

WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE OF THE GP IN CONTRACEPTIVE DECISION-MAKING: UNTAPPED POTENTIAL FOR A 'REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE' APPROACH?

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Background: This paper contributes to an emerging body of research examining the barriers and enablers to women's uptake of Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs). As in other Western countries, uptake of LARCs in Australia is relatively low despite being identified by peak family planning bodies as the preferred modes to be recommended to women. This pilot study explored women's experiences of contraception across the lifecourse and how these experiences shaped their views on LARCs.

Methods: Twelve qualitative interviews were carried out with South Australian women aged from 23 to 48 years. Women were included if they had ever considered using LARCs. Interviews took a narrative format with women asked to describe their contraceptive history and decision-making over time. Interviews were analysed using narrative thematic analysis.

Results: This study found that the nature of women's relationships with their General Practitioner (GP) was a key mediating factor in shaping access to modes of contraception. The women in this study told narratives of tricky negotiations with GPs and some explicitly presented the relationship as a barrier to accessing contraception other than the oral contraceptive pill.

Discussion: Further fine-grained research is needed into models of contraceptive service delivery that are woman-centred, particularly in relation to training and support for GPs. The significance of GPs in women's lives can be problematic in relation to access to diverse modes of contraception. Yet we propose that these often long-standing relationships hold untapped potential for service that takes a 'reproductive justice' approach to provision of contraception.

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