

INTRODUCTION

The dapivirine vaginal ring (the ring) is a woman-initiated HIV-1 prevention method developed by the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM). The ring is a flexible silicone ring for vaginal insertion that slowly releases an antiretroviral called dapivirine locally in the vagina over a period of one month. The ring reduced the risk of HIV infection by 35% in a Phase III trial called The Ring Study, and by 27% in another Phase III trial called ASPIRE. In addition, modeling data from recent open label studies suggest that the ring reduced HIV risk by about 50%.

WHO WE ARE

PROMISE and CHOICE are activities within larger USAID-funded awards, led by FHI 360 in close collaboration with a consortium of partners including Afton Bloom Group, AVAC, Avenir Health, Columbia University, Jhpiego, LVCT Health, Pangaea Zimbabwe AIDS Trust, the University of Washington, and Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute.

WHAT WE DO

PROMISE and CHOICE support early product introduction planning for the monthly dapivirine ring in sub-Saharan Africa, with the goal of shaping the market and establishing a service delivery platform to support future multipurpose and longer-acting vaginal rings. In July 2020, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) adopted a positive scientific opinion on the ring for its use among women ages 18 and older in developing countries, opening the door to the next steps in seeking national regulatory approvals for the ring in sub-Saharan Africa.

HOW WE DO IT

In addition to working closely with IPM to support their regulatory and commercialization strategies, PROMISE and CHOICE operate in coordination with IPM to support early product introduction planning through the below activities:



Service delivery channels – Consolidating and summarizing existing resources on ring introduction to generate integrated, de-medicalized strategies for strengthening health system delivery of the dapivirine ring as part of comprehensive family planning (FP) and HIV services



National planning and programming – Engaging stakeholders and policymakers to develop planning resources and country-specific technical assistance with the goal of synergizing FP and HIV/STI prevention programming efforts, while paving the way for vaginal ring programming at the national level



CHOICE Collaboration for HIV Prevention Options to Control the Epidemic
PROMISE Preparing for Ring Opportunities through Market Introduction Support and Knowledge Exchange



Demand creation and market shaping – Applying research and emerging evidence to update existing HIV prevention and FP demand creation strategies, materials, and tools to include vaginal rings and address social norms to create an enabling environment for female-initiated HIV prevention and FP choices



Knowledge management – Developing and expanding on existing knowledge management strategies to improve knowledge of the dapivirine ring and position it as part of a broader sexual and reproductive health prevention package inclusive of FP and oral PrEP

WHERE WE WORK

PROMISE and CHOICE activities are focused in sub-Saharan Africa and prioritization of countries will be determined in consultation with USAID.

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