

Shocking survey results reveal serious contraception issues are being ignored

Submitted by: Curated Digital

Tuesday, 19 June 2018

(UK) Nearly half of all women in the UK (47%) have had “serious trouble” with their current or previous form of contraception, of which 16% said they didn’t receive adequate professional care for the trouble.

On top of this, just 1 in 4 (25%) women feel the potential side-effects of any contraception they were taking or about to take were explained to them “in-depth”, a new survey by The Femedic has revealed.

The Femedic (<https://thefemic.com/>) — an educational women’s health website — commissioned an in-depth survey in October 2017 in order to gauge women’s attitudes to and experiences with contraception: what are women choosing, and why? Are they being given adequate information, support, and care?

Almost half of women (45%) said the potential side effects of the contraception they were advised to use were only “barely” or “briefly” explained to them, and 6% said side effects weren’t explained to them “at all”.

This is all the more astonishing given that examples of horrible side effects women reported included constant bleeding, blood clots, suicidal thoughts, and even needing surgery because of their contraception.

When women complain or raise concerns, however, many don’t feel they are listened to.

“I was told to stay on it and see how it goes,” said one respondent. Others say they weren’t taken seriously, or that their GP laughed at them.

Another woman said: “I bled for six months constantly and was severely anaemic. The doctor didn’t help me until it got so bad that I needed a blood transfusion.”

Almost half (45%) of the women polled said they don’t feel there are enough resources or information available about contraception and associated risks.

Many women also reported feeling that their contraceptive choices weren’t even in their own control.

25% of women said that they felt under pressure from someone, be it a family member, a healthcare professional, or a partner, to take the form of contraception they use.

Only two thirds of women (65%) felt that their choice to use the contraception they currently use was theirs and theirs alone.

The survey exposes the nation’s dissatisfaction with the contraceptive options — and the services providing these options — available to them, and shows that more research and funding needs to be spent

on educating the population and allowing them access to suitable contraception options.

It also highlights the short shrift given to women's health issues, and women's complaints of pain or problems related to their reproductive health.

The statistics come around at a time when NHS staff are particularly stretched, and sexual health clinics are being forced to close as local governments find their funding is slashed.

Founder of The Femedic, Monica Karpinski said:

"The survey results expose a deep need for a cultural and organisational shift in the way we speak about and value reproductive health, and contraception.

"The results of our survey should in no way dissuade women from using the form of contraception that works for them. Nonetheless, the more choice women have, and the more information they are given, the more confident they will feel about pursuing what they know is best for them.

"More awareness of women's experiences will, hopefully, counter any impressions that their pain is not as serious or deserving of care."

In January, Dr Mark Lawton of the British Association of Sexual Health and HIV warned that up to 600 people per week are being turned away from oversubscribed sexual health clinics in one London NHS Trust, speaking after several central London clinics were closed in 2017.

In August, the Local Government Association (LGA) warned that sexual health services were at "tipping point", after seeing a 25% rise in patients seeking help in the last five years, combined with total cuts of £531m to public health budgets by 2021.

--Note to editors--

For more information or to speak with Monica Karpinski, founder of The Femedic, please contact imogen@curated-digital.com

The survey, written by The Femedic, was conducted between October 2017 and January 2018, and distributed among women of reproductive age in the UK via digital channels. 1,010 women responded. A full report with key statistics and breakdown of results is available on request.

The Femedic is an educational women's health website launched in August 2017, which deals specifically with areas of women's health considered taboo. By treating health as a broad spectrum that includes lifestyle, emotional, medical, and social factors, the site aims to challenge stigma and create a holistic, progressive discussion about women's health.