Challenges Implementing VOICE

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Presentation Outline

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

- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit type</th>
<th>Estimated time (hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening Part I</td>
<td>4 – 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Screening Part II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>6 – 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>VOICE B + Semi/annual</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly, semi-annual, annual</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
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Unexpected Challenges

- **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

- 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

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

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

- **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

- 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

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