

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:403
ANSWERED ON:02.03.2005
EFFECTS OF CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS ON WOMEN
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that studies have revealed that women who are taking oral contraceptives (OC) pills have higher incidence of brain strokes ;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether studies have also revealed that this risk is more pronounced among women who are prone to developing clots;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether prolonged use of OC among those at risk leads to acquired `activated` protein `C` resistance ;
- (f) if so, the details thereof; and
- (g) the steps taken /proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a) & (b) Women with existing risk factors i.e. history of frequent bruises in persons or in any related family member, hypertension, greater than 35 years of age, smokers, severe migraine are reported to have a higher risk of venous thrombosis. The risk of stroke in healthy OC users (on low dose OCs) would be less in women below 35 years if they do not have the above risk factors.

In India oral pills use constitutes only 3% of the total contraceptives. Moreover, among these women use is erratic and very few women (20%) continue till one year of use. Besides smoking among women in the reproductive age group is uncommon in the Indian population as compared to the western world.. The benefit risk ratio is higher if women are protected by contraceptives and not exposed to the risk of pregnancy, as all over the world and specially in the developing countries, pregnancy and puerperium have a much more higher risk of thrombotic episodes.

(c) & (d) The increased risk is observed in those women who are more than 35 years old, are smokers, use a high dose of pills (more than 50 mcgs) or have a family or past history of Thrombo Embolic disorders. The risk decreases on cessation of the oral pill.

(e) & (f) The phenomenon of activated protein `C` (APCr) refers to the ability to mount an effective anticoagulant response. Clinically this results in an increased risk of thrombosis. There are some reports of increased risk of venous thrombosis in women, above the age of 35 years and smokers, who were on oral contraceptives. However it is unclear whether or not this acquired APCr effect is a risk factor for thrombosis.

(g) The Government of India`s guidelines for oral pill administration prescribe that history of thrombo embolism and cerebro-vascular accident, cardiac disease, high blood pressure, women above 35 years and heavy smoking are absolute contra indications for initiating oral pills.

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