When the Pill sometimes lays an egg

By ACSH Staff — December 22, 2010

Two pieces of news appeared yesterday with respect to birth control.

First, Reuters reported on a three year study evaluating the reproductive outcomes of 52,000 women in the United States. The study found that unintended pregnancy rates of those taking regimens of birth control pills were highest among obese women and adolescents.

Researchers also determined that conception rates were lower among women on cycles of birth control pills that contained 24 days of the female hormones progesterone (drospirenone) and estrogen (ethinyl estradiol), along with four days of sugar pills, compared with women on cycles that contained 21 days of progesterone and estrogen, along with seven days of sugar pills. The one-year pregnancy rate for women on the 24-day regimen was 2.1 percent as against 2.7 percent for women on the 21-day regimen. After three years, the rates were 4.7 percent and 5.7 percent, respectively.

The study also found that American women had a four-times higher rate of conception while receiving a prescription for the Pill than European women.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross comments that, “The Pill works very well when taken faithfully.” He additionally comments: “The discrepancy between its effectiveness in Europe and the United States is further proof that these populations are very different and that making direct comparisons of health care outcomes in the two areas is often extremely misleading.”

Meanwhile, the Vatican refuted claims that recent comments of the Pope condoned the use of condoms.