

# Learning to protect family planning during future crises: A prospective, longitudinal study on women's experiences with family planning access and use during COVID-19 in Malawi, Nepal, Niger, and Uganda

Aurélie Brunie, Dinah Amongin, Gwyneth Austin, Jamie Arkin, Basant Thapa, Samantha Archie, Rawlance Ndejjo, Philip Mkandawire, Maimouna Hallidou Doudou, Sarah Brittingham, Ndola Prata

## STUDY RATIONALE

COVID-19's impact on Family Planning service use may arise indirectly from health system disruptions, containment efforts and people's fear of becoming infected while seeking services. They were unknown and therefore difficult to mitigate. Longitudinal evidence on the effects of COVID-19 on family planning access and use is needed to inform efforts to ensure continuity of care.

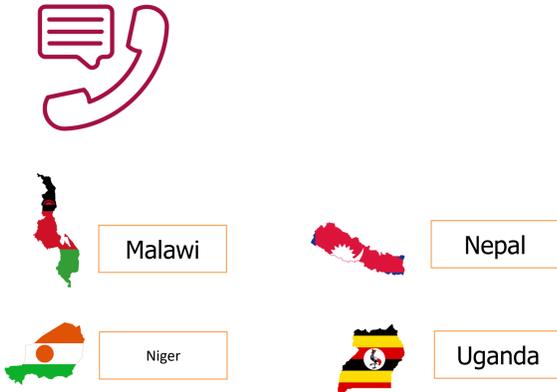
## Research Objectives

The goal of this research was to generate evidence on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on family planning access and use from the perspectives of women.

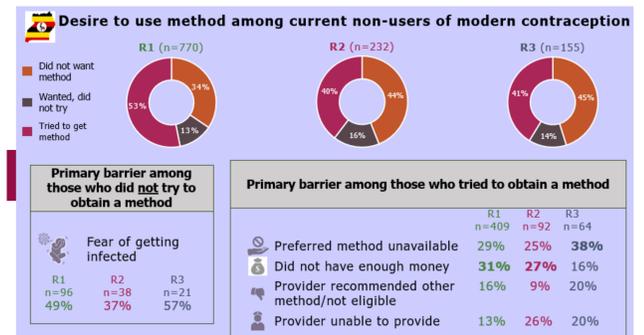
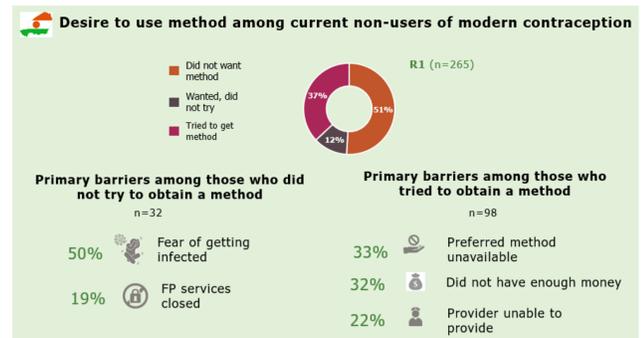
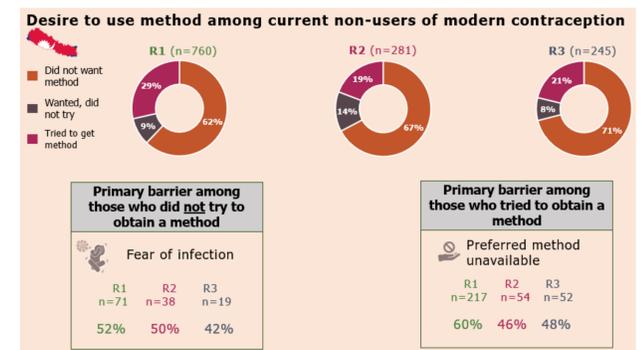
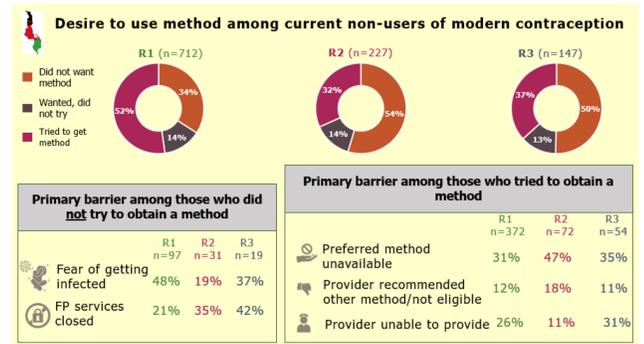
- 1 Document access-related reasons for not using family planning that led to unintended pregnancies.
- 2 Examine the ability of modern contraceptive users to obtain their preferred method
- 3 Describe barriers to family planning access and use among non-users of modern contraception

## STUDY DESIGN

- Observational, prospective, longitudinal study
- Participants were recruited through Viamo's 3-2-1 service, a toll-free service through which mobile phone users access automated informational messages, find services, or purchase products.
- Female callers ages 18-49 had the opportunity to opt into a short survey that used pre-recorded messages to ask questions via interactive voice response (IVR).

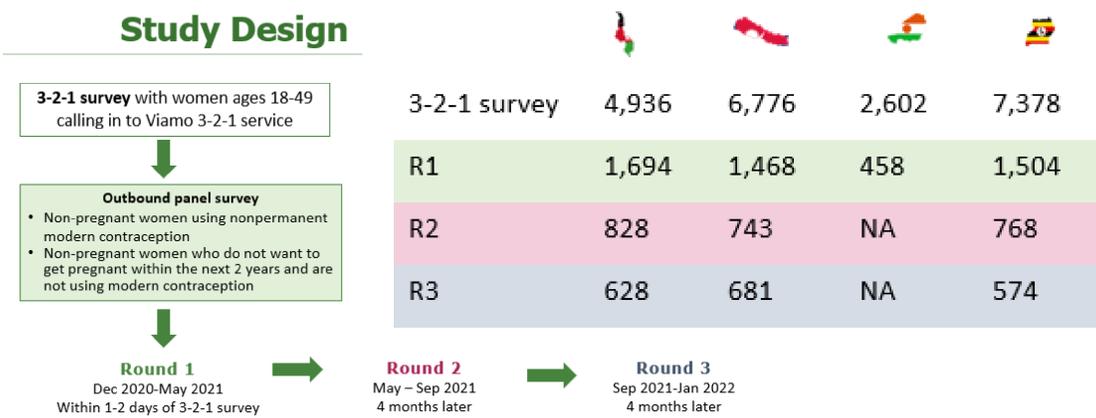


## RESULTS: BARRIERS TO FAMILY PLANNING



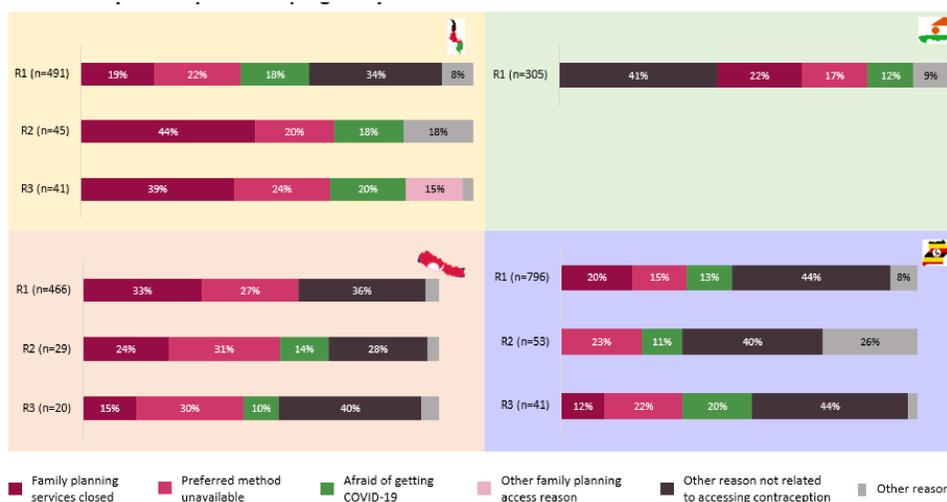
## STUDY DESIGN

Observational, prospective, longitudinal study using interactive voice response data collection.



## RESULTS: UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES

Main reason for attributing pregnancy to COVID among pregnant women who reported COVID affected their ability to delay or avoid pregnancy



## RESULTS: USE OF PREFERRED METHOD

Proportion of modern method users who obtained preferred method among users who last obtained/resupplied method since previous round

Method unavailable was main reason for not getting preferred method

Round	Malawi	Nepal	Niger	Uganda
R1 (n=1,981)	84%	88%	79%	84%
R2 (n=972)	94%	91%	NA	91%
R3 (n=788)	93%	90%	NA	91%

## CONCLUSION

- We found evidence of participants attributing unintended pregnancies to the pandemic due to both supply and demand challenges in all four countries.
- Most users were able to access their preferred method, lack of availability of one's preferred method was consistently the most common barrier to realizing method choice.
- There were missed opportunities among non-users who were afraid to seek services or accessed services but did not receive a method.
- Improved preparedness will require improving health system resilience

**Limitation:** The study respondents were young overall (70-80% were ages 18-24) and the samples are not nationally representative.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Dinah Amongin, damongin@musph.ac.ug

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