

Contraceptive counselling in primary health care – what do young women prefer?

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Introduction

In Estonia abortion rate among young women has halved during the last 10 years (figure 1), but is still higher than in most of the neighbouring Nordic countries. The availability, access and use of reliable contraceptive methods has increased, but the use of unreliable methods is still relatively wide-spread (figure 2). In 1991, the state funded health care system in Estonia was replaced by a national solidarity-based health insurance system. In addition to the existing women's out-patient clinics, new types of primary health care services offering contraceptive counselling were set up: the family doctor system, private gynaecological practices and youth friendly clinics (YFC). The family doctor system is well-functioning and prevention-oriented and is highly appreciated by patients in general. YFC are specially designed to meet the needs of young people of both sexes the age of 25 years of age, providing contraception counselling, HIV/STI testing and a chance to talk about sexuality with a professional counsellor free of charge.

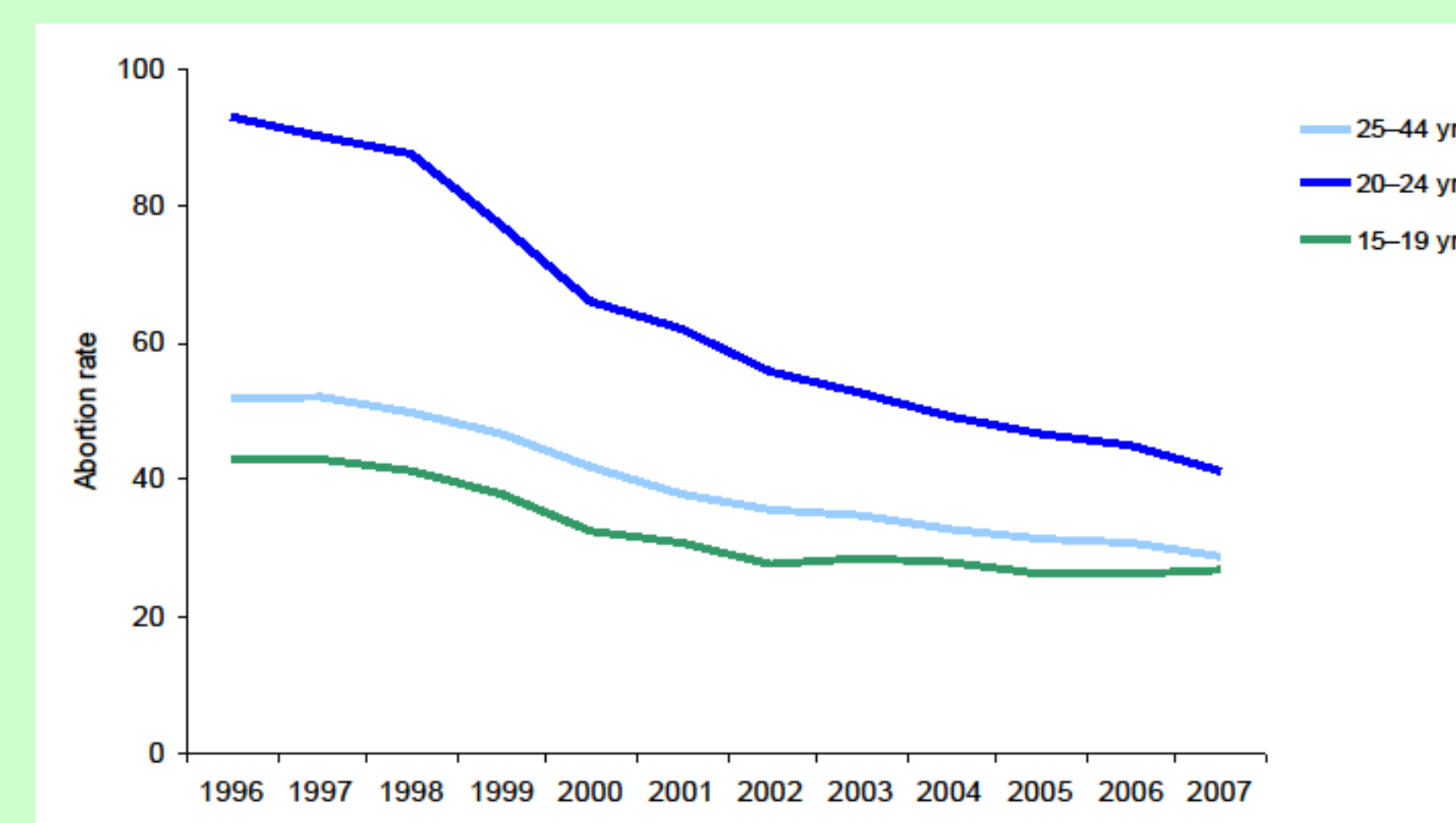


Figure 1. Age-specific abortion rate per 1000 women, 15–44-year-old, Estonia 1996–2007.

Objective

This study aimed to investigate young women's usage of, preferences for and satisfaction with different types of contraceptive service providers in Estonia.

Methods

Data came from the population-based postal survey "Estonian Women's Health". In this study we used data from 649 women aged 16–24 years who visited health care services in order to get contraceptive counselling. Logistic regression was used to investigate the association between satisfaction (friendliness, competence, confidentiality, adequacy of time) and the most recently visited health care service type, adjusted for age, marital status, mother tongue, living area, self-rated health and preferred type of health care service provider. Visitors of women's out-patient clinics were taken as a reference group.

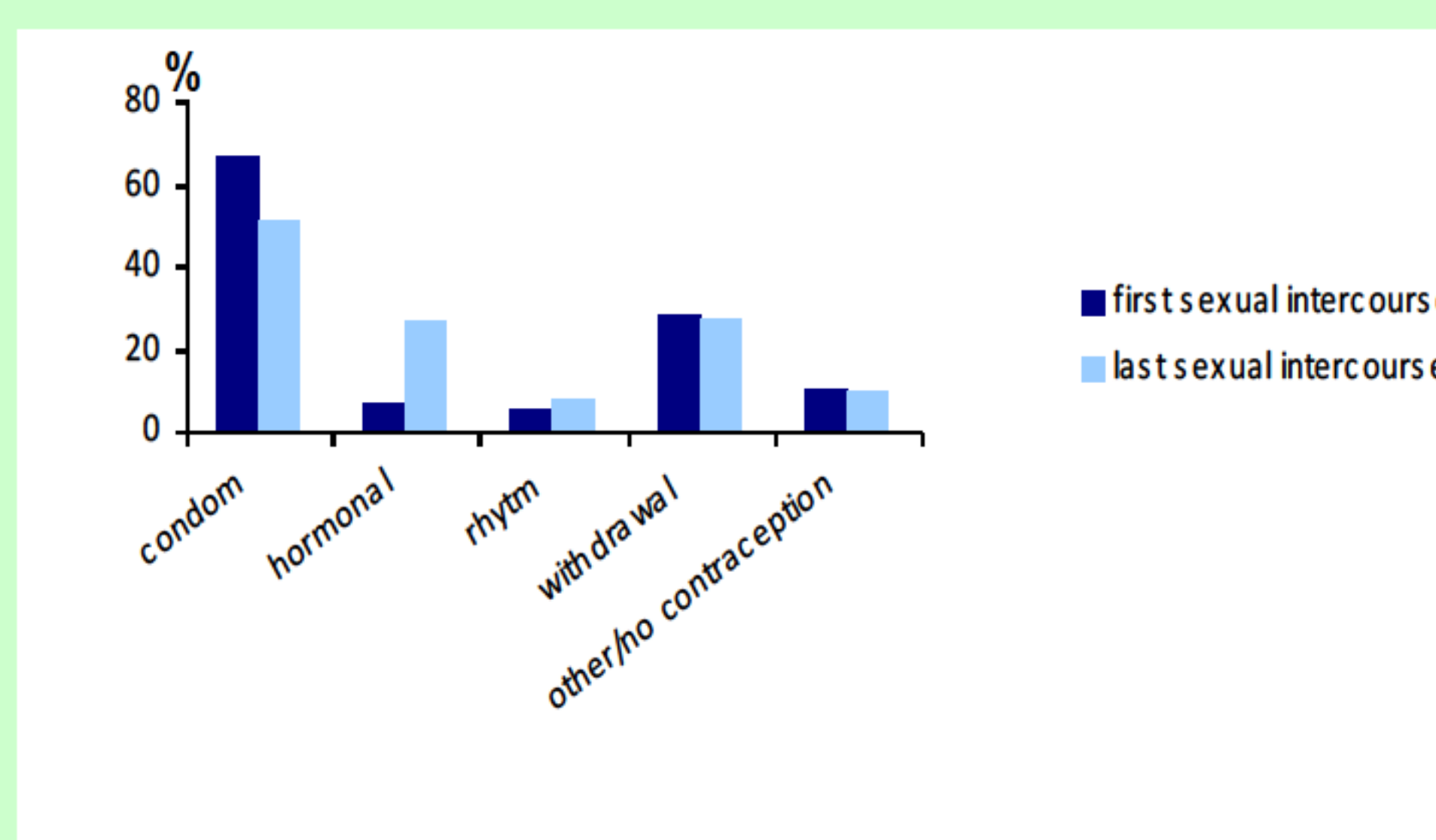


Figure 2. Contraceptive methods used during the first and the last intercourse 16–24-year-old women, Estonia, 2004. (Respondents could choose several methods).

Results

More than half of the respondents visited and also preferred women's out-patient clinics (57 % and 51%, respectively); the remainder visited and preferred YFCs (20% and 13%), private clinics (18% and 18%) and a family doctors (12% and 7%). Of the respondents, 60% had visited the health care service that they actually preferred.

Most of the women were satisfied with all four aspects of the studied health care services: 90% with friendliness, 87% with confidentiality and competency and 83% with adequacy of time.

Compared with the women's out-patient clinics, respondents were more likely to be satisfied with friendliness and length of the visit in all the other studied service providers, but not with confidentiality in family doctor centers and in private clinics and with competence in family doctor centers. The results were statistically significant only with friendliness in private clinics (OR 3.08; 95%CI 1.12–8.45) (figure 3). Respondents who had visited YFCs were more likely to be satisfied with all four studied aspects of care in YFCs - with friendliness (OR 2.37; 95% CI 0.97–5.74), competency (OR 2.05; 95% CI 0.75–5.64), confidentiality (OR 1.38; 95% CI 0.57–3.38) and adequacy of time (OR 1.66; 95% CI 0.77–3.57).

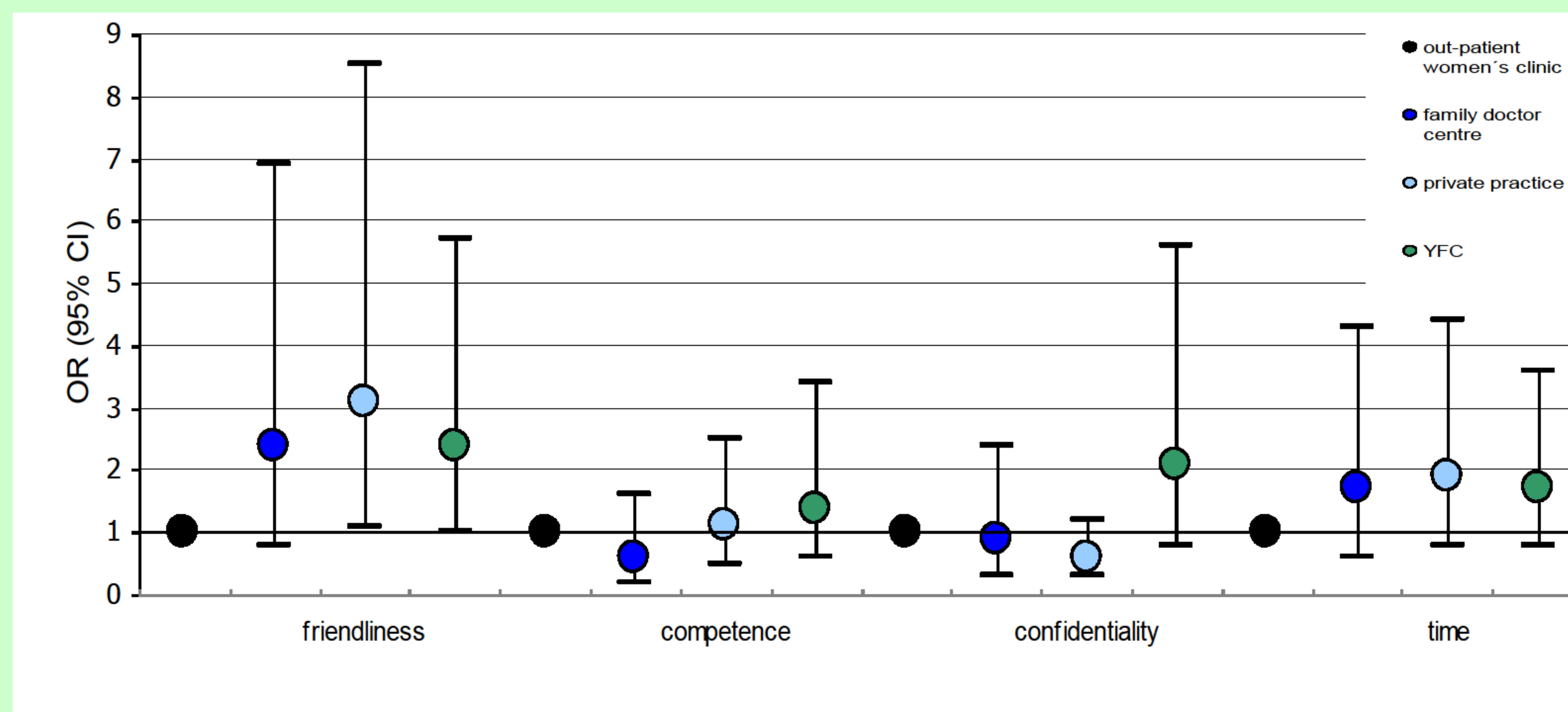


Figure 3. The association between satisfaction with different aspects of the service and the most recently used type of contraceptive service provider, adjusted for age, marital status, mother tongue, living area, self-rated health and preferred type of health care service provider, 16–24-year-old women, Estonia, 2004

Conclusion

The past 15 years has seen the addition of new health care services offering family planning contraceptive counselling and young women in Estonia have the possibility to choose between service provider. Although half of the respondents prefer to visit and are satisfied with women's out-patient clinics, the remainder of the respondents are equally or even more satisfied with other providers they have visited. More active involvement of YFCs and the family doctor system offering an integrated service, may further contribute to an increase in reliable contraception usage.