

Abstract

Title: Exploring the Correlation Between Long-Term Oral Contraceptive Use and Thyroid Dysfunction: A Literature Review

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In modern reproductive health practices, oral contraceptives are foundational, granting women control over their fertility and enabling informed choices about their bodies. Among young women globally, the prevalence of oral contraceptive use highlights their major role in family planning. However, hidden behind the apparent ease of use is a health issue that often gets ignored: the potential link between long-term oral contraceptive use and the heightened risk of developing thyroid issues. This literature review aims to highlight the widespread nature of oral contraceptive usage among young women, provide an overview of thyroid biology, and explore the correlation between oral contraceptives and thyroid dysfunction. Across the world, millions of women rely on oral contraceptives to regulate menstrual cycles, alleviate symptoms, and assert control over their reproductive choices. The widespread acceptance of oral contraceptives among young women emphasizes their efficacy and accessibility in navigating the complexities of sexual and reproductive health. Initial studies suggest a correlation between long-term use of oral contraceptives and thyroid dysfunction, with statistics indicating a higher incidence of thyroid issues among users. The thyroid gland plays a crucial role in regulating metabolism, growth, and development through the production of thyroid hormones. Its function is tightly controlled by the hypothalamus-pituitary-thyroid axis, which ensures the proper release of hormones like T3 and T4, essential for various physiological processes. Emerging evidence suggests a potential link between long-term oral contraceptive use and thyroid dysfunction. Studies have observed that prolonged exposure to the hormones in oral contraceptives may disrupt the normal thyroid function, leading to an increased risk of developing conditions such as hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism.