Abstract

Background: The pharmacists role in dispensing emergency contraception (EC) has become controversial due to the intersection of personal and professional ethics. Therefore, to examine the issue of EC availability, we surveyed a sample of West Texas pharmacists. West Texas is a religiously and politically conservative region where no methods of EC have been made available.

Objective: to survey a sample of pharmacists in West Texas about their experience, beliefs, and knowledge of EC both before and after a presentation of the current literature about EC.

Methods: We asked a convenience sample of 75 pharmacists about their experience, beliefs, and knowledge of EC both before and after a presentation of the current literature about EC. Results: Sixty-four (85%) pharmacists agreed to complete the study questionnaire. None carries EC in his/her pharmacy, and scientific understanding of EC was generally poor. Fourteen percent stated EC conflicts with their religious views, 17% considered it a method of abortion, 11% would not be willing to fill an EC prescription written by a doctor. 58% would be willing to offer EC over the counter. The presentation encouraged more to offer it over the counter, but in general did not significantly change their beliefs.

Conclusion: Our sample of West Texas pharmacists demonstrated very little experience with, a general lack of knowledge about, and some personal and religious objections to EC.

Keywords

Contraception, Postcoital. Pharmacists.
Ethics, Pharmacy. United States.