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The Other Half of the Equation: Serving Young Men In a Young Women's Reproductive Health Clinic

By Tina Raine, Arik V. Marcell, Corinne H. Rocca and Cynthia C. Harper

CONTEXT: Efforts to improve reproductive health typically target women. Family planning agencies serving high-risk young women may be particularly suited to integrating young men in their health promotion efforts.

METHODS: In 2001, a family planning clinic in San Francisco serving primarily young women opened a male clinic as part of a male involvement program that includes education and outreach components. Client volume was assessed by reviewing billing data. New male clients completed questionnaires on their demographic characteristics, sexual and health-seeking behavior, and reason for clinic visit. Before and after the male clinic opened, female clients completed questionnaires assessing their satisfaction with services and their attitudes on males' being served at the clinic. Data were analyzed by using descriptive and chi-square statistics.

RESULTS: In the first year of the male clinic, the number of adolescent and adult male clients served at the facility increased by 192% and 119%, respectively, over the previous year. Among 110 males making first visits, 88% came for sexually transmitted disease testing or treatment. Three-quarters had learned of the clinic by word of mouth—from a sexual partner (37%), friend (29%) or sibling (6%)—rather than directly from outreach efforts. The proportion of female respondents very or mostly satisfied with their care was similarly high before (98%) and after (92%) the male clinic opened.

CONCLUSIONS: Increasing capacity within the female reproductive health model to serve males is feasible. To reach at-risk males, "in-reach" efforts with female clients may be as important as targeted outreach efforts.

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Tina Raine is assistant clinical professor, Corinne H. Rocca is senior research analyst and Cynthia C. Harper is demographer, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences and Center for Reproductive Health Research and Policy, University of California, San Francisco. Arik V. Marcell is assistant professor of pediatrics, Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, University of Maryland, School of Medicine, Baltimore.

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