**Pilot study of “WhyIUD”: an IUD user-led social communication intervention**

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**BACKGROUND**

- Prior studies have shown that social networks are a valued source of information about contraception.
- Low IUD uptake among contraceptive users (7.7% in the US) may be explained in part by prevalent misinformation and concerns about IUDs spread through social communication.
- Applying diffusion of innovations theory to an IUD social communication intervention may be an effective means to increase awareness, positive attitudes and adoption of IUDs.

**DEVELOPED AN INTERVENTION TO SUPPORT POSITIVE SOCIAL COMMUNICATION ABOUT IUDS**

In collaboration with the design and development team from Bedsider.org and Dr. Tom Valente, social network expert, we developed a multi-pronged, low-cost, and peer-led IUD communication intervention.

**PILOT STUDY METHODS**

**Baseline:**
- We recruited IUD users (n=10) from a safety net family planning clinic in San Francisco to receive the WhyIUD intervention.
- IUD users completed a baseline survey.

**Baseline - 1 month:**
- IUD users recruited women of reproductive age with whom they felt comfortable talking about birth control.
- These women were enrolled as “social contacts” (n=32) and completed baseline surveys.

**3 months:**
- Quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were conducted with IUD users and social contacts.

**PILOT STUDY FINDINGS**

**Characteristics of IUD Users’ social networks**

- 69% of IUD users had comfortable talking about birth control with an average of 5.4 women.
- Social contacts’ relationship to IUD user:
  - 90% were friends
  - 10% were family
- Out of social contacts who enrolled (n=32), 26% had IUDs.

**Acceptability of and engagement with WhyIUD intervention**

**IUD users:**
- Overall, women liked the design and content of the intervention materials.
- Interviews suggested there was a positive effect on IUD users’ social communication.
- Engagement with intervention website and text messages was lower than desired.

**Clinic staff:**
- Reported that implementing intervention was easy and did not disrupt clinic flow.
- Made recommendations around streamlining instructions for clinic staff.

**Feasibility of recruiting and collecting data from IUD users’ social contacts**

- 59% of IUD users’ social contacts enrolled in the study.
- 100% of social contacts who completed baseline surveys completed follow up surveys.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Harnessing social communication about IUDs promises to be a powerful strategy to influence social norms around IUDs.
- Ensuring adequate engagement with WhyIUD intervention is challenging given our goal to keep it low-cost and easy to implement in clinic.
- Recruitment of social contacts was adequate, suggesting a large-scale study of this intervention is feasible.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Based on feedback from participants and clinic staff, we are optimizing our intervention.
- We plan to pilot our optimized intervention in a setting with lower uptake of IUDs to target innovators earlier on the diffusion of innovations curve.

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**OUR HYPOTHESIS**

Activating IUD users to disseminate evidence-based information and their personal experience with IUDs may accelerate the normalization and acceptance of IUDs among contraceptive users.

**FORMATIVE RESEARCH**

Using focus groups and interviews with IUD users and non-users, we assessed women’s perceptions of how peers can provide information to encourage IUD use.

- The majority of respondents (83%) valued learning about contraceptive methods from women who had experience using them.
  - “If you have a friend that’s actually tried [the method] and they can share their experience with you, then it kind of gives you like a more open mind about it.” - 25-year-old
- Almost 80% of IUD users had recommended IUDs to others.
  - “When someone’s alarm goes off and it’s time. ‘Oh, I’ve got to take my birth control’, like I’ll mention [IUDs] to all my friends. I just feel like I’m so lucky, that like should probably spread the word.” - 25-year-old IUD user
- IUD never-users expressed interest in learning about how IUDs feel and potential side effects from IUD users.
  - After participating in a non-directive discussion about IUDs, IUD non-users reported increased acceptability to the idea of having an IUD themselves (11% pre-discussion versus 36% post-discussion, p<.02).