

Expanding Access to Long-Acting Contraceptives in Lagos State Through Quality Counseling and Services

June 2015

FAMILY PLANNING SAVES LIVES

Family planning and reproductive health services save lives by allowing women to decide the timing and spacing of their children. This lowers maternal mortality, increases the chances of children's survival, and saves government funds [1].

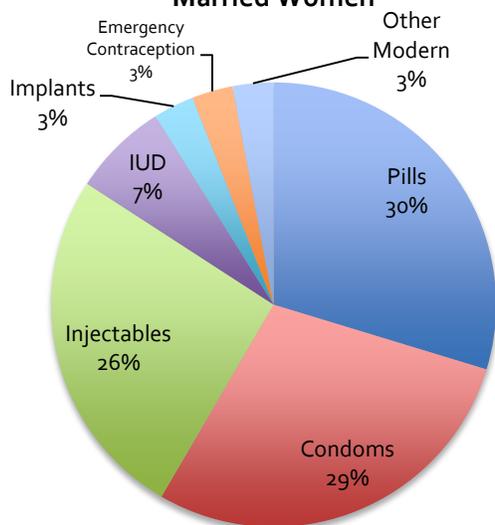
Among the **most effective methods of family planning are long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs), such as the IUD and implant.** However, these methods are the hardest to access. The government recently introduced its LARC Strategy, which seeks to ensure that all women who want implants or IUDs are able to safely and freely obtain quality counseling, insertion and removal services through public health sector providers [2].

Lagos by the Numbers

- 3.4:** average number of children a woman in Lagos will have in her lifetime
- 19:** percent of married women who currently use a modern method of family planning
- 27:** percent of married women who have an unmet need for contraception
- 10:** percent of modern method users who are using IUDs or implants

Source: PMA2014/Lagos

Methods of Contraception Used By Married Women



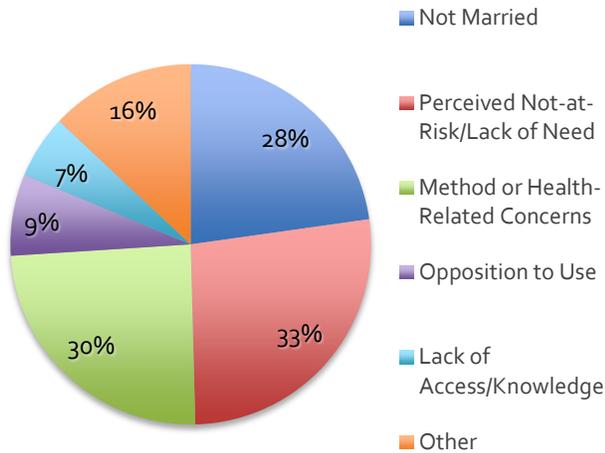
Source: PMA2014/Lagos

UNMET NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING IN LAGOS

Despite the widely acclaimed benefits of family planning, only **1 in 5** married women in Lagos are using any modern method of family planning, and **1 in 4** do not have access to the family planning supplies and services they need [3].

Among women in Lagos who do use family planning, the majority rely on short-term methods, such as the pill, injectables, and condoms. These methods are less effective at preventing unintended pregnancy than LARCs, which are very effective for many years [3]. This reliance on shorter-term and less-effective methods leaves women at risk of unintended pregnancy.

Reasons Women Are Not Using Contraception*



*women were allowed to select more than one option

Source: PMA2014/Lagos

WOMEN NEED FAMILY PLANNING COUNSELING

Recent data show that public facilities in Lagos do have LARCs in stock. However, **60% of women who visited a health facility for their own or their children's care in the last year did not receive any counseling about family planning from their health provider.** Given the high proportion of non-users of FP who have health concerns or are worried about method-related side-effects, provider counseling is especially important [3]. This lack of information may explain the reliance on less-effective short-term methods.

MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH CAN IMPROVE COUNSELING & SERVICES

To help Lagos state meet the aims of the national LARC Strategy and help more women access family planning—including LARCs—**LGA and LCDA Medical Officers of Health** can:

- Ensure high quality family planning counseling and services through regular scheduled and unscheduled **monitoring of providers**
- Organize **refresher trainings** on provision of LARCs, in accordance with the national LARC Strategy.
- **Make local health funds available** to implement training on FP counseling and ongoing supportive supervision.

REFERENCES

1. Rhonda Smith, et al. 2009. "Family Planning Saves Lives." Population Reference Bureau. <http://www.prb.org/pdf09/familyplanningsaveslives.pdf>
2. Nigeria Federal Ministry of Health. 2014. "Increasing Access to Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives in Nigeria: National Strategy and Implementation Plan (2013-2015)."
3. *Performance Monitoring and Accountability 2020 (PMA2020) Project, Centre for Population and Reproductive Health at the University of Ibadan (CPRH), the Centre for Research, Evaluation Resources and Development (CERED), the Population and Reproductive Health Program (PRHP) at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, and Bayero University Kano (BUK). 2014. Lagos. Baltimore, MD: PMA2020, Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.*

