

# *Understanding negotiation and use of female-controlled barrier methods*

American Public Health Association  
135th Annual Meeting and Expo  
November 3-7 2007 Washington DC

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# Overview

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- Results
  - Female condom
  - Diaphragm
    - Use
    - Negotiation
    - Acceptability
- Conclusions

# Female-controlled barrier methods

- Women suffer from serious consequences of STI's (PID, ectopic pregnancy, infertility, cervical cancer)
- Vulnerable populations (e.g. sex workers) more affected and often unable to negotiate male condom use
- Renewed interest in diaphragm and women-friendly microbicides

# Methodology

- Two study sites in Dominican Republic (Puerto Plata and Santiago)
- In-depth interviews with
  - 18 female sex workers
  - 22 male sexual partners (7 regular partners, 15 new clients)
- Analysis of transcriptions by two researchers

# *Results*

# *The female condom (FC)*



# FC: Use

- 12 women were frequent users (good experiences)
- 2 had difficulties inserting it
- All 22 men had at least one experience with the female condom

# FC: Negotiation

- Three strategies:
  1. Give both options (male and female condom)
  2. Negotiate the female condom when men refuse male condom
  3. Use the female condom secretly



# FC: Acceptability – men's attitudes

- According to women:
  - Reluctance, but they accept after explanation
  - They like it, as they don't need to use a male condom
  - They get angry and mistreat the women
- According to men:
  - High satisfaction with female condom!

# FC: Advantages

- According to women:
  - Women feel protected (18)
  - Beneficial for their business (6)
  - They have 'the control' (5)
  - Protection against pregnancy (4)
  - Comfortable (3)
  - No rests of lubrication gel inside of vagina (1)
- According to men:
  - Protection against all diseases, including HIV (12)
  - Comfortable (male condom is tight)
  - Feel more 'free', more natural

# FC: Disadvantages

- According to women:
  - Looks ugly (5)
  - Strange noise while having intercourse (2)
  - Excess of lubricant gel (2)
  - ‘Penile misrouting’ (2)
  - Irritation of the skin (1)
- According to men:
  - Unfamiliar method, more confidence in male condom (3)

# *The diaphragm*



# Diaphragm: Use

- 10 women reported frequent use
- Often tried out with regular partner first (5)
- 3 women had problems inserting it 1st time
- 3 women non-compliance with 6 hrs interval after intercourse
- 2 women accepted sex without male condom
- 8 men had experience with the diaphragm (1 client, 7 regular partners)

# Diaphragm: Negotiation

- Regular partners
  - Were told about use diaphragm (before or after intercourse)
  - Secret use
- Clients
  - Secret use

# Diaphragm: Acceptability - men's attitudes

- According to women:
  - They accept after explanation of method
  - They like it, as they don't need to use a male condom
  - They get angry and mistreat the women
- According to men:
  - OK, but not very safe

# Diaphragm: Advantages

- According to women:
  - Back-up method against diseases (10)
  - Can be used without knowledge men (10)
  - Can be used during menstruation (6)
  - Comfortable (5)
  - Protects against pregnancy (2)
- According to men:
  - Protection against pregnancy (5)
  - Protection against diseases, including HIV (3)
  - No need to use male condom (2)



# Diaphragm: Disadvantages

- According to women:
  - Pain, irritation, discomfort (6)
  - Lack of confidence in protection against diseases; does not protect against HIV (4)
  - Has to be left in vagina for six hours (3)
  - Some men can feel it (3)
- Problems according to men:
  - Lack of protection

# Conclusions

- Introduction female-controlled barrier methods improved women's options to have protected sex
- Acceptability of female condoms is high for women and men
- Diaphragm use seems higher with regular partners than with clients

# Conclusions (cont.)

- More data are needed on condom migration after introducing female-controlled barrier methods
- Strategies are needed to disseminate information on female-controlled barrier methods among clients and regular partners

# ***THANK YOU!***

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## **Acknowledgements:**

- **Ibis Reproductive Health**
- **PSI**
- **USAID – DR**
- **Leticia Fernandez**
- **Hector Jerez**
- **Francisco Paz**

## **Local partners:**

- **CEPROSH**
- **COIN**
- **MODEMU**
- **Profamilia**