

# Introducing the Standard Days Method™

Issue 2, July 2002



## News from the IRH

The past few months have been very exciting for Standard Days Method (SDM) introduction activities. With the efficacy study results now published, our efforts have turned to “getting the word out” – and on responding to the interest in the method and in CycleBeads™. (CycleBeads are the new, trademarked, patent-pending version of the “necklace”). The Institute has presented results from the efficacy study and operation research studies at scientific meetings. We have displayed the method and distributed CycleBeads at a number of conferences. Officials at USAID continue to be updated on results, and we have seen tremendous interest on the part of the mass



*The SDM has been featured in multiple newspapers and magazines worldwide.*

media and the public. Several groups, such as JHPIEGO, Pathfinder and EngenderHealth are interested in introducing the SDM and making it more widely available in the countries in which they work. USAID missions, most recently in Rwanda and Ethiopia, have contacted us about introducing the SDM in additional countries.

We rely on you to help us with our work. Your experiences in offering the SDM, ways of involving men and promoting the SDM all contribute to making it more accessible to women and men around the world. We’re counting on your continued support to make informed choice a reality. Many thanks for your hard work. ☺

## Country Highlights

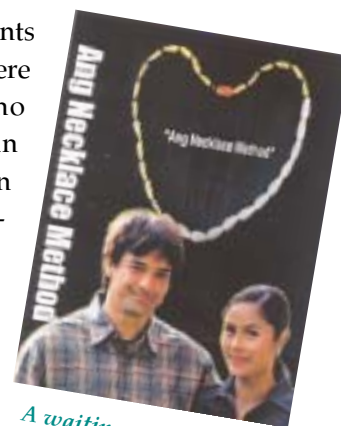
### Philippines



Fabella Hospital, the largest maternity hospital in the Philippines, also has a large and very busy family planning service. The Comprehensive Family Planning Center (CFPC) serves between 600 and 700 women a month, providing them with a full choice of methods ranging from sterilization to natural methods.

Because the women attending the CFPC come from all over the metropolitan area of Manila, the staff at Fabella Hospital wanted to explore whether or not it was feasible to offer the Standard Days Method using only one counseling visit. Thus, Fabella hospital is testing whether women counseled in the SDM in one visit use the method as well as those who had two counseling visits, which is a more common practice. The study is looking at correct use and pregnancy rates across the two groups.

Of the 122 admitted clients to the study so far, 61 were assigned to nurses who provided the method in one counseling session and 61 to nurses providing it in two sessions. An informational video starring a local celebrity couple was developed to inform CFPC clients in the waiting room about the SDM. Nurses who do outreach in other community clinics have also included information about the SDM in their talks.



*A waiting room video starring a local celebrity couple was developed to inform potential clients of the SDM.*

Preliminary observations from follow-up interviews conducted in March with 32 women in each study

*(continued on page 2)*

## COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS (cont. from page 1)

group found that generally all the respondents knew how to use the beads; however, women with two counseling sessions had better factual recall. Similarly, though all clients were counseled and knew they had to avoid unprotected intercourse during the fertile days, a higher percentage of women with two counseling sessions followed the method instruction. Very preliminary findings thus sug-

gest that knowledge and practice may be better among women who receive two counseling sessions. However, it is too early to draw any firm conclusions since not enough time has elapsed to level out the short-term benefits of an additional counseling session. IRH will continue to monitor client practice to see whether differences persist over time. ☞

## News from the Field

**PERU:** IRH welcomes Peru to the group of countries who are beginning to introduce the Standard Days Method into their existing family planning services. The Ministry of Health, with support from the USAID Mission in Peru and technical assistance from IRH/Peru, will begin incorporating the SDM into the methods currently offered by the public sector. As a first step, the SDM will be introduced in San Martín, a department of Peru located in the Amazon basin. This site was chosen as a starting point because of the relatively high demand for natural methods, well-established health services, and experienced personnel in the implementation of such projects. IRH/Peru will be testing a service delivery model that, if successful, will be applied at the national level. First, regional trainers will be instructed on the method itself, its scientific basis, and on how to train providers in method delivery. Providers from selected health facilities will then be trained to offer the method. Community health promoters from these establishments will be trained to assist in informing their communities about the method and referring interested couples to their local health facility. Since the SDM is a new

method, promotional activities to increase the population's awareness of the availability of the method are also planned.

Activities are scheduled to begin in early August. A letter of understanding has been signed between IRH/Peru and authorities of San Martín, who are confident that this initial experience will be successful and contribute to their efforts of

improving the quality of family planning services. IRH will monitor service delivery and IEC activities for a six-month period to identify strengths and limitations in the process.

**TURKEY:** Marmara University, with collaboration from IRH and funding from the World Health Organization completed an SDM pilot study in Istanbul. The study was designed to evaluate the

demand for the Standard Days Method when offered to women systematically. Researchers conducted a door-to-door household census to identify potential users and offer the method. Women who reported using withdrawal, traditional methods, or inconsistent use of condoms, and women who reported using no method at all were informed of the SDM along with other methods. Approximately 80% of them were interested in using the SDM – a very high rate, considering that this was the first time they had ever heard of the method. These women were then screened, and those who met the criteria to use the SDM were counseled on the method and given the CycleBeads. They were followed for a period of four months. Results suggest that the SDM is an acceptable family planning alternative for many couples in Istanbul, and that it would fit nicely into the range of methods provided in Turkey. ☞




*Results suggest that the SDM is an acceptable family planning alternative in Istanbul, Turkey.*



## Country Statistics

In the first issue of this news bulletin we gave you a brief overview of the projects around the world that are currently introducing the SDM. Below is a table that shows how we are doing so far by country. Note that many new SDM users don't always opt for participating in the study. This


is why in some countries there are more new SDM users than clients admitted to the study. As the Institute becomes more involved in service delivery activities, fewer studies will be conducted and we will rely more on service statistics. 

Country	Benin	El Salvador	Ecuador	Honduras	India	Philippines	Turkey (study completed)
New SDM Users	40	89	219	116	386	179	132
Users admitted to Study	40	83	160	93	386	179	132
Providers Trained	15	31	69	81	131	195	10
Pregnancies	---	10	19	6	19	15	4



## Special Recognition

**Shailendri of Baliapur, CARE, INDIA** – IRH commends Shailendri's courage and her commitment in promoting the SDM. Not only has she been instrumental in getting many people in her village interested in using the SDM, but she has also been successful in ensuring its continued correct use. Congratulations, Shailendri!! You are doing a great job!

**Hector Ovidio Lemus, PCI, EL Salvador** – Although Hector began the recruitment process several months after the official starting date, he is now the provider with the most clients in the study in El Salvador. Congratulations Hector, and keep up the good work!! 

### Please Take Note!!

The Institute for Reproductive Health in Washington, DC, has moved to a new location. Our address and fax number have changed, but our phone numbers and e-mails remain the same. We are now located at:

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 202-687-1392 (tel) • [irhinfo@georgetown.edu](mailto:irhinfo@georgetown.edu) (email)  
[www.irh.org](http://www.irh.org)



Let us Hear from You



**Got a challenge**  
with your client?

**Get advice**  
from other providers like you.

Dear IRH,  
I have several clients who have been using the Standard Days method successfully for almost twelve months but have had more than one cycle out of the 26 to 32 day range. They are very happy with this method and want to continue using it. I have explained that this method works best for women whose cycles fall in that range but they want to continue to use it. What should I do?

*Dear Provider,  
If a woman has more than one cycle out of this range in one year of use, this is not the best method for her. If she chooses to continue using the method, she has an increased risk of getting pregnant. Although it is common for a woman to experience one out-of-range cycle in one year, she needs to be aware that if it happens more than once, she is better off using another method. Just like the pill is not recommended for women with high blood pressure, the SDM is not recommended for women whose cycles fall outside that range. Recommend that she use another method of family planning. However, keep in mind that ultimately, this is her decision.*

Dear IRH,  
I have a client who could not remember exactly when during the night she got her period and is concerned that she may be off by one day. She does not remember getting it before going to bed, but she noticed it when she woke up the next morning. How should I advise her so that she can rest assured that she is on the right bead?

*Dear Provider,  
If she started her period during the night but is not sure exactly when, she should move the ring to the red bead when she wakes up the next morning and consider that day to be Day 1 of her menstrual cycle. Also remember to tell her that if she starts her period anytime before midnight (or before she goes to bed), she should move the ring to the red bead immediately and the next morning move the ring to the second bead.*

**Introducing the Standard Days Method™**

The **Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH)**, part of Georgetown University, conducts research, advances scientific information, and provides policy support on fertility awareness-based methods of family planning by providing technical resources and assistance to organizations around the world, primarily in developing countries.

**The Institute's work is supported through a cooperative agreement with USAID, HRN-A-00-97-00011-00.**

*For more information contact:*

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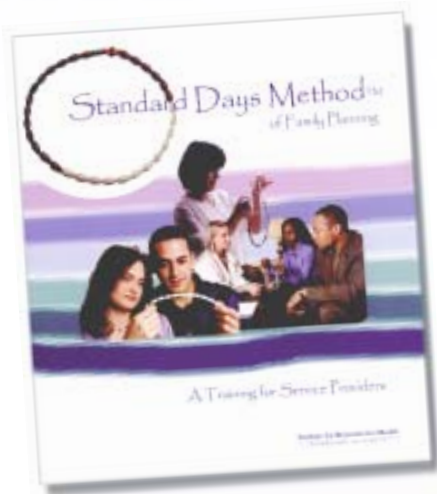
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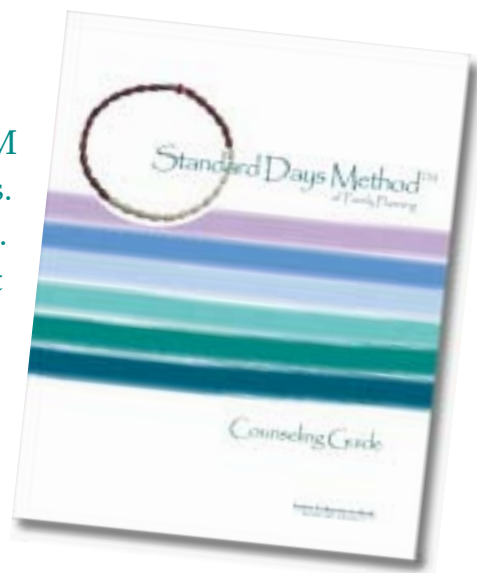
## SDM Materials available from the Institute

In this issue of *Introducing the Standard Days Method™*, we present some of the latest materials that are available or will soon be available to programs offering the method. To provide technical support to family planning programs introducing the SDM, the Institute designed, developed and tested materials for providers and clients to ensure that both have the materials they need to provide and use the method effectively.



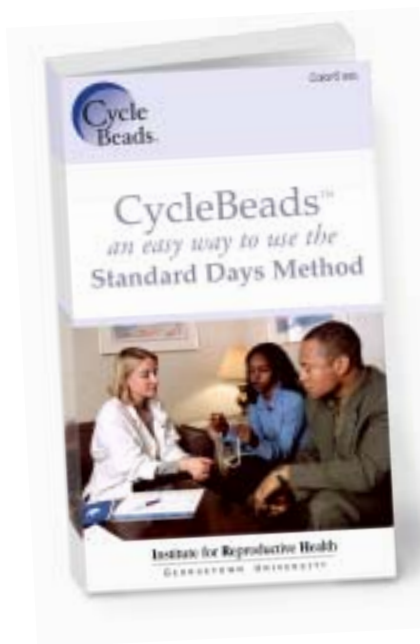
**Standard Days Method Training Manual.** The SDM Training Manual outlines an approach used to train providers on how to offer the SDM. The manual provides information for designing, conducting, and evaluating training programs. It also addresses issues critical to the successful use of the method, such as couple's relationship and gender issues. The content covered is appropriate for all types of providers, including those with no medical background or with limited knowledge in reproductive health and family planning. Now available from the Institute in English and in late July in Spanish.

**Standard Days Method Counseling Guide.** The SDM Counseling Guide is a comprehensive tool for service providers. It outlines the steps to properly counsel women on the SDM. Included in the guide is a set of "quick reference" tools that can be removed for easy access and a reference section on the SDM interface with other family planning methods. Available from the Institute in English in mid-July and in Spanish in early August.



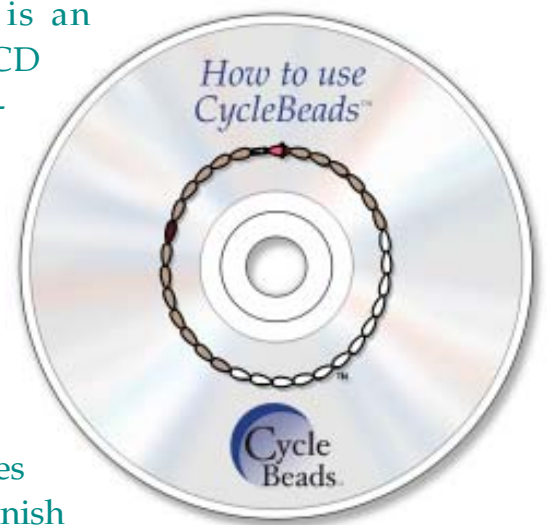
**CycleBeads™ Package Instructions.** This full-color instructional sheet accompanies CycleBeads and guides users through all the steps required to use the method effectively. The insert describes CycleBeads, who can use them, what the user should do before starting to use them, how to use the beads properly, and common questions about method use. This insert was field tested in English and Spanish, using focus groups and one-on-one interviews with patients in several family planning clinics. Available in English and Spanish from the Institute in late July.





**Introductory Video** for SDM and CycleBeads. In this introductory video, a service provider explains through a short narration how to use the Standard Days Method and CycleBeads. The video also includes a computer-animated description on how to use CycleBeads. The video is approximately 5 minutes long and can be used in a variety of settings to inform people about the SDM and CycleBeads. It may be used as an educational tool for meetings or conferences, in training sessions, or in group sessions for clients. The video can also function as a stand-alone piece providing information, for example, to clients sitting in a waiting room. It is a prototype for similar materials that could be developed at the country or regional level. Available from the Institute in English and Spanish and as a CD in August 2002.

**CycleBeads Animation CD.** The CycleBeads CD is an educational tool for providers and programs. The CD includes a short animation that describes in simple, easy-to-understand language how to use the CycleBeads, what the colored beads mean, how to move the rubber ring, what to do during the fertile phase, and what to do if the user's cycle is shorter than 26 or longer than 32 days. The CD can be played on a computer for use by service providers, trainers, and program managers. The computerized animation can also be easily integrated into locally produced promotional materials such as websites or videos. Available from the Institute in English and Spanish in September 2002.



**SDM User Experiences.** This short document highlights information gathered from women and men around the world on their personal experiences using the SDM. Through informal, in-depth interviews, these users reveal some of the issues that influenced them when deciding on the method, their perceptions of the method after several months of use, and their strategies for working with their partners to handle the fertile phase. Now available from the Institute.

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