Name of Study: Contraception Induced Menstrual Changes

Study component: Focus Group Discussion, Females

FGD ID#: CIMC 102

Date of FGD: 27 November 2024

Time FGD Began: 10h44

Time FGD Ended: 12h31

Name of Facilitator: [redacted]

Name of Note taker 1: [redacted]

Name of Note taker 2: [redacted]

Location of FGD: Wits MRU board room

Name of Transcriber: [redacted]

Name of Translator: [redacted]

Name (s) of Reviewer (s): [redacted]

Observers: [redacted]

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

- ***This was an FGD with women between the ages 18-49 years.***
- ***The interview was conducted in a private interview room.***
- ***Participants were relaxed, laughing, responsive and willing to share their perceptions and experiences. The participants were exhausted, uncomfortable, less responsive and shy when discussing the last section that spoke about sex.***
- ***There were 7 females.***

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

F: I greet you again in our discussion for today. Today's date is the 27th of November 2024. The time is 10:44. Focus number C102. Okay, so, before we start our discussion, I would like for us to do an activity that will make us a bit creative, be open, uhm get to know each other better without using our names. Isn't we remember that when continuing with our discussion we will use numbers [for identification of participants].

P2: Mhm [Participants agreeing]

F: But I would like for us to get to know each other better. So, the activity that we will do is as follows; which animal do you see yourself as, and why do you choose this animal?

[Chuckles by participants]

F: I can start, so that you [interviewer meant that she would start so that participants become relaxed], yeah. So, I see myself as a tiger. We know a tiger, right?

Mhm [Participants agreeing]

F: Mhm [agreeing], so, a tiger, what I like about it is that first, it is different. It has stripes, which makes it different, so, I like that, that I am unique. Another thing that I like about the tiger is that it hunts. A tiger, even when the others [referring to other animals] are sleeping, it doesn't sleep,

it is hunting. And it doesn't go with the crowd, a tiger most of the time is alone. So, I am a person who likes being alone and I like being eager. When I want something, I go after it, you see. I can also say I am a hunter; you see. I am a person that when they want something in life, I make sure that I do my best to get it, so, yeah.

[Participants raised their hands]

F: Speaker number 4. We will come back to you, speaker number 7.

P4: Hello.

Yes. [Participants responding to the participant]

P4: I like being a hen.

F: Mhm [Neutral]

P4: I like hustling for my kids. And I can open my wings for my kids, I always protect them. I like that it can look after its kids even if a hawk comes, it [hen] closes, it closes so that there is no hawk to abuse its [hen] children. I am like that; I don't like my children to get abused.

[Participant raised her hand]

F: Mhm [Neutral], okay, thank you. Number 7.

P7: I like being a rabbit because the rabbit has tricks, and it is clever. Any animal that comes after it, it quickly becomes alert and protects itself.

[Chuckles by participants]

P7: So, it has tricks.

[Chuckles by participants]

[Participant raised her hand]

F: Okay, thank you. Number 1.

P1: Hello.

Yes [Participants responding to the participant]

P1: I relate to a cat. A cat most of the time observes and looks at how things are going. A cat is clean, and it likes itself.

F: Mhm [Neutral], thank you//

P3: //[Chuckles] She said mine [participant is referring to the animal that was mentioned by participant number 1]//

F: //[Chuckles] That is also fine, number 3.

P3: I am also a cat.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P3: I am clean, I love myself and I observe. When you do something to me, I will do you wrong.

[Chuckles by participants]

P3: I will do you wrong shame; a cat does you wrong. It doesn't forget. If you have done something to it, it doesn't forget shame. I am like that.

F: Mhm [Netural].

P3: If you do me wrong, I will be revengeful and painful. I will come back with a snake!

[Chuckles by participants]

P3: Something that will make you go *hla*! [It is a sound in isiZulu describing your body shaking, being scared and shocked].

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Thank you so much, number 2.

P2: Oh, my goodness! [Slight silence by participant] I am also a cat!

[Chuckles by participants]

P2: [Chuckles] I am also a cat! I will fight back. I am like that.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P2: I first look at you and say, "Oh I will show this one". [Chuckles] I am like that. But I love myself shame. Yeah [Chuckles].

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Okay, thank you. Number 5.

P5: I can say that I am a crocodile.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P5: I am a down-to-earth person. I keep quiet, I wait for you to start with me and then//

P2: [Chuckles]// then you strike!

P5: [Chuckles] I am like that.

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Okay, thank you. Number 6!

P6: Hello.

P2: Yes.

P6: I like being a rabbit. The reason I like being a rabbit is how smart it is. And it is full of tricks. It can outsmart a person who is competing with it.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P6: So, I can say that I always say I am like a rabbit.

F: Thank you so much. I think we were all able to share.

Yes [All participants responded at once]

F: We now know each other better. Just to remind you, when we are going to start talking, we say our numbers [Meaning: participants' identification number] and then talk. We must also raise our voices when talking but I am happy to get to know you today. To continue with our discussion, today our discussion will be talking about menstrual cycles. So, sometimes people use different words when talking about menstrual cycle. Which words do you use when talking about menstrual cycle?

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Number 1.

P1: The one I am used to is *ukuba sezinsukwini zakho* [Meaning: a direct translation is, "it is to be on your days". In this context the participant means to be on your menstrual cycle days].

[Participant raising her hand]

F: It is to go on your days, [participant raising her hand] number 2.

P2: *Irobhothi livalile* [a direct translation is, "the robot is closed". The robot refers to the traffic lights]. [Chuckles]

F: What does it mean that the robot [referring to the traffic light]//

P2: //It is [menstrual] periods//

F: //It is periods//

P2: //Yes, it [traffic light] is red.

F: [Chuckles] Oh, the robot [traffic light] is red.

P2: Yes, it is red.

F: Oh okay. Okay, please may I come back to number 1. You mentioned that it is to be on your days.

P1: Mhm. [participant agreeing]

F: What does that mean, when you say it is to be on your days?

P1: It is to be at a state where you are not supposed to be galivanting, respect yourself when you are on your [menstrual] periods. Don't go around visiting.

F: Okay, thank you. [Participant raising her hand] Speaker number 5.

P5: I usually say *ngiseJapan* [the direct translation is, “I am in Japan”].

F: Japan?

P5: Yes, because the flag from Japan is white and then it has a red dot. So, I describe it as a pad//

F: //Oh, a pad, a pad is white.//

P5: //Yes, a pad is white but when you are on your [menstrual] periods you then have red [menstrual blood]//

F: //Red//

P5: //Which means I am on my [menstrual] periods.

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Okay, number 4.

P4: I usually say *ngikushintshi* [this directly translates as, “it is to be on change”]. Which means that from time to time I must go and check if I don’t have to go and change a [menstrual] pad.

[Chuckles by participants]

F: [Chuckles] Okay, thank you.

P7: I usually say *ngisendaweni yami* [this directly translates as, “I am at my place”], because when I am at my place, I must respect myself and the things that I do I have to pay attention to. So, I say, I am at my place.

F: Okay. Is there anyone else that would like to share?

P3: I say *ngiseyinsukwini zami* [this directly translates as, “I am at my days”], [which means I am on my period], this is where I don’t want to be touched, I don’t want anything. I am focusing on myself only.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P3: Yes.

F: Okay, thank you so much. So, the words that we came up with now or the ones that we were sharing, we can use them when continuing with our discussion because they are words that we use, that we understand//

P2: //Yes//

F: //So, for us to be comfortable, we can use them when continuing with our discussion. How do people usually track when they are about to go on their menstrual periods? How do they track that the [menstrual] periods are about to start?

P3: I fart.

[Chuckles by participants]

P3: That's how I track that I am about to go on my days [Meaning: in this context "to go on my days" means when the participant is about to have their menstrual periods].

F: Okay//

P2: // I have menstrual cramps//

F: //You have menstrual cramps before//

P2: //Yes, before the [menstrual] periods. I have them first before I go on [to menstrual periods].

F: Mhm [Neutral], okay.

P6: I have blisters on my vagina. A small painful pimple. So, when it shows that time, I know that in the next 2 or 3 days I will be on [menstrual] periods.

F: Okay…//

P7: //I become moody//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P7: // The day before I go on [menstrual] periods. I become emotional. I cry, I cry for nothing then I can tell that it will get messed up [participant means that she will start her menstrual periods] tomorrow or the day after. I just cry.

F: Okay...

P5: I just think of food, food is what I think of. I have cravings even when I am watching tv. The things that I watch, I think of food. Chicken meat smells ugly for me, then raw one. Then I can see that I am about to go on [menstrual] periods.

F: Mhm [Neutral], okay…

P4: I see with, nothing happens on my body but on my underwear, I just have that brownish thing [discharge] that comes out. That's how I see.

F: Mhm [Neutral], before you start to go on your menstrual periods?

P4: Yes, yes.

F: Oh okay.

P1: My breasts become painful and hard. Then I crave something with sugar, like cake.

F: Mhm [Neutral], okay. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences. Maybe is there anything else different that you have heard from other people, the way they track if they are going to go on their menstrual periods? [Slight silence by participants] Apart from your experiences, what have you heard from other people that you would like to share?

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Yes, number 6.

P6: My friend, when she is going to go on her [menstrual] periods, her face has lots of pimples. It becomes swollen and painful//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: // Then she knows that the following day she will be on her [menstrual] periods.

F: Okay//

P2: To attest with number 6, it is that.

F: Number 2.

P2: I, number 2, to second number 6, I know that you have pimples. You have pimples.

F: That means you are about to go on//

P2: //You are about to go on//

F: [Menstrual] Periods//

P2: //Yes.

F: Okay. Is there something else? [Slight silence by participants] Okay, thank you so much for sharing. To have the same understanding with regards to menstrual cycle since we will be talking about menstrual cycle throughout our discussion, uhm when we are talking about menstrual cycle we are talking about the monthly cycles. Another thing that we need to note is that it includes the time just before you bleed, and the time just after bleeding, and other times of the month in between. So, when we are talking about menstrual, we are including all of that when we are continuing with our discussion. Are we still good though?

Yes [All participants responded at the same time]

F: Okay. Now, I would like for you to think about how your menstrual cycles have changed while using contraceptive, it can be changes that were good or changes that were not good. So, to talk about those changes, there are questions that I will ask you that will make us talk about the changes that took place between us//

P2: Yes.

F: The first one, please tell me about any ways contraception has changed how often you have bleeding. [Participants raising her hand] Number 4.

P4: In a month maybe, I go twice on my [menstrual] periods. I go [on menstrual periods] when it [month] starts maybe on 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 [participant referring to the dates in the month when she is on her menstrual periods]. Then on the 25th, towards the end of the month I go back again, and it is not a lot of days. Maybe it is for 2 to 3 days//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P4: //Yes.

F: Okay…

P2: Uhm [Neutral], mine has also changed. It happens that I don't go on it [participant referring to menstrual periods], it happens that I go on it [participant referring to menstrual periods]//

F: //Oh okay…//

P2: //It happens that several months end without going on it [participant referring to menstrual periods].

F: Mhm [Neutral]. Okay, number 6.

P6: I can say that it was…I can say that…the change that occurred was drastic because when I started, I went on [menstrual] periods for over 6 months, I started inserting the implant//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: //And during those 6 months it is not like I am going [on menstrual periods] today and stopping tomorrow. No, it is every day for 6 months. Then after those 6 months, maybe 1 month will pass and then the following months I will stay for 3 or 4 months without going on [menstrual] periods at all. It is like fluctuation, if I go [on menstrual periods] for 6 months, the following months will stay for 4 months without going [on menstrual periods]. Sometimes I go for 3 months [on menstrual periods] and sometimes I don't go [on menstrual periods]//

F: //Mmh [Neutral]//

P6: And another thing happens, that if I go [on menstrual periods] for 6 months, maybe 6 months ends on periods, the following month I know that I should be discontinuing [menstrual periods] by that time//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: Then I must go to the clinic, and they give me [participant means she is given pills at the clinic], there are those pills that are sometimes given to you if you want to discontinue [a contraception method] or want to go on [menstrual] periods. I drink those pills. So, yeah//

F: //So, all these changes occurred when you started to use an implant?

P6: Yes.

F: Okay, please can we come to number 7 and then we will come to number 5.

P7: Using the injection changed my [menstrual] periods because I used to go [on menstrual periods] normal. Maybe go [on menstrual periods] for 5 days. But when I used the injection, I would go [on menstrual periods] for 2 weeks. And even then, it wasn't like it was normal periods that came out [participant referring to the menstrual blood], no I spot, maybe I spot for 2 weeks. I know I must wear a pad for 2 weeks. It is not something big, it is just spots [of menstrual blood]. On another month it happens that I don't go at all [on menstrual periods]. On another month I go on normal [menstrual] periods, like 5 days. It changes//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P7: //I sometimes spot for 2 weeks and sometimes I don't go on [menstrual] periods and sometimes I go [on menstrual periods] for normal days, 5 days.

F: Okay, okay, number 5.

P5: My periods changed when I started to go on contraception. In a month I would go [on menstrual periods] for 3 weeks and rest on the last week. And they would be heavy, even clots would come out//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P5: I would sometimes have a headache. When I go to the clinic, they say it is something that happens to have irregular [menstrual cycles] and all of that. But I would worry that *ay* [no] no they do become irregular but mine seems like it is worse.

F: Mmh [Neutral]

P5: I told myself that maybe I shouldn't prevent because when I was not preventing, I would go on [menstrual periods] maybe 3 times a month. In 1 month, I would go on [menstrual periods] 3 times. So, it hasn't changed but they said I must continue with the contraception. It was a contraception injection that is for 2 months. They said I must continue with the contraception because I am still young and all of that.

F: Mhm [Neutral], okay… Number 1.

P1: There was a lot of change because I now go [on menstrual periods] for a lot of days, before I used to go 3 days. Now I even go [on menstrual periods] for 5 or 6 days. So, pads, I must buy 2 pads [referring to packets] in a month yet I was using 1 [sanitary pad pack]. And it has happened that I bleed so much that I told myself that I am having a miscarriage, yet it is a lot [participant referring to how often she has bleeding].

F: Okay, thank you so much for your experiences that you have shared currently. I would like for us to look at if you are on your menstrual period, do you bleed a lot or do you bleed less because of the methods that you use for contraception?

[Participant raising her hand]

P2: I use an implant. I don't want to lie, it is not the same, it is not the same how often I go on my [menstrual] periods. The blood is not the same, it happens that I go [on menstrual periods] a lot//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P2: //I go on [menstrual periods] the whole month//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P2: //It happens that I only spot.

F: Oh okay…

P2: Yeah, that is how it is.

P3: Mine is like number 2. When I go [on menstrual periods] it becomes heavy, and sometimes it is spotting and maybe 2 weeks even so. 2 weeks I keep on spotting and spotting.

F: Okay…

P6: To support number 2 and number 3. I also go on heavy [menstrual] periods. In such a way that I decided that whenever I am on my [menstrual] periods not to use pads because I was using [sanitary] pads, and then can you imagine using a [sanitary] pad for the next 6 months? So, you have a rash around

the vagina, so I stopped [using] the [sanitary] pad and used tampons. Tampons still treated me badly [participant means having side effects due to using sanitary pads]. So, I ended up using - I am a child raised by granny guys, there is usually a T-shirt that doesn't work that is old. And then you take that T-shirt and cut it and use it because since I am bleeding heavily, I couldn't anymore, I was getting hurt because when I have a [sanitary] pad on it was becoming painful because you can imagine every day it is [menstrual] blood, every day. Heavy periods! Heavy periods! I then decided to change from [sanitary] pads and use clots.

F: I hear you, [participant raised her hand] number 7.

P7: Mhm [Neutral] please may I second number 3. I also mix, it happens that I spot for 2 weeks yet the time I had not started the injection I was going [on menstrual periods] well, [menstrual periods were] normal. I would start with heavy [menstrual bleeding] and continue nicely for 5 days. But when I was using the injection, I now spot for 2 weeks.

F: [Participant raising her hand] Number 4!

P4: It becomes heavy, the [menstrual] blood looks like it is maroon, it is not red. It becomes blood that you don't understand, it even smells badly since I have inserted a loop.

F: Oh okay…//

P5: //Since I have started to be on contraception, my blood is heavy. Yet before I was on contraception it [menstrual blood] would be heavy and end up spotting.

F: Okay. Okay, no, thank you so much. We will move on to the next question but please don't mind that I will ask you questions that will sound like you have answered. Some of you have answered some of the questions but I will go through them for everyone to have the opportunity to answer them.

P4: Okay.

F: So, please tell me how contraception has changed how regularly you bleed? [Slight silence by participants] Maybe it is bleeding that comes when you least expect it, or it is bleeding that comes when you expect it? [Participant raising her hand] Yes, number 4.

P4: It [bleeding] comes when I don't expect it. Sometimes I know that at the beginning of the month, maybe on the 1st or on the 30th or 29th, I know that on the 1st I am starting [to bleed]. Then on the 7th I will be towards finishing. Now, it [bleeding] comes at any time, on the 2nd, on the 8th or on the 7th, there is no date that is exact. The periods recycle, they change from time to time but this time it [menstrual periods] changes drastically because on the 7th, 8th, 6th, 1st, you, see? It is skipping, I don't know which one [date] is it exactly. I must always have [sanitary] pads every day! That I know that I have in my bag, because it might happen that I am sitting, and it [menstrual blood] is coming out.

F: Okay, so, you find it hard to know when bleeding will start.

P4: Yes.

F: [Participant raising her hand] Number 5.

P5: To also second number 4, my time to go on [menstrual] periods is not the same. It is not the same. I don't have that , "oh on this day I will go on [menstrual] periods. I don't know when to visit the guy [referring to her male partner]//

[Chuckles by participants]

P5: //Because I don't know if I visit him I will//

P2: //You will go on [menstrual periods]//

P5: //Go on [menstrual periods], so, it [menstrual changes] made my things bad.//

[Chuckles by participants]

F: [Chuckles] Okay, thank you. [Participant raising her hand] Number 2.

P2: I am seconding number 4 and number 5.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P2: That there is no date anymore, that maybe on a certain date I must wait [for menstrual periods]. Anytime now *ziyakhala* [Meaning: it is a Zulu slang word that in this context means that the participant starts their menstrual period when she least expects it].

F: [Chuckles] When you say *ziyakhala*, what do you mean?

P2: It means that I anticipate that anytime I will go on [menstrual] periods. There is no time where I say, "I will go on my periods now, soon". I must wait for anytime [to go on menstrual periods].

F: Oh okay…//

P4: //Yes.

F: Okay, is there anyone else that would like to share? [Slight silence by participants] How has been on contraception changed how long you have bleeding? So, for example, when you bleed how many days does it take? I know that some of us had mentioned, but please can we go over this question, if you are bleeding how many days does it take since you are using contraception? [Participant raising her hand] Number 3.

P3: As I had mentioned, 2 weeks and I spot. Maybe it discontinues on the 3rd week. And then again on the 4th one I will see it [menstrual period] heavy. You see, there is no rest exactly.

F: Mhm [Neutral], so, you would say before you used a contraception method your days [of being on menstrual period] were less?

P3: I knew that I go [on menstrual periods] for 7 days. I knew before that I am 7 days [participant means she would go on her menstrual periods for 7 days]. So, it is not like that anymore. Now it is 2 weeks, it discontinues on the 3rd week and then on the 4th one it comes back. So, if I must make myself happy, I must make myself happy in the one [week], because I know that after that *ziyakhala* [it is a Zulu word that in this context means that the participant will have to face again the problem of having menstrual periods again] , it is coming back again.

[Chuckles by participants]

P3: Think about that, but I won't take it out [referring to the contraception] even if it is like that.

F: When you say when you make yourself happy, how do you make yourself happy?

P3: The husband [referring to the male partner], you can imagine I have to make sure//

[Chuckles by participants]

P3: //I must make sure that ay here I also give him a chance because I know I will go back [participant means she has sex with her male partner when she is not on her periods for 1 week because she knows that she will go back and continue to have menstrual periods after that specific 1 week].

F: Oh okay//

P3: //Yeah, it is something like that//

F: When you "make sure", I am asking so that the note taker understands what you were saying//

P3: //We have sex everyday dear//

P2: //Oh, my goodness!//

[Chuckles by participants]

P3: Not many rounds [referring to the number of times they have sex when they are engaging in sexual intercourse], we have small rounds. We have sex almost every day in that week. It [week] becomes busy!

[Chuckles by participants]

F: Okay, thank you so much. [Participant raising her hand] Number 7.

P7: I can say that my bleeding after having used the 2 months injection, it has changed because I know bleed 2 weeks. I also spot. Yet before I used the injection, I was bleeding normally. Maybe I would bleed for 5 to 6 days, it would start by being heavy, heavier, and then it will be right and spot. After the injection I spot 2 weeks full.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P3: Mmh.

F: Okay, [participant raising her hand] number 1.

P1: I must tell myself that the whole week I am on my [menstrual] periods. Because I bleed a lot.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P1: Mhm [participant agreeing].

F: Before you used contraception, how was it?

P1: It was normal, I would go for 3 days, something normal, you see. I would finish quickly.

F: Okay.

P2: Before I was on contraception I would go on [menstrual periods] 7 days. I would go on [menstrual periods] for 7 days. Okay, but now! oh my goodness! I also don't know. I don't know this thing. I would

even go to the clinic and say, “ay no I am taking it out [referring to the contraception]” and I would turn there [at the clinic and go back home].

[Chuckles by participants]

P2: If I continue to take it [contraception] out, I will fall pregnant [chuckles]. Ay, I would stay [with the contraception] and be patient until I am alright. You see when I have a rash, when I have a rash because of the pad, but yeah, I am I am getting used to it because I do take a break [from menstrual periods] and on other months not go on [menstrual periods].

F: Okay…Is there anyone that wants to share?

P4: No, it is the same.

F: Okay. So, when bleeding, how have the contraception methods changed how much you bleed during those days? So, for example, do you bleed a lot? I know that some have mentioned//

P2: //Mhm [Neutral]//

F: //Do you bleed heavy or light, is it hard or easy? [Participant raising her hand] Number 5.

P5: Since I am contraceptive, I bleed a lot. I even come out blood clots. And [sanitary] pads, they become short. But my aunt helps me because she works at a school. There are those [sanitary] pads that are received by children [at school]. She sometimes brings them [sanitary pads] for me. So, that helps me, that there is someone who covers me with [sanitary] pads. Money doesn’t get wasted in that way.

F: Okay, thank you. Is there anyone else that would like to share? [Slight silence by participants] Okay, how has using contraception methods changed how your bleeding looks during your menstrual cycle? [Participant raising her hand] Number 4.

P4: Red blood comes out but when I am in my periods, a maroon one comes out. I don’t know where the maroon one comes from. Maroon, black! Something that you don’t understand. I don’t know what to say, it is that for me.

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Okay, number 6.

P6: To support number 4, I also have the same problem. Because, you see, maybe I will go [on menstrual periods] on the 1st day. Sometimes I also don’t understand it, is it black or is it maroon or dark maroon but it will happen for 2 days. Then after 2 days of the black or maroon it starts to become [red] – but it [menstrual cycle] doesn’t have one color until I finish. Sometimes it is red, sometimes it is somehow black, sometimes it becomes maroon.

F: Mhm [Neutral], okay. [Participant raising her hand] Number 7.

P7: Before I started using an injection, it was blood that was red. But when using the injection, I mentioned that I spot. It is just something light, light red//

F: //Light red//

P7: //Yes, light red.

F: Okay, is there anyone else that would like to share? [Slight silence by participants] Okay, is there maybe a change, maybe you find you have small blood clots during your menstruation? Is there a change like that you experienced? [Participant raising her hand] Number 2.

P2: Yes, it happens when I haven't gone on my menstrual cycle for a long time. Like now, it has been a long time. Maybe if I were to go [on to my menstrual cycle], blood clots will come out. It happens.

F: Mmh, okay, it happens when//

P2: // It has been a while; it is not like before. Isn't before I started to go on a contraception, I would go [on menstrual periods] month after month. Now there are months that I don't go [on menstrual periods]. I think it is caused by that, that the other months I don't go on [menstrual periods].

F: Okay, okay.

P1: It happens when on the days when I am going to start my periods, for 2 days I come out clots.

F: Mhm [Neutral]. Oh, clots come out.

P1: Yes, clots come out.

F: How long does it take?

P1: It is for 2 to 3 days, it is clots.

F: Okay, thank you. [Participant raising her hand] Number 5.

P5: I want to agree with number 1. I always come out clots when I am starting [menstrual] periods. The whole 3 weeks that I go on [menstrual periods] they [blood clots] come out. Then I rest on the last week. There it is quiet and then when it [menstrual periods] comes back, they [blood clots] come out again.

F: Okay, thank you so much. I am aware that the things we are sharing seem to be deep, you see.

P5: Yeah…

F: So, thank you for being comfortable and sharing. Thank you for that. Uhm, there is this discharge that comes come that is not blood. Uhm, have you seen that discharge that I am talking about?

C_102_0: It comes out when you are about to finish [participant referring to when you are about to complete your menstrual period] maybe?

F: It can be when you are about to finish [menstrual cycle] or before you go on your menstrual cycle. Some see it even when they are on their menstrual periods. But it is a discharge. Has anyone had something like that? [Participant raising her hand] Yes, number 4.

P4: When I am about to start [menstrual periods], I first see with the discharge//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P4: If I am going to the toilet, when I look at the underwear, because it is when I am not aware that I am about to start periods. I see that thing that is slippery, I don't understand its color. Is it cream [referring to the color of the discharge] or?

F: Mhm…Okay, number 6.

P6: Just to add to number 4, I also see that, but it happens when I am about to go on them [participant is referring to menstrual periods] because since I have irregular menstruation, so, you don't know when it is going to happen. So, the minute maybe I go to the toilet and see it, I become aware that okay there's a possibility that I might go on [menstrual] periods. So, it [discharge] is something like jelly like. It is something you don't understand what kind of a thing it is.

F: Oh okay, what color is it?

P6: It differs because it doesn't have a specific that maybe it is white or it is – because it is something like a discharge, you see//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: Even with my discharge I don't know the color of it. I knew it before I was on my contraceptives but after I was on them, I don't know. Because sometimes, it is white and at times it is like brown. At times I don't understand it. Because it happens that since you are a woman, you become aware of all these things, you become curious that, "and then what is this, where is it coming from" you see.

F: Okay, thank you so much. Is there anyone else that would like to share? [Slight silence by participants] Okay. So, please tell me about changes that you had with your [menstrual] cramps when using contraception. Are there any changes that you experienced with your [menstrual] cramps?

P3: For me, it is the menstrual cramps, I experienced it a lot before [using contraception]//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P3: //But since I have inserted the implant ay//

F://You don't experience them anymore?//

P3: Even though it is that slight pain, it is not the same. I can bear it; it doesn't even need a tablet.

F: Okay. [Participant raising her hand] Number 5

P5: I had menstrual cramps before but now it is back pains. It becomes painful here [participant pointed to the back of her body, above her buttocks].

F: Okay, you don't have menstrual cramps anymore?

P5: Yes, I don't have menstrual cramps anymore. I just have back pains only.

F: But previously you had them [menstrual cramps].

P5: Yes, I had them.

F: Okay. [Participant raising her hand] Number 2.

P2: I have menstrual cramps, but I have them if I am going to go on [menstrual cramps]. It is not like before//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P2: Because I would go on month to month [participant means she used to go on her menstrual periods every month] but now I have them [menstrual cramps] when I am about to go on [menstrual cramps]. Because it happens that I skip months, maybe 3 months, 4 months I don't go on [menstrual periods].

F: Mhm [Neutral], previously were they [menstrual cramps] severe?

P2: Yes, they were, they were. I would have them month to month, month to month//

F: //But only if you are about to start periods//

P2: //Yes, when I am about to start periods.

F: Okay, is there anyone else that would like to share? [Slight silence by participants] Are we still good though?

Yes! [All participants responded at once and sounded lively].

F: So, when we were busy with our discussion, sharing our experiences, our colleagues, our note taker was writing. So, on the wall they placed the things we were discussing. Please can we look at them and review the things that they mentioned. While we were talking, maybe there were things that we forgot to share. Please may we share if there are things that we forgot. But let us look at the things we discussed. The first one, there was a question that said, "how often you bleed". Others mentioned that they bleed for 2 weeks, others said they skip a month, others said it is 5 days, others said they bleed every day for 6 months, others said 4 months because of the implant. Others said they don't even go on their menstrual periods because of contraception. Then the second questions, "how regularly you bleed". Others said sometimes heavy, others said they spot, others said they spot for 2 weeks since the injection, they said it becomes heavy because of contraception. And then, "how long you bleed". Others said 2 weeks, others said 6 months, others said they are no longer sure because there are changes that are happening so they can't track how long they bleed. Then the next one , "how much you bleed". Others say they bleed heavily. Others said there was a change after using the injection. They spotted for 2 weeks. Others said they spot for 2 weeks and then 2 weeks it becomes heavy. So, we can see that there is change when an individual is using contraception. And then, "how your blood looks" when you are on your menstrual cycle. Others said they have clots during the entire [menstrual] periods. Others said their [menstrual] periods look like they are maroon, like black because it is not red the normal way. Others said they see fluids before they start going on their menstrual cycle. They look like a discharge. Okay, then we looked at "menstrual cramps". Others said they have menstrual cramps before they start [menstrual] periods. Others said they don't have periods, but it becomes painful at the back [of their bodies], have back pains. Others have a lot of cramps as compared to before, because of using contraception. Is there maybe something that we forgot that you would like us to add? [Participant raising her hand] Yes, number 5.

P5: There by how long you bleed, 3 weeks//

F: //How long you bleed//

P5: //Yes, 3 weeks.

F: 3 weeks, okay we will add and say, "3 weeks". [Note taker is writing the additional information] [Participant raising her hand] Number 4.

P4: I can't see twice a month. I can't see it.

F: Twice a month.

P4: Yes, that I go twice a month [on menstrual periods] when it is starting and finishing.

F: Okay… [Note taker is noting down the additional information]. So, we have 3 weeks and twice a month. Okay, thank you so much. We have added it. It is for 3 weeks and twice a month. Is there anything else that we would like to add. Maybe changes that we didn't mention while we were having a discussion that we had because of using contraception methods. [Participants raising their hands] We will start with number 6, 4 and then 7.

P6: Guys, please bear with me isiZulu is not my strength//

F: //It is okay you can also speak English//

P6: //Okay. So, the difference that was there apart from the irregular menstruation, was the weight loss after inserting the implant. Because we notice that the periods are abnormal, not realizing that the more you go on your menstrual cycle for a long, the body loses weight because the blood is coming out a lot compared to your normal cycle. So, I lost weight and secondly, I lost the love of being intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse] out of nowhere. When I am doing [sexual intercourse] it, I am just doing [sexual intercourse] it because I must do it. But I could feel it in me deep down that *ay* [no] no, I don't want to do this. Then I went as far as going to the clinic to go and ask if it is normal that since I am using an implant that I feel like the way I feel. They said it is normal, it will eventually discontinue. I think it is the 3rd time I am inserting the implant//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: //But still it is the same thing. I haven't gotten used to it, I just told myself that I will eventually get used to it. I will do this thing; I will be intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse] because I live with my partner. I must be intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse]. I can't say I am still on my periods for 6 months, wait for me. He will wait for me for 6 months; he won't wait for me for the whole year. So, it was that, I lost interest in intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse] and lost weight. And it was hard. You can imagine you are moving from size 38 and going back to 34 and 32 because you are on your periods. That's the difference, the shift that was there since I am using an implant.

F: Okay, thank you for sharing. Thank you.

P4: Others who don't know it might find it funny, yet it is something that exists. In my vagina, I inserted a loop. On my left-hand side in my vagina, I had a cyst, something like a pimple//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P4: //The biggest one. It appeared, when I went to do a pap smear the nurse said she can't insert metal. She made a [referral] note for me, and I went to [Name of hospital]. [Name of hospital] they conducted an operation for the cyst. The doctors mentioned that it might come back, and it has come back. Right now, I have it, it is on the right [side of the body] now//

F: //The cyst//

P4: //The cyst. So, one day when I was listening to [Name of radio station], there was doctor that was talking about women and men issues, and I popped a question. He said my hormones are closed by

something in me. Which means that when I inserted the loop, it closed my hormones. The time the one this side showed, it got cut and then this one showed this side. If it were to be cut again, it would appear again on this side. So, it is like a game. I am taking it out, it appears, I am taking it out, it appears. The thing that I think I must end up doing is to take out the loop because it keeps on affecting me. Because even when I am having sex, it comes out//

F: //The loop comes out?//

P4: //The bump that I mentioned, the cyst. It comes out, even when you insert your finger in your vagina there is a lump that comes out on the side. It is not painful. It becomes painful if I am on my periods. It doesn't become painful like having pains but there is a thing like a rash that looks like pimples on it, like if I continue using a [sanitary] pad during those days when menstruating. But the problem I have had since I inserted a loop is the cyst only. Which means I need to end up taking out the loop because the hormones will end up not being right.

F: Mmh [Neutral], okay.

P7: When I started the injection, when I just started it early last year//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P7: //It made me gain weight. It made me have big cheeks. I had a big stomach. I gained weight and saw that I am gaining weight. Then in November I discontinued it//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P7://After discontinuing it I got skinny, I got skinny. When I got skinny, I went back to the injection. The body is starting to get back to shape.

F: Okay, thank you so much for sharing your experiences. Whilst talking about the changes that happened because of using contraception methods, are there changes that you can say occurred with regards to how your body feels because of using contraception methods? [Participant raising her hand] Yes.

P3: It affected me using contraception methods. I really loved sex but now it feels like someone is raping me [when being sexually active].

[Chuckles by participants]

P3: It feels like I am being raped, I loved it [sexual intercourse]. Now, *ay* [no] no. There is something wrong, I can see that *ay* [no]. There are tablets that they [at the clinic] said they will give me them; they will restore [the appetite for sexual intercourse]. They restored [the appetite for sexual intercourse] but now they made me behave wrong, they made me act wrong, they made me love it [sexual intercourse] a lot. I don't know what their [tablets] name is, they [tablets] were in another box that were like black. They made me behave wrong, that's the problem but they made me yearn for it [sexual intercourse]. Ay now, I even take cheese and try to boost [referring to boosting her sexual drive], banana [the participant even eats banana to boost her sex drive].

[Chuckles by participant]

P3: To try and have this thing come back [participant referring to her sex drive].

F: So, you can say it affected your emotions?

P3: Emotions, yeah.

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Okay, number 5.

P5: To agree with number 3, I loved sex. I loved it a lot. When I started contraception, even my partner, I saw him as annoying. If he wants [sex], you see, it just becomes a coincidence, and I have [menstrual] periods. Then I would say to myself maybe I should not do it [sex] anymore. I feel sad. I would say, "okay let's try". But I would say to myself he is annoying.

[Chuckles by participant]

P5: He was annoying, he was annoying, because it would be a coincidence, he wanted it [to have sex] at the wrong time.

F: Mhm [Neutral], okay number 6.

P6: Ei, I am alright for now.

F: Okay. Uhm, all these changes that we have spoken about of menstrual cycles. How did they impact your day-to-day life? Others have shared that their sex life has changed a bit, in their relationship they get affected. Maybe is there anywhere where you were affected in terms of at work, at home…[Slight silence] anything.

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Number 5.
P5: For me, it is at home. At home, I don't know. I become lazy when I am on my periods. I don't act like before when I woke up, cleaned and did chores that are done by girls.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P5: I just become lazy. They said that maybe did I have fallen pregnant again. I become lazy like a person who is pregnant.

F: Okay…

P5: I don't become active in-house chores.

F: Okay, is there anyone else that would like to share?

P3: It is becoming moody. When I am on my [menstrual] periods, I become moody.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P3: Ay, I become moody.

F: Okay...

P3: Yeah, I just become moody.

F: Number 2

P2: I start [menstrual periods] anytime. I went to [name of city], I was on set [participant is referring to the workplace in the entertainment industry]. You know that on [name of film], I got a feature and dressed up [name of actress].

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P2: I started [menstrual] periods that I don't know of [meaning the participant started her menstrual periods unexpectedly]. The problem is that I am not even used to tampons. They use tampons there because they wear G-strings [it is underwear that consists of a narrow strip of cloth attached to a waistband that covers only the genital area]

F: Mmh [Neutral].

P2: It is that.

F: So, you can also say that it [contraception] affects you even at work.

P2: Yeah.

F: Okay. Uhm, please can we go back to number 3. You mentioned being moody. So, how does that change of becoming moody because of using a contraception method?

P2: It ends up not being nice in the house. You see, being moody and having anger. Even if a person tries to play with me, I just get annoyed by little things and see that I am getting annoyed. He [male partner] even says that whenever I start my menstrual periods, I always have anger and am moody, I don't want someone to even touch me. Yet, I don't do anything I just say, *ay* [Meaning: A Zulu expression which in this context is an expression of being irritated]! *ay* [Meaning: A Zulu expression which in this context is an expression of being irritated]! *ay* [Meaning: A Zulu expression which in this context is an expression of being irritated]! I just get annoyed.
[Participant raising her hand]

F: Okay, number 1.

P1: The change that was there is that you can't go to church while on your [menstrual] periods. So, you are forced to stay at home and don't go to church, because as a person who worships at [Name of church], they can't pray for you because it is like you are dirty//

P2: //Dirty.

F: How does that make you feel?

P1: It saddens me because when I go to church, I know that it is where I get to be happy. So, when I don't go, it doesn't sit well with me.

F: Okay… Is there anyone else that would like to share? [Slight silence by participants as a way of communicating that there is nothing that they would like to add] Okay, thank you so much. I would like for us this time to look at the things that we were talking about. Uhm, our note taker has noted some of the things that we were talking about with regards to the questions that I was asking you. Before we read through it, is there anything else that you wish for us to talk about that we didn't add or talk about it? [Slight silence by participants as a way of communicating that there is nothing they would like to add] Okay, we looked at, "how changes make your body feel". Others said there is weight loss. Others said there is a cyst because of using a loop. Others said there is a loss of interest in terms of intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse]. Is there anything that we can add?

[Slight silence by participants as way of communicating that there is nothing that they would like to add] Okay. Then there is "how changes impact your daily life". Another one said they become moody. Another one said they become lazy, so, at home she ends up not doing anything because she becomes lazy. Another one said they become irritable. Another one said it affects her even at work because her [menstrual] periods start when she least expects. Another one said it affects her in terms of going to church, she said she can't go to church if she has started her menstrual periods. Is there something else that maybe we can add? [Slight silence by participants as a way of communicating that there is nothing that they would like to add] Thank you so much for sharing your experiences. Are you still good?

We are good [All participants responded together at once and lively]

F: You can drink water and relax. We are about to start another activity, since we are continuing with our discussion. Okay, is there anyone who wants to drink water, are we all alright?

We are alright [All participants responded together at once]

F: Okay. So, now we are going to do body mapping. Okay, the reason we call it body mapping is because on the wall, when we turn and look, we will see there is a body [chart]. On my left, there is a front of the body of a woman. And on my right, there is a back of a woman. Okay, so, in this activity what we will be doing or the purpose of doing this activity is to be able to talk about things that we face concerning menstrual cramps, while using contraception. Okay, so, what is going to happen is that we will you individually stickers, they are different and have different colors. And then you will paste it anywhere there, whether it is at the front or at the back where you feel cramps because of contraception. So, while we were talking in our discussion, we mentioned that there are different things that we use for contraception, right?

Yes! [participants agreeing]

F: So, please can we start with people who are using pills, please can they take yellow stickers and place them anywhere on the body where they feel menstrual cramps. Those that are using pills, please raise your hands and go in front to place the stickers. [Participants sitting down] Is there anyone using stickers?

P1: Yes.

F: Number 1.

[Participant number 1 standing up to go and place her sticker]

F: You place it anywhere. [Sounds of movements] Wherever you feel menstrual cramps on your body. [Participant number 1 has placed her sticker] Okay, thank you. Are there any of you that use the injection? [Participants raising their hands] Okay, please can the ones using the injection, number 7 and number 5 place stickers where you feel menstrual cramps on your bodies. [Participants number 7 and 5 stood up and placed their stickers.] Are there any of you using implants? [Participants raised their hands] Number 3 and number 2, please can we take stickers there that are blue. [Participants number 3 and 2 stood up and placed their stickers]. Okay, is there anyone who uses an IUD? [Slight silence by participants] Okay, is there anyone who uses any other method that we didn't mention?

P4: For the loop, I don't have anything [participant means she doesn't have any menstrual cramps when using the loop] [Participant is speaking softly and sounds uncertain].

F: Number 4.

P4: I don't have [menstrual] cramps, I don't have anything.

F: Oh okay. Okay, so, [participant raising her hand] number 6.

P6: I also don't have any cramps.

F: Oh okay. So, you use an implant, but you don't have menstrual cramps.

P6: Yes.

F: Okay. Thank you. So, there [referring to the body mapping charts, there are our stickers. Please may we take gold stickers, the stars that are gold, right.

Mhm [participants response is neutral]

F: We will place them on the body where we feel as though that is the place on the body where we experience a lot of pain. That is where the menstrual cramps are troublesome on our bodies. Please can we stick them. [Participants standing up and sticking the gold stars]. Okay, you are allowed to use 2 stars if you need to. [Silence, movements of participants sticking the gold stars]. Okay, right, is there anyone else that we have left out who wants to place a sticker there? Are we all done?

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Number 6.

P6: The place that is painful since I have inserted the implant, I think it is where I have inserted the implant. Because at times when you are sleeping, you get tired, you feel like placing your head on the hand [participant meant she feels like placing her head on her arm when sleeping]. So, it is like it [implant] is moving. You see, maybe if I am folding my hand [participant meant her arm] like this, sleeping like this. It is like it [implant] is moving. That means, it [implant] is opening another place [on the arm] because it [implant] is moving, it is not on one place. So, if you are going to change your position, maybe for sleeping, it is like it gets pushed upwards//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: //So, when that motion happens it becomes painful where it [implant] is inserted.

F: Where is that?

P6: On the left.

F: On the left of the arm?

P6: Yes, of the arm.

F: Oh okay. [Slight silence] Okay, I can see on the front and back of the body that we have placed our stickers. How would we explain - let's start with the front, where we have placed our stickers, that area where we have placed our stickers, what do we call that place?

P3 : It is *isinya* [bladder] or what.

F: *Isinya* [bladder].

P3: Mhm [participant agreeing]

F: Oh okay. And then at the back, that part where we have placed the stickers, what do we call it. Number 1.

P1: It is *iqolo* [the back].

F: *Iqolo* [the back].

P1: Mhm [participant agreeing].

F: Okay, thank you. Number 6 mentioned that there is a pain that she feels on her arm because of the implant, please go and place a sticker there. [Participant number 6 stood up and placed the sticker on the body part]. Okay, thank you. So, we mentioned that it is *iqolo* [the back], we mentioned *isinya* [bladder], are there other words used for these body parts that we have mentioned? [Slight silence by participants] No, there isn't?//

P1: No.

F: Okay. Please can the one who placed a sticker on the front, anyone who placed a sticker there share their experience about menstrual cramps that they have. [Participant raised their hand] Number 2.

P2: Yes. It becomes painful, I get strained. It becomes like that; it is painful, and it is unbearable. And it is painful, it is painful, it is painful.

F: When you say you get strained//

P2: //I wrap myself//

F: //When you say you get strained, you get strained in the bladder?//

P2: //There [on the bladder], yes.

F: Oh okay…

P2: I wrap myself; it is painful.

F: Okay, what helps you when you feel that pain?

P2: I take tablets for pains.

F: Okay, okay. [Participant raising her hand] Mhm [interviewer agreeing to allow the participant to speak].

P7: I feel pain, like I am getting poked. It is like there are needles. What I usually do I drink water and sleep on my stomach.

F: Okay, you drink hot water?

P7: Yes, warm [water] and then I wrap my stomach.

F: Okay, is there anyone else that would like to share? [Slight silence by participants] Okay, we have 3 stickers there. They are stars. Why have you placed the stickers that are stars, where you have placed them. Why did you say it is the part that is most troublesome?

P1: It is the part that is most troublesome when I am on my menstrual periods. It is painful.

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Mhm, okay. Yes number 5.

P5: I placed it [star] at the back because it is the most painful body part, and I can't sit up straight. When I sit up straight, it becomes like I don't know, it becomes like I am getting hurt. It is like I can always sit bending like this, it becomes better if I am bending.

F: Okay, thank you so much for sharing your experiences. Maybe can we share what else do we do to avoid menstrual cramps that we have. [Participant raising her hand]. Yes number 1.

P1: I take a bottle and put hot water in it and place it where it is painful. Then it is like it [muscle] is disintegrating. The pains become better.

F: Okay, mhm [Neutral], is there anyone else that would like to share? [Participant raising her hand] Number 5.

P5: I don't do much, I don't take any medication. I sit and bend. I listen to the pain telling me what to do so that I can be alright.

F: Is there anything that you have tried, and it has helped you or?

P5: Mhm [no] tablets for pain, I have tried them, and they didn't help me. So, I just stopped [taking the tablets for pains]. It becomes better if I am going to listen to it [participant referring to the pain] until it stops.

F: Okay. Alright, okay, thank you so much. Can you share that when you were using contraception methods, they felt less pain, less [menstrual] cramps? [Slight silence by participants] Is there anyone that can say, "when I was using a contraception method, I had less pains than before". [Participant raising her hand] Number 3.

P3: Since I have used contraception methods, as I have mentioned that my menstrual cramps became less [painful], even though it becomes painful in the bladder, but it is not the same as before. I would even vomit if I am on my [menstrual] periods before I used anything. It became better when something came out and I vomited, then it would be better. Even the tablet didn't help. But now when there is this [participant is referring to the contraception] I can use the tablet for pains and the pain becomes better.

F: Okay.

P3: Mhm [participant's response is neutral].

F: Thank you so much. Are we still good?

Yes! [All participants responded together at once]

F: Okay. So, thank you so much for sharing your experiences, we will now move on to our next questions. What information did you get from the clinic or from the healthcare providers about

changes to your menstrual cycle before you started using the contraception method? [Participant raising her hand] Number 5.

P5: The nurses told me that since I am going to start contraception, I will have different [menstrual] periods than before. There will be changes in the body. But I never have any changes on my body because I don't have pimples. It is just that the [menstrual] blood comes out with blood clots every time when going on menstrual periods.

F: Okay, would you say that information helped you or it didn't help you?

P5: It helped me because I got to be aware because I would always be afraid that maybe – I don't know – I would always be afraid, it helped me.

F: Okay, is there someone else who would like to share? [Slight silence by participants] Thank you so much. Now, let's think about all the things we have talked about today. What do you wish they had told you more about the changes to your menstrual cycle before you started using the contraception method? [Participant raising her hand] Number 2.

P2: It would have been better if they had told me that a month would end on [menstrual] periods. *Ay* [Meaning: A Zulu expression which in this context is an expression of being irritated], I wouldn't have started. [Menstrual] periods are annoying, I don't want to lie. But when you don't go on them [participant is referring to going on menstrual periods] you have that fear that my goodness, so long it is quiet. But I don't want to lie they [menstrual periods] are annoying, they are annoying.

F: Okay//

P2: //But if they had told me that my goodness a month even ends consecutively! I wouldn't have.

F: So, you wouldn't have started to even use it//

P2: //I wouldn't have started, the implant I wouldn't have started. The problem is I fear the injection. I have never been injected. That's why I chose the implant, because I fear the injection shame.

[Participant raising her hand]

F: Okay, number 4.

P4: If they had told me that there is a side effect that I would end up having, this lump cyst I don't know, I wouldn't have inserted the loop. I would have tried something else that is better. Maybe it would have shown a problem, but it was going to be better than the one I have now.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P4: Yes.

F: Okay.

P6: Please may I say that according to my understanding, I believe that there is information that they hold back the time – let me talk about me – the time I inserted an implant, I think the nurse inserts this thing [implant] because she doesn't tell you everything. She just says no that it is an implant; it does 1, 2 and 3. But then they don't mention abnormalities and everything. She just says, "no if it doesn't treat you well, come back to take it out if you have not completed 7 days and so forth. If it doesn't treat you well, come back to take it out". Then when you come back, okay sister, you said I must come back because now I am suffering, please can I take it out. Then they said, "no don't take it, stay with it and

see how it will treat you. For now, since you have abnormal menstruation, here are tablets. Use these tablets to stop it. So, I feel like there is information that they didn't tell me, because if only I knew from the word go that this is what I will be facing maybe I would have opted for something else and not the implant.

F: Okay. Which information would you have wished they shared with you?

P6: I feel like everything! On a clean plate. Okay, since you are choosing an implant, here are the side effects that you will encounter. So, if you take this thing, just know you won't come back to the clinic to complain that 1, 2 is not happening, 3 and 4 is happening. So, know that the minute we insert this thing, you will face this. Not to come back after 2 weeks, I have inserted it, I have complications, I am complaining, I am having this and that. You see that? So, if only they would tell us that since we are choosing this thing, know that you face this. So, the only thing they say, they say, "we will insert you an implant, it will protect you, you see it does this and that". But they don't say the real problem, because what I have noticed is people who insert implants//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: Yes, we have irregular menstruation but ours I feel like it is more, because if I speak with another person who has inserted an implant says, "you know I have also had this". Maybe we are talking, and we are at the clinic. "Since I inserted an implant, I have had this, I have been on my menstrual periods for this time". You see, we are having the same problem, but then it seems like there is nothing done about that problem that we are facing. It is like, "Okay! You have put yourself in it, sort it out yourself "!//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: You will come here when you have a problem that you mention, because there are a lot of us. When you go to the clinic, you complain that "sister [Meaning: participant is referring to a nurse when she says sister] I went on menstrual periods for this long". Then she says, "*ay* [no] it is normal". Only to find out that the person who told you that it is normal has not inserted the implant. You are the one that has inserted the implant. So, you know the effects of all of this. Because we get there without any information. We tell ourselves that if I won't get pregnant, I must insert it [implant].

F: Okay//

P6: //I don't want to fall pregnant, so when they insert it, they say it is normal. You will be okay. I even ask that okay, if it is normal, why are you giving me these tablets to drink them because you are saying it is normal to go on [menstrual] periods for 6 months? But when I ask people around me that, "okay you have not inserted the implant, how does your menstrual cycle go?" then they say, "ay I go maybe that 2 weeks". Then when you tell a person that you go for 6 months, she will be, "there is a person who goes on menstrual periods for 6 months?"//

F: //Mmh [Neutral]//

P6: //You see something like that?//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: So, I feel like there is information that they don't tell us.

F: Okay.

P6: Mhm [Participant is neutral].

F: What is the most important information that you would like your friend to know about these changes before starting to use contraception? [Slight silence by participants] If you were to advise your friend.

P6: I would advise her that an implant, a*y* [no] no if she knows that her health is weak to not insert it, because they don't [healthcare providers] don't remove it. Even if you tell them that you have a problem, the side effects are this and that they give you medication, but you are told that it is not removed because it is expensive. They say what they say. If you have money, you will even go to the doctor and remove it there straight. But at the clinic, they don't remove it. Their 3 months must be completed, their 3 years. Yeah, it is 3 years that need to be completed. You will suffer from those side effects if you don't have the strength to go to the clinic.

F: So, would you tell her about the side effects?

P6: Yes!

F: Okay, is there someone else. [Participant's hand raised] Number 1.

P1: I would tell her that it is difficult, like me. When you want to have a baby, you don't fall pregnant quickly, it becomes difficult. Some of us are forced to use injection so that they don't fall pregnant. So, when you want a baby, it becomes difficult to have it.

F: Mmh [neutral] okay, is there someone else that would like to share? [Slight silence by participants] Okay, thank you so much. Uhm, we will move on to our next question. Are we still good?

We are good [All participants responded together at once]

F: Okay, so, there is an activity that we will do. We will talk about 2 questions. It is 2 questions that the healthcare providers and the researchers sometimes ask people about their menstrual cycle. So, please may we all stand up. [Movements of participants standing up] Okay, we can stand where we are standing. Okay, the first question says, "when you last had a period", let us think about when we had our last period, if you were to explain your last period, would you describe it as: light, moderate, or heavy? Those who say it was light, please raise your hands. [Participants raised their hands] Please can we go to this side and stand on my right. Those who say it was moderate, it was moderate, the last period. [Participants raised her hands] Please stand in the middle there. Those who say the last period was heavy, please raise your hands. [Participants raised her hands] Okay, please may they go this side, on the left. Alright, so, we have light, in our group of the light ones, they are 4 in total, it is number 7, 5, 3 and 2. And then moderate, we have number 1. Then with heavy, we have 6 and 4. Let's start with light. Anyone can respond, okay, so, how did you decide that your last period was light?

P2: They were light. Okay, I spotted only.

F: You spotted only?

P2: Maybe 2 days and that was the end of it. 2 weeks back.

F: Oh okay. So, the reason you said they were light is because you spotted.

P2: I spotted only.

F: Okay, let's go to the moderate. So, the decision to respond and say your last period was moderate, how did you decide?

P1: It is something normal when I go on my periods.

F: So, I would say it is medium. How do you measure that they are medium? What is different about them from before? How can you tell that they are medium?

P1: I can tell by the fact that it is something the same as last month. So, there was no change that was there.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P1: So, I can say it is medium.

F: Okay, in our last group. How did we decide that they were heavy. What made us decide that they were heavy, our last period?

P4: Mine were maroon or black. So, that is why I said they were heavy, and it was not for 4 days that I usually go on periods for. It was 8 days.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P4: Yes, it was for 8 days. When I started, it was a spot that was not light. It was red and then it increased and had periods that are maroon or black.

F: Oh okay. So, in other words, the days have increased //

P4: //Yes.

F: Oh okay. Thank you so much. Please may we raise our hands, I would like to ask when it was when you had your last periods. Okay, so, please may the ones that had periods last month or 2 months ago to raise their hands [Participants raised their hands], number 6, number 7, number 5 and number 1. Okay, the ones that had periods 3 to 6 months ago. [No hands were raised by participants]. Is there no one? [Slight silence by participants]. Okay, the ones who had periods more than 6 months ago. [Slight silence by participants, no hands were raised by the participants]. So, when did the others have their last period. [Participants inaudible and speaking softly]. Pardon?

This month! [participants number 3 and 2 responded at the same time]

F: This month.

P2: This month, we spotted.

F: Okay, number 3 and number 2 had their periods this month. Okay, number 4?

P4: This month.

F: This month.

P4: Mhm [participant agreeing].

F: Okay, alright, thank you so much. Is there anything that made it difficult to answer this question?

No [All participants responded together at once]

F: Okay, are we all still good?

Yes. [All participants responded together at once]

P2: Yes, we are alright.

F: Alright, so, we are going to move on to our next question that says, "on the heaviest day of your last period, how many menstrual pads, tampons, or other materials did you need to use? How many did you use when you were bleeding in your last period. [Participant raised her hand] Number 4.

P4: I changed the [menstrual] pad maybe 4 times.

F: Mhm [Neutral]//

P4: //In the afternoon, 3 times later in the evening. That means I used 7.

F: Okay, on that day?

P4: Yes.

F: Okay, and this is our heavy group. [Participant raised her hand] Okay, number 6.

P6: As I have mentioned that since I had this problem, I was no longer using [menstrual] pads and tampons. I was using a cloth. So, when you are using a cloth, I think I say to myself that after 2 hours I want to change it because the cloth is quick to absorb [menstrual blood]. So, time and again, time and again you must change it.

F: Okay, so, how many clothes did you use?

P6: I would put together maybe 3.

F: On that day when they were the heaviest, how many did you use?

P3: I used 3.

F: 3, okay. Okay, let's come this side, did you used [menstrual] pads, tampons, or which materials did you use and how many?

P1: I used [menstrual] pads; it was just one pack.

F: It was one pack.

P1: Yes.

F: How many are there in one pack?

P1: There are 9 [menstrual pads].

F: Okay, let's come this side, light.

P2: I didn't finish them.

F: You didn't finish them//

P2: //I spotted for 2 days only. I didn't see the need to//

F: Okay, on your heaviest day of your last period when you spotted, how many//

P2: The last time I was on periods was in June, the heavy one. The last time was in June.

F: Let's go back to your last period, when they were heavy. The day where they were heavy, even if you spotted. How many [menstrual] pads would you say you used?

P2: I go on periods for the whole month, because I have inserted an implant.

F: I hear you//

P2: //It is not like before, I use them [menstrual pads], maybe 3 packs.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P2: I use them, I change because there is a lot of blood.

F: Okay, so, now we are talking about your last//

P2: // I used only 2 pads, 1 for today and 1 for tomorrow only.

F: Okay, on the 2 days that you have mentioned, which day would you say was the heaviest day that you were bleeding?

P2: I was not bleeding a lot.

F: You were bleeding a little?

P2: I was spotting.

F: You were spotting, okay, when you were spotting which day did you use [menstrual pads] more than the other?

P2: There isn't.

F: How many did you use?

P2: 2.

F: Okay, and others.

P7: I second 2. I don't bleed a lot; I spot and most of the time I use pantyliners for 2 weeks. I use pantyliners, I spot. I don't bleed a lot.

F: So, during your last period, which day did you use a lot of them?

P7: I used 3 pantyliners.

F: 3.

P7: Yes.

F: Okay. Number 5.

P5: Yes, on my last period, I used 4 pads. It was 1 in the morning; in the afternoon it was 2 and then in evening it was 1.

F: That was on the day it was heavy?

P5: Yes.

F: They were 4?

P5: Yes, they were 4.

F: Okay.

P3: They were 2, one in the morning when I woke up and 1 in the evening.

F: Okay, thank you so much. While we are standing, I noticed that there are differences in terms of your numbers. Let's start with our group that is light. Some said they used 3 pantyliners, others used pads, 2 or 4 and so forth. What do you think causes differences?

P3: I would say that months are not the same//

F: No, what caused the differences between your numbers, between you.

P3: Oh, between us.

F: Yes.

[Slight silence, participant is still thinking. Another participant raised her hand]

F: Yes, number 5.

P5: Maybe our bodies are not the same.

F: Your bodies are not the same.

P5: Yes.

F: Okay…

P5: We have bloods that is not the same.

F: Okay, is there something else that you would like to share? [Slight silence by participant] Okay, then we come this side, our heavy group. Uhm, your numbers are also not the same. An individual said 3, another individual was using 3 cloths and for another individual the numbers were more. Maybe what caused your numbers to not be the same? [Participant raised her hand] Yes, number 4.

P4: I think that we use materials that are not the same. Our contraception [methods] is not the same. So, hers and mine is not the same. Our periods won't be the same because we use different contraception.

F: Mhm [Neutral], okay. Thank you so much. So, as we continue, I would like to know if there was anything that made it difficult to answer this question.

No [Participants responded together at once]

F: How do you think another person would have answered this question if she was using another material apart from [menstrual] pads or tampons, uhm, maybe let's say she was using menstrual cups or a toilet paper. How would she have answered the question that I asked you? [Participant raised her hand]. Number 4.

P4: I think that someone using toilet paper maybe would have been shy.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P4: Because the toilet paper is light. I used it when things were tough. So, I have used it before, I know that since I am bleeding heavy, it [blood] ends up spilling on to you. So, another person would have ended up being afraid and shy to say how much she was using. Maybe she is using 4 rolls [of toilet paper], since I am using 7 [menstrual] pads.

F: Thank you so much. Thank you so much, how do you think another person would have responded to this question if they often don't have [menstrual] pads or tampons. Maybe let's say they really don't have it; how would they have responded? [Participant raised her hand] Number6.

P6: I think it would have been hard to respond, because nowadays we don't help each other. Another person's need, to me it is my happiness//

P2: //Yes//

P6: //Not necessarily that I mean, me [chuckles by participant]//

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P6: But another person might rejoice in my problems. So, think that they wouldn't have been able to answer it because it was going to be like we are showing off and we will judge her and say, "why don't you go and ask for help", you see.

F: Okay, okay, I hear you. So, sometimes people have a very small amount of bleeding, and they may not even need to use menstrual pad, tampon, pantyliner, or other material. What words would you use to describe this very small amount of bleeding. What do we call it?

P7: I say *ngiyaspotter* [I am spotting].

F: You are spotting. Is there another different word? [Slight silence by participant] Okay, what does the word to spot mean? How would you describe it?

P7: If I were to describe it, I mean that the blood comes out a little, like it is spilling.

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P7: Mhm [participant is neutral], like dots, dots [referring to the portion of the blood].

F: Oh okay, how do you know that you are spotting, or you are not on your [menstrual] periods. How do you distinguish it?

P7: I distinguish it because I can see the blood, even if it is light but I can tell that I am spotting. And I feel [menstrual] cramps, which means I am on my [menstrual] periods. Because before I used the injection, I used to have [menstrual] cramps, I would feel [menstrual] cramps and could tell that I am spotting which means that even the periods.

F: They are about to start [interviewer referring to menstrual periods].

P7: Yes.

F: Oh okay. How do you choose whether to use a [menstrual] pad, tampon, or other material if you are spotting?

P7: I can tell with how it [menstrual blood] is coming, that how much it [menstrual blood] comes out. So, then I use a pantyliner. When it [menstrual blood] comes out a little bit, a little bit, I use a pantyliner.

F: Oh okay. So, there is a question that I asked previously, that when you last had your [menstrual] period, which materials did you use? Do we remember it?

Yes! [Participants agreeing]

F: Okay, if you were spotting, how would you have answered that question?

P2: I am not used to pantyliners.

F: Okay…

P2: I use a [menstrual] pad.

F: How many would you use per day?

P2: Spotting is something small, it is just drops [of menstrual blood]//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P2: //Yes, I can use it maybe when I wake up in the morning, bath and wear it. In the evening if I can see that it [menstrual blood] is not there, I don't see a need [to change to another menstrual pad]. I will continue and wear the one from the morning.

F: Okay, maybe 1 [menstrual] pad.

P2: Yes, maybe also at night, or at night I can change it. It depends.

F: Oh okay. Is there someone who would like to share something different. [Slight silence by participants] Or would use something different and not a [menstrual] pad. [Slight silence by participants] Thank you so much, we can sit down. Are we still good though?

Yes! [All participants responded at once].

[Movements of participants sitting down]

F: We can drink water if any of you would like to drink water. Okay, we are about to enter a topic that is a bit different from what we were talking about today. How would you like to be asked if you had sex or not? [Slight silence by participants] Which words would make it easier or more comfortable to answer when talking about sex, if you have done it not?

[Slight silence by participants]

[Chuckles by participants, participants seem very shy]

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P6: I usually say, maybe when I am asking a person that I know, I say, *uwafrayile amachips* [Meaning: have you fried chips today]. So, the minute they say, "yes I fried them" I then know that oh, she was intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse]. So, it becomes easier to – or if the environment we are in, if there are children, so, if I say, "oh dear have you fried chips", "yes I fried them dear", "oh okay".

F: What do you mean when you say, "have you fried the chips". How is it related to sex?

P6: I think it is words that hide the person who is here//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: //In front of us but not in our conversation. So, there are people that are sitting here but then listening to our conversation. So, the minute we say words and say words explicitly and she will be like, "yes". We judge each other out here and stuff//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: //So, another person will say, "my goodness how old is this person having sex". So, the minute we use words that are not familiar, we know that we are both talking about the same thing. Rather than saying, "oh dear, did you have sex yesterday".

[Chuckles by participants]

P6: You see. Then they will want to know [participant meant that the other person would want to know what they are talking about]. Because, what we do, a person wants to judge you. Maybe they look at your body and so forth. And say you are young, not knowing that you are an adult, but we are not built the same way.

F: Okay, so, frying chips in having sex?

P6: It is having sex, yes, being intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse] .

F: Okay, is there another word that means having sexual intercourse? [Slight silence by participants] [Chuckles by participants]. If we were asked by a nurse or researcher, which words would make it easier or make you comfortable to answer if you have done sexual intercourse or not?

P3: *Kade usenkonzweni yini* [Meaning: it is a question in isizulu translated directly as: were you at a church service]?

[Chuckles by participants]

P3: Were you at a church service yesterday?

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P3: Mhm [participant is neutral].

F: Why do you call it church service?

P3: [Chuckles] Ay! Please respond for me number 4.

F: What does the word mean.

P3: That you were at a church service?

F: Mhm [Yes].

P3: You see when growing up, they said that when talking about sexual intercourse, they said it is *inkonzo yasekamereni* [Meaning: It is a Zulu saying that translated directly as: a service for the bedroom] //

F: //Oh…//

P3://So, it stems from there.

[Participant raised her hand]

F: Okay, number 4.

P4: I wanted to second number 3; we usually say it is a service for the bedroom.

F: Okay, what does the word sex mean to you?

[Chuckles by participants]

P4: It means that you are going to make yourself happy with your significant other.

F: In what way?

P4: By sleeping and doing mischief.

[Chuckles by participants]

F: What is mischief?

P4: Mischief is when a man, oh a woman, a woman sleeps, there are different styles, maybe let's say uhm//

[Chuckles by participants]

P4: //The woman will sleep and face up like a chicken from [name of store], the man opens your legs//

[Chuckles by participants]

P4: //Your legs, you woman. He will then insert//

P3: //Brinjal [Meaning: it is a vegetable also known as an eggplant, participant suggested it because it is shaped like a penis. Therefore, according to the participant another word for a penis is brinjal] [participant was whispering to another participant]//

P4: //Mhm [no], he will insert his cigarette//

F: What is cigarette?

P4: It is a penis!

P3: Oh, my goodness!

[Chuckles by participants]

F: Oh okay, mhm [Neutral].

P4: That's it.

F: Thank you so much. Let's relax.

[Chuckles by participants]

F: Let's relax because we all have experienced the topic that we are talking about [Chuckles by interviewer]. Let's just relax. Yes, I saw number 2 had raised her hand. What does the word sex mean to you?

P2: I didn't raise my hand, my goodness! [Chuckles by participant]

F: Is there anyone else who would like to share? [Chuckles] [Slight silence by participants, participants are uncomfortable and shy] Okay, what do the words sexual intercourse mean to you or vaginal intercourse? [Slight silence by participants]

P2: Please repeat the question.

F: The word sexual intercourse, what does it mean to you? [Participant raised her hand] Yes, number 5.

P2: When I think of vaginal intercourse, I think of masturbating. I would say they must make it clear that you have sex with your opposite gender. It is like you are satisfying yourself [participant is referring to vaginal intercourse].

F: Mhm [Neutral], that is how that word sounds?

P2: Yes, it sounds like that.

F: Oh okay. Maybe let me say this in English, what does the word vaginal intercourse mean to you? [Slight silence, participants thinking] Or what does it mean, if you were to explain vaginal intercourse or sexual intercourse. [Participant raised her hand] Mhm [Neutral], number 4.

P4: It is to partake in sex.

F: Okay…

P4: Yes, with yourself.

F: Mmh [pardon]

P4: With yourself.

[Chuckles by participant]

P4: With no second person.

F: The word sexual intercourse or vaginal intercourse means that to you.

P4: Sexual intercourse…[participant thinking] Mhm [Yes].

F: It is when you are having sex alone.

[Chuckles by participants]

P6: Please may I try.

F: Yes, number 6.

P6: I think it is fun between two people. A man and woman. So, the minute they become sexual intercourse, that is when they do intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse].

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P6: They are genders that are not the same.

F: Oh, it is genders that are not the same, that do intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse].

P6: Yeah.

F: What is intimacy?

P6: It is sex.

F: It is sex.

P6: Mhm [Participant agreeing].

F: Okay, alright, is there anyone else that would like to share? [Slight silence by participants] Okay, healthcare providers sometimes at the clinic or researchers sometimes ask whether you used a second method of contraception when you last had sex. How do you think this question can be better phrased? What words would make it easier to understand this question or answer? [Participant raised her hand] Number 4.

P4: *Ugcine nini ukuya kamfana* [When last did you go to the boy's house]

F: *Ugcine nini ukuya kamfana* [When last did you go to the boy's house]

P4: Mhm [Yes].

F: Okay…

P4: Or *umgcine nini umfana* [when last were you with the boy]?

F: Okay…Okay, so, here they want to find out if there is a second method that you used for contraception so that you don't fall pregnant, when you last had sex.

Mhm [Participants neutral]

F: How do you think it is best to ask this question?

P7: I think that they must ask if you and the person that you slept with used a condom.

F: Oh, you used a condom.

P7: Yes, a condom. They can phrase it that way.

F: Okay, what do others say? [Slight silence by participants] Okay, when we are talking about a second method of contraception, what do you think of? [Participant raised her hand]

P4: It is a female condom and the one that is inserted by men.

F: Oh, those are methods of contraception, okay. What else? [Slight silence, participants are exhausted] Is there anything else that we use to prevent pregnancy? [Participant raised her hand] Yes, number 1.

P1: Oh, I thought you were saying another thing that you protect yourself from, apart from pregnancy.

F: No, it is methods of contraception when talking about preventing pregnancy.

[Slight silence, participant is thinking]

P1: There isn't.

F: Okay, you may share what you wanted to share.

P1: I wanted to say, maybe other methods of contraception for you to know get HIV infected maybe take PrEP.

F: Take PrEP…

P1: Mhm [Neutral], yes.

F: Oh okay… Alright, thank you so much. When we are talking about the second method of contraception to prevent pregnancy, would you consider including withdrawal as a second method to prevent pregnancy?

[Slight silence by participants]

F: Do we know of withdrawal?

P3: Is it to “pull out” or what?

F: Pardon.

P3: Is it “pull out” or? What is withdrawal?

F: What is pull out?

[Chuckles by participants]

P3: It is when someone comes out.

F: What is it?

P3: It is when a person pulls out when they feel that they are about to//

P2: //Ejaculate//

P3: //Ejaculate.

F: Oh okay, what is he pulling out?

P3: His penis, he takes it out of her vagina. He pulls it out and ejaculates outside [of the vagina].

F: When having sexual intercourse.

P3: Mhm [Yes].

F: Oh okay. Do you think that can be a second method to prevent pregnancy?

P3: *Eish* [this is an expression isiZulu that shows that the individual is not at ease or disagrees about a certain thing], but it is not 100% , *ay* [no] no. [Participant is speaking softly, inaudible]

F: Mmh [pardon].

P3: All these things are not 100% but that one *eish* [this is an expression isiZulu that shows that the individual is not at ease or disagrees about a certain thing] no.

F: You don’t agree//

P3: //It is risky.

F: Why?

P3: Let’s say that a small portion is left behind [sperms] and he insert it [penis] in [the vagina], even if he pulls out it is late by then. That is what they say. It is risky.

F: Okay, what do others say? Would you use it as a method to prevent pregnancy?

P6: May I say something?

F: Mhm [Yes].

P6: What is sometimes suggested by nurses is to abstain. But nowadays we don't do that, because I mean like everyone is doing it. So, you will ask yourself, "why must I abstain worse others you see//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: //They are intimacy [Meaning: participant meant being intimate. She understood being intimate as having sexual intercourse]//

F: //Mhm [Neutral]//

P6: // So, that is the only method that they sometimes use of which it is not working for people.

F: Oh okay. So, you would say to abstain maybe will help, instead of person to pull out.

P6: Yes, according to my understanding. If you have not started [having sex], don't start.

F: Okay.

P6: Just abstain [Chuckles].

[Chuckles by participants]

F: Okay, are there any of you that think of not to start, and have days where they don't have sex?

P4: Number 4.

F: To prevent pregnancy, yes.

P4: From my perspective, it [sex] is done because it is part of life in this world.

[Chuckles by participants]

P4: From my perspective, it [sex] should be discontinued. I stay for 3 months without any issues, maybe we will argue over this cup, I then say no with my vagina, he must stay at his house, and I must stay at home.

[Chuckles by participants]

P4: The vagina is mine, if I don't want with it, I don't want with it. And it happens naturally to me that I should annoy him with something small and then he will whistle at me. Then I say, "no one whistles at me, lobola [it is a traditional African custom where the groom's family pays the bride's family before the wedding] was paid for me, go and whistle at your harlots. A person must call or knock and come in". Then from there I don't want to give him my vagina for 2 months, 3 months [the participants means that sometimes she does not have sexual intercourse with her male partner for 2 to 2 months].

F: What makes you sometimes not want to have sexual intercourse?

P4: I also don't know. But it just happens.

F: It just happens.

P4: It just happens.

[Participant raised her hand]

F: Okay, number 6.

P6: Just to add to number 4. I also have that problem, but I think it is because of the implant I inserted. As I have mentioned before, it made me lose interest in sex. So, it happens that – because at the end you must do it [sex] but at the back of mind, I tell myself that I am pushing [participant encourages her partner during sex] him, because I don't want to [have sex].

F: Mhm [Neutral].

P6: But now I can't say pull out and leave. I can't, I must submit to those rules [participant referring to rules that her partner might come up with during sex]. Because okay fine, he will understand for that time that now I am on my [menstrual] periods. Maybe for that 3 months, 4 months, 6 months, he will wait for me. But on his mind, he is doing me to wait for me. Because I make him understand that right now since I am in this period like this [participant referring to menstrual periods], so, since I go on menstrual periods heavily there is a possibility that you will get sick somewhere somehow because what is coming out of me [participant referring to the menstrual blood] is dirty. We mustn't touch each other.

F: Okay, thank you so much for the experiences that you have shared today. Before we end our discussion, I would like to know if there is anything that you would like to share about your menstrual cycle while using contraception that we didn't discuss today? [Slight silence by participants] Is there anything that we left out?

No [All participants responded at once].

F: Okay, thank you for joining our discussion today. We are very grateful that we had an opportunity to share our thoughts, your information is very important. The time now is 12:31, the date is 27 November 2024, focus group C102.

[End of transcript]