

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to assess selected socio demographic characteristics, causes and use of contraceptives among primary subfertile couples and the state of psychological distress among their female partners. It was a descriptive cross sectional hospital based study carried out among three hundred and fifty six primary subfertile females attending the subfertility clinics at Castle Street Hospital for Women, Colombo 8. A pre-tested questionnaire was used to get the details of socio demographic characteristics and use of contraceptives. Data extraction form was used to get details about the causes of primary subfertility identified, from the clinic records. The psychological distress state of the female was assessed using General Health Questionnaire -12 (GHQ – 12).

In the study group, more than 82% of the couples were from urban areas with a mean age of 29.6 years for females and 32.6 years for males. The mean age at marriage for females was 26.4 years and the mean duration of marriage was 3.5 years for this sample. It was also observed that, among the partners having a diagnosed problem, female only problem seen in 40%, male only problem seen in 19%, problem with both seen in 14% and problem unknown in 27%.

When the use of hormonal contraceptives was considered, about 14% newly married females have used this method to delay their first pregnancy. Another 12% have used condoms or some other traditional method for this purpose. Mean

duration of use of a contraceptive method was nine months and for hormonal contraceptives, it was only eight months.

Furthermore, it was revealed that about 25% of the females who attend the subfertility clinics were psychologically distressed.