

R025: Use of prescribed contraception in Northern Ireland 2010-2016 – Ulster University

The risk of an unintended, potentially unwanted, pregnancy is related to whether or not a woman uses any method of contraception and which method she uses. Evidence from studies of contraceptive use in Great Britain (which excludes Northern Ireland (NI)) and Ireland has found that contraceptive use is sociodemographically patterned. Women with lower levels of education, in the low and middle social classes and those living in the most disadvantaged areas are less likely to use contraception than their more advantaged peers. Contraceptive pill users are younger and more likely to be unmarried while long-acting reversible contraceptives, which have much lower failure rates than other methods, are used by older women. We do not know if, or how, contraceptive use in NI varies by age or deprivation. If, as in the rest of the UK, the younger and most disadvantaged are least likely to use contraception, or to use effective methods of contraception, they will be at increased risk of having an unintended pregnancy.

Through the Honest Broker Service this study aims to describe the use of prescribed contraceptives in NI and explore how this varies based on a woman's age and the deprivation in the area in which she lives. As the prescriber plays a critical role in determining medication use we will also explore how the use of prescribed contraceptives varies based on characteristics of the woman's general practice such as size of general practice, urban/rural practice location and practice area deprivation.