The Context
Uptake of contraceptive implants has increased in recent years. Between 2018–2020, an estimated 18.2 million women will adopt contraceptive implants across the 69 Family Planning 2020 focus countries. Increasing method popularity also means implant removal services will be utilized in greater numbers than ever before. Implant users rely on health care providers and an equipped health care system to initiate and discontinue implant use. However, emerging data show that some women face challenges in getting removal when they desire. In population surveys from Kenya, Ethiopia, and Burkina Faso, 4–8% of women currently using implants have attempted to have the implant removed but were unable to for various reasons. The purpose of this briefer is to provide clear messaging on why access to quality implant removals is vital to comprehensive family planning.

Why We Are Addressing It
• Improving access to quality implant removal helps to meet clients’ rights, helping ensure that they have full, free, and informed choice to both use and stop using their method. It ensures the “R” in LARC (long-acting reversible contraception) by delivering on the promise of reversibility.
• Ensuring quality implant removal services are easily available for women when they desire it positively reinforces the method’s reputation and affirms the promise of LARC for women who desire it.
• Removals are provider dependent, so when implant users reach the end of an implant’s effectiveness or decide to discontinue the method for any reason, it is paramount to ensure these users have access to quality services with competent providers.
• Implant removals will continue to increase in coming years as current and future users require removal services. Inputs are required to prepare systems to offer this service in greater numbers than ever before.
• Offering a range of options for women, including contraceptive implants, is necessary and critical to achieve the ambitious goals set by countries around the world to meet the reproductive needs of their populations. Improving quality of and access to implant removal services supports these aims.
• Health care providers deserve and desire to have the skills, confidence, necessary materials, and support to offer the full range of family planning services (including implant removal) as relevant to their cadre.

Jhpiego’s Work in Implant Removal

Every woman who chooses implants as her contraceptive method has a right to a quality insertion and, at the time of her preference, a quality removal.
How We Have Advanced This Topic

Leadership

Jhpiego co-founded the Global Implant Removal Task Force, a consortium of 20-plus partners, donors, and implant manufacturers who convene regularly with the goal of delivering clear evidence and best practices as tangible solutions for identified problems in implant removal services. Jhpiego has also published and presented seminal commentaries on the need for increased attention to implant removal to family planning audiences around the world.

Local Action

Supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Jhpiego began formative research in 2015 and subsequently designed, tested, and documented innovative service delivery strategies to strengthen the health system’s capacity to deliver quality implant removal services in Kenya and Uganda. As of 2018, this work expanded to explore system readiness for implant removal in Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Tanzania, with the goal of supporting ministries and partners to modify programming to better meet the needs of clients desiring implant removal.

Resources

To learn more and access relevant resources, visit the Implant Removal Toolkit: https://www.k4health.org/toolkits/implants/implant-removal-resources.