

# Combined Oral Contraceptive & Progestin Oral Contraceptive

## Effects on Mood Disorders

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### Introduction

Women have been using birth control to prevent pregnancy, regulate their menstrual cycle, relieve cramps, control blood flow, and clear up acne breakouts. There are six different forms of birth control, the pill, intrauterine device (IUD), the patch, the implant, injections, and vaginal rings. The most common form of birth control is the pill. The pill comes in a progestin-only (POC) dose or an estrogen and progestin (COC) dose. There are side effects when it comes to taking birth control, some include weight loss/gain, mood swings, anxiety/depression, worsened periods, headaches, nausea, an increased risk of blood clots, and ovarian cysts. The type of birth control (COC or POC) can put women at higher risk for these side effects and developing mood disorders.

### Methods

Six databases (PubMed, Medline, PsychINFO, CINAHL Complete, and APA PsycArticles) and keywords (oral contraception, combined oral contraceptives, progestin oral contraceptives, mood disorders, and mental health) were used to find peer-reviewed studies. The demographic for each study included women 15 to 54 years old.

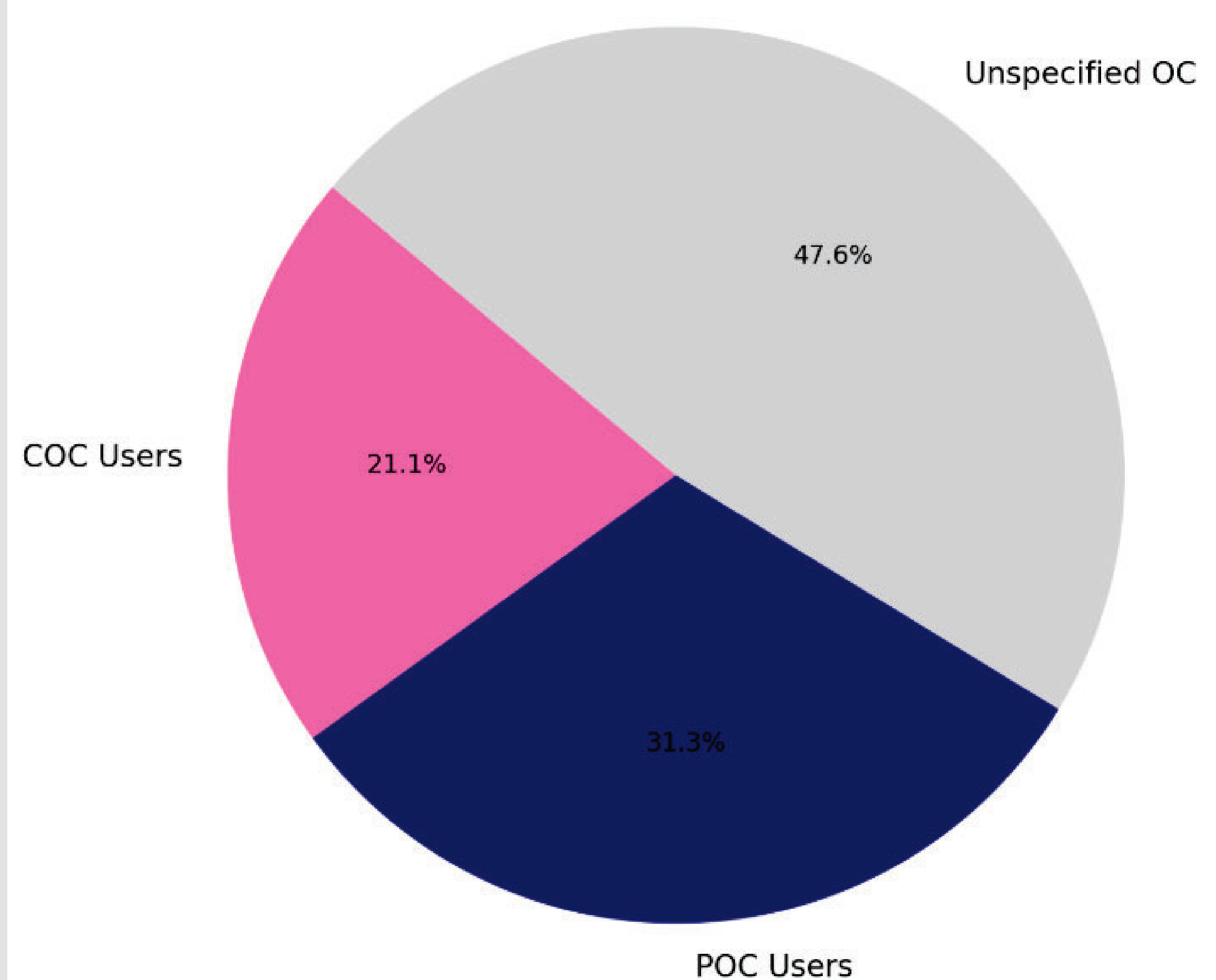
### Discussion & Conclusion

The review of 6 studies showed mixed results regarding the effect that POC and COC use have on mood. Interestingly, one study suggested that OC use influences alcohol dependency. Overall, POC is more clearly associated with mood disorders, depression, and depressive symptoms, as well as anxiety. That being said, due to the limitations regarding self-reporting symptoms, and lack of clarity of the type of OC use, and a narrow demographics there needs to be more diverse research. Additionally, the unexpected link between OC use and alcohol dependence calls for further research that would include additional behavioral impacts as well as family history and any pre-existing diagnosis. While OC has been an effective form of birth control for many years is it important to take precautions when prescribing POC especially for the population at risk for mood disorders.

### Results

The studies showed an increased risk of mood disorders for POC users, specifically depression. Some studies showed no increased risk of depression when using OC in general. Surprisingly, it was also found that COC protected against mood disorders, and it was found that OC use has benefits for mood. However, there is a link between the duration of OC use and a diagnosis of a mood disorder. The longer OC is taken, the higher the risk is for a mood disorder diagnosis. Additionally, it was concluded that OC users are at a higher risk of alcohol dependence.

Average Reported Depression/Mood Disorder by OC Type



#### Sources:

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