Study shows barriers exist for Texas adolescents seeking emergency contraception

Barriers exist for Texas adolescents seeking emergency contraception, according to findings from a new study being presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) 2018 Meeting. The study evaluated the availability of levonorgestrel (LNG) 1.5mg oral tablet, also known as the morning-after pill, in Texas and assessed knowledge of pharmacy staff about this medication.

In the U.S., emergency contraception in the form of LNG has been available over-the-counter for over 10 years and without an age limit for five years. Yet, the study found that almost half (46.5 percent) of over 700 pharmacies surveyed in Texas have an age requirement for purchase and over 50 percent require some type of consultation prior to purchase, though statewide pharmacy staff knowledge about effective use of the medication was inadequate. Results from the study indicate that most pharmacy staff would not be able to provide appropriate drug counseling.

“Texas has the fifth highest rate of teen pregnancy and the highest rate of repeat teen pregnancy in the U.S., but comprehensive sex education and contraception services are not readily available to all adolescents across the state, thus emergency contraception is often used as a substitute for more effective contraceptive methods,” said Dr. Maria Monge, one of the authors of the study.

“As Texas faces ongoing challenges in improving maternal health outcomes and decreasing teen pregnancy rates, removing barriers so that adolescents may more easily access over-the-counter emergency contraception is an important piece of this

puzzle that deserves additional attention."

Dr. Monge will present findings from the study, "Barriers to Obtaining and Effectively Using Emergency Contraception in Texas Adolescents," during the PAS 2018 Meeting on Monday, May 7 at 10:30 a.m. EDT.

Explore further:
Pharmacy staff frequently misinform teens seeking emergency contraception

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