Utilization of and Adherence to Oral Contraceptive Pills and Associated Disparities in the United States: A Baseline Assessment for the Impact of the Affordable Care Act of 2010

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated sociological factors that may influence women’s utilization of and adherence to oral contraceptive pills. This was a retrospective cross-sectional study using the 2010-2012 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey. Female adults aged 18-50 years were included. Logistic regression was performed to discern women’s decisions to use oral contraceptive pills or not. Ordinary least squares and Poisson regressions were conducted to examine the number of oral contraceptive pills received, refill frequency, and annual out-of-pocket expenditure on oral contraceptive pills. Covariates were based on the Andersen model of health care utilization. Among the study sample (weighted n = 207,007,531), 14.8% were oral contraceptive pill users. Factors positively related to oral contraceptive pill use included non-Hispanic white ethnicity, younger age, not currently married, having private insurance, residing in the Midwest, higher education level, and higher annual family income. Being non-Hispanic white and having a higher education level were positively related to oral contraceptive pill adherence. Our findings therefore demonstrate disparities in oral contraceptive pill utilization and adherence, especially according to women’s race/ethnicity and educational level. This study serves as a baseline assessment for the impact of the Affordable Care Act on oral contraceptive pill utilization and adherence for future studies.

Keywords: Affordable Care Act; Oral contraceptive pill; adherence; utilization

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