

## Understanding sexual behavior and patterns of contraceptive use among unmarried adolescent university students in Mandalay District

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### Abstract

**Background:** Increase in proportion of sexually active adolescents and insufficient use of effective contraceptive methods contributed to an increase in unintended teenage pregnancy, abortion and STI among adolescents in Myanmar. The study investigated the sexual behavior and contraceptive practices with different types of sexual partners among adolescent university students.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted using an anonymized, self-administered questionnaire with adolescents who were attending at three health-related and three non-health-related universities situated in Mandalay District. The universities were randomly selected and students were recruited using a proportional probability to size (PPS) sampling method. The samples recruited into the study were 960 and out of them, 850 students were included in the analysis. Univariate and bivariate analysis were used to describe the findings.

**Results:** Among 850 students, 12.4% were from health-related universities and the remaining was from other universities. A total of 135 unmarried students responded that they had sexual experience. The mean age of their first sexual exposure was 17.9 years (17.6 years for girls and 18.1 years for boys). The contraceptive use among adolescent students was high (more than 75%) and was higher when they had sex with persons who were not their regular partners (more than 90%). Among them, approximately 50% used contraception consistently and the commonly used method was the male condom. The mostly cited reasons for not using contraception consistently were unaware of contraceptive methods, unplanned sex, forced sex, unwillingness to use contraception by the partner and fear of contraceptive side effects. The higher percentage of students with better contraceptive and STI knowledge and those with more permissive attitudes towards men's and women's premarital sex used contraception more consistently. About 20% of students or their partners who had had sexual exposure in the past had an experience of pregnancy and approximately two-third of pregnancies were unwanted and ended with miscarriage.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicated the need for improving contraceptive knowledge and STI among adolescent students to promote consistent contraceptive use among students for effective prevention of unwanted pregnancy, abortion and STI.

