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**Perception of Gynecologists about using the Levonorgestrel-releasing Intrauterine System for treatment of Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding in women in Punjab province, Pakistan**

**Key Words:** DUB, Menstrual Bleeding, Gynecologists, Hysterectomy, LNG-IUS

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**Background and Objectives:** DUB is a common health problem in women and also one of the main reasons for hysterectomy. Excessive use of hysterectomy for DUB patients has been controversial for many years, although LNG-IUS is safer and more effective treatment option. In Pakistan there is not enough evidence about use of LNG-IUS and gynecologists' knowledge and attitudes towards it. Aim of this study was to get better picture of the most commonly used treatment options for DUB patients in Pakistan's Punjab Province with special focus on LNG-IUS.

**Method:** Qualitative study using semi-structured interviews. Gynecologists from two tertiary care hospitals in Punjab Province in Pakistan were interviewed. NVivo was used for data analysis. Literature review was carried out using PubMed and relevant web contents.

**Results:** All 30 respondents were female doctors having MBBS degree with specialization in OB/GYN and had work experience between 2 to 11 years. Respondents frequently used or preferred Tranexamic acid & Mefenamic Acid followed by Oral Progesterone for DUB patients. There were no official treatment guidelines for DUB in Pakistan; age, patient preference, reproductive wish and costs were main factors affecting choice of treatment. Respondents were familiar with standard treatment options for DUB including LNG-IUS (Mirena). According to the respondents, in private hospitals more surgical options are used to treat DUB patients. Hysterectomy was last resort for respondents in DUB treatment although they performed many hysterectomies and barely inserted any LNG-IUS. There was

no proper patient counselling available before patients underwent hysterectomy. Respondents knew how LNG-IUS works, but high cost and low patient awareness were hindering them to recommend it.

**Conclusion & Recommendations:** Respondents preferred non-hormonal medical treatment as first line treatment for DUB patients, which was different from standard international guidelines. No consensus in DUB treatment and unavailability of treatment guidelines in Pakistan were observed. Hysterectomies performed were much more higher than the insertion of LNG-IUS which contradicted respondents' claim of hysterectomy being last resort for DUB. Few misconceptions about LNG-IUS such as high cost and suitable for younger patients were detected. They are not aware that LNG-IUS is more cost effective than other medical treatments. According to respondents, cost subsidizing and raising patient awareness were the main driving force to increase the usage of LNG-IUS. Guidelines for DUB treatment need to be developed, government and MoH of Pakistan should make LNG-IUS affordable for all DUB patients. Private health sector needs to be regulated to prevent the excessive use of hysterectomies. Medical practitioners should be trained in appropriate treatment and patient counselling methods. LHV's can play vital role in early detection, supervision of the treatment and follow-up care. Public awareness on DUB treatment options needs to be increased and media has a crucial role to play.