OC Use Not Linked to Depression in Adolescents

BY TIMOTHY F. KIRN
Sacramento Bureau

Los Angeles — Oral contraceptive pills do not cause mood swings or depression in most adolescents. On the contrary, overall, it appears that oral contraceptives increase positive mood and decrease negative mood, Mary A. Ott, M.D., said at the annual meeting of the Society for Adolescent Medicine.

"Our pill users in our study felt better," said Dr. Ott of Indiana University, Indianapolis. "This is different from the adult data."

Data from studies of adults on whether oral contraception impacts mood negatively have been conflicting, and results of prospective studies have varied from those of retrospective studies. Overall, however, there has been a suggestion in adults that oral contraception can increase depression or exacerbate mood lability, and it is well known that mood changes are a common reason women stop using the pill, Dr. Ott said in a poster presentation.

In her study of 226 adolescent females, oral contraception decreased reports of negative mood by 27% over time and increased positive mood by 32% over time, relative to reports from subjects not on oral contraception.

The study involved having the 226 enrolled subjects keep daily mood diaries for two 12-week periods, twice each year, over 2 years. The participants were asked to rate the level of three negative moods they might have experienced during the day (irritable, angry, unhappy) and the level of three positive moods (cheerful, happy, friendly), each on a five-point scale reflecting a range from "not at all" to "all day."

A diary in which the participant reported being on oral contraception both at the start and at the end of the period was considered an oral contraception diary. Diary periods during which the participant either started or stopped oral contraception were excluded, but some participants were on oral contraception for an entire diary period at one time, but not at another.

When mean scores were graphed, negative mood scores in the nonusers stayed relatively stable over time. Scores for the users were lower initially, but by the end of the study scores among users had improved 27% relative to the nonusers.

Positive mood increased for both groups over time, but increased 32% more for the oral contraception users. ■

Outpatient PID Treatment Dicey With Adolescents

Los Angeles — Adolescents treated for pelvic inflammatory disease are not likely to complete a 14-day course of antibiotics nor return for 72-hour evaluation, according to a study designed to see if implementation of a rigorous institutional protocol could improve care.

The protocol helped, but only somewhat, Maria Trent, M.D., said at the annual meeting of the Society for Adolescent Medicine.

The study compared management of 56 adolescent females diagnosed with pelvic inflammatory disease before implementation of the protocol with the management of 72 females seen afterward.

The protocol included disseminating a treatment algorithm and a clinical practice guideline based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations, making available a full 14-day course of medications at discharge, providing written discharge instructions, and following up by telephone 24 hours to 2 weeks after the patients were initially seen. The patients were seen in a pediatric emergency department or a primary care clinic.

Before the intervention, 38% of patients did not receive an appropriate regimen, and only 10% returned at 72 hours to check on resolution of symptoms, as the CDC guidelines recommend, said Dr. Trent, an adolescent medicine specialist at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

During the intervention, 91% of patients received an appropriate regimen. But only 43% returned for reevaluation, and an interview with 28 patients contacted after treatment found that only 61% had taken all of their doses.

Physicians treating adolescents with the disease should seriously consider inpatient treatment, Dr. Trent said.

—Timothy F. Kirn