

DMPA User Experiences and Private Sector Support Systems: Mumbai & West Bengal

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DMPA Background

Injectable contraceptive

- DMPA (depot medroxyprogesterone acetate)
- Fourth most popular contraceptive method worldwide

DMPA In India

- Awareness?
 - Among women, 55% urban and 46% rural
- Use?
 - 0.1% (married women in reproductive age group)
- Available only in private sector

Study Objectives

- To describe DMPA user's acceptability and experiences (including side effects and impact on daily lives)
- To assess providers' knowledge of DMPA and their perspectives on provision

Participants and Methods

- Sample of women (120) and providers (40) in two sites
 - Mumbai & West Bengal
- Women and providers recruited through clinics
 - FPAI (Mumbai) & PSS (West Bengal)
- Cross-sectional, Mixed Method Design

| Population | Per Site | N (Total=160) | Instrument |
|--|----------|---------------|-------------------------|
| New Users | 15 | 30 | IDI |
| Continuing Users | 15 | 30 | IDI |
| Late/Discontinued Users | 15 | 30 | IDI |
| Women counseled on DMPA (current non users) | 15 | 30 | Structured Interview |
| DMPA Providers | 20 | 40 | Survey |

Preliminary Findings

DMPA Users
(n = 90)



User Characteristics

- All were married and had at least one child
- Vast majority live in urban areas
 - Mumbai: Majority women reported living in slums (62%)
 - West Bengal: Majority women reported living in non-slums (71%)
- More than two-thirds (n=62) did not want more children
 - West Bengal women tended to want to limit births more than those women from Mumbai

Initiation Reasons – Influential Sources *

- Provider (n=64)
 - Almost half during post abortion contact period (most in West Bengal)
- Partner (n=26)
 - Slightly more observed in Mumbai
- Family/Friends/Others (n=21)
 - Mostly In-Laws (sister or mother)

** Responses are not mutually exclusive*

Initiation Reasons – Method Comparisons

- Preferred DMPA in comparison with other methods (n=23)
- Reasons DMPA favored over OCs
 - Side effects, daily dosing, efficacy/missed dose
- Switched from another method (n=37) due to problems
 - Mumbai: disadvantages evenly split for OCs & IUDs
 - West Bengal: disadvantages focused on OCs

DMPA Initiation Reasons – Related to Sterilization

- Women plan to have sterilization later (n=28)
 - Waiting until children were grown/recovery time
 - Rare cases, provider refused sterilization (age, health of sole child)
- Some women mentioned would not get sterilized (n=14)
 - Fear of sterilization operation, religion/caste, and family disapproval

Initiation Reasons – Method Comparisons

- ***“Pills have to be taken daily and if forgotten then need to take two pills next day. If I’m traveling, I forget to take the medicine then it gets missed out. ...When I took copper-T that time I used to get heavy flow in my periods. Periods used to stay for seven to eight days. DMPA was most convenient for me.”***

-36 year-old past DMPA user from West Bengal

Side Effects

- Just over half reported experiencing no side effects.
 - Upon probing, 38 of those 46 women mentioned a side effect (mostly bleeding changes)
- Changes in menstrual bleeding most commonly reported side effect ($>3/4^{\text{th}}$ of users)
 - About half of all users (n=43) reported amenorrhea
 - One-third (n=30) report spotting or irregular bleeding
 - Of types of menstrual changes, an increase in bleeding was least often reported (n=8)

Side Effects (*contd.*)

- Second-most common side effect: weight gain
 - Of those with weight gain, even split between positive and negative perception
- Other mentioned side effects
 - Nausea, Dizziness, Back Pain, Headaches, Fatigue, and Pain (waist, leg, vaginal)

Impact on Lives

- Most reported no impact on daily activities or work
 - If discomfort from DMPA, kept to normal routine
 - Some reported a positive effect
 - Increased ability to conduct activities
 - Increased access and participation in religious activities due to menstrual changes
- Most reported positive impact on relationship with their partner
 - Confidence in efficacy – “No tension”
 - Partner support and involvement common

Continuation Reasons

- Of those 30 women who were continuing users
 - Half responded that they chose to continue because of its efficacy in preventing pregnancies

“They are also tension free because my child is small and if I get pregnant there will be problems; they are tension free knowing that I continue taking the injection.” -24 year-old continuing user from Mumbai
 - About a third cited lack of side effects as influencing their continuation

“I have no problem with this injection. My routine is on straight and tension free for three months.” -36 year-old continuing user from Mumbai

Discontinuation Reasons

- Among those who discontinued use, most reported stopping because of worry about side effects:
 - Bleeding changes, weight gain, or sickness
- Method switch (sterilization & condoms)
- Worry about side effects highlights area for improved counseling by providers

Facilities and Providers Offering DMPA



Facilities Offering DMPA

- Insufficient advertising for new clients
 - Lack of outside signage and few educational materials in facilities
 - In interviews, very few women reported seeing or being provided with informational materials
- Insufficient supplies & support for continuing clients
 - Stock-outs of DMPA and pregnancy test
 - Day of data collection, 40% West Bengal facilities without DMPA
 - Lack of written DMPA guidelines for staff
 - ~60% without onsite written guidelines

Providers Offering DMPA

- Providers generally pleased with provision of DMPA
 - Profit margin acceptable
 - Time required satisfactory
- Changes providers would like:
 - Increased awareness about DMPA in the community, and about FP in general.
- Perceived DMPA as best suited for:
 - Married women, done with childbearing
 - Those who are breast-feeding (Post partum FP)
- Need Improved DMPA Knowledge on:
 - Managing late clients
 - Contraindications

Conclusions



Conclusions

- Side effects of DMPA use did not affect daily routine;
- Improved counseling on DMPA can increase acceptance and continuation;
- DMPA perceived as a useful interim method for those who want to limit births, and also as a spacing method;
- Findings provide new information on DMPA use in India.

THANK YOU!