Implants Logistics Overview

The Logistics section of the Implants Toolkit discusses logistics of providing hormonal implants so programs can make implants available to clients when and where they need them. This brief provides basic guidance on supply chain considerations when managing hormonal implants. For more in-depth information on management of health commodities, please consult the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT's publications, The Logistics Handbook and Quantification of Health Commodities Guide.

The Six "Rights" of Logistics

A logistics system provides quality customer service by fulfilling six rights: ensuring that the right goods, in the right quantities, in the right condition, are delivered to the right place, at the right time, for the right cost.

Good Logistics Means Good Customer Service

Logistics is the process of getting goods through the supply chain from the point of origin to the point of consumption or use. Logistics works to ensure the uninterrupted supply of implants at the right time, for the right service delivery points by managing the flow of products from the manufacturer to the port of entry through the in-country distribution system and to the final consumer.

Effective and efficient logistics systems:

- Improve quality of care by ensuring the quality and availability of health commodities
- Improve cost-effectiveness by reducing overstock, waste, expiry, damage, pilferage, and inefficiency

Appropriate personnel should be trained at all levels of the logistics system to enable them to forecast, procure, and deliver implants and other health commodities. This includes not only individuals who are responsible for planning or monitoring health commodity logistics systems in the public and private sectors, but also in-country managers from donor agencies. Management of implants is usually integrated with other contraceptives, so personnel should be trained to handle all products. However, during training, specific characteristics of implants should be highlighted, including the bundling of additional supplies required for implant insertion and removal.

Special Considerations for Implant Logistics

Without all of the necessary equipment needed for implant insertion and removal, the implant itself is useless. Therefore, it is essential that all supplies needed for insertion and removal are ordered and distributed when the implants are ordered and distributed.

Insertion of implants requires supplies in addition to the implant itself. Logistics system managers and service providers should ensure that these supplies are procured and distributed to the service delivery points along with the implants. If possible, all supplies should be bundled with the implants as a complete insertion kit and distributed as a kit. The stock status of implants should be measured as the stock status of the necessary supply in the smallest quantity. In effect the stock status of implants relies as much on the stock of the supplies and instruments listed in the table below as it does on supply of the implant itself (Cagatay et al., 2010).

Table. Instruments and Supplies for Insertion and Removal of Hormonal Implants

Instruments and Supplies	Insertion	Removal
Instruments (reusable)		
Light source (if no natural light at service site)	X	X
Clean tray	X	X
Cup, bowl, or gallipot	X	X
Holding forceps (5.5” or 14 cm)	X	X
Mosquito forceps (5” or 12.5 cm, curved, delicate)		X
Scalpel handle with blade*		X
Supplies (expendable)		
Implants	X	
Antiseptic soap and water	X	X
Sterile surgical drapes	X	X
One pair of sterile gloves**	X	X
Antiseptic solution, such as iodine	X	X
Local anesthetic	X	X
5 ml syringe with needle	X	X
Trocar #10***	X	
Sterile gauze****	X	X
Skin bandage or band-aid	X	X

***** Scalpel may or may not need disposable blades; if needed, they should be ordered on a regular basis.

****** Gloves need to be talc-free. They can be ordered talc-free (preferable), or else the talc should be removed prior to the procedure.

******* A trocar is not needed for insertion of Implanon, which comes in a sterile insertion applicator. Jadelle and Sino-implant (II) may or may not come packaged with a disposable trocar.

******** To be used during insertion and at the end of procedure for pressure dressing (but does not need to be sterile if placed on top of skin bandage or band-aid).

Brand selection is also an important decision for countries considering implants for their family planning programs. For supply management, having multiple brands complicates forecasting, procurement, and distribution; it should be avoided unless clinically warranted for several reasons. Multiple brands, each requiring its own safety stock, lead to higher overall stock levels and more money tied up in inventory.

It is also challenging to accurately forecast the demand for implants. Because hormonal implants may be a new method for a country or one that previously had only limited availability, reliable consumption information may not yet be available; therefore, true demand would be difficult to estimate. Initial forecasts will probably rely heavily on demographic data, market research, or program goals.

The quality of forecasts along, as well as the maintenance of appropriate stock levels, are issues for all contraceptives. However, long-term and newer methods lacking significant historical consumption data have particular issues. These issues are especially important for implants because of their high initial procurement cost. One vital requirement is a nimble supply chain that can respond quickly to variations in demand. Managers should consider special treatment for implants, especially when a program is expanding and the demand is unpredictable. This could include flexible procurements so that shipments to the central warehouse can be advanced or delayed, supplies can be moved across levels to even out stocks, and stock levels can be monitored more frequently.

Collecting regular and reliable logistics data on the consumption and stock situation of implants can help improve forecast accuracy after implants are introduced into a program. In the beginning, logistics data can be compared with service statistics to confirm or adjust forecasts and distribution plans. Ideally, to capture unmet demand, programs could also collect data on the number of requests for implants that could not be fulfilled (USAID | DELIVER PROJECT 2008). Consult The Logistics Handbook for more information on inventory management procedures.

Storage

Implants should be stored using the same storage procedures of all other health commodities (at room temperature (20 - 25º C) away from excess heat and moisture). Routine visual inspection of the implants and related supplies should be conducted on receipt, during physical inventory, and whenever there is any quality concern. The implants, other supplies, and their packaging and labeling should be inspected for damage or contamination.

Shelf Life

Shelf life should not be confused with use life; implants inserted at any time during their shelf life maintain their labeled use life from the date of insertion. The expiration date on an implant package refers to the sterility of the product, assuming packaging is not damaged (USAID | DELIVER Project, 2007).

Key Resources

The Logistics Handbook: A Practical Guide for Supply Chain Managers in Family Planning and Health Programs is a reference book that explains the major aspects of logistics management with an emphasis on contraceptive supplies. It is intended to help managers who work with supplies every day, as well as managers who assess and design logistics systems for entire programs.

The Quantification of Health Commodities: A Guide to Forecasting and Supply Planning for Procurement is has been developed to assist technical advisors, program managers, warehouse managers, procurement officers, and service providers in (1) estimating the total commodity needs and costs for successful implementation of national health program strategies and goals, (2) identifying the funding needs and gaps for procurement of the required commodities, and (3) planning procurements and shipment delivery schedules to be able to ensure a sustained and effective supply of health commodities.

Additional resources can be found at the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT web site at www.deliver.jsi.com.

Adapted from IUD Logistics Overview. In: IUD Toolkit.

References

Cagatay L, Cordero C, Jacobstein R, Yacobson I, Quinn H, and formulated by Salem R. Instruments and Supplies for Insertion and Removal of Hormonal Implants. Implants Toolkit, 2010.

USAID | DELIVER PROJECT. Contraceptive Fact Sheets. Arlington, Va.: USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, 2007.

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