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Expanding women's contraceptive options to meet their needs

New Attention to the IUD



Key Points

Modern intrauterine devices (IUDs) are safe, effective, and quickly reversible long-term contraceptives that require little attention after insertion. Yet safety concerns and programmatic challenges have held back IUD services in many countries. New assessment of research findings, recently translated into guidance by the World Health Organization, should help reassure providers that most women can use IUDs safely.

Some family planning programs now are giving the IUD new attention. Basic requirements for making high-quality IUD services available include:

- **Service delivery guidelines** updated by stakeholders to remove unnecessary barriers.
- **Front line providers trained** how and why to follow the guidelines and backed up with supportive supervision.
- **A core group of IUD providers**, well trained in IUD insertion and removal, counseling, and management of side effects and complications, who can maintain their skills by seeing a steady flow of clients. Competency-based training, which focuses on ensuring each trainee demonstrates competence, works best.
- **A referral system** to assure that women who want IUDs can easily make contact with the core group of providers.
- **Necessary infrastructure, equipment and supplies** to provide high-quality IUD services. Low-resource settings can adopt innovative strategies to provide ongoing IUD services.
- **Clients who are well informed** about the IUD. Well-designed communication activities and helpful counseling increase people's understanding of the IUD and may reduce unfounded or exaggerated concerns.



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Intrauterine Devices**

Photo: Midwives in Nicaragua learn about the IUD during a workshop. Midwives and other health workers besides physicians can provide IUD services safely and effectively when appropriately trained.

CONTENTS

3 The IUD: An Important Method with Potential
Programmatic challenges and safety concerns have held back IUD use in many countries. Most recent research finds that serious complications are rare with modern IUDs. Some family planning programs now are taking action to create or renew interest in the method.

6 Providing High-Quality IUD Services
Successful IUD services require a holistic approach that pays attention both to policy and service delivery on one hand and to the public and potential users' knowledge and perceptions on the other.

8 Spotlight: Kenya Commits to Renewing Interest in the IUD
In Kenya levels of IUD use have dropped since the 1980s while overall contraceptive use has risen. The Kenya Ministry of Health recently began an initiative to reintroduce the IUD.

17 Feature: Good Counseling Increases Client Satisfaction
Informative and empathic counseling helps clients make good family planning choices and use their chosen methods successfully. Using visual aids, such as pelvic models, can help clients fully understand what to expect with use of the IUD.

19 Very Low Overall Risk of Infection with IUDs
The majority of evidence indicates that a woman who does not already have an STI—in particular, gonorrhea or chlamydia—cannot get pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) just from having an IUD inserted. A woman with gonorrhea or chlamydia at the time of IUD insertion, however, is at higher risk of PID in the first few weeks after insertion than she is later. After the first few weeks, an STI may be no more likely to progress to PID in an IUD user than in another woman.

21 Box: Evidence Shows Many Women with HIV Can Use IUDs
Recent evidence shows that IUDs do not increase a woman's chances of acquiring HIV infection or the risk that an infected woman will pass HIV to a sex partner. Also, HIV infection does not appear to lead to more complications of IUD use.

22 Minimizing the Risk of Infection
Where laboratory testing for STI diagnosis is not available, medical and sexual history, client self-assessment, and pelvic examination can help assess whether a woman might have gonorrhea or chlamydia and so should not have an IUD inserted.

24 Clinical Characteristics of IUDs
IUDs are highly effective, quickly reversible, and require little action from the user. Increased bleeding with copper IUDs is common. Complications, including expulsion and perforation, are not.

27 Bibliography
Note: Italicized reference numbers in the text refer to citations printed on page 27. These were the most helpful in preparing this report. Other citations can be found online at <http://www.populationreports.org/b7/>.



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