

# The Influence of Socioeconomic Status on Attitudes Towards Contraceptives in College Students

Sarah Gonzalez, Madison Brown, Esmeralda Herrera, Kha Vu,  
Savannah Hastings, BS, Elizabeth D. Joseph, MS, Amanda L. Wiese, PhD, Kevin Knight, PhD  
Texas Christian University



## Background

- While the prevalence of unintended pregnancies has decreased from 2008-2011, in 2011 the percentage was still at 45%.<sup>1</sup>
- There are higher rates of unplanned pregnancies among low income households, people who live together before marriage, minority groups, and people between 18-24 years of age.<sup>1</sup>
- Studies show college students' knowledge of contraceptives is low and has the potential to affect usage.<sup>2</sup>
- The Integrated Behavioral Model may help understand how contraceptive attitudes affect usage.<sup>3</sup>



## Method

- Participants were recruited in-person from tables set up in TCU's Intellectual Commons ( $N = 75$ ).
- Students were provided a link to a study survey via Qualtrics, lasting approximately 10 minutes.
- $t$ -tests were run to examine how sex of the participant influenced birth control knowledge and attitudes, as well as a Pearson's correlation coefficients to determine the correlation between SES and birth control knowledge and attitudes.

### Measures

- Demographics:** Sex, ethnicity, age, and other demographics.
- Knowledge of Contraceptives:** General measure assessing knowledge of topics related to birth control.
- Negative Attitudes toward Contraceptives:** Measure assessing perceptions about usage/morality of usage.
- Religiosity:** Scale assessing how religious participants are and how important their faith is in their life.

## Demographics

	Total (n)	Percent (%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	16	21.3
Female	59	78.7
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1.3
Asian	8	10
Black/AA	13	16.3
Hispanic/Latino	14	17.5
Middle Eastern/Arab	1	1.3
White	46	57.5
Mixed	4	5

## Results

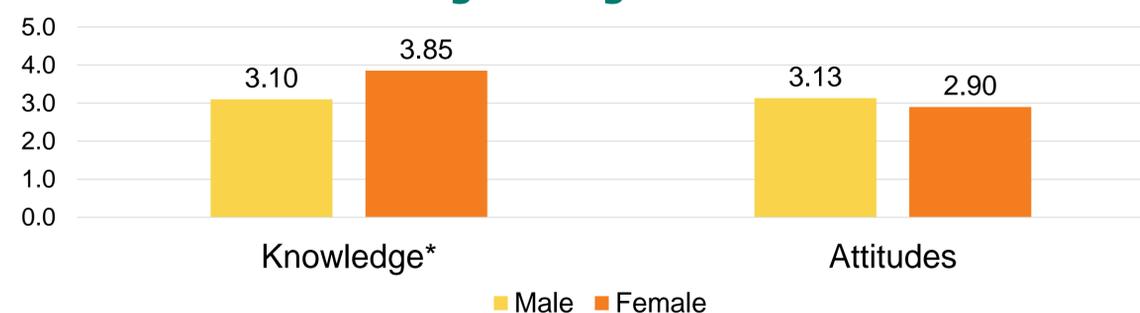
### Independent Samples $t$ -Tests (see Figure 1)

- Females ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ) were significantly more knowledgeable about contraceptives than males ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ),  $t(61) = 2.13$ ,  $p = .037$ .
- Sex difference in contraceptive attitudes was not significant,  $t(61) = 0.90$ ,  $p = .372$ .

### Correlations (see Table 1)

- Correlations between SES and knowledge/attitudes were non-significant ( $ps \geq .107$ ).
- SES was negatively associated with the belief that the government does not make sure birth control is safe ( $r = -.29$ ,  $p = .022$ ).
- Contraceptive knowledge was negatively related to negative attitudes about contraceptives ( $r = -.27$ ,  $p = .036$ ; see Figure 2).
- Negative contraceptive attitudes were negatively associated with the belief that there are many different purposes for the birth control pill ( $r = -.38$ ,  $p = .022$ ); were positively related to the belief that the government does not make sure birth control is safe ( $r = .27$ ,  $p = .032$ ), and the belief that if someone is on the birth control pill, it means they are sexually active ( $r = .34$ ,  $p = .007$ ).
- Religiosity positively correlated with the belief that if someone is on the birth control pill, it means they are sexually active ( $r = .31$ ,  $p = .014$ ).

**Figure 1. Sex Differences in Contraceptive Knowledge & Negative Attitudes**



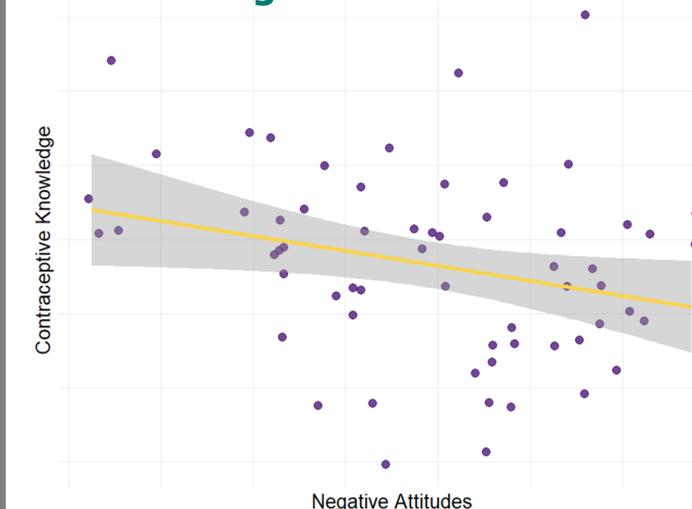
Note. Numbers represent group means. Asterisk (\*) indicates groups are significantly different ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 1. Correlation Matrix**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. SES						
2. Knowledge	0.21					
3. Attitudes	-0.07	-.27*				
4. Religiosity	0.15	-0.12	0.19			
5. The government does not make sure birth control is safe.	-0.29*	-0.7	.27*	-0.01		
6. There are many different purposes for the birth control pill.	0.09	0.24	-.38**	-0.22	-0.24	
7. If someone is on the birth control pill, it means they are sexually active.	0.04	-0.11	.34**	.31*	-0.04	-.48**

Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Figure 2. Contraceptive Knowledge & Negative Attitudes**



## Discussion/Limitations

- The study suggests that perceived SES may not significantly predict attitudes towards contraceptive usage and knowledge among college students, although this might be due to possible SES variation being limited in this study.
- Our research shows greater knowledge about contraception is associated with more positive attitudes towards birth control.
- Efforts should be made to improve access to sexual health and contraceptive education. Findings suggest potential relationships between SES and contraceptive stigma, and between contraceptive knowledge and perceptions of the birth control pill's purposes.

## References

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