

# ARE MEN WELL SERVED BY FP PROGRAMS?

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## BACKGROUND

Although existing contraceptive options include methods that men can use directly – namely, condoms, vasectomy, and withdrawal – and that require their participation (the Standard Days Method), family planning programming has primarily focused on women.

**What is known about reaching men as contraceptive users?**



## METHODS

This paper is based on evidence from published and grey literature documentation of interventions that included some focus on men as users of contraception in low- and middle-income countries, augmented by interviews with 36 representatives from institutions involved in relevant programming and research.<sup>1</sup> The four methods of male condom, vasectomy, withdrawal and the Standard Days Method (SDM) are included in the analysis.

This analysis draws from a review of 47 interventions that reached men in 27 countries on five continents. The 47 interventions, their outcomes and the strength of evidence are described in more detail in Hardee et al. 2016.

## RESULTS

Men have been reached as users of contraception through programming to create demand and expand supply, in addition to addressing the enabling environment.

Programming for men generally falls under five broad strategies, shown in **Table 1**.

**TABLE 1**

**STRATEGIES, NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS AND DESIGNATION AS PROVEN, PROMISING OR EMERGING BASED ON THE STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE**

	Strategy and number of interventions	Categorization based on strength of evidence
1	Clinic provision of information and services (4)	Promising
2	Outreach with male motivators and peer educators/mentors (10)	Proven/ Emerging
3	<b>Communications programming</b>	
	Social marketing (3)	Proven
	Mass media and social media (7)	Promising/ Emerging
	mHealth (4)	Emerging
	Hotlines (3)	Emerging
4	<b>Community engagement</b>	
	Community dialogue (10)	Strongly promising
	Engaging religious leaders (2)	Emerging
5	Comprehensive sexuality education (4)	Promising

## 10 Key Considerations in Programming For Men as Family Planning Users

- 1 Provide information and services to men and boys where and when they need it.
- 2 Address gender norms that affect men's use of contraceptive methods.
- 3 Improve couple and community communication.
- 4 Meet men's needs while respecting women's autonomy.
- 5 Link men's family planning use with their desire to support their families.
- 6 Teach adolescent boys about pregnancy prevention and healthy sexual relationships.
- 7 Develop national policies and guidelines that include men as family planning users.
- 8 Scale up programs for men.
- 9 Fill the gaps through monitoring, evaluation, and implementation science.
- 10 Create more contraceptive options for men.



## CONCLUSION

Currently, men and boys are not particularly well served by FP programs. As a result only about one-quarter of contraceptive users worldwide are men.<sup>2</sup> Most programs operate from the perspective that women are contraceptive users and that men should support their partners, with insufficient attention to reaching men as FP users in their own right.

At the same time, men and boys want information and services. Their positive response to existing programming warrants further programming for men and boys in family planning and contraceptive services.

## REFERENCES

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Presented at PAA 2017 in Chicago, IL

The Evidence Project is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of cooperative agreement no. AID-OAA-A-13-00087. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Evidence Project and Population Council and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.