

No Contraception Link

William Saletan's thesis in "Where the Rubber Meets Roe" [Outlook, Oct. 1] — that more contraception will reduce rates of unintended pregnancy and abortion — has intuitive appeal, but the data prove otherwise. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that contraceptive use is already "virtually universal among women of reproductive age."

The problem: With typical use, the 12-month pregnancy risk is 15 percent with condoms and 9 percent with oral contraceptives.

Large-scale studies in California, Washington state, Scotland, England, Sweden and China show no reduction in pregnancy or abortion rates despite increased availability of contraception or emergency contraception.

— Susan Wills
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