

# *Building the Evidence Base in Malawi*



17 November, 2009: International Conference on Family Planning

Using Male Motivators to increase family planning use among young married couples in Malawi



# Background & Rationale

## **Ongoing Save the Children Programs**

- Integrating Family planning into sponsorship programs; since June 1, 2006

## **Why target men?**

- Despite increases in access, uptake still low, particularly among young married women

## **How to tailor interventions to men?**

- Men obtain FP information from peers and informal networks
- Educational messages should explore the economic side of limiting births and improving the family's standard of living

# Research Question

- Primary Question:
  - Does a male focused family planning intervention increase contraceptive uptake?
- Secondary Question:
  - Are there relationships between contraceptive uptake and change in the following variables:
    - Ease in communicating
    - Frequency of communication

# Male Motivators & Intervention

- 40 Motivators selected from various community meetings
  - Exemplars of contraceptive use
- 5 day training:
  - Gender norms
  - FP information
  - Motivation tools to talk to men about FP
  - Links to community health services
- Intervention (5 visits over 8 months):
  - Family planning info
  - Motivational Factors
  - Role Play & Communication Skill Development
  - Continued Information & Motivation



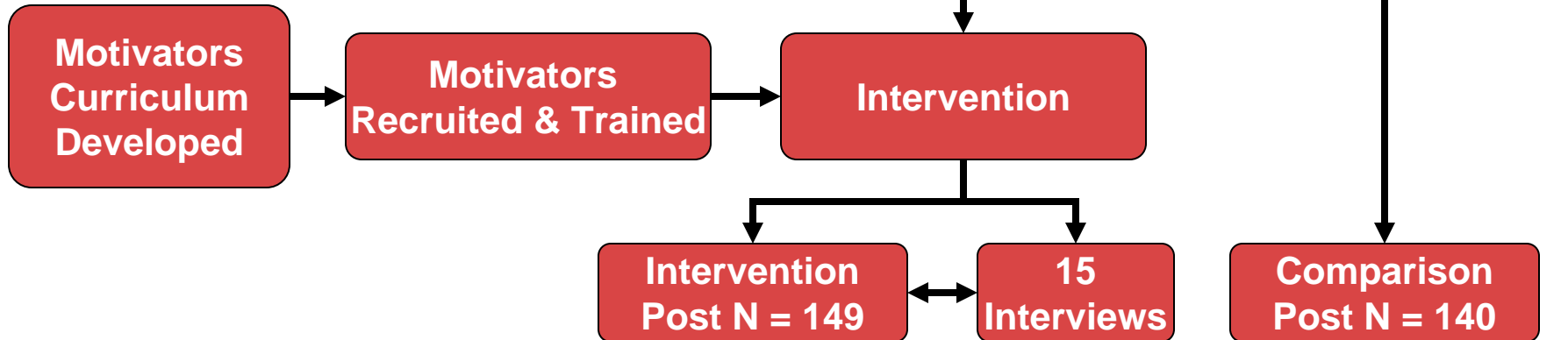
- Intervention Curriculum can be found:

<http://www.infoforhealth.org/youthwg/pubs/SaveTheChildren.shtml>

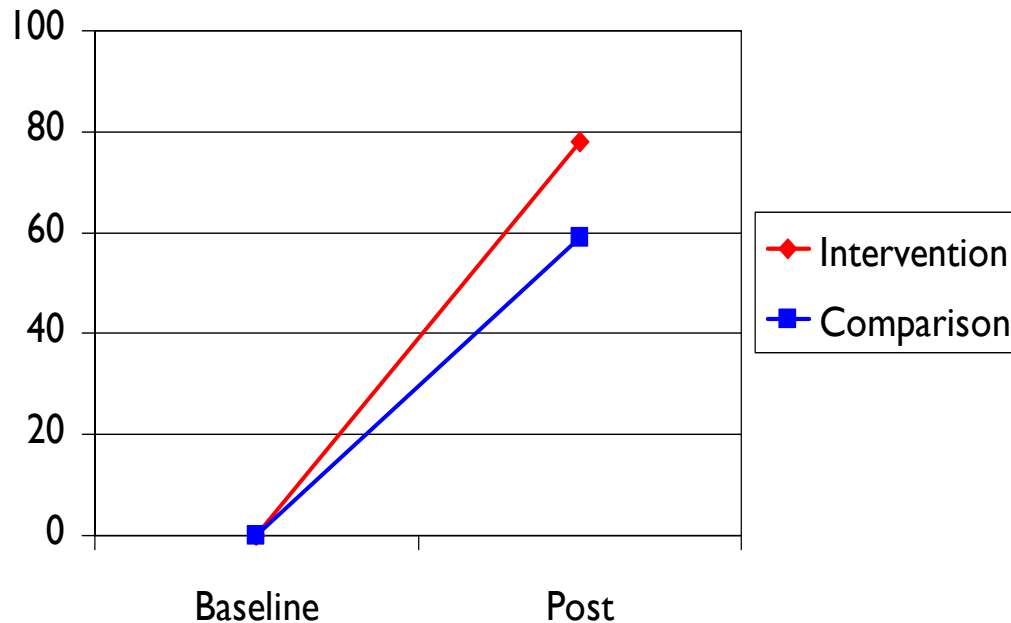
## Eligibility of Participants

- Married to or currently living with a female sexual partner that is less than 25 years old
- Have not used modern contraception with their primary partner within the last 3 months (Consistent condom use, pills, injectables, IUD)
- Neither participant or partner has undergone sterilization
- Wife or primary partner is not currently exclusively breastfeeding a child less than 6 months of age
- Wife or primary partner is not currently pregnant

# Study Design



# Contraceptive Uptake



- Chi-Squared Test
- Both arms increased significantly ( $p < .01$ )
- Increase in Treatment arm significantly greater than Control ( $p < .01$ )

## Contraceptive Uptake (cont.)



Most Frequently Reported Methods		
	Treatment	Control
Condom	56%	63%
Injectables	41%	39%
Pill	14%	11%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other methods reported less than 4 times: natural (rhythm), IUD, diaphragm, and male sterilization.</li> <li>• 31 men reported dual methods               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Most often: condom &amp; injectables (17 times)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

## Ease of Communication

- Both intervention and comparison groups showed significant increases on ease of communication ( $p < .01$ , paired t-test)
- Between group comparisons were not statistically significant over time (GEE)



## Communication Frequency

- Both intervention and comparison groups significantly increased scores on variable ( $p < .01$ )
- Between group comparisons were also statistically significant over time ( $p < .05$ )



## Exploratory Analysis

- Testing relationships with primary outcome
  - Correlations tested
  - Multiple logistic regression
    - Covariates included: *Contraceptive uptake, group, age(s), level(s) of education, live births, communication items, and demographic characteristics*
    - Significant relationships identified:
    - *It is easy to discuss family planning with my wife*
      - ( $\beta = .45$ , OR = 1.57,  $p = .08$ )
    - *How often do you discuss family planning with your wife?*
      - ( $\beta = .48$ , OR = 1.62,  $p = .02$ )

## Results: Qualitative

- Economic message received:  
*“Family planning is good and important because one is able take good care of the family with the limited resources available while **a family that does not practice family planning has difficulties in taking care of the children since [financial] resources are very limited ...**”*
- Communication improved:  
*“Before the educator came to shed more light on this issue I was doing what I could, basing on guess work without even discussing with my wife. **After the educator came I was able to discuss and communicate with my wife very well...**”*



# Discussion & Conclusions

1. Malawi Male Motivators intervention successfully increased contraceptive use among participants
2. Communication with wives about family planning was found to be related to contraceptive uptake
3. What factors influenced contraceptive uptake in the Control group?
  - a. Diffusion?
  - b. Question-Behavior Effect?
4. This intervention should be replicated and evaluated in other settings.
  - a. Modifications to the intervention



# Thank you...

