**INTRODUCTION**

- Approximately half of all pregnancies in the US are unintended.
- Among US adolescents 15 to 17 years of age, the vast majority (91%) of pregnancies are unintended.1
- Emergency contraception (EC) provides an additional effective option for preventing pregnancy in adolescents.2
- An over-the-counter (OTC) simulation study demonstrated that approximately 90% of women aged 13 to 17 were able to appropriately self-select and correctly use single-dose 1.5 mg levonorgestrel EC.2
- Previous studies have found adolescents’ contraceptive use and unintended pregnancies vary by race/ethnicity.1,3
- This post-hoc analysis examined appropriate self-selection and correct EC use by race.

**DESIGN AND METHODS**

- This multicenter, noncomparative case series study was conducted in the US from October 2008 to December 2010.
- Female adolescents 13 to 17 years of age were enrolled from reproductive health clinics in 5 metropolitan areas.2
- Participants completed self-administered participation and baseline questionnaires in which they reported race/ethnicity and reason(s) for requesting EC (Figure 1).2
- After reviewing package information, participants indicated whether they would use EC.
- Follow-up was conducted by telephone or during clinic visits at 1, 4, and 8 weeks after EC was dispensed to assess product use (correct or incorrect), health problems, and pregnancy status.2
- Appropriate self-selection for use was considered to have occurred if the participant recorded in her verbatim statement on the participation questionnaire that she wanted to use the study product for a reason for which the product is indicated, and if she did not indicate on the participation or baseline questionnaires that she had an allergy to levonorgestrel or a positive pregnancy test(s), or check “YES” to the question “Are you pregnant?”
- Correct use was considered to have occurred if the participant reported at the first follow-up contact that she took the EC within 72 hours following unprotected sexual intercourse.
- The study was conducted at clinics where IRB and state laws allowed minors to provide consent for confidential reproductive healthcare, including receipt of EC.2
- Statistical analysis for appropriate self-selection and correct use of EC by race was done using the Fisher’s Exact test.

**RESULTS**

- The study population was racially and ethnically diverse (Table 1).

**Table 1. Race and Ethnicity* of Enrolled Participants (N=343)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Answer</strong></td>
<td>17 (5.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>169 (49.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>55 (16.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don’t Know</strong></td>
<td>6 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>147 (42.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>68 (19.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>48 (14.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>39 (11.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>23 (6.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18 (5.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Race and ethnicity were self-selected by the participants.

- Overall, of the 343 women enrolled, who ranged in age from 13 to 17 years, 339 (99.1%) appropriately self-selected (Figure 2).
- Of the 297 women who used EC, 263 (88.6%) demonstrated correct use, and 34 (11.4%) reported incorrect use (Figure 2).

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Percentages of participants who correctly used EC were highest in all racial groups, ranging from 81.1% to 97%
- The variations — albeit slight — in rates of appropriate self-selection and correct use vary by race and ethnicity. A clear trend was observed from 77% for African-Americans to 90.7% for Latinas.
- Although the single-dose 1.5 mg levonorgestrel EC is now available over-the-counter to women of all ages, pharmacists should serve as resources for teens who request guidance on appropriate self-selection and correct use.

**REFERENCES**