

# DUAL METHOD USE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN KENYA



African Institute for Development Policy

## KEY FINDINGS:

- Various factors influence young women's dual method use, including protection against STIs and pregnancy, level of trust within the relationship, and knowledge of partner's HIV status.
- Dual method use is sometimes initiated by the woman and sometimes by her male partner.
- Changes in relationship status influence dual method use.

## KEY ACTION ITEMS:

- Ensure access to a full range of contraceptive options for adolescents so they feel confident in their pregnancy prevention method of choice and can use condoms as needed for STI/HIV prevention.
- Encourage positive couple communication around dual method use.
- Support FP and HIV services integration at the facility level to increase access to quality counseling, HIV testing, and contraceptives for adolescents and youth.
- Strengthen collaboration between the family planning and HIV communities to increase messaging regarding the importance of dual method use among adolescents and youth.

Young people represent a diverse population with unique family planning needs and practices. These practices include use of contraceptive methods to prevent both unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV; this is often referred to as 'dual method use.' The most common approach for dual method use is a barrier contraceptive method (e.g., condoms) plus another contraceptive method to prevent pregnancy (e.g., pills, injections or a long-acting method). Understanding dual method use experiences among young people in Kenya will help policymakers and program implementers ensure young people in their communities have access to a full range of contraceptive methods that satisfy all of their reproductive health needs.

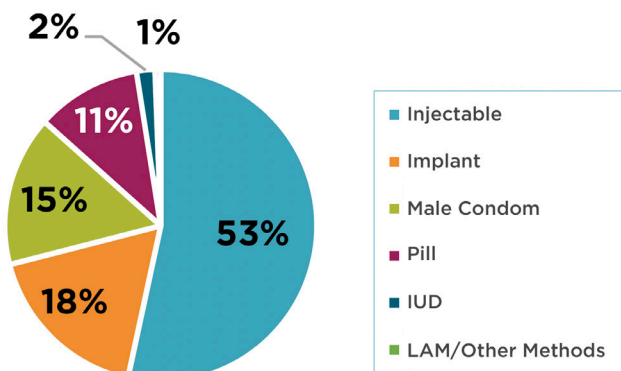
In 2018, the Full Access, Full Choice project convened key family planning stakeholders, from the NGO and government sectors, for technical workshops to identify key evidence gaps in adolescent and youth family planning research. Full Access, Full Choice undertook qualitative in-depth interviews with 32 women ages 18-24 years in Mombasa, Nairobi, and Migori, to better understand their contraceptive journey and respond to these evidence gaps. Information from these from these counties related to dual method use is presented below, alongside quantitative data from various large-scale surveys in Kenya, including the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) (2014) and the Kenya Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (KENPHIA) (2018).

## CURRENT STATUS OF CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG YOUNG WOMEN IN KENYA

**9.3%**  
of women ages 15-19 currently use any modern method of contraception (DHS 2014)\*

**38.5%**  
of women ages 20-24 currently use any modern method of contraception (DHS 2014)\*

Modern method mix\* among women ages 15-24, DHS 2014 National



**60.7%**  
of never married, sexually active women ages 15-24 reported using a condom at last sexual intercourse (DHS 2014)\*



\*Current use only measures the most effective method of contraception used, even if multiple methods are reported. As a result, current use does not capture dual method use.

# PREGNANCY AND HIV OUTCOMES AMONG YOUNG WOMEN IN KENYA



**16%**

of women ages 15-19 are mothers  
(MIS, 2015)

**63%**

of pregnancies among women ages 15-19 are unintended  
(Guttmacher Institute, 2019)

**1.2%**

National Prevalence of HIV among women ages 15-19  
(KENPHIA, 2018)

**3.4%**

National Prevalence of HIV among women ages 20-24  
(KENPHIA, 2018)

**21%**

of all new HIV infections are women ages 15-24  
(KHER, 2014)

## YOUNG WOMEN CHOOSE CONDOMS FOR DUAL PROTECTION AGAINST PREGNANCY AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS



In the qualitative interviews conducted by the Full Access, Full Choice project, 22 of the 32 young women interviewed reported using condoms at some point in their lives. All 22 reported condoms as their first chosen contraceptive method used and a majority (n=15) cited the dual protection against both pregnancy and STIs as the main motivating factor for condom use.

Condom use was frequently taught in school or recommended by others because of dual protection, and therefore was often one of the only contraceptive methods a woman reported knowing about when she first started having sex.



**Interviewer:** "What made you decide to use [a condom] with this person? Because it was your boyfriend?"

**Respondent:** "Protection from unplanned early pregnancy, and for the first one I did not want to get pregnant or those diseases like STIs and HIV/AIDS."

**Interviewer:** "Who advised you? Were you advised by anybody or you just decided by yourself?"

**Respondent:** "We were taught in school to use protection during sex."

*-21-year-old female without children from Migori County*

## WOMEN WEIGH MANY FACTORS WHEN DECIDING ON DUAL METHOD USE

In addition to using a method to avoid pregnancy, the main reason for dual method use was to protect against infections (HIV and other STIs).



**Interviewer:** "Why did you still use a condom and you had implants in place?"

**Respondent:** "Because implants prevents pregnancy only **but condom prevents both pregnancy and diseases.**"

*-20-year-old female without children from Nairobi County*



"That one for three years I have already inserted. I know that I have already protected myself from having a child. Haven't I put protection there against a child? **What about diseases, what will you use for protection? You have to use a condom.**"

*-24-year-old female from Mombasa County with one child*

Other times, dual method use or the decision to use a condom was driven by goals of **pregnancy prevention**. In these instances, women thought about the effectiveness or duration of their current non-condom method and used a condom when they were unsure if their other method would be effective.



**Interviewer:** "Okay. At the time when you were taking the pill, were you also using the condom?"  
**Respondent:** "Yes."  
**Interviewer:** "At what point?"  
**Respondent:** "When I was on the period and I felt like having sex. I didn't know it could prevent pregnancy at all times."  
**Interviewer:** "So when you were on your period, you would use this."  
**Respondent:** "Yes. If I was on my period and I had sex, we would use a condom."

*-24-year-old female from Migori County with two children*

Women's decision-making for dual method use often considered their **level of trust in their partner**. Women who were in stable relationships or who were aware of their partner's HIV status often did not see a need to take up or continue dual method use. When discussing condom use in general, several women mentioned that they would not use condoms once married or when there was a higher level of trust in the relationship



**Interviewer:** "And what don't you like about it [condoms]?"  
**Respondent:** "I don't like it because I am married."  
**Interviewer:** "So when you are married you cannot like condom? [Laughing]"  
**Respondent:** "[Laughing] Eeh."  
**Interviewer:** "How is that related? [Laughing]"  
**Respondent:** "[Laughing] I don't like it since I am married."  
**Interviewer:** "Just that?"  
**Respondent:** "Eeh. We trust each other."

*-22-year-old female from Nairobi County with two children*

However, when women did not trust their partner or did not know his HIV or STI status, they described using dual methods to protect themselves.



"You know when you use injection you can get diseases. When you sleep with a man, you don't know who is ok or not, **for us to prevent those things but still get satisfied**, you must use a condom."

*-21-year-old female from Migori County without children*

**82%**

of 15-19 women and

**92%**

of 20-24 year old women believe that a woman is justified in asking her husband to use a condom if she knows that he has an STI

*(DHS, 2014)*

## INITIATION OF DUAL METHOD USE

Dual method use was sometimes initiated by women and sometimes by her partner. **Some respondents suggested that when their male partners initiated dual method use, it was due to the partners having sex outside of the relationship and wanting to be cautious regarding STI protection.** When dual method use was initiated by the woman or described as a joint decision, there was less conversation in the interviews about the actual communication with the partner regarding this decision. Dual method use was often linked to the timing of HIV testing of a husband or boyfriend, as women described using condoms in the time before the partner or both individuals within the couple could test for HIV and/or other infections.

**69%**

of sexually active women age 15-24 who had sexual intercourse in the past 12 months, had an HIV test in the past 12 months and know their results.

*(DHS, 2014)*



“He was the one who made that decision because sometimes he was far and when he was back, he couldn’t control himself. **So he used to insist on using condoms in case I was afraid.**”

*-24-year-old female from Migori County with two children*



“We usually test, even with my husband we were tested when he married me. **You go and test and tell each other how it was and there is trust, as long as you have known each other.** But you can use if he has messed up for just like three months, without you knowing how he behaved where he was. So for you to know you will go and test again.”

*-24-year-old female from Migori County with two children*

## DISCOMFORT WITH CONDOMS IS A BARRIER TO DUAL METHOD USE

Women frequently mentioned either their own or their partners’ dissatisfaction with condoms, often related to discomfort or concerns about the “oil” in condoms, which was a potential barrier to condom use. **Some respondents shared that they did not disclose their use of another contraceptive method because they worried their partner discontinue using condoms since they disliked wearing them.**



**Respondent:** “He used to say that if he uses a condom then he gets hurt... he feels that he was suffering because it is oily. But I told him that I could not have sex with him without using any protection since I was still in school.

**Interviewer:** “Just to ask you, have you ever used condom along other method?”

**Respondent:** “No, I have never.”

**Interviewer:** “Does that mean that you have ever used other methods like pills or any other method you know of?”

**Respondent:** “I had put this other 5 year one but I lied to him to use a condom because he didn’t know that I had placed it.”

*-20-year-old female from Mombasa County without children*

## CHANGES IN RELATIONSHIP STATUS MAY AFFECT CONDOM USE

Women who were not using a male condom at the time of interview were generally satisfied with that decision, although some mentioned they were unable to use it because their partners did not like to use condoms. However, some women who were not using a condom at the time of the interview mentioned they would consider using a condom in the future if they were to start a new relationship, were to have an extramarital relationship, or be concerned about transmitting an STI.



### What is Full Access, Full Choice?

Full Access, Full Choice is four-year, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) supported project implemented by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Carolina Population Center and the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP). The project will generate and synthesize evidence to inform programs and policies to expand contraceptive method choice for youth aged 15-24 at the global and country levels.

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