Life Saving Commodities – Family Planning
Commodities: emergency contraception, female condoms, contraceptive implants

Background
The UN Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children (the Commission) was formed in 2012 by the UN Secretary-General as part of the global Every Woman Every Child (EWECE) movement (www.everywomaneverychild.org). The Commission challenged the global community to increase access to and appropriate use of essential medicines, medical devices, and health supplies that effectively address the leading preventable causes of death during pregnancy, childbirth, and childhood.

Led by a wide range of high-level leaders from around the world, the Commission made ten recommendations focused on rapidly increasing the availability and use of 13 priority commodities for reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) to achieve the goal of saving the lives of six million women and children by 2017.

Eight expert groups1 – or Technical Resource Teams (TRTs) carry forward the Commission’s recommendations by supporting countries in their efforts to make these essential commodities more widely available and used, and by addressing global and regional RMNCH challenges.

Each of these TRTs specializes on a type of commodities or on a barrier that prevents a wider use of these commodities.

Pooling expertise on family planning
The Family Planning TRT focuses on the three essential commodities identified by the Commission that can lead to healthier timing and spacing of pregnancies, and are essential to reduce maternal, newborn and child deaths.

Contraceptive implants, female condoms and emergency contraception can reduce unintended pregnancies and deaths related to unsafe abortions, diminish the transmission of STIs including HIV and reduce the incidence of deaths and illnesses related to complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

Contraceptive implants are a highly effective and popular method of long lasting and reversible contraception, offering multi-year protection. Female condoms are the only female-initiated method available that offer dual protection from pregnancy and STIs/HIV.

Emergency contraception is a unique method, offering women an important second chance to prevent unintended pregnancy if a method fails, is not used, or sex is forced.

If contraceptives were available to every woman who wanted to use them, an estimated 53 million unintended pregnancies could be avoided, 90,000 women’s lives saved, and 590,000 newborn deaths averted annually.

Life Saving Commodities is working to ensure that they are available in countries with a high burden of disease, put into the hands of skilled health workers and administered properly to save women and children.

Progress to date
Female condoms:
- Increase utilization of female condoms: The Family Planning TRT researched attitudes, practices and behavior that influence uptake and sustained use of the female condom in selected countries including those with large volume of female condoms, some with moderate quantity of supply and those where commodities were in small quantities.
- Update existing and develop new tools and guidelines that expand accessibility and use of female condoms: The Family Planning TRT developed an assessment to monitor new female condom introduction and reviewed existing tools. The TRT supported the development/adaptation of a quantification and forecasting tool for female condoms, taking into account national reproductive health and HIV strategies.

Emergency contraception:
- Strengthen/develop policy guidance and tools to expand access to emergency contraception, including among

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1 The other TRTs focus on newborn health; maternal health; child health; demand, access and performance; global markets, quality and regulation; supply chain and local markets; and advocacy. These groups are coordinated by a multi-agency Strategy and Coordination Team hosted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).
vulnerable groups: The TRT completed a literature review on emergency contraception access in low and middle income countries. The review revealed that there is an inadequate evidence base for policy guidelines. In-country operations research plans are underway.

- Strengthen capacity of providers and pharmacists to introduce and implement emergency contraception programs in selected countries: The TRT developed a training module on emergency contraception for inclusion in the Training Resource Package for Family Planning, at fptraining.org

- Strengthen public knowledge and demand for EC: The Family Planning TRT conducted a global scan on emergency contraception access, which was published in June 2013 in the  "A Review of Global Access to EC,” by E Westley, N Kapp, T Palermo, J Bleck.

- Strengthen quality assurance standards throughout the supply chain for emergency contraception: The TRT created fact sheets on country-level registration of emergency contraception and inclusion of emergency contraception in countries’ Essential Medicine Lists (EMLs). Among the pathfinder countries, four include dedicated emergency contraception pill products on their EMLs, one includes emergency contraception but not a dedicated product, two do not include emergency contraception pills, and the status is unknown in the other. Emergency contraception pills are registered in all eight of the pathfinder countries.

**Contraceptive implants:**

- Secure supply of affordable contraceptive implants available to women in low- and middle-income countries: In January 2013, Bayer HealthCare finalized an agreement with public and private sector partners to make the Jadelle® contraceptive implant available to more than 27 million women in the world’s poorest countries at a more than 50 percent price reduction over the next six years. The price reduction is available worldwide. In May 2013, Merck MSD signed an agreement to reduce the cost of IMPLANON® and its next-generation implant, IMPLANON NXT®, by approximately 50 percent over the next six years.

- Increase demand for and adoption of implants by women for whom they are the method of choice: The Family Planning TRT supported a first evidence review on demand creation for implants.

- Ensure a dynamic and sustainable market for affordable, high-quality implants as part of a broad range of contraceptive choices: The Family Planning TRT is currently working with a generic manufacturer to discuss items, forecasts, stocks and registration status. The group also developed assessment and forecasting tools for contraceptive implants.

- Strengthen systems and capacity for delivering quality services through appropriate human resources and effective supply chains: CHAI led a mapping exercise of human resource and commodity availability at a facility level in selected countries, providing valuable insights into facility-level barriers.

- Ensure providers are trained in the safe insertion and removal of contraceptive implants. Partners are increasing focus on the service delivery environment to support increased access to implants. Jhpiego conducted a review of training resources and developed a consolidated Learning Resource Package for implants. Across implant partner organizations, more than 11,800 health workers were trained in counselling, insertion and removal of implants in 2013.

**How to involve the Family Planning TRT**

The Family Planning TRT is available to provide technical assistance in several ways to support the introduction and use of the three family planning lifesaving commodities, including:

- Assistance on forecasting, supply planning, and procurement
- Support for developing training for health workers and service providers
- Support to develop service delivery expansion plans and human resource plans
- Assistance in the development of country-level strategic and operational plans on female condoms, implants and emergency contraception
- Support on advocacy and communications for the three family planning commodities
- Support for demand generation for the three commodities

**Members**

The Family Planning TRT is co-chaired by the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Consortium for Emergency Contraception (ICEC, hosted by Family Care International), and the World Health Organization (WHO) and brings together experts from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Center for Health and Gender Equity, the Condom Project, Cupid Ltd, FHI 360, HLL Lifecare Ltd, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Management Sciences for Health, MatCH, PATH, Population Council, the UK department for International Development (DFID), the Safehaven International, SUPPORT/Female Health Company, the Universal Access to Female Condoms Joint Programme.

**Resources**

The Family Planning TRT has published a variety of assessments and evidence reviews on contraceptive implants, as well as a range of fact sheets on emergency contraception, and case studies on access and use of emergency contraception in Nigeria and Senegal. For the full list of resources, visit: www.everywomaneverychild.org/resources/un-commission-on-life-saving-commodities/knowledge-resources. For more information and resources about emergency contraception, visit emergency contraception.org

**Contact us**

For more information or to request tools and technical assistance, please contact Sarah Rich srich@familycareint.org, Mario Festina festina@who.int, Bidia Deperthes deperthes@unfpa.org, or Heather Clark hclark@popcouncil.org

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2 The ‘pathfinder countries’ are the eight countries where the TRTs started their work: DRC, Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda.

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