Women with Nerve: Providing Reproductive Health Care for Women with Epilepsy
Q&A with Caryn Dutton, MD, and Amanda Dennis, DrPH, MBE

The following questions were submitted during the Women with Nerve: Providing Reproductive Health Care for Women with Epilepsy webinar presented by Caryn Dutton and Amanda Dennis on December 2, 2015. Questions have been edited for clarity.

Caryn Dutton is an Instructor in Obstetrics and Gynecology at HMS and the Medical Director of the Gynecology Clinic at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Dr. Dutton has a consult practice for women with complex medical conditions requiring gynecologic or family planning care, and is active in the education of both medical students and residents in her department.

Amanda Dennis joined Ibis in 2007 and has led several studies evaluating how US health care policies impact women and health care providers. Amanda has also contributed to a number of Ibis’s efforts to ensure access to comprehensive, evidence-based sexual and reproductive health care in the United States and South Africa. Her dissertation work, which aimed to understand and respond to the reproductive health needs of adult women with epilepsy, inspired her to build a body of work focused on addressing the reproductive health needs of women and girls with various chronic health conditions.

Questions and Answers

Could you please touch on counseling emergency contraception?

There is no specific study on levonorgestrel dosing. There is one guideline that was produced by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in the UK that suggested doubling the dose, however there is absolutely no data to support that. Because it is a progestin-only dose, it is safe to take as a single dose if someone is on an enzyme-inducing agent. However I think we need to advise them to take the typical prescribed dose of 1050 mgs rather than increasing the dose in the absence of true data to show there is a significant decrease in ongoing efficacy.

Do you have any recommendations for AEDs and lactation?

Many AEDs are safe for breastfeeding, however I would refer a patient to the resources that are available online and their neurologist in terms of planning AED use while breastfeeding.