NATURAL METHODS of FAMILY PLANNING

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• University of Utah
• American Academy of Fertility Care Professionals
Presentation

- Definition of natural family planning (NFP)
  - *Avoiding* pregnancy
  - *Achieving* pregnancy
- Scientific methods of NFP
- Use and interest
- Counseling and instruction
- Need for updated ICD-9-CM codes
  - *Candidate terms*
- Proposed V25 modifications
- Proposed V26 modifications
Natural Family Planning

“Methods for planning and preventing pregnancy by observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of the menstrual cycle, with the avoidance of intercourse during the fertile phase if pregnancy is to be avoided.”
NFP has dual uses

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

TO ACHIEVE PREGNANCY
Procreative management

TO AVOID PREGNANCY
Family planning management
Fertile window of menstrual cycle

Probability of conception

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0

0.45
0.4
0.35
0.3
0.25
0.2
0.15
0.1
0.05
0

Barrett/Marshall
Wilcox et al

http://humrep.oupjournals.org/cgi/content/full/14/7/1835
Scientific NFP Methods

- Biomarkers identify the fertile window
  - Vaginal mucus discharge
  - Basal body temperature
  - Cycle length

- Couples can choose:
  - Intercourse during the fertile window to conceive
  - Abstinence during the fertile window to avoid
Modern NFP Methods

- Are not the Rhythm Method
- Do not require regular menstrual cycles – except the Standard Days Method
- Can be used by women of any reproductive status:
  - irregular cycles
  - breastfeeding
  - premenopause
NFP Methods available in USA

- **Standard Days Method**
  - calendar; regular cycles only

- **Two-Day Method**
  - vaginal discharge from cervical mucus

- **Billings Ovulation Method**
  - vaginal discharge from cervical mucus

- **Creighton Model FertilityCare System**
  - vaginal discharge from cervical mucus

- **Sympto-Thermal Method**
  - calendar, mucus, and temperature
## NFP published effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFP Method</th>
<th>Pregnancy rates during first year of use to avoid (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perfect use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Days Method</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Day Method</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billings Ovulation Method</td>
<td>0.5-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creighton Model FertilityCare System</td>
<td>0.2-1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympto-Thermal Method</td>
<td>0.5-1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* CrM typical use includes *planned* pregnancies; others do not
NFP chart with hormonal correlates
(Creighton Model)
Who uses NFP?

- Not ascertained by national surveys
  - Questions are based on “rhythm method”
  - Modern methods are not specifically mentioned
- Instruction not captured in health services statistics (no specific ICD-9-CM code)
- Population-based survey in Missouri
  - 3% current use
  - 19% ever used to avoid
  - 25% ever used to conceive

Who is interested in using NFP?

- Population-based surveys in Missouri and Utah
  - About 25% women interested in NFP to avoid pregnancy
  - About 33% interested in NFP to conceive
  - Men also interested (40%)
  - Interest NOT associated with religion, education, age, or income

Reasons for interest in NFP

- Natural
- No side effects
- Convenient / easy
- Helps to understand body
- Low cost

NFP Counseling and Instruction

- Provided nationally and internationally by a growing number of trained physicians, nurse practitioners, and allied health professionals in a variety of ambulatory care settings.
Need for updated ICD-9-CM codes

- Current schema does not include natural methods of family planning
- Providers have used non-specific codes
  - V25.09 Other (Family planning advice)
  - V26.4 General counseling and advice (Procreative management section)
- Specific codes are needed
  - accuracy in coding of clinical services
  - assessing use (clinical practice, research, policy)
Need for updated ICD-9-CM codes

- **Updated schema** should address encounters for
  - **Initiation** of natural methods of family planning to avoid pregnancy
  - **Surveillance** of natural methods of family planning to avoid pregnancy
  - **Procreative counseling** and advice using natural family planning
Candidate terms

- **Natural family planning**
  - Term used by National Library of Medicine to index articles
  - Term widely recognized by providers and policy

- **Natural method of family planning**
  - Emphasizes that multiple methods are included

- **Natural method of birth regulation**
  - Term not commonly used by providers of NFP

- **Natural method of birth control**
  - Term not recognized by providers of NFP
Need for updated ICD-9-CM codes

- Updated schema should allow for distinct comparison of natural methods of family planning with methods of contraception
  - Terminologic accuracy
  - Conceptual clarity
- NFP is not a contraceptive
  - Contraceptives are *agents* or *devices* to prevent conception, such as barriers, spermicides, hormonal compounds, and intrauterine devices.
Candidate umbrella terms

- **Family planning**
  - Widely used by providers and policy makers to mean all methods to postpone or prevent pregnancy.

- **Birth control**
  - Popular term among patients, but not widely used by providers or policy makers.

- **Fertility regulation**
Relationship of NFP, family planning, and contraception

FAMILY PLANNING

- Natural Family Planning
- Contraception
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revise</th>
<th>V25 Encounter for <strong>family planning</strong> management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V25.0 <strong>General counseling and advice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New code</td>
<td>V25.04 <strong>Counseling and instruction in natural family planning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise</td>
<td>V25.4 <strong>Surveillance of previously prescribed family planning methods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New code</td>
<td>V25.44 <strong>Natural family planning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V26.40</td>
<td>Procreative counseling and advice, unspecified</td>
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<tr>
<td>V26.41</td>
<td>Procreative counseling and instruction in natural family planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V26.49</td>
<td>Other procreative management counseling and advice</td>
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Contraception

- Contraceptive: An *agent or device* that diminishes the likelihood of or prevents conception. Includes *barrier* contraceptives, *chemical* contraceptives, *intrauterine* contraceptive devices and *oral* contraceptives (hormonal pharmaceuticals).

  – Stedman’s Medical Dictionary,
    Dorland’s Medical Dictionary,
    Webster’s Third New International Dictionary
    of the English Language
Family planning

- In the broadest sense...a means by which patients are assisted in either achieving or preventing pregnancy. However, family planning is generally defined more narrowly to include only those methods by which couples defer or prevent reproduction.

- Essentials of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Hacker and Moore
Ovarian Hormones

![Graph showing the levels of Estrogen and Progesterone during ovulation.](image)
Type E and G mucus at cervix
Type E and G mucus at cervix

From T.W. Hilgers, MD
Type E and G mucus: light microscopy

Cervical mucus changes in response to follicular development

Adapted from Erik Odeblad, MD, PhD
NFP Methods - comments

- **Standard-Days Method (SDM)**
  - Only for women with cycles usually 26-32 days

- **Two-Day Method (TDM)**
  - Any cycle length; cannot use with continuous vaginal discharge

- **Billings Ovulation Method (BOM)**
  - Any reproductive status

- **Creighton Model FertilityCare System (CrM)**
  - Any reproductive status; standardized descriptions

- **Sympto-Thermal Method (STM)**
  - Multiple indicators
## Pregnancy rate in NFP cycles to conceive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Couples</th>
<th>Pregnancy Rate (%)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Sympto-thermal</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>68 at 3rd cycle, 92 at 1 year</td>
<td>Prospective declaration to achieve, followed by analysis of cycles with intercourse in fertile phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand, India, Ireland, Philippines, El Salvador</td>
<td>Billings Ovulation Method</td>
<td>&lt;869; 13% cycles</td>
<td>84 at 1 year</td>
<td>Declared intent was to avoid; analysis of “imperfect use” cycles; 1 year rate; 8/12 cycles (67%) where peak day was used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA, Omaha</td>
<td>Creighton Model</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>76 in first cycle</td>
<td>Retrospective; excluded couples not conceiving</td>
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</table>
NFP and Infertility

- Documenting ovulation
- Timing intercourse appropriately
- Assessing abnormalities of reproductive function, assisting with diagnosis and management
Approaches to document ovulation and time intercourse

- Calendar calculations
- Basal body temperature
- Urine LH kits
- Fertility charting of vaginal discharge with NFP Method (particularly Creighton Model or Billings Method)
- Monitoring urinary estrogen metabolites

Obstet Gynecol 2002; 100(6):1333-41
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<th>BBT</th>
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Mucus Peak

- prospectively identifies approach of ovulation
- information about cervical and ovarian function
- information about sperm survival
- low cost over time

Urine LH

- prospectively identifies approach of ovulation within limited time frame (36 hours)
- information about ovulation only
- no information about sperm survival
- high cost for testing
Using CrM charting to assess abnormalities of reproductive function