



Tehran University of Medical Sciences

School of Medicine

Title:

**Comparative study of Ethical Considerations of Birth control,
Family planning, and Contraception (Islamic and secular views) –
Providing National Ethical Guideline**

**A thesis submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for Doctor of
Philosophy (PhD) Degree**

By

Kobra Joodaki

Supervisor

Bagher Larijani

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Abstract:

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Introduction: In recent decades, dramatic changes in the demographic structure of most countries and unprecedented low fertility rates have occurred in all parts of the world. Our country has also witnessed changes in population policy in recent decades that have had many consequences. There have been valuable studies on the economic, cultural, social, political, and jurisprudential implications, but no ethical considerations have been mentioned in any of them. In the last few years, few articles have briefly addressed the ethical challenges posed by population growth policy. There has also been no study that comprehensively examines the ethical considerations of birth control, family planning, ethical considerations when presenting or using contraceptive methods or the views of different group of society. The purpose of this study is to explain the ethical considerations of birth control, family planning, and contraceptive methods from different perspectives and to compare them from Islamic and non-religious (secular) views. It also specifically addresses the ethical considerations of teaching and providing contraceptive methods to adolescents.

Methodology: The study was conducted in two sections: qualitative and theoretical study. In qualitative research, data were collected through purposeful sampling and in-depth semi-structured interviews. Thirty-seven individuals from different group of society (politicians and executives, Gynecologist& obstetricians, midwives and health care providers, consumers, and users) were interviewed. Twenty-five individuals were interviewed to study of ethical considerations for providing contraceptive methods to adolescents. After interviews, coding and analysis of content were performed using MAXQDA 11 Software and the conventional content analysis method. The protocol of comparative studies of medical ethics was used for the comparative study, and the differences and similarities were identified. In the formulation of ethical guidelines appropriate to the country, after reviewing the literature and 14 focus group discussion sessions, the initial text was prepared, and expert opinions were obtained by the Delphi method to finalize the guide.

Results: Content analysis and coding were performed on the entire text of the interviews and the codes (867) were extracted. After identifying the themes and classes, the main concepts were achieved in three general areas: birth control, family planning, and contraception. Due to the purposeful sampling, to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, the results of the specific groups were not mentioned separately, and in general, the ethical considerations of birth control, family planning, and methods of contraception were explained. After summarizing the findings of the qualitative and library study, Comparative study of the Islamic view and the non-religious view was carried out in the four domains of respect for autonomy, beneficence, maleficence and justice. In the study of the ethical considerations of sexual education and the presentation of contraceptive

methods to adolescents, 717 codes were extracted that were divided into two main themes: “Ethical Considerations and Challenges of Adolescent Sexual Education” and “Ethical Considerations and Challenges of Providing Contraceptive Devices and Methods to Teens”.

Conclusion: At the macro level, contrary to non-religious views that favor proportional or declining populations, Islam supports population growth, but the issue of birth control depends entirely on the situation of each period and the situation in each region. . At the family level, In the family planning debate, the Islamic and non-religious views are similar and the distance between children and having a proportionate number of children with the physical, economic and social conditions of parents is emphasized. At the individual level, in Islam's perspective, all methods of contraception that are reversible, without significant harm that do not lead to sterility are permitted with the consent of the couple, provided that no unlawful act (haram) is used. From a non-religious perspective, the emphasis is on women's autonomy in using these methods. In the subject of adolescents, Islam recommends parental sexual education and has specific instructions for each stage of individual development. From a non-religious perspective, adolescent autonomy is valued, but in some cases, the principle of beneficence over autonomy is preferred.

Keywords: Ethical considerations, Birth control, Family planning, Contraceptive methods, Adolescents, Sex education, Ethical guidance