

## THE CHANGING PATTERN OF CONTRACEPTIVE ACCEPTANCE—A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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The results of a longitudinal study of contraceptive acceptors over a five-year period are presented. The demographic characters show a shift from an older age group to a younger one, and from a higher to a lower parity. The shifts in parity groups were more significant than for age groups.

For each method used three distinct categories are identified on the basis of age and parity. For reversible methods of contraception, the characteristics of acceptors were similar in contrast to the permanent methods. Parity seems to have been the criterion of selecting patients for sterilisation without due regard to age whereby very young patients have been sterilised resulting in medical problems. For permanent methods there has been a significant drop among high parity acceptors.

For pregnancy spacing, younger subjects prefer the IUD to the pill. There is a tendency among IUD acceptors to continue with this method long after the desired family size is reached. Consequently those acceptors of sterilisation who have spaced their families for some time are in an older age group.

The significance of the shifts in demographic characters on the Maternity Services and in hospital practice is predicted.