

Leveraging technology to address unmet reproductive health needs through pharmacies in Southeast Asia



Pharmacy professionals serve as front-line community health providers in low-and-middle income countries (LMIC) providing contraceptive products and advice as well as medicine and rapid diagnostics. Pharmacies serve clients with a diverse range of demographic and socio-economic profiles, including youth and women with unmet family planning (FP) and other reproductive health needs.

In Southeast Asia, up to two-thirds of women who use a modern contraception source from pharmacies.¹ In addition to serving as a convenient source of short-acting methods, pharmacies are an important source of longer acting, reversible method supplies and referrals for insertion, particularly in markets where public sector contraceptive stockouts occur.

A 2021 survey in Viet Nam found nearly universal access to oral and emergency contraceptives as well as condoms at pharmacies. In addition, close to 1 out of 4 pharmacies stock the IUD and 1 in 5 stock the implant contraceptive. Injectables were only available at 13% of pharmacies sampled.

Contraceptive Method	Availability Percentage
IUD	24%
Implant	20%
Injectable	13%
OC, ECP & Condom	94%-97%

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and pharmacy associations in Southeast Asia, the role of pharmacists extends beyond dispensing medicine to include family planning counseling, referrals and with training, other services including injections and use of rapid diagnostics.²

Problem: To date, global health partners have struggled to engage pharmacies at scale with FP training and related task sharing initiatives.

Solution: SwipeRx leverages technology to improve FP knowledge and practices at the pharmacy and expand access to contraceptive choice.



Launched in 2017, SwipeRx is the largest network of pharmacies in Southeast Asia connecting over 240,000 pharmacy professionals through a single platform offering accredited professional education, pharmacy-specific news, opportunities for interaction with peers, a drug directory and—in Indonesia-- a digital procurement platform. Global health partners leverage SwipeRx to increase pharmacy contributions to national FP program goals by:

Generating evidence about the contraceptive supply chain as well as pharmacy professionals' knowledge, attitudes and practices. Through SwipeRx, digital surveys collect practical insights from the pharmacy channel for a fraction of the time and cost required for offline pharmacy research.



Deploying digital behavior change campaigns to:

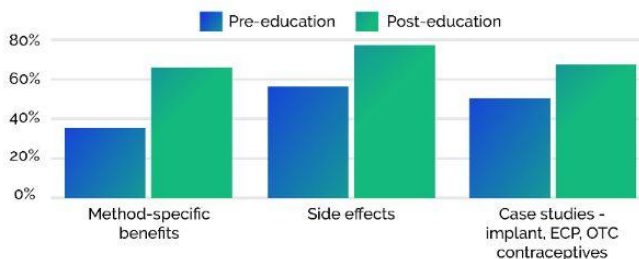
- Improve knowledge about the method-specific benefits and side effects
- Address biases and attitudinal barriers to non-judgmental, client-centered FP
- Promote appropriate contraceptive stocking, merchandising & dispensing practices at the pharmacy
- Introduce new or underutilized contraceptives and connect SwipeRx users with commercial suppliers of contraceptives



Digital posters and interactive games deployed through SwipeRx to bust myths related to infertility and clarify that all contraceptives available at pharmacies are reversible.

Educating thousands of pharmacy professionals

about contraceptive choice and balanced counseling through accredited, digital education modules and webinars. As a result of SwipeRx education, knowledge about contraceptive benefits, side effects and case studies related to contraceptive choice increased compared to pre-education:



Strengthening the contraceptive supply chain

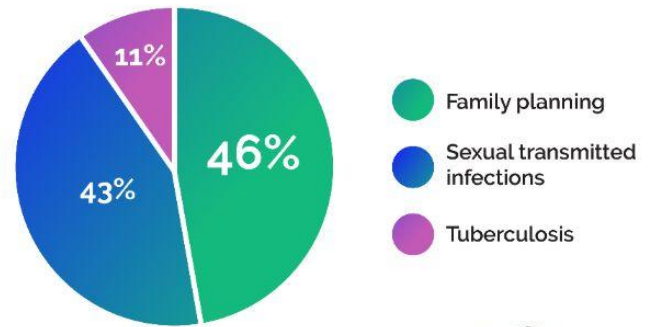
using an "amazon for pharmacies" model to enable pharmacy professionals to source quality assured contraceptives and other supplies for the best price and delivery time.



Increasing client referrals through an e-Referral tool with automated SMS reminder messages to clients who consent to be referred. Nearly half (46%) of all clients referred through SwipeRx between June 2021 and May 2022 in Cambodia were referred for family planning services compared to 43% referred for management of sexually transmitted infections and 11% for tuberculosis care.

Pharmacy Client Referrals through SwipeRx:

June 2021-May 2022



Sin Kimcheng

(SwipeRx User Since 2017)
Pharmacist in
Battambang Province



“ Before seeing the family planning myth-busting posters in the SwipeRx newsfeed, I didn't understand which methods are safe for breastfeeding women to use. Previously, I encouraged my clients to seek family planning from a specialist doctor, but this is not always possible in my rural community. Because of SwipeRx, I am more confident in my ability to counsel clients about all contraceptive methods available. ”

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¹USAID SHOPS Plus Project/Abt Associates <https://www.privatesectorcounts.org/familyplanning/prevalence.html#priv>

²Hardee, K. et al. "Partnering with the private sector to strengthen provision of contraception," Family Planning Evidence Brief. World Health Organization, 2017.