

## Pharmacology to reduce possible risks of hormonal contraception

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Unintended pregnancies are a substantial social problem worldwide. Hormonal contraceptives are an essential tool in preventing such pregnancies. Women today have access to a multitude of hormonal contraceptive methods but all these are associated with adverse effects which limit their effectiveness.

All hormonal contraceptives contain products of oestrogen and progesterone in varying amounts. Both these are responsible for the adverse effects seen with hormonal contraceptives. The amount of these in the contraceptive is directly responsible for most of the adverse effects. Modifying the contents by either reducing the amount or changing selectivity of action is one way to reduce the adverse effects while changing the route of administration is the other.

Pharmacological basis for the adverse effects of hormonal contraceptives and how these can be minimised by pharmacological manipulations will be discussed.