Investigating the feasibility and acceptability of Sayana® Press self-injection in Ghana

MAY 2018

ACTIVITY BRIEF

BACKGROUND

As of 2014, the modern contraceptive prevalence rate in Ghana was 22 percent (2014 Ghana Demographic & Health Survey) and the total fertility rate was 4.2. The injectable is the most popular modern contraceptive method used by married women in the country, accounting for 36 percent of modern method use (2014 Ghana Demographic & Health Survey).

Sayana® Press is a three-month, progestin-only, all-in-one injectable contraceptive that combines the drug and needle in the Uniject injection system (PATH, 2016). Due to its Uniject method, Sayana® Press is small, light, easy-to-use, requires minimal training and is expected to help in improving provision of family planning services in low-resource settings (PATH, 2016). Sayana® Press could be particularly useful in Ghana where access to family planning services is curtailed by the distance to clinics, for example. Sayana® Press is suitable for community-based distribution and for women to administer themselves through self-injection. Through self-injection, Sayana® Press can improve access to a safe and effective contraceptive option and increase women's autonomy.

At the request of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), the Evidence Project, through the Population Council and with funding from USAID/Ghana, is studying the feasibility and acceptability of Sayana® Press self-injection, and by extension, informing its introduction in Ghana. The primary objectives of the seven-month study are to assess the feasibility of introducing Sayana® Press self-injection and its acceptability among both health workers and injectable clients. Results from the study are expected to inform the national strategy, including procurement and scale-up of Sayana® Press in the public and private sectors.

ACTIVITY DESIGN

GHS and the Evidence Project formed a multi-sectoral technical advisory group (TAG) comprised of stakeholders from GHS, USAID/Ghana, UNFPA, PSI, SHOPS, Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana, Health Keepers Network, and DKT International. TAG members were actively engaged in discussions and decisions around the design of the study protocol and have participated in meetings on study results.

Pfizer, Inc. registered Sayana® Press in-country, allowing for the commodity to be procured by UNFPA on behalf of GHS. Eight resource persons, four from each study region, attended a four-day training with a master trainer from PATH/Uganda to become Ghana master trainers. Master trainers trained health pro-


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viders across eight public health facilities selected as study sites by the TAG in the Ashanti and Volta regions.

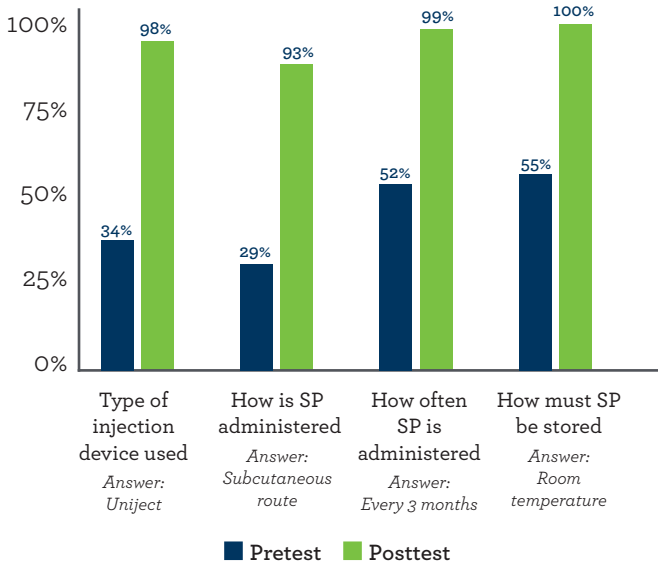
One hundred and fifty providers (71 in Ashanti region and 79 in Volta region) completed a questionnaire both before and after receiving three days of training on Sayana® Press counseling, administration and client self-injection, which included practicing injections on non-human models. Eighty-eight percent of providers are women and sixty-five percent are community health nurses, the rest being midwives, community health officers, enrolled nurses or other. The master trainers followed up with supportive supervision visits to each facility, where the providers were assessed on simulating how to teach a client to self-inject using a self-injection practice checklist.

Thirty-two data collectors (16 per region) were trained in November 2017 over a three-day period on the principles of research (ethical conduct), research methodology, and study instruments. They also role-played to practice interviewing clients. Data collection began in December 2017.

At each injection, clients chose provider-administered injection or to be trained by the provider to self-inject. Clients who demonstrated self-injection competence were given up to two Sayana® Press packs to take home to self-inject. Clients who agreed to participate in the seven-month study were interviewed after each injection (a total of three). The first round of interviews was conducted from the first week of December 2017 to the last week of January 2018, where a total of 589 clients were recruited into the study. The second round is from the first week of March to the second week in May.

To monitor service delivery of Sayana® Press, special provisions have been made to include the commodity

PROVIDER PRETEST AND POSTTEST KNOWLEDGE OF ASPECTS OF SAYANA PRESS (n=150)



into the GHS Reproductive Service Log (rsLog), an electronic platform to capture family planning services in public health facilities. These data are beneficial in assessing uptake, continuity and discontinuity beyond the study period.

An early analysis of the client data indicates that this study may also yield interesting findings on clients' progression to self-injection, a unique feature of this study's design as compared to Sayana® Press feasibility and acceptability studies conducted elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. As of Round 1, 36 percent of all study clients self-injected Sayana® Press.

The Ghana Health Service has a strong commitment to task shifting to accelerate access to modern contraceptive methods. GHS's commitment to engaging all relevant stakeholders in the public, private and NGOs sectors in the study process provides an excellent model for maximizing research utilization.

SELECTED REFERENCES

PATH. 2016. "What is Sayana Press?" Accessed: https://www.path.org/features/sayana-press-2016/sayana-press

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana Health Service (GHS), and ICF International. 2015. Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2014. Rockville, Maryland, USA: GSS, GHS, and ICF International.

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Evidence

The Evidence Project uses implementation science—the strategic generation, translation, and use of evidence—to strengthen and scale up family planning and reproductive health programs to reduce unintended pregnancies worldwide. The Evidence Project is led by the Population Council in partnership with the Population Reference Bureau.

For more information, go to evidenceproject.popcouncil.org or contact Dela Nai at dela@popcouncil.org