

*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: The Role of Men in Family Planning Decision Making*

## **Male Partner's Roles in Women's Use of Emergency Contraception**

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# Study overview:

## May-June 2009 in Accra, Ghana

- Focus on male “ECP influencers”:
  - Bought ECPs for a female partner;
  - Provided money/transport for partner to buy ECPs;
  - Told partner about ECPs.
- Recruited male participants from pharmacies
- Mixed methods data collection:
  1. Quantitative survey (n=316)
    - 188, or 60% , were “ECP Influencers”
  2. Qualitative interviews (n=31)

# Sample Characteristics of ECP Influencers

	Survey (n=188)	Interviews (n=31)
Age (average)	30	26
Single	58%	100%
Has children	48%	3%
Education	49% completed University	Most completed high school and many in University
Frequency of sexual activity (mode)	2-3 times/week (47%)	1/week (48%)

# Survey Data: ECP Purchasers

- 76/316 (24%) purchased ECPs at the pharmacy the day of the interview
  - 50 did not use anything to prevent pregnancy
  - 22 bought them before they had sex for later
  - 19 had sex with partner during fertile or unsafe days
  - 12 said the condom slipped or tore
  - 10 said partner missed pills or pills/injectable refill

# Survey Data: Knowledge ECPs

- High knowledge of ECPs. More than 80% knew that:
  - ECPs can be taken up to 72 hours after UPS
  - ECPs do not cause an abortion
- Half believed ECPs should not be used repeatedly, while one-quarter believed it is OK

# Survey Data: Attitudes toward Longer-term Contraception

- ECPs were preferred to condoms & longer-term methods:
  - Nearly  $\frac{1}{2}$  preferred ECPs over condoms
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  have encouraged use of ECPs, but only  $\frac{1}{3}$  have encouraged use of longer-term methods
  - More than  $\frac{3}{4}$  believed ECPs are as effective as OCPs

# Interviews: Types of ECP Support (n=31)

- Bought ECPs (n=26)
- Gave money to partner to buy to ECPs (n=18)
- Introduced partners to ECPs (n=17)
- Told their partner they wanted them to use ECPs or convinced their partner to use it (N=10)
- Reminded partner to take ECPs (n=9)
- Provided emotional support (n=7)
- Provided transportation to buy ECPs (n=5)

# Interviews: Are Men Supportive...

*“The first initiative was for me to go and buy it and that was a source of encouragement for her to go and buy it herself.”*

*“She didn’t know about it. She knows nothing about ECP when I told her about it.”*

*“I gave her money to buy the pills, and I sometimes go with her.”*

*“After I had realized she will be vomiting or having slight headache, she told me and then I had to always be by her side.”*

## ... Or Coercive?

*“Since I’m the man and maybe she wants the pregnancy so if I give her the money, she may not buy but will come and tell me that she’s bought it and that the medicine didn’t work so I have to buy it myself and make sure that she takes it.”*

*“I made sure she took the pill because sometimes she can lie to me and she wouldn’t take it. “*

*“[The man] should decide whether to use condoms or use the emergency contraception. That’s all.”*

# Interviews: Feelings about Longer-term Contraception

- Most men did not support partner's use of longer-term methods because:
  - Side effects, safety, and “remembering” concerns
  - Preference that she use ECPs instead
  - Perception that contraception is for married couples

*“I rather prefer she doesn't use [longer-term contraception]. That's what I'm going to tell her. I would rather she doesn't use it but uses EC. With EC it's more effective and works very fast.”*

# Interviews: Feelings about Longer-term Contraception

- Men used strong language : “I wouldn’t advise it to her” or “I’d have to convince her not to use that method.”

*“Injecting someone to prevent pregnancy? No. To go to the extent of injecting someone to prevent pregnancy? No, no, no.”*

# Conclusions:

## Male ECP Influencers

- Supported partners' ECP use, but on a continuum
- Believed that the man should be responsible to some extent for pregnancy prevention
- Had introduced their partner to ECPs
- Had high knowledge of ECPs
- Knew little about other methods of contraception
- Were generally opposed to partners' use of longer-term contraception

# Programmatic recommendations

- Continue to promote ECPs, but with greater understanding of gender dynamics
- More work needs to be done with respect to promoting longer-term methods of contraception
  - Increase knowledge of methods
  - Dispel myths, specifically around side effects and effectiveness
  - Emphasize that use is appropriate for married AND single women
- Target men as equal partners in family planning and promote joint decision-making for family planning