



Have you asked your doctor about NFP lately?

Imagine this, you're in the doctor's office and he or she asks you what type of birth control you are using. You say that you are using Natural Family Planning (NFP). "Oh," is your doctor's polite response, followed by some scribbling on the clipboard. He or she looks up at you and, after a moment's pause, says, "You know, that doesn't really work."

Some readers may not have experienced such a bold response from their doctor about NFP, but you probably could tell he or she was thinking it! A recent (and not very surprising) study in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology addresses doctor's attitudes towards contraception and NFP.

The research article is entitled "Obstetrician-gynecologists' views on contraception and natural family planning: a national survey." The authors mailed a survey to U.S. obstetrician-gynecologists (ob/gyn) asking various questions about contraception, NFP,

and the doctor's religious affiliation (to see if there was a correlation between their views on family planning and religiosity).

The majority of those that responded did identify themselves with a particular religion. 23% identified themselves as Catholic and just 11% said they had no religious affiliation.

The authors asked the ob/gyns whether they had any moral or ethical objections to commonly prescribed forms of artificial contraception:

1. intrauterine devices
2. tubal ligations
3. oral contraceptive pills
4. condoms

5. diaphragm/spermicide
6. cervical cap/spermicide
Then they asked if they would offer these contraceptive methods to their patients (despite their objections).

Overall, 4.9% of US ob/gyns had a moral or ethical objection to one or more of the contraceptive methods and 6.8% would not offer one or more of these methods to their patients. Only 1.1% of the surveyed physicians had a moral or ethical objection to all six contraceptive methods.

To gauge their views on Natural Family Planning, the ob/gyns were asked to estimate what the yearly

pregnancy rate was for couples practicing NFP. The average response was 25%, with Catholic physicians on average estimating 3.4 percentage points lower and doctors that objected to one or more of the contraceptive methods given answering 5.9 percentage points lower.

When asked if they considered NFP a good option for women, 1% said they considered it the best option for all women; 31% the best option for some women and 68% considered it a poor option for most women.

The authors state that this negative view of NFP by ob/gyns agrees with another published study that also showed that the majority of physicians have a negative view of NFP. In that study, however, physicians' views often "softened" as they became more familiar with the method.

The authors of the present study go on to make this very interesting point:

"perhaps, religious physicians support for natural family planning may be attributed as much to familiarity as to religious motivations."

Perhaps this study will give us all new motivation to keep talking to our doctors about the effectiveness and many benefits of NFP.

NFP: Make a Resolution February Challenge

Did everyone complete January's challenge to make a resolution and spread the word about NFP by posting the TLC newsletter link on your Facebook page? Write to TLC and let us know if you got any interesting feedback from your post.



Talk to your physician about NFP.

Resolve *this month* to talk to your doctor about NFP even if you do not have an appointment scheduled!

Save the Date!!! May 14, 2011

for Theology of the Body Conference at Madonna University
Speakers:
Dr. Janet Smith
Bill Donaghy
Dr. Mary Healy
details in the April TLC

Please email topics, articles, questions, and suggestions to TLC at jndorsten@gmail.com