

Combi-packs and contact centres: supporting safe self-care

KEY LEARNINGS

To support the safe self-administration of menstrual regulation (MR) pills, MSI Bangladesh analysed over 280,000 calls made to their contact centre – a phone line that provides information to menstrual regulation users and providers.

The data from these calls demonstrate the essential role of contact centres and hotlines in safe self-management of mifepristone and misoprostol – the drugs used for menstrual regulation in Bangladesh. The findings also show how combination packs (combi-packs) of these medications, with packaging that includes clear instructions and a contact number, can support safe access to essential reproductive healthcare.



THE CHALLENGE

Enabling safe menstrual regulation

In Bangladesh, menstrual regulation was introduced as a method to establish non-pregnancy in the 1970s.

Menstrual regulation services can include manual vacuum aspiration or medical methods (mifepristone and misoprostol, or misoprostol alone). Pregnancy is not confirmed before a procedure or medications are administered.

The medications mifepristone and misoprostol in a combination pack (combi-pack) is often available in pharmacies in Bangladesh. These medications can be safely self-managed and evidence suggests that pharmacy provision of the medications is safe and effective. However, it is important for women to have access to accurate information about how to use the medications, and pharmacy staff do not always provide advice on the correct regimen, or how to manage unexpected side effects.

WHAT WE DID

Analysing over 280k client calls

In 2010, MSI Bangladesh established a contact centre, staffed by mid-level health care providers who can provide advice and information to support menstrual regulation self-management.

Between 2012 and 2016, over
280,000
 calls were made to the contact centre

We analysed data from these calls to find out who was calling, the reason for their call and how contact centre use changed as new products became available.

“By raising awareness of contact centres and hotlines through combi-pack product packaging, we can support women in accessing the safe and informed care they need and deserve.”

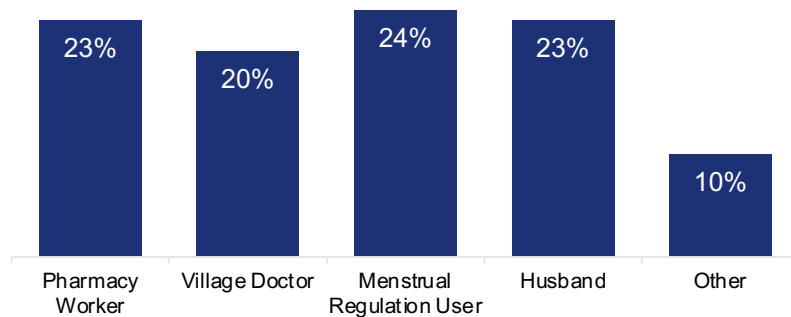


WHAT WE FOUND

Over four years, the use of the contact centre steadily increased from 2,429 per month in July 2012 to 8,700 per month in August 2016.

Calls were from menstrual regulation users, their husbands, pharmacy workers and village doctors, and a high proportion of callers had previously used the contact centre. Most menstrual regulation calls were related to the use of misoprostol. However, after the more effective combi-pack was introduced to the market in 2014, a growing proportion of calls were about the combi-pack regimen, and more calls were from MR users who had taken the complete regimen and wanted to know about side effects or pain medication, with fewer calls asking about dosages.

Profile of Callers



“By raising awareness of contact centres and hotlines through combi-pack product packaging, we can support women in accessing the safe and informed care they need and deserve.”

WHAT THIS MEANS

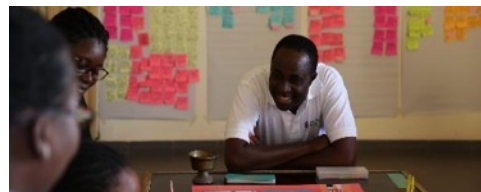
The role of combi-pack, clear packaging and onward support

The high and increasing volume of calls suggest the contact centres are meeting an unmet demand for information about menstrual regulation medications, and that contact centres can provide an accessible way to deliver this support.

The findings also highlight the value of printing a contact centre number on menstrual regulation medication packaging. When MSI Bangladesh started printing their contact centre number on their own product packaging, there was a substantial increase in calls about the product. There was a similar increase when the contact centre number was printed on another company's product, too. By maximising visibility of the contact centre, MSI Bangladesh increased access to information and support.



Finally, the study highlighted the impact that combi-pack products can have on access and ease of use. After the combi-pack entered the market, fewer people called to ask about dosages, which may reflect that the combi-pack is easier to use.



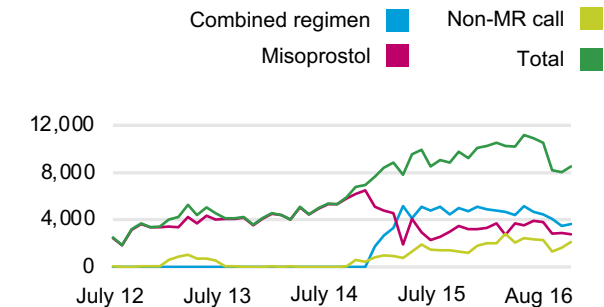
Enabling a continuum of care

In short, the findings support the importance of combi-pack availability, including clear, user-centred instructions on the packaging. The findings also highlight the value of ensuring that there is onward support for combi-pack users, in the form of a contact centre or hotline, to provide the information and support needed for safe menstrual regulation.

By raising awareness of contact centres and hotlines through combi-pack product packaging, we can support women in accessing the safe and informed care they need and deserve.

Access the [full journal article online](#).

Contact Centre Call Volume



MORE INFORMATION

For more information on MSI Reproductive Choices and the work that we do, please contact:
T +44 (0)20 7636 6200 • evidence@msichoices.org.
Alternatively, visit our website: www.msichoices.org.