

# | You started using family planning: What does he think?

**A study of men's influence on contraceptive  
continuation in Nyando District, Kenya**

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A stylized world map graphic composed of small dots, rendered in shades of blue and green, positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide.

# Background



- Hormonal contraceptive methods are highly effective if used without interruption
- Depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA) is the most popular method in Kenya
- High discontinuation rates noted
- Men could be influencing discontinuation

# Significance

- Past research has focused on user and method-related characteristics associated with discontinuation
- Little attention has been paid to the influence of men
- Husbands and male community leaders emerged as influential during FGDs with current DMPA users
- Results from this study informed message development in a campaign to increase contraceptive continuation

# Research question



Why do some men encourage discontinuation of DMPA among current users in Nyando District, Kenya?

# Study Site

Nyando District is located in western Kenya



# Methods - 1

- FGDs were conducted with men
- Eight FGDs were conducted in 2007-2008
- Participants were purposively sampled
- Recruitment procedure

# Methods - 2

- FGDs contained 8-11 participants
- They lasted for 1-2 hours
- Discussions were conducted in the local language (Dholuo)
- All proceedings were tape recorded

# Data Analysis

- FGDs were transcribed and translated into English
- Data were coded and analyzed using QSR's NVivo 8
- Some codes were predetermined, but the majority were created inductively
- Cross tabulation reporting function (“matrix coding”) used to identify patterns in themes by respondent type
- Evidence that supports each theme was examined both quantitatively and qualitatively

# Results - Overview

- A total of 66 themes were identified
- 28 themes were expressed in at least three FGDs
- Few differences between the themes expressed by husbands and community leaders
- Themes regarding discontinuation were placed into three higher- level conceptual constructs:
  - Logistical reasons
  - Medical/health reasons
  - Social reasons

# Results – Logistical reasons

- Lack of cash to purchase FP method or services

*There is need to ensure that family planning [methods] can be easily obtained. We were told by the provider to buy the medicine but were unable to use it [injectable] due to lack of money. (Community leader, FGD 2)*

- Stock outs of the FP method

# Results – Medical/health reasons

- Fear of physical harm to their wives

*A woman who uses injectables could experience a [health] problem because of the diseases that are caused by injectables. (Community leader, FGD 1)*

- Belief it causes women to be drowsy or tired, resulting in their inability to perform work

*When some people use injectables, they become too overweight that they cannot perform their daily chores like they used to. They cannot till the garden, fetch water from the river and cannot go on a long journey on foot. (Community leaders, FGD 1)*

# Results – Medical/health reasons

- Dislike of specific side effects such as weight gain or loss, lower libido, or menstrual bleeding changes

*When I sleep with my wife, it is as if I were sleeping with a corpse. She does not respond to my caresses at night. This has completely ruined our sexual relationship. (Husband, FGD 1)*

- Myth that DMPA causes infertility, deformed children, death to the user, or high blood pressure

# Results – Social reasons

- Belief that method use is associated with prostitution
- Decreased libido leads husbands to seek new sexual partners or suspicion that women are unfaithful

*The idea of a woman being cold [not open to sex] can necessitate the husband to go out and look for those who are hot [engaging in extra marital affairs]. This can lead to the other person contracting HIV and also promote polygamy. (Community leader, FGD 2)*

- Want more children and to increase the community size  
*If a husband wants to name a child after his grandmother, he instructs his wife to stop using injectables. (Community leader, FGD 1)*
- Religious opposition
- Perceived high death rate among children
- Discovery of covert use

# Conclusions



- Men reported that they had strong influence over women's decisions to continue using contraceptive methods
- Both husbands and community leaders had a low level of knowledge regarding side effects of hormonal contraceptives, especially DMPA

# Recommendation

- Programs should strive to fully engage men in FP educational efforts and FP decision making to:
  - Explain the benefits of FP
  - Describe the potential side effects of methods such as injectables and how to handle side effects should they occur
  - Dispel myths about contraceptives