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Newsletter

Several times a year, CBAS distributes an electronic newsletter to subscribers. The newsletter is designed to keep subscribers abreast of new research, activities in the field, and relevant events. Recipients are encouraged to share the newsletter with others. If you have input on the content of the newsletter or have an item of interest to include, contact us at info@cervicalbarriers.org.

Note: We are always updating our research listings on the CBAS website. Please contact us at info@cervicalbarriers.org with study updates or information on new research related to cervical barriers or female condoms.

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- [Archives](#) of the CBAS newsletter

In this March 2012 issue:

Table of Contents:

- [Woman's Condom in "Women Deliver 50" Contest](#)
- [Recent Conferences and Events](#)
- [Recent Publications](#)

Woman's Condom Voted among the Top 50 Inspiring Solutions in Women Deliver 50 Contest



The Woman's Condom, a new female condom developed by PATH and CONRAD, was selected as one of the 10 favorite technologies and innovations in the "Women Deliver 50" contest. The contest spotlighted the top ideas and solutions making the world a better

place for girls and women in five categories: advocacy campaigns, health interventions, technologies, educational initiatives, and leadership programs. Results of the competition were released on International Women's Day (March 8). The Woman's Condom won for its potential to increase woman-initiated protection and to deliver improved reproductive health to women and girls.

Click [here](#) to read the full PATH press release on the Women Deliver 50 Contest. Click [here](#) and [here](#) for more information on the Woman's Condom.

(Photo: Woman's Condom, PATH/Glenn Austin)

Search >



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[Newsletter](#)[Current Newsletter](#)[Archives](#)[Subscribe/Unsubscribe](#)[<Back to Top>](#)

Recent Conferences and Events

The 2011 International Conference on Family Planning

The 2011 International Conference on Family Planning was held in Dakar, Senegal, November 29-December 2, 2011. The conference was the second of its kind and brought together over 2,000 participants to share research, best practices, and national strategies to ensure universal access to family planning. Please see below a list of posters and presentations that highlighted diaphragms and female condoms and visit the [conference website](#) for more information.

- High rate of female condom acceptance and use by male youths against the unending mystification and refusal by female youths, in some communities of Delta state, Nigeria (Poster unavailable; Sunday Onuche Akoh and Aniagboso Francis)
- [Contraception use and effectiveness among women in a trial of the diaphragm for HIV prevention](#) (Poster; Kelly Blanchard et al.)
- [Couples' use of woman's condom in China - a performance, failure modes, and acceptability study](#) (Presentation; Patricia Coffey et al.)
- [Users as co-designers: Development of improved female barrier methods](#) (Presentation; Patricia Coffey and Maggie Kilbourne-Brook)
- [Expanding choice, expanding access: Bringing four new contraceptives to market](#) (Presentation; Patricia Coffey et al.)
- [Understanding factors influencing use of female condoms among young Basotho women: A mixed methods study](#) (Presentation; Mosele Machitje et al.)

The Global Forum on Multipurpose Prevention Technologies for Reproductive Health

(By Kathryn Stewart, CAMI)

The Global Forum on Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs) for Reproductive Health was held at the Wellcome Trust in London, United Kingdom, January 11-12, 2012. The Global Forum on MPTs brought together a small, multi-disciplinary, multi-national group of experts to discuss the evolving strategy for accelerating the development of MPTs. MPTs are products such as the female condom designed to simultaneously protect women from unintended pregnancy, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections. The Global Forum on MPTs successfully contributed to shaping an international, multi-sectoral perspective and commitment towards the development of MPTs from those regions of the world with a substantial unmet need for these prevention options.

To learn more about the Global Forum on MPTs, or view speaker presentations, please click [here](#). If you'd like to learn more about MPTs, please visit the [website](#) of the Coalition Advancing Multipurpose Innovations (CAMI).

[<Back to Top>](#)

Workshop on Establishing the WHO/UNFPA Prequalification Scheme for Female Condoms

(By Mags Beksinska, MatCH, CBAS Steering Committee Member)

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) held a workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, January 16-18, 2012, to present the principles of the WHO/UNFPA prequalification scheme for female condoms and review and finalize the specifications for female condoms. The generic specifications have been in development for some time and the workshop presented the WHO/UNFPA technical review process and the pre-qualification scheme for female condoms, providing an opportunity to review and discuss the requirements and procedures to produce quality assured female condoms for public sector procurement.

The participants included condom manufacturers mainly from India and China and country regulatory staff from the Africa Region. It was an excellent opportunity for manufacturers to discuss their existing and future plans to develop new and improved female condoms. The advice and guidance they received at this meeting demystified the development process and will hopefully encourage male condom manufacturers to diversify and consider female condom production in future.



(Photo: Participants in WHO/UNFPA Female Condom Workshop)

[<Back to Top>](#)

Female Condom Parallel Programming Meeting

(By Mags Beksinska, MatCH, CBAS Steering Committee Member)

The Maternal, Adolescent, and Child Health Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of the Witwatersrand (MatCH) and the Universal Access to Female Condoms Joint Programme (UAFC) co-hosted a meeting in Durban, South Africa, November 23-24, 2011, to discuss global strategies for female condom programming when there is more than one product available in the public-sector, donor-funded market. To date only the FC2 female condom made by the Female Health Company is approved for purchase by donors such as The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and The United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Producers of new female condoms aim to increase competition through lower pricing, new designs, and features that improve the user experience. New materials have lowered costs and several new female condoms are finalizing regulatory approvals with possible candidates available as early as mid-2012. As new female condom products are introduced to the public-sector market, there is a need for careful consideration of distribution, training, and advocacy strategies.

The meeting was attended by representatives from a range of organizations that will play a crucial role in parallel programming of female condoms, including UNFPA, Population Services International (PSI), PATH, Association Camerounaise pour le Marketing Social (ACMS), The Condom Project, Support Worldwide, and the South Africa National Department of Health. The meeting sessions included presentations of country plans and experiences of parallel programming; marketing, training, research, and regulatory issues; and sustainability. One of the main objectives of the meeting was to develop a global strategy, recommendations, and guidelines for parallel programming. A full report is being prepared by MatCH and will be disseminated in 2012.

For more information on this workshop, please contact [Mags Beksinska](#).



(Photo: Participants in Female Condom Parallel Programming Meeting)

[<Back to Top>](#)

Recent Publications

The following are published abstracts of research studies on topics related to cervical barrier methods and female condoms.

Beksinska M, Smit J, Joanis C, Hart C. Practice makes perfect: Reduction in female condom failures and user problems with short-term experience in a randomized trial. *Contraception*. January 2012. doi:10.1016/j.contraception.2011.11.071. (Online ahead of print).

Background: Female condom (FC) failure (breakage, slippage, invagination and misdirection) declines with user experience. Participants in FC performance trials are commonly novice users, and failure rates may be inflated related to inexperience. Study Design: This was a randomized, crossover study assessing preference, safety, acceptability, and function of three new FCs (WC, FC2 and V-Amour) among 170 women in Durban, South Africa. FC failure by condom type use period was investigated in women using five FCs of each type. Results: Of the 2411 condoms used during intercourse, 96 failures (breakage, slippage, invagination and misdirection) occurred in 86 condoms (77 condoms had one failure, 8 condoms had two failures, and 1 condom had three failures). Total clinical failure was comparable across FC types. The number of failures in the first condom use

period was 58 (7.0%), and this decreased to 21 events (2.6%) in the second and, finally, 17 (2.1%) in the last condom use period. No failures were reported in the last use of the FC in the final condom use period. Conclusions: FC failure rates decreased markedly after use of the first five condoms, regardless of FC type, and stabilized in the second and third use periods. Consideration should be given to the number of condoms used in trials to ensure that failure rates are not inflated by limiting the numbers of condoms used by novice users.

Beksinska ME, Smit JA, Mantell JE. Progress and challenges to male and female condom use in South Africa. *Sexual Health*. October 2011;9(1):51-58.

South Africa has responded to the sexually transmissible infection and HIV epidemic with a rapid expansion of its national-level, public-sector condom program. Male condoms are available widely at no cost in the public sector, with expanded access via social marketing and the private sector. The female condom program is one of the largest and best established globally. National surveys show progressive increases in rates of condom use at last sex. However, inconsistent and incorrect condom use and the likelihood that condoms are discontinued in longer-term partnerships are some of the challenges impeding the condom program's successes in the fight against sexually transmissible infections and HIV. This article reviews the current condom program, related guidelines and policies, and the existing data on male and female condom use, including distribution and uptake. We discuss the main challenges to condom use, including both user and service-related issues and finally how these challenges could be addressed.

Gallo MF, Kilbourne-Brook M, Coffey PS. A review of the effectiveness and acceptability of the female condom for dual protection. *Sexual Health*. January 2012;9(1):18-26.

The female condom remains the sole female-initiated method of dual protection against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmissible infections (STIs), including HIV. We reviewed published data on the effectiveness and acceptability of the female condom for protection against pregnancy and infection. Overall, use of the female condom is low and several barriers hinder the wider adoption of the use of the method. Research on effectiveness has focused on pregnancy, STIs, and biological markers of semen exposure. Although the data available suggest that female condoms (or a mixture of female and male condoms) may provide similar degrees of protection against pregnancy and STIs as do latex male condoms alone, this conclusion has not been demonstrated and thus comparative research is urgently needed.

Kacaneck D, Dennis A, Sahin-Hodoglugil NN, Montgomery ET, Morar N, Mtetwa S, Nkala B, Phillip J, Watadzaushe C, van der Straten A, the MIRA Team. A qualitative study of obstacles to diaphragm and condom use in an HIV prevention trial in Sub-Saharan Africa. *AIDS Education and Prevention*. February 2012;24(1):54-67.

Consistent condom use and the substitution of condoms with potential HIV prevention methods of lower or unknown effectiveness are important concerns in the development of new prevention technologies. This qualitative study explored obstacles to consistent condom use with the diaphragm in MIRA, an HIV prevention trial in South Africa and Zimbabwe. We conducted 26 focus group discussions (FGDs) with 206 women and 7 FGDs and

10 in-depth interviews with 41 male partners of intervention-arm women. The belief that the diaphragm/gel prevented HIV, women's difficulties negotiating condom use, and men's unawareness that using the products together was recommended were obstacles to consistent condom use with the diaphragm/gel. Concerns about protection from HIV and pregnancy, recognition that the diaphragm was not yet proven to prevent HIV or sexually transmitted infections, and the trial context were facilitators. Understanding selective study product use in HIV prevention trials may inform improved adherence counseling and male involvement strategies.

[<Back to Top>](#)

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[<Back to Top>](#)

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