to sex (consent)
- How to use condoms
- Where to access birth control
- HIV/AIDS
- Sexually transmitted infections

Fabi Huda, Madaleine Smith, Samantha Hovey, Lauren Schmidt, Stephany Wong