

## **Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), in the Context of Family Planning Services**

Ideally, family planning should be seen as one component of a package of interventions aimed at maintaining reproductive health. The integration of client education on STD prevention (including human immunodeficiency [HIV]) into this package of services enhances reproductive health care. Family planning programs should address the prevention of STDs. When providing non-barrier methods, men and women should be informed that such methods will not provide protection against sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Counseling for STD Prevention**

Providers should be trained in culturally appropriate counseling techniques and should routinely ask questions to determine the client's risk status<sup>1</sup>. In areas of high STD prevalence, it is particularly important to ask clients about STD risk (using a few simple history questions) and then to provide appropriate information on STD prevention, and explain any relationship between STD risk and available contraceptive methods.

### **Condoms for STD Prevention**

For clients at risk of STDs, condoms (when used correctly) are potentially the most effective and widely available method of preventing STD transmission. Counseling on STD prevention and condom use should be incorporated into family planning services, when possible and as appropriate, regardless of contraceptive method or client age. When resources are limited and condom distribution must be prioritized to those at highest risk, information on STD prevention should still be offered to all clients, as appropriate.

### **For More Information**

Those responsible for supervising or providing family planning services may wish to consult the following documents for information on STD prevention in the family planning context:

- 1) Controlling Sexually Transmitted Diseases. *Population Reports*, Series L, #9, June 1993.
- 2) Condoms – Now More Than Ever. *Population Reports*, Series H, #8, September 1990.

*Population Reports* are free in any quantity to persons in developing countries and may be purchased for a minimal fee by persons in developed countries. To obtain *Population Reports* write to:

Population Information Program  
The John Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health  
111 Market Place  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202, USA

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, Family Planning and Population, Division of Family Health. *Providing An Appropriate Contraceptive Method Choice: What Health Workers Need to Know*. Geneva, WHO, 1993, p 41.