CycleTel™: Family Planning on Mobile Phones
From development to deployment

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Victoria Jennings, IRH/DC
Priya Jha, IRH/India
Esha Kalra, IRH/India
Rohit Bansal, ThoughtWorks
Meredith Puleio, IRH/DC

Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University
Agenda

- CycleTel’s story
- How CycleTel works
- Proof-of-concept process and results
- Update on CycleTel research and development
Standard Days Method® (SDM)

- Modern fertility awareness-based method of family planning

- Method characteristics:
  - Appropriate for women with menstrual cycles between 26 and 32 days long
  - Identifies days 8-19 of menstrual cycle as fertile
  - Helps a couple avoid or plan pregnancy
  - 95% effective with correct use
  - Reaches non-users, traditional method users & reduces unmet need for family planning
  - Typically used with CycleBeads® (at right) to identify fertile days & communicate with partner
SDM: Direct-to-Consumer to Achieve Sustainable Scale-up

FAM PROJECT MANDATE
SDM scale-up in select areas

SDM IS WELL-POSITIONED FOR DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER APPROACHES
- Knowledge based
- Does not require a visit to a provider (for initiation or re-supply)
- Easy to teach & learn

VALUE PROPOSITION
- As a new FP method, SDM is not yet widely available
- Direct-to-consumer approaches expand access to SDM thru avenues outside of health services
What we know...

67% of population in Delhi are using a family planning method, of which 48% may be interested in a modern natural option. An additional 33% are not currently using a FP method.

Source: NFHS 3 (2005-06)
Further, women who use natural or barrier methods are from varying income levels.
And, the Indian telecom market is immense.

- There are 2,458 mobile phone subscriptions for every 1000 people in Delhi.
- Over 851M subscribers in India (1.2B population).
- World's fastest growing market in terms of new subscribers.

Source: Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, 2011.
Introducing CycleTel™
Family Planning on the Mobile Phone

- **What?**
  - A mobile health service that uses text messaging to facilitate use of SDM

- **How?**
  - Alerts woman of her fertile days via SMS during each menstrual cycle
  - Requires a woman to send in the start date of her period each cycle

- **Where?**
  - Initially tested, built and launched in India

- **Why?**
  - Reaches different audiences
Snapshot of the User Journey

- SMS “JOIN”
- Screening questions
- SMS responses
- Registration instructions
- SMS period start date
- Registration confirmed & messages begin according to algorithm

User

CycleTel
From Formative Research to Deployment

- Technology Development
- Proof-of-Concept Testing
- Automated Testing & Partner Development
- Product Launch
- Continuous M&E
## Structure of CycleTel Proof-of-Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Phases</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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| **Focus Group Discussions** | - Understand phone use patterns  
                          | - Determine potential interest among target audience  
                          | - Explore appropriate messaging and preferences for the service          |
| 54 participants            |                                                                            |
| **Cognitive Interviews**   | - Verify comprehension of messages  
                          | - Adapt and finalize messages (in English & Hinglish)                     |
| 18 participants            |                                                                            |
| **Manual Testing**         | - Enroll women for 2 cycles to assess feasibility, satisfaction and correct method use  
                          | - Initially used a low-cost open source software to manually send/receive messages (FrontlineSMS)  
                          | - Troubleshoot problems and determine how to improve service  
                          | - Determine target audience                                            |
| 26 women in Lucknow  
21-28 years old, housewives|                                                                            |
| 88 women in New Delhi  
24-33 years, working women|                                                                            |
Profile of Delhi Phase Participants

- **Age:** 24-33 years; mean age 28.4 yrs
- **Education:** Bachelors degree and above
- **Employment:** 97% employed (either full time or part time)
- **Children:** 97% had children, 52% had 1 child, 48% had 2 children
- **Current use of FP:** 77% were using condoms inconsistently; others were either not using any method or using traditional methods
- **Mobile phone use:** All participants owned a personal mobile phone; 15% reported sharing their cell phone with someone regularly
Completion Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Follow-up</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Follow-up</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Exit</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Exit</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Results: Satisfaction, Ease of Use, Correct Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction &amp; Ease of Use</th>
<th>Correct Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92% were <strong>very satisfied</strong> with CycleTel to prevent pregnancy</td>
<td>37% of participants <em>called the helpline</em> during the 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; cycle of use, 15% called during the 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; cycle of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98% said it was easy to send/receive SMS</td>
<td>22% reporting having unprotected sex during an unsafe day during the 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; cycle of use; this decreased to 13% during the 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; cycle of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% of users would recommend the service to friends</td>
<td>95% participants reported that they received SMS at an appropriate time and that the # of messages sent were the “right amount”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features users liked the most: ease of use, convenience, lack of side effects</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Results: Male Involvement & Willingness to Pay

**Male Involvement**
- 76% said it was easy to tell their husband that it was an unsafe day.
- 23% expressed interest in having their husband receive unsafe day alerts too.
- About 70% of women reported showing their husbands messages from CycleTel.

**Willingness to Pay**
- 83% of users said that they would be willing to pay on average Rs. 33 per month for the CycleTel service, ranging from Rs. 15-400 (US $1 = Rs. 45).
“I was showing the message to my husband and we were managing our fertile days accordingly.” -Female

“My husband is very shy, every time we go to the doctor, he sits outside and I talk. CycleTel has provided us an easy solution at home.” -Female
“I would recommend CycleTel to my friends because it’s a completely easy method. Anyone can benefit from it. One can get all the important information sitting at home.”
- Female

“I received all messages on time. I appreciate the reminder messages because I may get busy and forget, but CycleTel never forgets.”
- Female
What’s Happening Now?

- Technology built, partnerships established
- Automated testing (June 2011-ongoing)
  - 240 completed exits
  - 73% are very satisfied with service; 22% are somewhat satisfied
- Testing feasibility of voice (IVR) version to reach wider audience (BOP & rural)
- Exploring commercial models for sustainable scale-up

CycleTel Launch Expected in 2012
Technology Development Continuum

- **QuickStart begins**
  - Dec 13

- **Development begins**
  - Dec 20

- **Version 1 released**
  - Apr 1
  - Features:
    - User registration
    - Reminders
    - Filler messages
    - Hinglish language
    - Web based reporting
    - Unsafe alerts

- **Version 1.1 released**
  - May 5
  - Features:
    - Application monitoring
    - English language
    - Secondary phone #
    - Flexible date formats

Filler messages
Ecosystem of Deployment Partners

- **Host Provider**
- **Technology Partner** (ThoughtWorks)
- **SMS Gateway Provider** (Unicef)
- **Donor** (USAID)
- **Research Organization**
- **Business Consulting Firm**
- **Marketing Company**
- **Lead Organization** (IRH)
- **Call Center**
- **End User**
Recommendations for mHealth Development

- Design and implement proof-of-concept testing
- Identify strong partnerships for technology development/deployment
- Test technology platform with target audience before public launch
- Prepare for systematic scale-up from the beginning
CycleTel™
Family planning via SMS

For more information, contact Meredith Puleio at mp447@georgetown.edu or visit www.irh.org