

CURRENT PRACTICE OF PRECONCEPTION CARE IN THE NETHERLANDS

Background

Guidelines for preconception care (PCC) are available in the Netherlands. However, uptake of PCC is still low. Moreover, practice of PCC greatly varies between professionals.

Aim(s)

To evaluate the current practice and perceptions of PCC.

Methods

A questionnaire was developed and sent to 90 primary care midwifery practices and 12 obstetric departments in the Southwest-region of the Netherlands.

Results

Eighty three respondents (81.4%); 76 independent primary-care midwives and 9 obstetricians, completed the questionnaire. PCC mostly consisted of an individual consultation with personalized health-and-lifestyle advice. A PCC protocol was available in 44.4% of the respondents' organization. How the consultation was conducted differed greatly between professionals. Regardless of these differences, respondents acknowledged the need for PCC for all couples. However, requests for PCC consultations was low.

Discussion

It is likely that PCC provided by independent primary care midwives differs from PCC provided by obstetricians or clinical midwives in a hospital. And PCC provided by younger and older birth care professionals might also differ. Unfortunately, the number of respondents was too small to further investigate this topic.

Implications and future perspectives

Midwives and obstetricians acknowledge the need for PCC, but practice still varies. Results of this survey can be used to find bottlenecks in standardization of PCC, which may help increase awareness and subsequently the uptake of PCC.