Provider Perspectives on Clients’ Needs for Multipurpose Prevention Technologies
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BACKGROUND

Multipurpose prevention technologies (MPTs) deliver varied combinations of HIV, other STIs and pregnancy prevention. They provide a unique and critical opportunity to leverage younger women’s concern for contraception with prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). An array of MPTs are currently in development but for them to have meaningful public health impact they must be acceptable and accessible to women and adolescent girls. Health care providers working in the areas of HIV prevention, family planning (FP) and other SRH areas offer a unique perspective into their patients’ health care needs and the types of products they may find acceptable.

RESULTS

Provider Knowledge of MPTs Based on Years of Experience

Respondents reported serving populations in Africa, Asia, Australia, Canada and the United States. Two-thirds of the providers indicated at least 10 years of work experience in HIV (n=127), FP (n=111), or other infectious diseases (n=52). Independent of region and years of clinical experience, over half of the providers (n=145) had never before heard about MPTs (Figure 1). A majority (75%) believed that their clients needed combined protection against pregnancy, HIV and other STIs. This was especially pronounced among respondents with more than 20 years of work experience, working in a developed country, and providers working in integrated HIV and FP clinics. When asked to provide more details on the demand for combined protection against pregnancy, HIV, and other STIs in their settings one participant responded “combined prevention is really highly demanded in my country. It is sort of a one shop marketing for clients.” When asked to prioritize two of three possible indications for MPTs, half of all respondents preferred a combination of contraception and HIV prevention (52%) (Figure 2), particularly among African providers.

CONCLUSION

Providers provide an essential window into the needs and wants of their clients. Inclusion of providers perspectives can help ensure that MPTs are not only technologically based but market driven.

Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs) are an innovative class of sexual and reproductive health prevention products that deliver HIV prevention, other sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention, and contraception in varied combinations. Condoms are the only currently available option to prevent the simultaneous risks of HIV, other STIs, and unintended pregnancy. While condoms are important, they are not enough. Women need more options that suit the circumstances of their daily lives.

There are nearly a dozen MPTs in clinical trials, with many other innovative technologies in earlier stages of development, including:

- Longer-acting vaginal rings
- Injectable that combine contraception & infection prevention
- Fast dissolving films and insects

Effective, affordable, and widely available MPTs would save lives and improve the health of women and their families across the globe.

The Initiative for Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (IMPT) advances the development of MPTs to address the interlinked risks of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV, believing that the availability of desirable methods that deliver an array of prevention combinations will improve the lives of women and their families worldwide. Established in 2009, the IMPT is an international collaboration that has engaged product developers, scientific researchers, health care providers, funders, and community-based advocates behind this common agenda. Leveraging the multidisciplinary expertise of this diverse network, the IMPT accelerates action around priority technical gaps and challenges to advance the science to support the development of MPTs and their successful introduction into target populations with high unmet need.

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