



The Female Health Foundation News – Issue #2 July 1, 2005

Welcome to the quarterly *Female Health Foundation News!* The Female Health Foundation, the not for profit arm of *The Female Health Company*, works with key stakeholders in individual countries to implement HIV/STD prevention/family planning/workplace programmes with an FC female condom component. This newsletter will disseminate information on these programmes as well as best practice materials, published research and impact data from around the world.

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China – Female Condom Consultation Meeting, April 2005

A consultation took place in China in April 2005 to discuss ways of making the female condom available to all women in the country. The meeting was attended by 48 participants representing national government, provincial governments, international and local NGOs, UN organisations, businesses and representatives from the private sector. Ms Guo Wei of the UNFPA/WHO 100% condom use project, which has concentrated on promoting condom use in nine provinces in China, believes that female condoms must have political support as well as widespread education programmes and outreach and mass media campaigns to reach high risk groups and the general population.

The Futures Group presented findings from their research intervention in Yunnan and Sichuan on acceptability of female condoms among female sex workers. Key findings of the research were; a general acceptability rate for the female condom of 70%; that protected sexual acts increased by 10% during the period of the study; and that users found the female condom equivalent to the male condom in terms of sexual pleasure and comfort. Importantly the study indicated that practical difficulties associated with female condom insertion were resolved over time.

Population Services International has been promoting the female condom to high risk women, including sex workers, in Honghe, Yunnan and Ruili. Nanjing College and Columbia University, USA, are researching acceptability of FC among couples in Kunshan County, Jiangsu province using a research model developed by the Reproductive Health Research Unit in South Africa. Findings from this study may be used to promote FC to the general population.

For more information please contact:
The Futures Group at futures1@51condom.com
Population Services International at ghafner@psichina.org

International Council of Nurses Congress, Taipei, 22 May 2005

Celebrating nursing innovation and knowledge, more than 3500 nurses from 131 countries and every region of the world gathered in Taipei, Taiwan to participate in the International Council of Nurses (ICN) 23rd Quadrennial Congress 21-27 May 2005. The scientific programme boasted more than 1500 presentations, including main sessions, symposia, workshops, special interest sessions and posters. Topics included how nurses can help overcome barriers to access to female condoms--both as providers and advocates.

The Female Health Foundation presented on “*Access to Female-Initiated Prevention*” focusing on a rights based approach to choices for protection, the role of nursing in advancing access to female condoms and mobilizing political action for female-initiated prevention. Copies of the presentation are available from pweisenfeld@femalehealthfoundation.org

Effectiveness of female controlled barrier methods in preventing sexually transmitted infections and HIV: current evidence and future research directions

A M Minnis, N S Padian *Sexually Transmitted Infections* January 2005; 81: 193 - 200

The review aimed to evaluate evidence for the effectiveness of female controlled physical and chemical barrier methods in preventing STI/HIV transmission as well as translating results into public health interventions. Information about various female controlled methods was presented including diaphragms, cervical caps, microbicides and the FC female condom. The authors reviewed three studies which looked at the disease prevention effectiveness of the FC female condom. The authors state that the studies “suggest that the availability and use of the [FC] female condom offers at least as much protection from STIs as male condoms alone”.

The authors concluded that female controlled barrier methods are an essential tool to prevent the continued spread of STI/HIV infections. Additionally they provide women with the opportunity to take an active role in reducing their STI/HIV risk.

FHF's Intervention Toolkit

Based on its experience in the field, FHF has created an intervention toolkit which is designed to help public health specialists and programme managers improve the assessment, planning, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of female condom interventions. It guides users through a process to gather, synthesise and analyse information to support and define female condom programme objectives and interventions. There is also a collection of tools to assist in this process, amongst others; an introductory pack containing a flipchart, briefing card and case studies; a manual for cascade leader and motivator training; and examples of work plans and log frames to assist with the strategic planning phase. Additionally it includes practical advice for programme managers introducing female condom programmes for the first time as well as for those intending to revise/re-evaluate and update existing programmes.

FHF is keen to receive feedback from those organisations working on or intending to implement female condom interventions to ensure that the toolkit is practical, user friendly and covers the key aspects of female condom programming. We would be happy to supply you with a trial kit for your use and feedback. A feedback form will be attached for each

section. FHF is planning to complete the prototype of the kit by the end of July. If you would like to participate in reviewing the tool kit, please send an e-mail to ebayliss@femalehealthfoundation.org

We welcome your input and contributions for future issues!

Correspondence can be addressed to info@femalehealthfoundation.org

Further information on FC female condom is available at www.femalehealth.com

Visit <http://www.femalehealth.com/resources.html#newsletter> for previous editions

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