

Contraceptive Self-Care: Search Strategy

Methods for literature search, information sources, abstraction, and synthesis

Search Strategy

To compile the list of documents meeting inclusion criteria, a literature search was conducted using bibliographic databases and hand searching of online websites for peer-reviewed articles and grey literature that include contraceptive self-care. The period of review focused on documents published from 2010 to 2024.

Electronic Databases

The following electronic databases were searched for journal articles and grey literature:

- PubMed
- Web of Science
- Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL)

For additional published articles and grey literature, online searches were conducted of websites containing relevant family planning program interventions and information. Consultations with subject matter experts generated additional citations.

Search Terms

An electronic database search was based on combinations of self-care, family planning, and contraceptive terms. Additional limits for publication date, language, and availability of abstract were used. The table below shows the concept and search strings used. Variations of search strings were used depending on the resource.

Concept	String with terms
Self-care	Self care[MeSH Terms] OR self care[tiab] OR self manage*[tiab] OR self administ*[tiab] OR self inject*[tiab] OR self treatment[tiab] OR selfcare[tiab] OR selfmanagement[tiab] OR selftreatment[tiab] OR user control[tiab] OR drug shop*[tiab] OR pharmacy[tiab] OR pharmacist*[tiab] OR advanced provision[tiab] OR over the counter[tiab] OR over-the-counter[tiab] OR without a prescription[tiab]
Contraception	Contraceptive Devices[MeSH Terms] OR Contraceptive Agents, Female[MeSH Terms] OR Female Contraceptive Agent*[tiab] OR Female Contraceptive*[tiab] OR Natural Family Planning Methods[MeSH Terms] OR "contraceptive devices"[MeSH Terms] OR "contraceptive agents, female"[MeSH Terms] OR "female contraceptive agent"*[Title/Abstract] OR "female contraceptive"*[Title/Abstract] OR "natural family planning methods"[MeSH Terms]
Specific methods	(vaginal ring[tiab] OR contraceptive patch[tiab] OR diaphragm[tiab] OR sponge[tiab] OR spermicides[tiab] OR natural FP methods[tiab])
Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)	The search string is multiple pages. It includes each LMIC listed individually, geographic terms such as Northern Africa or Southeast Asia, developing countries, developing nations, middle-income countries, and multiple synonyms.

Exclusion Criteria

- Condoms: Excluded male condoms to focus on women's self-care options. Excluded female condoms because they are used mostly for HIV prevention.
- Papers on multipurpose methods that address use only for noncontraceptive purposes.
- Papers in which outcomes are awareness, knowledge, or attitudes of nonusers only. Papers were excluded if the subjects did not have the option of using self-care methods; that is, if their answers were hypothetical.

Note: Because condoms were excluded from the initial literature review, the Technical Advisory Group requested a supplemental literature search for contraceptive condom use from 2020 to 2024. This search resulted in studies that address condom use for noncontraceptive purposes only and so were not included in the search results. This is noted as a footnote in the Brief.

Note that the search resulted in 109 papers, and two were merged with other papers from the same study. Thus, while the distribution below shows 109, there were only 107 papers included.

Distribution of Papers

Below is the distribution of papers identified through the database search process.

By self-care method		By geographic region	
Multiple methods	34	Sub-Saharan Africa	70
Injectables	24	Multiple	22
Vaginal ring	19	Latin American	8
Diaphragm	4	Asia	5
Oral contraception	3	Middle East/N Africa	4
Natural methods	2	Total	109
Total	109		

Bibliography

Below is a complete list of citations identified from the literature search process described above. An additional 40 citations were identified through extensive hand search and consultations with subject matter experts after the literature search, bringing the total to 147 documents. A subset of these references was used to support the development of the Contraceptive Self-Care HIPs Enhancement Brief. The complete brief and reference listing is available from: <https://fphhighimpactpractices.org/briefs/contraceptive-self-care/>.

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