

# **Introduction to Impact Evaluation: What is it and why do we use it?**

Male Circumcision Impact Evaluation Meeting  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
January 18-23, 2010

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# Efficacy vs. Effectiveness

**Efficacy** – the effect under ideal circumstances (i.e. laboratory, clinical trials)

Effectiveness – the effect under real world circumstances ; aka *Impact Evaluation*

# Efficacy Trials for HIV Prevention: Measuring Progress

Type of Intervention	HIV prevention efficacy			Total
	Positive effect	Adverse effect	No effect	
<i>Behavioral</i>	---	---	7	7
<i>Microfinance</i>	---	---	1	1
<i>Diaphragm</i>	---	---	1	1
<i>Vaginal Microbicides</i>	---	1	11	12
<i>PrEP</i>	---	---	1	1
<i>Male Circumcision</i>	3	---	1	4
<i>STI Treatment</i>	1	---	8	9
<i>Vaccine</i>	1	---	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39</b>

Source: Padian, McCoy, Balkus, & Wasserheit. *AIDS* 2010, *in press*.

# What did the efficacy trials tell us about MC?

- Efficacy data from three countries
  - Reduces female-to-male transmission
- Acceptable procedure
- Negligible short term risk compensation in the context of a method of unknown efficacy

# Efficacy vs. Effectiveness

Efficacy – the effect under ideal circumstances (i.e. laboratory, clinical trials)

**Effectiveness** – the effect under real world circumstances / the effect at scale; aka *Impact Evaluation*

# Why might effectiveness/impact be different at scale in the real world?

## *EXERCISE:*

Identify 3 reasons why an effectiveness trial results would be different from those in an efficacy trial.

# Why might real world effectiveness be different?

- Male circumcision quality
- Male circumcision coverage
- MC for HIV+ men
- Wound care
- Abstinence from sex during healing
- Need for long-term behavioral reduction

# What effects/outcomes might be relevant or different in a real-world effectiveness trial?

## *EXERCISE:*

Identify 3 other outcomes you would be interested in assessing in an effectiveness trial

# What might we measure in effectiveness trials?

- Direct effects on female partners
- Population level effects of the program at scale
- Effectiveness on other outcomes: STIs, cervical cancer
- Data on behavioral dis-inhibition now that it has proven efficacy (especially long term effects) and exactly what behavioral messages to pair with promotion
- Most effective and cost effective methods of delivery

# How can we turn this...



...into this?



Photo source: International Women's Health Coalition

# The Evaluation Gap in Scaling Up

- Scaled-up programs are rarely evaluated systematically
- Inhibits documentation of success and prevents distinction between fact and story
- Rigorous evaluation methods link inputs and impact (i.e. *Impact Evaluation*)
- Without such evaluations, policy decisions are based on scanty information from small-scale experiences combined with a large doses of opinions and politics

# **World Bank Challenged: Are Poor Really Helped?**

By Celia Dugger

New York Times, July 28, 2004

WASHINGTON - Wealthy nations and international organizations, including the World Bank, spend more than \$55 billion annually to better the lot of the world's 2.7 billion poor people. Yet they have scant evidence that the myriad projects they finance have made any real difference, many economists say.

# How can we address these gaps?

- Educated estimates about the translation between efficacy and effectiveness (it will almost always be lower)
- Use modeling to estimate effectiveness as well as the other parameter values and outcomes of interest
- Use study designs and analytic techniques that permit empirical assessments of impact

# What does impact mean?

- Impact originally means “effect of something on something else”
- In impact evaluation, is it the portion of the observed change in an outcome caused by or attributed to the intervention of interest

# Impact Evaluation Answers...

- What was the effect of the program on outcomes?  
(*causal attribution*)
- How much better off are the beneficiaries as a result of the program?
- Is the program cost-effective?
  - Depends on costing, plus robust measures of effectiveness as determined from IE

# When can you do Impact Evaluation (IE)?

- When scaling something up
- When starting something new

When the program is at “steady state”; IE is impossible. The fundamental premise is to examine the differential effect of a change in the program

# For what is Impact Evaluation (IE) useful?

## → Accountability

A way to measure the effect of an activity on outcomes of interest.

## → Strategic Planning

A way to determine the “best buys” for prevention, care and treatment