Sisters doing it for themselves

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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1 Szarewski A. Sisters doing it for themselves. RE: 'Continuous dosing of COCs is a reasonable approach for women without contraindications to COCs'.

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References

Genuine Depo-Provera® failure

After reading the case report of Lucinda Farmer and Elizabeth Patel entitled ‘Contraceptive failure of Depo-Provera®: long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods do fail too’ in the January 2009 issue of this Journal1 we would like to refute the suggestion in Dr Devonald’s Letter2 that IUDs are used for emergency contraception (EC). There is no evidence that the LNG-IUS is effective as emergency contraception (EC). There is no evidence that the LNG-IUS is effective as emergency contraception (EC).

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References

Reply

I agree entirely with Dr Robinson1 that that long-term health effects of longer-cycle combined oral contraceptive (COC) use have not been formally studied for more than a few years and we should ensure that monitoring continues. However, we should avoid issuing a policy that makes prescribing in fact not the norm for healthy, reproductive age women. As Thomas et al. have pointed out: “in hunter-gatherer times, women had infrequent menstruations because they had closely spaced pregnancies, they breastfed their infants for long intervals (which suppresses ovulation and menstruation), and they died before reaching menopause. Prehistoric women had few menstrual episodes per lifetime, whereas the modern woman has approximately 450 bleeding episodes”. In addition, the bleeding that occurs during the pill-free interval is simply due to hormone withdrawal, not to any physiological need. The studies of longer cycle/continuous pill-taking regimens have so far not given any indication that the adverse event or metabolic profile of extended-regimen oral contraceptives differs in any clinically significant manner from traditional 28-day regimens, while having many health benefits. Indeed, even a Cochrane Collaboration review in 2005 concluded that “continuous dosing of COCs is a reasonable approach for women without contraindications to COCs”.

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