Global Reproductive Health Diaries

Real Challenges, Real Women’s Needs
Imagine a world where women and girls are empowered to protect themselves from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Bethany Young Holt - Director, CAMI

The consequences of unsafe sex are among the greatest public health challenges of our time. Women risk unintended pregnancies as well as HIV and other infections that can lead to maternal mortality, low rates of child survival, infertility and other health impacts for women and their families.

Today’s technologies are not meeting women’s health needs. Women face obstacles including access, cost, knowledge and partner cooperation that can hinder their ability to use available methods, such as condoms, that prevent unintended pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs) are a new class of health products that simultaneously prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

Promising MPTs include a single-size diaphragm and easier-to-use vaginal rings that would provide contraception plus protection against infections. New microbicide gels could lead to marked declines in HIV and sexually transmitted infections. Effective, affordable and widely available MPTs will save lives and resources and improve the health of women and their families everywhere.

Using a multi-disciplinary approach, the Coalition Advancing Multipurpose Innovations (CAMI) works to empower women and girls around the world to protect themselves from unintended pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

CAMI is the Secretariat for the international Initiative for Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (IMPT) which helps reproductive health researchers, health care providers, policy makers, advocates, product developers, and donors work together to advance the development and introduction of multipurpose prevention technologies to protect women against unintended pregnancy, illnesses and infections. IMPT representatives can be found across the globe helping to raise awareness and support for MPTs in countries that need them the most.

From Kenya to Kentucky, women struggle with limited reproductive health options to protect their health and the well being of their families. Read on for what women around the world have to say about prevention methods they want to improve their lives and health.
Sohni, age 30, India

"People are afraid of getting pregnant because there is this real fear of unsafe delivery. Mothers really can die in childbirth. My sister, Roshni, died while delivering her fifth baby in just seven years. I am married with two children. My husband wants more children, so he doesn’t think we need to use contraception. I want to have more children, but I want to space them out; it will be safer for all of us. I don’t think I am at risk for AIDS, but I can’t be sure; my husband travels a lot and is often out late for ‘work’. I know he would be angry if I asked him to get tested. I wish there was something that could protect me, and my family, against unintended pregnancy and diseases."

MATERNAL MORTALITY

Everyday 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, 99% of which occur in developing countries.
Helene, age 33, Ivory Coast

“I have six children, and that is enough. I go to the local health center to get the Depo injection so that I won’t become pregnant again. That is what I have to focus on, not getting pregnant. I don’t feel comfortable asking my husband to wear condoms because he doesn’t like them, and he asks me why? I know he is with other women, but he denies it. I can control when I get pregnant, but don’t know what to do about other infections.”

RISK AMONG YOUNG WOMEN

Young, married women are the fastest growing group of HIV-positive people worldwide.
Lian, 28, China

“My husband and I are moving into the city with our 2-year-old son, Minsheng. He got a job at a factory and I will help my cousins at their restaurant. We don’t want to have another child and I have heard from friends about chlamydia being common in the city and I am nervous. I think my husband has always been loyal to me, but I am unsure about what may happen when we move. He would be against using a condom because we are married. I wish there was a way I could avoid pregnancy and keep from getting chlamydia or something else.”

UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

222 million women worldwide want to use safe and effective family planning methods but are unable to do so because they lack access to information and services or the support of their partners and communities.
Rachel, age 23, USA

“Ever since I became sexually active, I’ve had to deal with some partners trying to convince me that we don’t need to use a condom. And sometimes, I have been swayed. I’m lucky that I never had to deal with the consequences of that decision. I can’t imagine how many women out there don’t feel comfortable insisting on using a condom—guys can be persuasive. I mean, your safety should come first, but in the moment, it doesn’t always.”

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

1 million people contract a sexually transmitted infection everyday.
Gabriela, 31, Guatemala

“I have HIV, but have received good treatment that has allowed me to stay healthy. I am dating a nice guy who is very supportive of me. I am so nervous about giving him HIV, so I ask him to use condoms. I can tell that he does not like it and I admit that a couple times we didn’t use protection. We have been lucky those times, but I have always been afraid afterwards. I think someday we would like to have a family, but not now. I wish there was an easier way to keep from getting pregnant and protect him from my HIV, but all we have are condoms.”

HIV IN WOMEN

16.8 million women are living with HIV.

For women in their reproductive years (15-49), HIV/AIDS was the leading cause of death and disease worldwide in 2009.
One product
Multiple health solutions
Countless lives saved

Availability of MPT products providing contraception and HIV and STI prevention at the same time will help women the world over better meet their health needs. These technologies will put prevention in women’s hands and help to:

- Decrease maternal mortality
- Improve child survival and health
- Enable women to attain higher education levels
- And improve economic opportunities for women

SOURCES FOR STATISTICS:


RISK AMONG MARRIED WOMEN: PATH, UNFPA. Female Condom: A Powerful Tool for Protection. Seattle: UNFPA, PATH; 2006.


Get Involved!

Join the international movement for MPTs! Go to www.MPTs101.org and raise awareness and support for MPTs.
The Time for **MPTs** is NOW!

Millions of women around the world face the challenge of protecting themselves from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Each one has her own personal story. We asked women, and their health professionals, to tell us about their experiences so that we could create these composite diary entries and share them with you.

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