



## CASE STUDY

# Testing the Utility of an Automated Feedback System for Family Planning Counseling Quality

Researchers assess the feasibility and utility of an automated feedback system on quality of information provided to family planning counseling clients in clinical settings in Mexico City.

## BACKGROUND

Access to effective, affordable family planning (FP) services and products is fundamental to reproductive autonomy, health, and human rights. The quality of care provided to clients seeking contraceptives – including the information given and the way in which it is communicated – impacts clients' reproductive health, as well as the continued use of the chosen method. Quality of family planning counseling, therefore, needs to be assessed and monitored in order for providers to maintain and improve client experience, as well as to reach international goals for modern contraceptive use.

The Mexican Foundation for Family Planning, A.C. (Mexfam), is a civil society organization promoting access to health, education, and defense of sexual and reproductive rights for all people, through their clinics, services and activities across Mexico. At the time of this study, Mexfam provides direct services through 18 operational centers and 9 medical service centers, as well as supporting public information and conducting policy advocacy for sexual and reproductive rights and services.

As part of their efforts to ensure quality of family planning counseling, Mexfam has encouraged clients to complete brief satisfaction surveys after appointments. These 10-question surveys focus on general client satisfaction rather than exploring specific areas of service, such as contraceptive counseling. These surveys are administered via electronic tablets at the front desk of the clinic.

## CHALLENGE: IDENTIFYING A PRACTICAL AUTOMATED SYSTEM FOR CLIENTS TO FEEDBACK ON THE QUALITY OF THEIR FAMILY PLANNING COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

While the existing quality of care surveys provided some insights for Mexfam, the organization struggled with limitations, too. The existing surveys consist of long, relatively complex questions. Once surveys were collected, staff had to input and process the data, generate reports, then provide survey results to those administrating clinics. This process was time consuming – often taking months – and required significant staff effort, neither of which effectively supported responsiveness to client feedback. Additionally, the existing surveys did not capture the granularity of information that Mexfam was interested in learning and increasing the survey length resulted in clients electing not to respond.

Mexfam needed a simpler, more efficient process for collecting better data from clients and analyzing it more effectively. They also needed the system to be practical and cost-effective for their context, and to go beyond client satisfaction to demonstrate contributions toward modern contraceptive uptake and continuation.



## SOLUTION: A NEW TABLET-BASED SURVEY WITH AUTOMATED RESULTS

The Method Information Index (MII) is a simple measure to assess the quality of family planning counseling, that has been widely adopted by the global public health community. A higher MII score (3 being the highest) is associated with a lower rate of contraceptive discontinuation while in need.

The MII is an FP2030 core indicator and is included in major population-based survey tools such as the USAID Demographic and Health Surveys, and the Performance Monitoring for Action 2020 surveys.

The MII is quick and easy to administer. After completing a visit in which they received a family planning method, clients are asked three questions:

1. Were you informed about other methods of family planning?
2. Were you informed about side effects for your chosen method?
3. Were you told what to do if you experienced side effects?

In January of 2022, they collaborated with Metrics for Management in a proof-of-concept study to test the feasibility and utility of collecting responses to the MII questions via an automated client feedback system to regularly collect and report data on family planning quality in their clinic settings. Data were collected on a standalone kiosk, and weekly reports were delivered to clinic and headquarter leadership.

The study sought to answer three main research questions:

- How well does the system work and does it offer any advantages over Mexfam's existing customer feedback system?
- What proportion of eligible clients uses the system, and does usage change based on the survey duration?
- To what extent does automated feedback to clinic managers and Mexfam impact decision-making?

Mexfam's Medical Services Management and Research teams worked with Metrics for Management teams to review and adapt the survey instrument before deployment. Metrics for Management identified a kiosk provider, and Mexfam's Research team managed the installation and deployment of kiosks housing internet-connected tablets in two Mexfam clinics - Xola Clinic and La Villa Clinic. Both clinics are centrally located in Mexico City, have high client volumes and, in particular, have high volumes of clients seeking family planning services. The clinics also have electricity and internet access, making them ideal for testing the automated feedback system.

Piloting of the new system began in April 2022. In the first, 6-week, phase, family planning clients at the study clinics were presented with a short survey via the tablet kiosks, which were strategically placed so that clients leaving appointments were routed past the kiosk locations. Clients who received a family planning method during their visit were asked five questions, while clients who did not receive a family planning method during their visit were asked four questions. All respondents were given the option to include any additional comments through a free response question at the

end of the survey. Each week, Metrics for Management produced a report based on the data collected from the four in-clinic devices. Individual reports were produced for each clinic and a third report that combined data from Xola and La Villa was also produced for the central office.

During the second phase of the study, which ran for seven weeks beginning in July 2022, the length of the survey was extended for clients who received a contraceptive method, with these clients being asked nine or ten questions, depending on whether or not the client had used the contraceptive method previously received. The added questions included in this phase asked about prior use of contraceptive methods, age, and satisfaction with the services provided by the Mexfam clinic. If a client responded that they had never used the contraceptive method they received during their prior visit, they were asked a follow-up question about whether they had ever used any contraceptive method before to determine if they were a new user.

Clients who did not receive a contraceptive method did not see a change in the survey during this phase of the study and were asked the same five questions as were asked in the first phase of the study. As in the first phase, all clients had the option to leave any additional comments through a free response question at the end of the survey.

The Mexfam Research team acted as the study's liaison between Metrics for Management and the larger Mexfam staff, monitoring user engagement and system functionality. Following the conclusion of the study, Mexfam provided summary data from their records. Data collected during the study was retrospectively compared to the Mexfam records.

The Research team also worked with clinics to troubleshoot the system during the study. For example, after the study began, a lack of user engagement prompted the team to analyze placement of the kiosks and work with the clinic to make the kiosk more visible, as well as training nurses and counselors to better understand the tool and encourage them to invite users to take the survey.

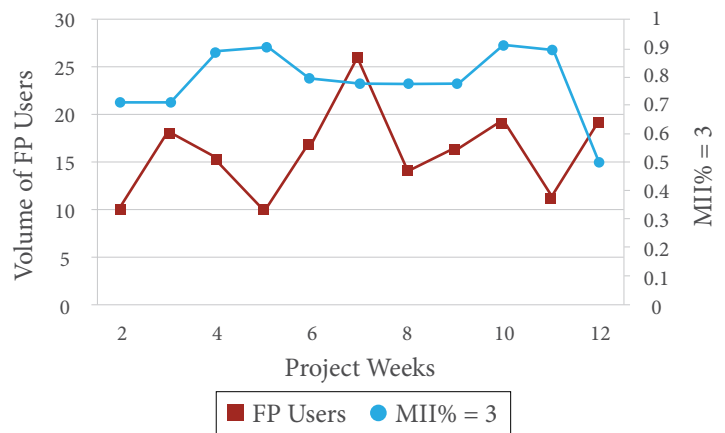
## RESULTS: IMPROVED SERVICE PROVISION BASED ON EFFICIENT DATA CAPTURE AND PROCESSING

Mexfam found that clients were easily able to use the kiosks and did not have questions about how to use the devices or have difficulty understanding the questions or response options in the survey. The kiosks also had the advantage of being 'attention-catching,' resulting in clients being drawn to them and wanting to respond to the survey. Clients were able to provide valuable feedback in a short amount of time. Automated capture, analysis, and reporting saved Mexfam staff time by eliminating or reducing previous processes and eliminated recurring costs of gathering and reporting paper-based analyses across the clinic system. The second phase did not show any indication of survey drop-off, despite the longer survey, indicating that it is possible to extend the survey without impeding data collection.

Over the course of the study period, 79.3% of family planning clients surveyed reported receiving complete counseling, earning a MII score of three (the maximum score possible). Surveyed Xola Clinic clients were more likely to have an MII score of three than those in La Villa Clinic, although La Villa Clinic showed a notable increase in the percentage of users with an MII score of three in the second phase of the project (Figure 1, Figure 2).

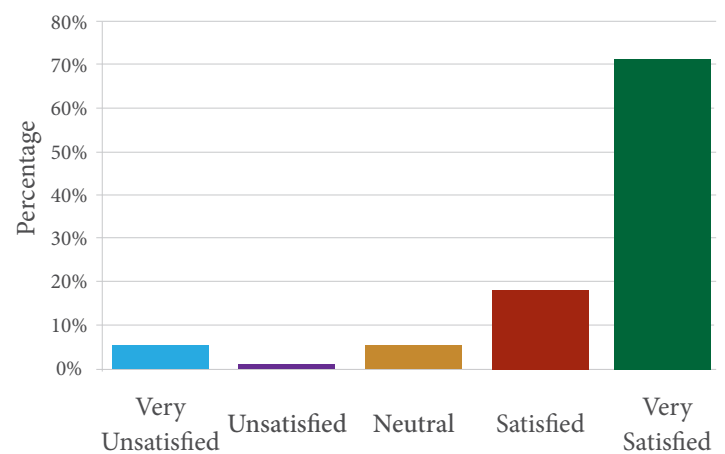
Because the data were analyzed and results were reported back so quickly each week, Mexfam was able to make needed changes quickly, as well, allowing them to improve the quality of services offered in their clinics. In one case, evidence from the survey resulted in a change of personnel in a participating clinic; in other instances, the survey data demonstrated areas in which counselors or doctors needed training. Having this information in near-real-time enabled Mexfam to improve the quality of their services quickly after feedback was requested, showing a genuine concern for and responsiveness to customer satisfaction and service quality.

**FIGURE 1. USERS WHO RECEIVED COMPLETE COUNSELING ON CONTRACEPTIVE METHODS**



Source: Final Report of the Proof of Concept Study on MII

**FIGURE 2. SATISFACTION OF ALL FP USERS SUMMARY**



Source: Final Report of the Proof of Concept Study on MII

## NEXT STEPS

- This initial study was conducted only in two clinics. Mexfam and Metrics for Management would like to expand it to the rest of its clinics and operational centers.
- Because the kiosks used in the study were determined to be too expensive for Mexfam to roll out to additional clinics, the study team would like to identify and test more affordable device options.
- Some of Mexfam's clinics are located in areas with limited internet access, so the organization is also investigating applications such as CommCare and Kobo ToolBox as options for implementing the MII survey in these locations.
- While the study was conducted in Spanish using written surveys, Mexfam and Metrics for Management are also interested in exploring options to make the MII surveys available for non-native Spanish speaking and for non-literate populations. This may include testing a photo-based survey option or read-aloud technology that would provide non-literate clients with an independent, automated survey experience.
- As a member association of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Mexfam hopes to document their experiences using the MII for client satisfaction surveys and share their learning with other member associations.

The tool is very simple, easy to use, and comprehensive. It greatly facilitates processes and can be adapted to the needs of different healthcare units.

Ada Melchor, Research Officer, Mexfam

## Lessons Learned

1. Using a short, simple, and well-designed surveys encourages participation. Many don't respond to surveys because they are in a hurry, but if it's a short, easy-to-use survey, they are more likely to respond.
2. It was important to have people promoting the surveys (medical teams, counselors) and taking action on the survey results.
3. Efficient and effective reporting in a timely manner is critical for timely decision-making.



Visit the MII webpage for additional information on this metric.  
<https://m4mgmt.org/method-information-index/>

Visit the Mexfam website for additional information.  
<https://mexfam.org.mx>

Metrics for Management can help you use the MII in your project. Contact [communications@m4mgmt.org](mailto:communications@m4mgmt.org).