

What does it take to achieve a balanced method mix?

KEY LEARNINGS

MSI strives to provide full choice in contraceptive methods to every client. This requires not only ensuring clients are well informed on the range of methods suitable for them, but also that providers are competent and confident to provide the full range of methods.



In 2018, our programme in Zambia (MSZ) found that their providers were not confident to provide intra-uterine devices (IUDs) in their mobile outreach channel. This meant that method choice was limited, and during periods of method scarcity such as national implant stock-outs, options for long-acting forms of contraception were restricted.

MSZ invested in a comprehensive approach to supporting provider confidence, client-centred counselling and provision of contraception to ensure that clients were always counselled on a full range of possible methods, even when facing product stock-outs.



THE CHALLENGE

Ensuring a balanced method mix

To support women to make an informed choice about which method is right for them, it is essential providers feel confident to counsel clients on a full range of contraceptive options. This is especially important during periods of method scarcity, such as national stock outs of popular methods such as implants, which are becoming increasingly common.

In 2018, MSZ found that many of their providers lacked confidence in inserting intra-uterine devices (IUDs), which meant that during implant stock outs, options for long-acting forms of contraception were limited.

WHAT WE DID

Investing in provider confidence

MSZ invested in clinical trainings on IUD insertion, however they found that the group nature of these trainings made providers uncomfortable admitting they wanted more support, so MSZ introduced one-on-one clinical supportive supervision to further improve their skills and confidence.

They also increased the number of female providers/female chaperones available for clients, and embedded a client-centred approach to counselling (i.e. starting with client aspirations and needs, and tailoring counselling on methods to that, rather than just running through the pros and cons of all methods, as they had previously).



**One-to-one
supportive
supervision
builds provider
confidence in
counselling on
all methods**

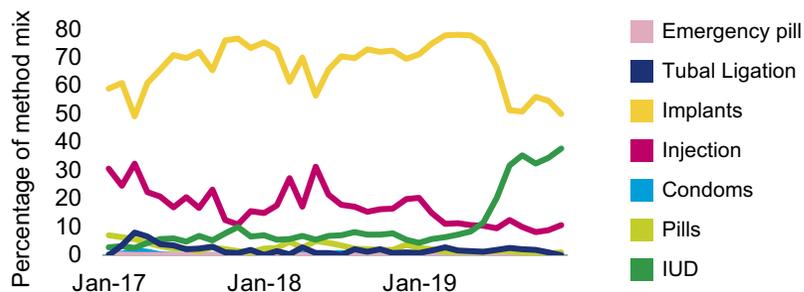
WHAT WE FOUND

A long-term, effective alternative

This approach saw MSZ's rate of IUD uptake triple from 7% in 2018 to 22% in 2019 – aligned with the MSI global average method mix for our mobile outreach channel.

The absolute number of IUD insertions also increased six-fold from **6,324** in 2018 to **40,919** in 2019.

Method mix in outreach by month



MSZ's investment in building provider confidence and ensuring client-centred counselling and provision meant that in 2019, when MSZ was affected by national implant stock outs on an unprecedented scale, IUDs were available as another option for clients who wanted long term effective protection.

2019 client exit interview data showed that clients in outreach:

85% ?

felt comfortable asking questions to the provider

99% 

felt treated with respect by the provider

94% 

understood what the provider was explaining during counselling

WHAT WE FOUND

The right method for the client

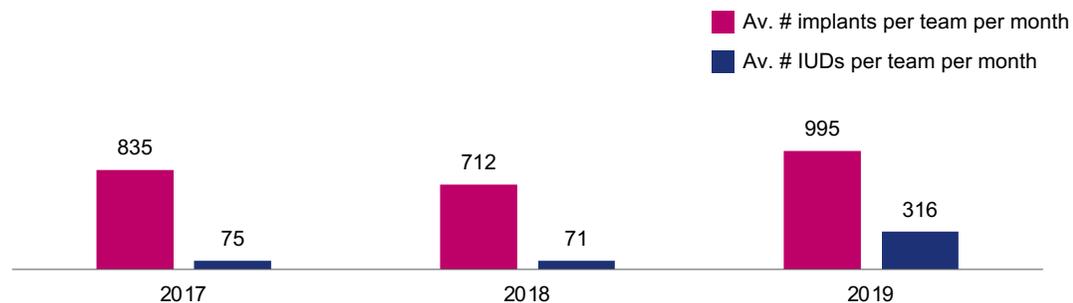
MSZ's experience suggests that IUD uptake is influenced by factors such as how counselling is tailored, as well as provider confidence and client comfort with the IUD insertion process.

MSZ's concerted effort to address these barriers meant not only a steady trend in IUD uptake, but that when Zambia was affected by national stockouts of implants in 2019, they saw an increase in the proportion of their method mix from IUDs, as an effective long-term alternative to the implant.

In the context of method-scarcity, it is more important than ever that providers are confident in providing all possible methods and that every effort is made to match clients with a method that meets their needs.



Average LARC insertions per team per month



MORE INFORMATION

For more information on MSI Reproductive Choices and the work that we do, please contact:
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