

## **The Effects of Pregnancy Experience on Contraceptive Practice**

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*Retrospective reports of, contraceptive use on two occasions of intercourse (separated by 2 years on average) were used to examine, change in contraceptive practice as a function of intervening pregnancy experience in a randomly selected biracial (Black, White) sample of 466 female adolescents. Although all groups of adolescents regardless of pregnancy experience improved their contraceptive use, adolescents experiencing an unplanned pregnancy or pregnancy scare appeared to improve relatively more. However, differences between groups could be explained by the differential passage of time, and this was true among both Black and White adolescents. Specifically, ever-pregnant adolescents had been sexually active the longest and showed the most improvement, never-pregnant adolescents who had never had a pregnancy scare had been sexually active the shortest period and showed the least improvement, while adolescents experiencing a pregnancy scare were intermediate on both variables. These findings suggest that prior research may have drawn faulty conclusions about the effects of pregnancy experience on subsequent contraceptive behavior, and that future research on these topics may need to pay greater attention to the passage of time as an important and substantive and methodological factor in its own right.*

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