**MTN-032 Phase 2**

Male Partner Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Topic Guide

**INSTRUCTIONS for the Facilitator: How to use the FGD Guide**

1. There are two levels of questions:

* Primary discussion questions: appear in **bold** text and represent all the topics you will need to cover by the end of the interview. The questions are written to ensure some consistency across FGDs but you are not required to read them verbatim. You may adapt the questions and/or ask them in a different order, depending on how the discussion develops.
* Probing topics: are indicated with a bullet. If you find that the participants provide little information in response to the primary question, these probing topics may be used to encourage further discussion. You are not required to cover every topic listed.

1. *Instructions/suggestions to facilitator are in italics and [brackets].*
2. The FGD guide is not meant to be used to take notes. Rather, you should use the separate notes form, where you will also insert your initials, the PTIDs of all participants, as well as the date, start and end time of the discussion.

**Before starting the FGD, the facilitator reminds the group of:**

* The purpose of the FGD
* Ground rules for FGD (per study SSP), including importance of confidentiality and use of pseudonyms
* That tape recording will now begin

**Before starting the FGD, ensure that all participants have provided written informed consent.**

[*Facilitator starts the tape recorder and reads:*] **Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this discussion. I look forward to hearing all of your thoughts and please remember there are no right or wrong answers and everything you say here will be kept confidential; we will not share your personal information or responses with anyone outside of the study. As you know from your informed consent, this FGD will be tape recorded today. Before we start, please verbally indicate that you are aware that we are tape recording this session and that it is okay with you** *[be sure to get a verbal okay from all members of the focus group before continuing].*

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| 1. **Men in the community and HIV risk perception** |
| *Purpose: To explore their perceptions of HIV risk relative to other aspects of life, and how this impacted their support of their partners' use of the dapivirine ring.*   1. **What do men in your community most often talk about when they get together?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * *KEY PROBE:* What do they say about HIV? * *KEY PROBE*: Who is at risk of getting HIV? Why? |
| 1. **How worried are men in your community about getting HIV**?  **Why?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * *KEY PROBE:* What other health worries do men have? How do worries about HIV compare to these other health concerns? * *KEY PROBE*: How do you think worries about HIV compare to other worries in their lives (e.g. financial, work, partner relationship, family issues, etc.)?   + How much do men care about preventing HIV? * *KEY PROBE*: How worried are men in your community about their partners getting HIV? Why?   + How do the levels of worry change if it’s their wife versus girlfriend?   + How do the levels of worry change if men aren’t married versus if they are married? |
| 1. **What do men in your community do to protect themselves from getting HIV?** (*e.g. condoms, HIV testing, medical male circumcision, mutual monogamy, etc.*)   *Possible probing topics:*   * Which methods are most preferred? Why? * Which methods are least preferred? Why? * In a couple, who is responsible for HIV prevention? * Do men use protection with some partners and not others? Why? * What have you used to protect yourselves from getting HIV? |
| 1. **Knowledge of and Opinions About HOPE** |
| *Purpose: To hear what they and other men in their community know and think about medical research in general and the HOPE study.*   1. **What are your opinions about medical research in general?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * What do men in your community think about research? * Where do you think these opinions originate? * Did you discuss your feelings about research with your partners? Why/why not? * What is the community perception regarding the fact that this research is “foreign” (as opposed to “local”)? |
| 1. **What do you know about the HOPE study? (Purpose, product used, etc.)**   *Possible probing topics:*   * What do you know about what your partners did while they were at study visits? * How did you learn that information (*e.g. male partner engagement activities, partner, study staff*)? When did you learn it? * What was your initial reaction when you found out about the study? * What do men in your community know about the study? |
| 1. **What are your opinions about the HOPE study?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * How did your opinion about the HOPE study change over time?   + For those of you who are familiar with ASPIRE, how have your opinions changed since the time of ASPIRE? * What concerns have you had about the HOPE study?   + What did you do about the concerns? * Did those concerns change at any point (get worse or go away)?   + If yes, why did they change?   + Do you still have those concerns? |
| 1. **What challenges have there been in your relationships due to your partners participating in HOPE?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * What has been a positive change? * What has been a negative change? * Did these challenges go away or what happened? |
| 1. **Knowledge and opinion of vaginal ring** |
| *Purpose: To explore what they and their communities know about and think about the vaginal ring for HIV prevention.*   1. **What do you know about the vaginal ring?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * KEY PROBE: How did you learn that information (*e.g. male partner engagement activities, partner, study staff, community meetings, etc.*)? When did you learn it? |
| 1. **What is your opinion about the vaginal ring? Likes/dislikes?** [U*se opinion tool; sample of the ring*]   *Possible probing topics:*   * *KEY PROBE*: What concerns did you have about the ring?   + What did you do about those concerns?   + Did those change at any point (get worse or go away)? If yes, why did they change?   + Do you still have those concerns? * *KEY PROBE*: How did your opinion of the ring affect your level of support for your partner using the ring in HOPE?   + What kind of support did you offer your partner (if any)? * *KEY PROBE*: How could the ring be improved so that men would like it more? |
| 1. **What do other men in your community know and think about the vaginal ring?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * Have you heard other men talking about the ring? What did they say? * Did you talk to other men about the ring? What about? * How did the community’s opinion influence your opinion of the ring? * How did this affect your level of support for your partner’s participation in HOPE? * How would this affect your level of support of your partner using the ring in the future? |
| [*Interviewers should* *use transition language in their own words to ease into this next section about asking more personal questions about sex and the ring*] |
| 1. **How did the ring affect your sexual life, if at all?** [*Use penis & pelvic models, sample of ring, etc.]*   *Possible probing topics:*   * *KEY PROBE*: Could you tell when your partner was wearing the ring? How did you know it was there? * *KEY PROBE*: What did sex feel like when your partner was wearing the ring? Please describe how it was different from sex without the ring. * Did you change sexual positions because of the ring? * Did you change what you did to your partner? (insert fingers, other types of foreplay) * If there were changes, do you think they were good or bad? * Did you talk to your partner about the ring and your sexual experience? Why or why not? |
| 1. **Ring efficacy** |
| *Purpose: Find out their understanding of ring efficacy, and what impact that had on their support of their partners.*   1. **Please explain your current understanding about how well the ring protects against HIV.**   *Possible probing topics:*   * How did you learn that information? (e.g. research staff, media, your partner, other participants, other sources?) * How do you feel about the level of protection the ring provides? * How did this knowledge affect your support of your partner using the ring throughout HOPE? * What level of protection would the ring need to provide for you to want your partner to use it in the future? * Did your understanding change at any point? If yes, how? From whom did you hear the new information? (e.g. research staff, media, your partner, other participants, other sources?) |
| 1. **HIV prevention preferences** |
| 1. **How do you feel about your partners using the vaginal ring to prevent HIV compared to you wearing a condom?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * *KEY PROBE*: What do you think about using the ring and condom together? (Are you willing? Do you think it’s necessary?) * What other products would you like to have available for HIV prevention? (For men/women) * What are the benefits of having men vs women having control over the HIV prevention product? * What are the drawbacks of men vs women controlling HIV prevention products? |
| 1. **Male engagement in future vaginal ring projects** |
| 1. **How much should male partners be involved in women’s decisions to use the vaginal ring for HIV prevention?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * Do you think that men should always be involved? To what extent? * How do you think men can best be involved in getting more women to use these products? * How can men be encouraged to support women’s use of HIV prevention methods in general? |
| 1. **As the vaginal ring for HIV prevention continues to be studied, how do you think male partners should be involved in the research?**   *Possible probing topics:*   * *KEY PROBE*: Did you attend any clinic events? Which ones? What did that entail? * (*If did NOT attend events*): Why did you not attend any clinic events? * *KEY PROBE:* Besides clinic events, how and where can male involvement and participation take place? * What roles can men fulfill in research, why is male participation important? * Do you think that men should always be involved? To what extent? * How do you think other men from the community should be involved in future research? |
| 1. **Wrap Up** |
| 1. **Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions with us today. We truly appreciate your willingness to participate and discuss your experience with us. We’ve now reached the end of our discussion. Do you have any questions for me or any additional comments about the HOPE study or the vaginal ring?** |