

EVIDENCE ON ONCE-A-MONTH PILLS

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Objective: To review the safety, effectiveness and continuation of once-a-month pills in China.

Methods: Two kinds of once-a-month pills were concerned, one contains quineestrol 3 mg and norgestrel 12 mg (Quin-Ng), the other contains quineestrol 3 mg and levonogestrel 6 mg (Quin-Lng). A total of 26 papers were identified by electronic and manual searches of international and Chinese database and relevant Chinese journals. Of them, 17 papers were included.

Results: The one year cumulative pregnancy rates were 3.9 and 2.2 per 100 women for Quin-Ng and Quin-Lng, respectively; the recalculated one-year pregnancy rate of Quin-Ng was 2.0 per 100 women on average, which ranged from 0 per 100 women to 4.2 per 100 women. The two-year Pearl indices were 2.3 and 1.1 per 100 women-years for Quin-Ng and Quin-Lng, respectively ($P < 0.01$). Nausea was common side effect. Incidences of increased leukorrhea were over 50% in most of included papers. Based upon available data, the mean one-year incidence rate of hypertension was 5.8% for Quin-Ng users. The one-year continuation rates for Quin-Ng and Quin-Lng users were 73.6% and 86.7%, respectively.

Conclusion: Findings of this review indicate the incidences of pregnancy and short-term side effects and hypertension are relatively high. The high monthly estrogen and progestogen doses of once-a-month pills raise concerns about their long-term safety. Once-a-month pills should be removed from the procurement list of family planning program.