

Developing a Measure of Contraceptive Acceptability

Situation

Family planning programs are evolving to prioritize reproductive empowerment over reproductive behaviors. As existing measures cannot fully capture and track progress toward these new goals, we need new, person-centered measures. A gap in current measures is the degree to which individuals find contraceptive use acceptable, an area that may be informed by conceptual underpinnings of vaccine hesitancy. East and West Africa are key contexts for exploring contraceptive acceptability, given pressure to bear children early and often and high levels of contraceptive-related fear, stigma, and misinformation.

What We're Doing

USAID's Agency for All Project is developing a Contraceptive Acceptability measure to provide family planning program implementers and practitioners with a tool to better support reproductive agency. This includes:

- **A review of existing literature** to examine factors associated with contraceptive hesitancy and acceptability in sub-Saharan Africa and any parallels with vaccine hesitancy in these contexts.
- **Formative research** in Cameroon and Kenya exploring reasons for contraceptive acceptability, and testing applicability of the "5Cs" framework of vaccine hesitancy to contraceptive demand and behaviors.
- **Development of a contraceptive acceptability framework** based on literature, theory, and research.
- **Psychometric research** to develop, test, and refine contraceptive acceptability measure in Cameroon and Kenya.
- **Longitudinal cohort study** to measure shifts in contraceptive acceptability and test the measure's sensitivity to changes in contraceptive desire and ability to predict contraceptive behavior.

What We're Learning

- Contraceptive acceptability is an important construct through which we learn **why, which, and when** women and men use, don't use, switch, or discontinue contraceptives.
- Contraceptive acceptability **exists on a spectrum** of willingness to use any contraceptive method.
- **Contraceptive agency** influences contraceptive acceptability, demand, and behaviors.
- Conceptual models of vaccine hesitancy require contextualization to apply them to contraceptive acceptability. While some components of vaccine hesitancy are salient, contraceptive hesitancy requires more consideration of **social contexts, experiential histories, and the range of contraceptive behaviors.**

Impact

A measure developed from this research will capture the spectrum of factors influencing the transition from contraceptive desire to contraceptive demand. This will enable programmers and policymakers to better understand drivers of contraceptive acceptability from a user perspective and tailor person-centered family planning programs to support achievement of self-determined reproductive goals.

Snapshot

Locations: Cameroon: Yaoundé and Nganha; Kenya: Mukuru (Nairobi) and Homa Bay

Duration: 2022–ongoing

Consortium Partners: Center on Gender Equity and Health, UC San Diego; EVIHDAF; Makerere University; Matchboxology; Save the Children

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