

Background:

• Ambivalence towards having children can lead to uncertainty, confusion and emotional distress among female university students. (1983)

Aim:

1. determine indicators for GPs to detect internal conflicts (dilemmas or real emotional problems) regarding the desire to have children among female university students in order to provide effective care
2. find possible time trends.

Methods

- Interviews with seven GPs
- Questionnaire (via Internet and a students' health service UvA (spring 2013)
- Logistic regression analysis

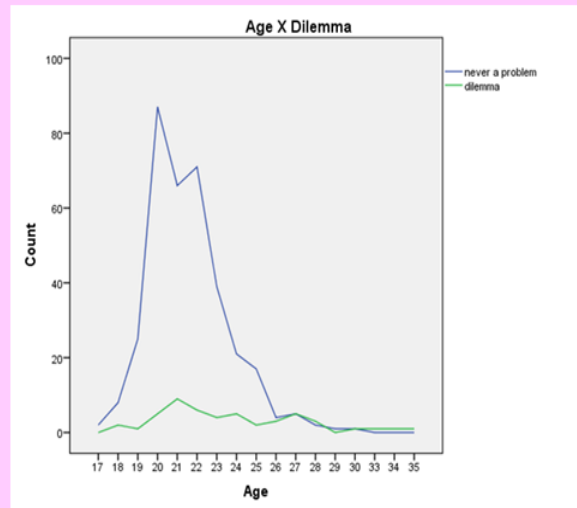
Sample:

- 398 female students
- average age was 21.83 (sd= 2.4)
- 59% was in a steady relationship, 15% lived together



Results

- 4% of the students would like to have a child while in college (6% in 1983)
- 2% of the female students perceived not having a child while in college as a real problem, compared to 4% in 1983 (n.s.) Additionally, 11% experienced not having a child while in college sometimes as a problem (dilemma), compared to 18% 30 years ago. (p=0.04)
- In 2013 more students reckoned it important to complete their education and get a proper job before starting a family compared to those in 1983. It seems that students in 1983 appreciated their freedom more than students nowadays since they would feel too much tied down with a child (52% compared to 29%).



Logistic regression results for detecting internal conflicts regarding the desire to have children, presented as odds of the presence of a real problem or dilemma.

Characteristic	Wald-Cl	p	OR	95%-Cl
Age	3.61	.057	1.21	0.99~1.46
Living together with partner	3.07	.080	-.43	0.17~1.11
Worries about fertility	9.07	.003	-.27	0.11~0.63
Refusing abortion if pregnant	5.35	.021	3.14	1.19~8.26
Morning after pill(s)	.82	.366	1.27	0.75~2.15
Pregnancy test(s)	.96	.327	1.29	0.77~2.15
Dissatisfaction with current contraceptive	3.22	.073	2.42	0.92~6.36

Conclusions

- Ambivalence towards delayed childbearing can be experienced as problematic by current female students, like in 1983.
- 13% of the female students experienced being childless as problematic (2% often and 11% sometimes).
- Five indicators can be used by GPs to identify these students: (young) age, worrying about their fertility, living together with partner, refusing abortion and dissatisfaction with current contraceptives.

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