

EFFICACY OF THE SYMPTOTHERMAL METHOD OF NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING WITH DIFFERENT SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR – A PROSPECTIVE LONG-TERM STUDY

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Objectives: The efficacy of methods of natural family planning is discussed controversially. To study efficacy and acceptability of the symptothermal method of natural family planning, a large ongoing prospective nonrandomized, noncontrolled long-term study has been conducted in Germany.

Materials and Methods: Since 1985 women submit their cycle charts documenting basal body temperature and cervical mucus as well as their sexual behaviour. A cohort of 900 woman and 17.638 cycles met the inclusion criteria for the effectiveness study. Out of these, 509 women applied the symptothermal method with occasional use of barrier method during the fertile phase. Main outcome measures have been overall rates of unintended pregnancies and method-related drop out. Besides an analysis of the unintended pregnancies have been conducted using the "perfect/imperfect-use" model.

Results: After 13 cycles, 1.79 of 100 women of the whole cohort of the effectiveness study experienced an unplanned pregnancy; 9.2 of 100 women dropped out because of dissatisfaction with the method. The "perfect-use" rate according to Trussell and Grummer-Strawn was 0.43 of 100 women after 1 year of method-use.

Conclusions: The symptothermal method of natural family planning is an effective family planning method, especially if used perfectly. It is also well accepted.

Key Words: effectiveness/efficacy/natural family planning/symptothermal method/contraception/



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