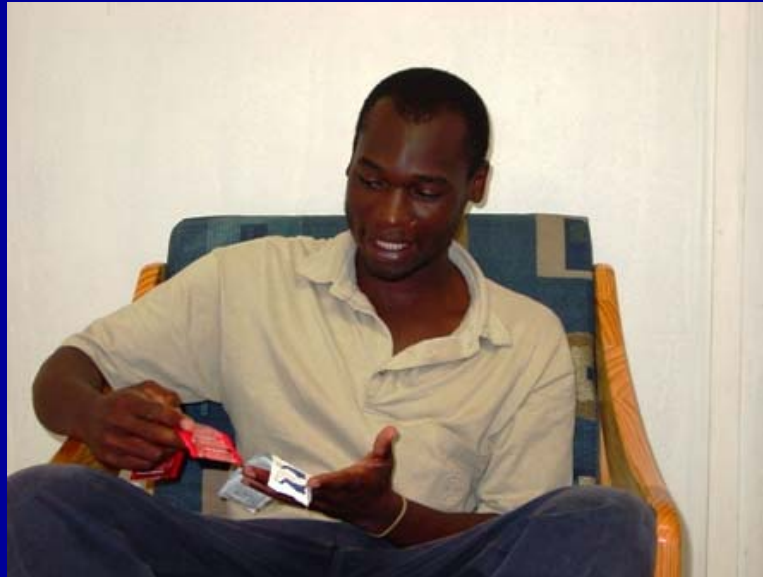


Female-controlled HIV prevention methods in Zimbabwe: how “involved” are the male partners?



Presented by Liz Montgomery
Women's Global Health Imperative, UCSF
IAS Sydney Conference
July 24, 2007

Women's
UCSF Global
Health
Imperative



Co-authors and collaborators

- *Agnes Chidanyika, Sibongile Mtetwa, Connie Watadzaushe, Tsungai Chipato, The MIRA Study Team (Zimbabwe)*
 - *University of Zimbabwe – UCSF Collaborative Programme, Harare, Zimbabwe*
- *Nancy Padian, Ariane van der Straten*
 - *University of California, San Francisco, Women's Global Health Imperative, San Francisco, CA, United States*
- *Shabbar Jaffar*
 - *Infectious Diseases Epidemiology Unit, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, England*

Presentation outline

- Describe male involvement study
 - Background to male involvement
 - Background to MIRA
 - Male involvement study procedures
 - Male involvement study preliminary results

“Male involvement” presumed to be beneficial...

- ACOG, UN official statements
 - *Shared responsibility between men and women in matters related to reproductive and sexual behaviour is essential to improving women’s health*
 - Programme of Action, 1995 Beijing Conference on Women
- Family planning realms, now applied to HIV/STI prevention

Male involvement in female-controlled methods

- Much exploratory and qualitative research thus far has reported that both men and women want men to be involved in use of female-controlled HIV/ STI prevention methods

(Green, Pool, Bentley, Moon, van der Wigjert, Ramjee, Coggins)

- Unclear whether this is out of true want, duty, fear, etc.
- Adverse consequences if she does not involve him?

May be beneficial, may be harmful...

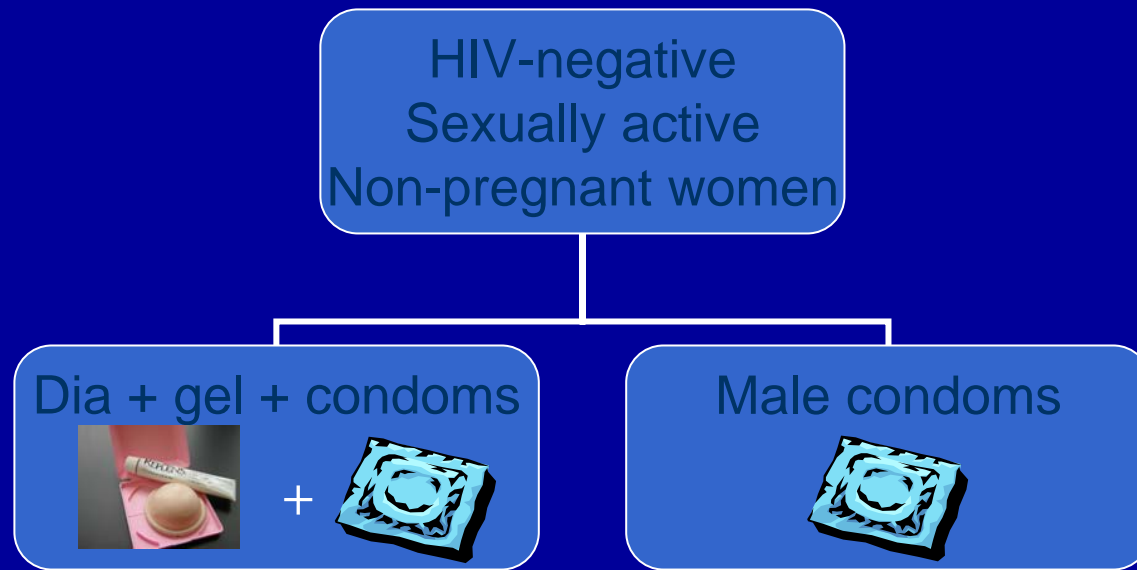
- Encouraging male involvement might mean that he believes “he calls the shots”, i.e. Zimbabwe Male Motivation Project
- “Highly involved” might mean “highly controlling” which could have negative health consequences, as was shown in a study in South Africa of gender and HIV risk

The Methods for Improving Reproductive Health in Africa (MIRA) Study

Phase III trial of the effectiveness of the diaphragm and Replens® gel in preventing HIV acquisition among women in Southern Africa



Study Design



- Multi-site, open label randomized clinical trial
- All women receive risk reduction counseling, free male condoms and diagnosis and treatment of curable STIs
- Women were followed quarterly for 12-24 months

Promotion of male involvement in MIRA

- Screening and enrollment consents explain that male partner invited to come to the clinic for free counseling and testing for HIV
- Staff verbally encouraged women to invite male partners to the clinic for any other reason
- No formal “intervention”



Male involvement study location and population

- 2502 participants recruited from the community and municipal clinics in high-density suburbs of Harare



Harare, Zimbabwe

Male Involvement Study Aims

Primary Aims:

- To measure *quantitatively* and explain *qualitatively* the effect of male involvement on:
 - women's adherence to the diaphragm, gel and male condoms.
 - women's acceptability of the diaphragm, gel and male condoms.

Quantitative data collection

Male Partner Involvement Form (MPIF): 58 item questionnaire designed for this study

- Domains explored: Partner communication, participation and control, and male partner's attitudes and support for condom, diaphragm and gel use



Results: study population characteristics (interim data)

Characteristic	Harare (n=2325)
Mean Age	28.3
Mean Yrs Education	9.4
% Married	97
% Christian	94
% Employed	26
Mean ratio persons: rooms at home	2.5
% Tap water inside home	22
Mean # of lifetime partners	1.3
Mean # of live births	2.4
Mean age of sexual debut	18.6

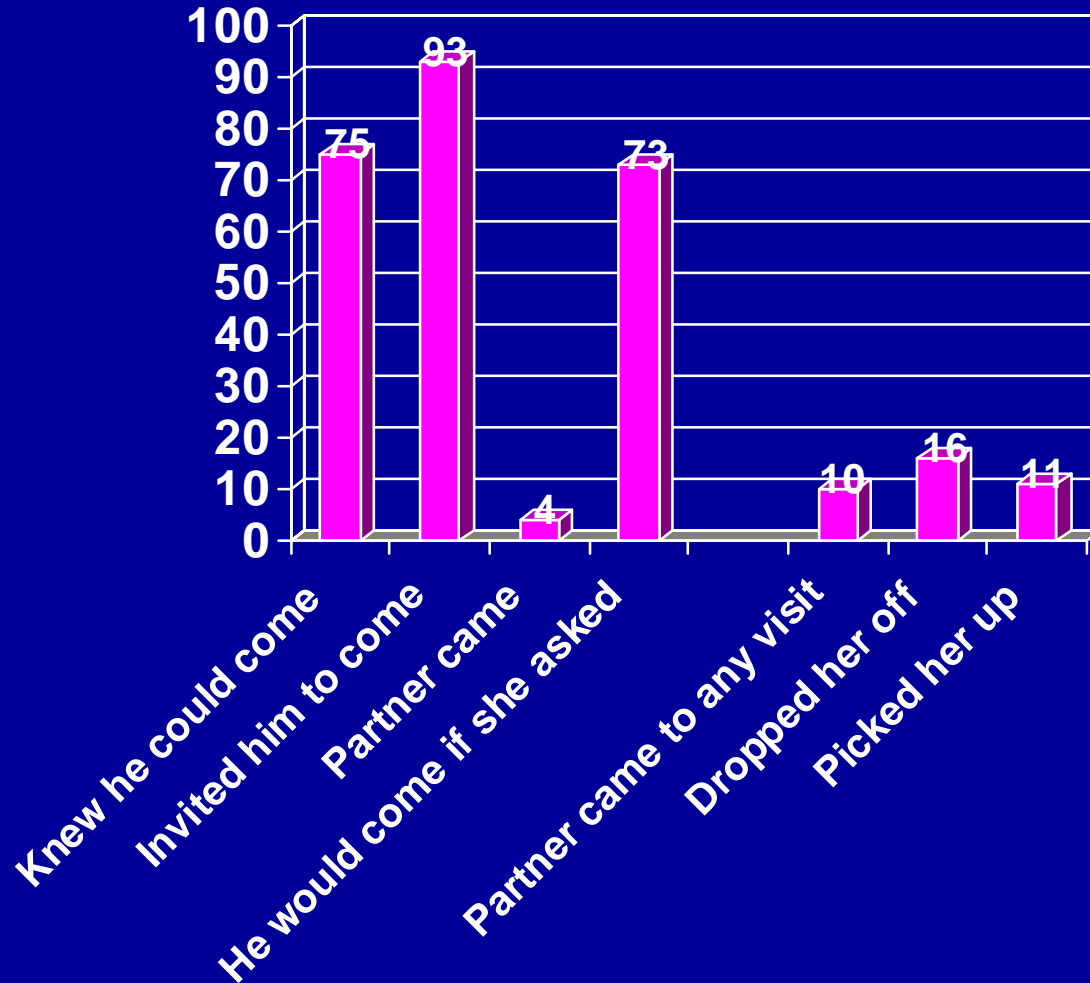
Couples' communication about study participation (from MPIF)

	% Yes N=1982
Ever discussed joining study with partner	98.3
Asked permission to join study from partner	95.1
Would face problems if she joined without asking permission first	66.6
Did you tell him you were coming to MIRA today?	90.4
He asks about what happened at MIRA EVERY TIME	76.5
He reminds her to go to MIRA	65.4

Overall support and interest

- 95% report their male partner is supportive of her being in the study
- Women's perceptions of his interest in her participation:
 - 54% say he is “very interested”
 - 42% “somewhat interested”
 - 2% “not at all interested”

Men coming to the study clinic



Disclosure of HIV and STI results

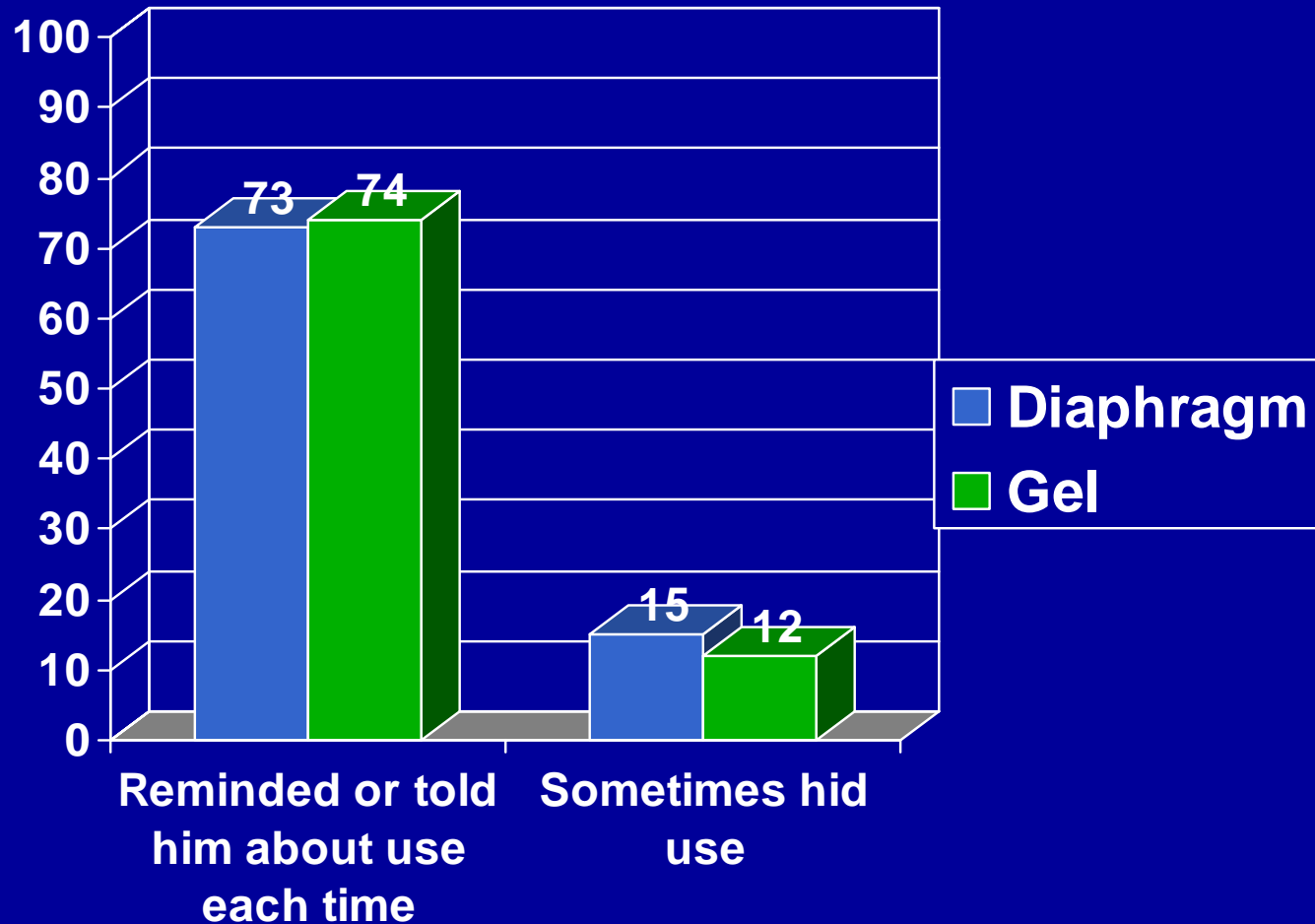
Male Involvement Indicator: Men's participation in the DMS Study	% Yes N=1982
Disclosed HIV results to partner	99%
Disclosed STI results to partner	99%
As far as you know, has he been tested for HIV	36%
OF THESE, has he ever disclosed his HIV status to you	96%

*not all answered this question because of skip pattern

Women's report of men's attitudes towards diaphragm use (from MPIF)

Male Involvement Indicator: Study product use (diaphragm)	% Yes N=1982
In general how much does he support the idea of using the diaphragm during sex?	87% Strongly supports or supports
How much does he like using the diaphragm?	95% Strongly likes or likes
How difficult has it been to convince him to use the diaphragm?	83% Not at all difficult
For each sex episode how often has he helped you insert or remove the diaphragm?	14% Some of the time
Does he talk to you about whether it is comfortable or fitting correctly?	67% Yes
Does he talk to you about how you are caring for the diaphragm, i.e. cleaning and storing it?	63% Yes

Women's communication and disclosure about diaphragm and gel use (from MPIF)



Potential bias

- Selection bias
- Social desirability bias

Summary/implications

- Very few male partners came to the clinic, despite open invitations
- However, most women report that their partner was aware of her involvement in the study, and the majority reported (>95%) that he was supportive.
- According to women, there is a fairly high degree of support and approval for the diaphragm and gel.
- During most sexual episodes, women communicated use of the diaphragm and gel to their partners.
- Secret use of the diaphragm and gel quite rare. Diaphragm reported to have been used secretly more often than the gel, perhaps due to physical properties.

Next steps and further analysis

- To correlate indicators of male involvement from the intervention and the MPIF with women's adherence and acceptability outcomes from other study instruments.
- To correlate indicators of male involvement with HIV and STI status.
- To examine characteristics of women with different levels of male involvement.



Acknowledgements

- The MIRA Study was supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- MIRA Study Participants