

# Challenges Implementing VOICE

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# Presentation Outline

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- Challenges Implementing VOICE
- Strategies to Address These Challenges
- Lessons Learned
- Unresolved Challenge

# Expected Challenges

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- Recruitment → Ongoing
  - High fertility rate – 6.9
    - Cultural/religious beliefs – misconceptions, desire to have more children
    - Pregnant, breastfeeding
  - LTFU after pre-screening – need to first consult partners
  - Preference for gel – safety and sexual pleasure
  - Abnormal laboratory values
  - Feeling of self sacrifice, need for reward

# Expected Challenges, cont'd

- Long visit procedures → Ongoing

Visit type	Estimated time (hours)
□ Screening Part I	4 – 5
□ Screening Part II	4
□ Enrollment	6 – 8
□ VOICE B + Semi/annual	8
□ Quarterly, semi-annual, annual	5

# Unexpected Challenges

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- Retention → **Ongoing**
  - Re-location
  - Participant work schedule, change of jobs
  - Lack of disclosure to partner
  
- Adherence (to gel) → **Ongoing**
  - Non-disclosure
  - Inconsistent reasons for discrepant returns

# Strategies to Address Challenges

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## □ Recruitment

### ■ On-going community sensitization - Successful


- Demystifying myths and misconceptions about family planning (country wide problem)
- Emphasize need for learning more about both oral and topical products

# Strategies cont'd

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## □ Long visit procedures

- Participants encouraged to come early
  - Offer equivalent of lunch meal if seen before lunch
- Staff report before ordinary work hours



Partially  
successful

## □ Adherence

- Adherence Coordinator, form, database, calendar
- Participant forum
- Weekly Adherence committee meetings
- Strengthened counseling using commonly reported reasons for non-adherence



Strategy  
has  
improved  
Adherence

# Strategies cont'd

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## □ Retention

- Partner involvement, invitation letter –  
too early to assess
- Detailed locator information including rural home - Successful
  - Restrict recruitment to participants who have lived in same area for >1 year
- Plan to increase reimbursement due to high inflation rate



# Lessons Learned

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- Continuous modification of **recruitment** strategies
- Community key in all prevention studies
- Need for 'combing' strategy of recruitment
- Male leaders have been active mobilizers
- Need for collaboration with other researchers: co-enrollment
- Importance of demand driven staff recruitment
- Adherence Coordinator, field recruiters
- Need for continuous staff training
- Flexible working hours including weekends



# Unresolved Challenge

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- How can we achieve an overall retention rate of 95% among healthy high risk HIV negative women ?**