

A frisky continent: European women's attitudes to sex and emergency contraception revealed!

Direct access to the morning after pill in pharmacy has made making a smart, positive decision easier, for women not ready to have a baby

Tuesday 8 March, 2016 - New research, released on International Women's Day, shows that across Europe, more than three in four women (77%) are aware of the morning after pill as an option for managing the risk of an unplanned pregnancy after unprotected sex or contraceptive failure.¹

Just 12 months ago, access to emergency contraception was a different story, with women in Germany, Italy and Croatia requiring an appointment with their GP to access the morning after pill. The treatment is most effective when taken as soon as possible after contraceptive failure and this was clearly an obstacle for women seeking the best chance of avoiding pregnancy.

Now, one year on, following a ruling by the European Commission, the ellaOne (ulipristal acetate 30mg) emergency contraceptive pill, is available to 25 EU member states via pharmacy. As a result, more than 114 million women in Europe now have direct access to the latest emergency contraceptive pill.²

Sexual behaviour

The research which looks at the sexual behaviour of women in 20 European markets shows that women aged between 26-35 years are having more sexual encounters than their younger counterparts. The findings show 1 in 5 (21%) 16-25 year old women say they have no sexual encounters on an average week vs just 8% of 26-35 year olds in the same position. Young Bulgarians proved to be the raciest group averaging at four encounters a week, second only to 26-35 year old Finish women who enjoy sex five times a week!

The weekend was naturally more popular for a bedroom frolic – 76% of women enjoy a liaison on a Saturday – but for Finland sexual activity was much more consistent across the week, averaging at 42% of women who engage in sexual relations Monday-Thursday.

The study also reveals the importance of sex with more than half (52%) of women citing being spontaneous as a key sign of a satisfying sex life along with being in a secure relationship (74%), looking hot for a partner (55%). Interestingly, Southerners (Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal) are more interested in trying out new sexual positions (34%) than their Northern friends. While 1 in 5 ladies in Spain and in the Czech Republic (19% and 22% respectively) attribute the use of bedroom toys as being key to a satisfying sex life (vs 12% European average).

But with spontaneity often comes the risk of unplanned pregnancy and this may be behind the reason why across Europe, 45% of all pregnancies are unintended.³ " We understand that women don't want sex to be planned and so in instances where contraception has failed or was absent, which is the case in 30% of sexual intercourses,⁴ the emergency contraceptive pill is a smart, positive, choice, to remove that uncertainty," says Frédérique Welgryn, Women's Health Therapeutic Domain Director from HRA Pharma, the manufacturer of ellaOne.

Interestingly, whilst overall seven in 10 European women would visit their local pharmacy should they need the emergency contraception pill, women in Italy and Germany would be more likely to seek an appointment with their GP.

“Giving women the freedom to buy the morning after pill from their local pharmacy empowers them to choose the contraceptive option that’s right for them, whatever the circumstances,” continues Frédérique Welgryn. “Emergency contraception is not a regular form of contraception but is an effective choice for women who have had a contraceptive failure but who are not ready to have a baby and having access to this treatment at any time of day, without making an appointment is critical to making this choice valuable.”

“ International Women’s Day celebrates the equality of women and we fully support the efforts and progress made on empowering the achievements of women across the social, economic, cultural and political spheres,” concludes Frédérique Welgryn “Knowledge and understanding of the role of emergency contraception is part of this equality journey – putting women of all ages in complete control of their contraceptive choices.”

ENDS

Notes to editor

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About emergency contraception and ellaOne

There are different types of emergency contraception available; these include the emergency contraceptive pill and emergency intrauterine device (IUD).⁵ Emergency contraceptive pills are commonly known as ‘morning after pills’, because it is best to take them as soon as possible after unprotected sex.⁵ The morning after pill is an emergency contraception, which acts before pregnancy occurs. If a woman is already pregnant, it is too late for emergency contraception.

Last year, following the European Commission’s keynote ruling, authorising ellaOne® to be accessible direct from pharmacies throughout the European Union (EU), the pill’s owner, HRA Pharma, has embarked on an ambitious roll out program to ensure the product is made available across EU.

Before the landmark decision was reached most EU countries required a prescription from a doctor in order for women to gain access to the morning-after pill. Now, ellaOne® is eventually available without prescription to over 100 million women.

Women of all ages are now able to get ellaOne® quickly in order to prevent unplanned pregnancies which enables them to take control of their own future.

About HRA Pharma

HRA Pharma is a privately-held European pharmaceutical company that designs products, devices and supporting services in niche areas of health and makes them available to doctors and patients worldwide. The company targets therapeutic gaps in the areas of reproductive health and endocrinology, and uses innovative marketing solutions and socially-conscious programs to promote healthy management of drugs and diseases. Headquartered in Paris, France and with subsidiaries across Western Europe, HRA Pharma has built a strong network of R&D, manufacturing, distribution and NGO partners which enables it to satisfy critical patient needs and improve patient health in over 80 countries across the globe. Visit www.hra-pharma.com for more information.

References

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