

Introduction

[Bullet points below to be explained in the facilitator's own words]

- Begin with icebreaker if appropriate
- Remind participants that discussion is confidential, so personal information won't be shared outside of the REACH study
- Remind participants to use pseudonyms during the discussion and identify themselves with their pseudonym
- Purpose of FGD: Learn about participants' experiences with the REACH study and the study products
- Affirm that participants are the experts
- Affirm that all answers are valid: no right and wrong
- Invite differing opinions
- Ask participants to speak one at a time so that the audio recorder can capture everything
- Turn audio recorder on and then, ask participants to confirm for audio recorder that they agree to participate in FGD

Section 1. Icebreaker

1. What was it like to participate in the REACH study?

- *Challenges getting to the clinic*
- *Challenges during clinic visits (length of visit, staff, other participants)*
- *Thoughts on REACH study procedures (lab work, clinic procedures, counseling, surveys, computer interviews, engagement activities)*
- *Challenges from people in the community (rumors, misinformation, distrust of researchers)*

Section 2. Social context

2. In your social circle (partners, parents, friends, other family, neighbors, etc.), who knows about the REACH study?

- **KEY PROBE:** *How they found out*
 - o *What they know about her being a participant*
 - o *What they know about the study products that participants are using (clarify: general knowledge of tablets/ring vs. product she has been assigned)*
- *Feelings around disclosure*
- *Reasons/motivations for disclosure*
- *Others' reactions to the REACH study*
- *Others' reactions to study products*
- *Probe specifically about disclosure, knowledge or reaction of sex partner(s) if not discussed spontaneously*

3. Who are the people you decided not to tell about the REACH study?

- **KEY PROBE:** *What kept participants from disclosing*
- *How participants hide their participation or study product use, at home or with people outside of home*

Section 3. Study product acceptability and experience with use

[ONLY if participants are in a tablet group: use questions 4T and 5T]

4T. Can you share your experience with taking the tablets?

- *General likes and reasons*
- *General dislikes or concerns and reasons*
- *Feelings when first seeing the tablets*
- *Anything that changed after starting to take the tablets*
- *Ability to understand instructions for how to use products*
- *Any challenges bringing the tablets back to the clinic*

5T. Let's talk about how much the tablets fit (or did not fit) into your day-to-day life.

- **KEY PROBE:** Things that make it easier to use the tablets
- **KEY PROBE:** Things that make it harder to use the tablets
 - o Side effects
 - o Size of the tablets
 - o Any worries about study product use
- Any reminders used
- Interaction of tablet use with sex, partying, alcohol use, privacy
 - o What it was like to take tablets while using contraception

[ONLY if participants are in a ring group, use questions 4R and 5R]

4R. Can you share your experience with using the ring?

- General likes and reasons
- General dislikes or concerns and reasons
- Feeling when first seeing the ring
- Feelings after first ring insertion
- Once inserted, how the ring felt in her body (every day, during sex or menses, changes in vaginal wetness/dryness)
- Any challenges bringing the rings back to the clinic

5R. Let's talk about how much the ring fit (or did not fit) into your day-to-day life.

- **KEY PROBE:** Things that make it easier to use the ring
- **KEY PROBE:** Things that make it harder to use the ring
 - o Side effects
 - o Size of the ring
 - o Any worries about study product use
- Interaction of ring use with sex
- Interaction of ring use with hygiene, menses, partying, alcohol use, privacy
 - o What it was like to use the ring while using contraception
- Any changes in vaginal practices while using the ring
- Any changes in the desired vaginal state

[Remaining questions should be asked in all focus groups]

6. How did your experience with [the unchosen product] compare to what you just described about your experience with [the chosen product]?

- Comparison of ease of use
- Difference between how they fit into day-to-day life

7. What did people in the community say about study products in REACH?

- Stigma around the tablets related to ARVs
- Social harms or benefits due to tablet use
- Social harms or benefits due to ring use
- Attitudes about vaginal insertion of the ring
- Strategies used to respond to negative pressure/community rumors

8. Previously, you have all discussed your drug results with a study counselor. How did you feel about getting these results?

- Ability to understand the drug results
- If drug results reflect how the participants think they used their chosen product
- Ability to understand the information given (correctness/accuracy of drug results, partial efficacy)
- Influence of getting results on their continued product use
- Influence of getting results on their product choice

Section 4. Product choice and preferences

9. What did you think about being required to try each of the study products first before getting to choose?

- *Potential differences if participants had been able to choose right away*

10. Everyone who is in this group chose to use the [insert RING or TABLETS here]. What kinds of things did you think about when making this decision?

- *Explanation of the decision-making process*
- *How it is different from [study product **not** chosen by group members]*
- *Preference for chosen study product or condoms to protect against HIV, assuming they are just as effective*

11. When you joined this study, you were asked to choose a contraceptive method (if you weren't already using one). How has that been for you?

- *Feelings about contraceptive product chosen*
 - o *Ease of use of contraceptive product chosen*
- *Feelings about being required to use a contraceptive to participate in the REACH study*
 - o *Whether contraceptive use impacted ability to participate in the REACH study*
 - o *Whether contraceptive use impacted ability to use study products*

Section 5. Product use for the public

12. If both study products were available to the public, which one do you think your peers would prefer?

- *Reason(s) why*
- *What would you recommend to your friends?*

13. What did you think of how the study products were packaged?

- *How the packaging could be improved*
- *Probe for thoughts on both the tablets and the ring*

14. What would it be like for your friends/sisters to use condoms and the tablets?

- *Challenges to using condoms and the tablets together*
- *What might make women interested in using them together*

15. What would it be like for your friends/sisters to use condoms and the ring?

- *Challenges to using condoms and the ring together*
- *What might make women interested in using them together*

16. If time: participants break up into groups of 2-3. Take 5 minutes to prepare a quick advertisement for the study product they chose. Goal is to come up with a 30 second advertisement that would inform women in the community about the study product and get them interested. Come back together and share the advertisement with the group.

Closing: thank participants for time and responses

17. Are there any final questions, comments or opinions you would like to share with the group?

Thank you for your time and sharing your experiences and opinions today.