Emergency Contraception for Rape Survivors: A Human Rights and Public Health Imperative

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Access to EC in post-rape care is low

- Even where ECPs are available in health systems, they are often not provided on-site to women who seek post-rape care.

  - **South Africa***: Study found 14% of girls aged 12-17 received EC in post-rape care.
  
  - **Kenya and Zambia***: Survey of “one-stop centers” found that 3 of 5 did not offer ECPs to survivors.


Policy Underpinnings for EC provision

UN Commission on the Status of Women

UN Committee Against Torture

FIGO

World Health Organization

PEPFAR

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE
Some details on EC provision

- **EC pills are safe & effective for all ages.**
  - All female survivors of rape should be offered ECPs if they have reached puberty or are believed to be at risk of pregnancy.

- **Pregnancy testing is not required.**
  - Guidance from WHO and others does not support pregnancy testing before ECP provision.

- **IUD can be used for EC.**
Increasing access to EC in post-rape care

- Policies
- Front-line care
- Enforcement
Implementing policies

- **Country-level guidance** on EC as a part of post-rape care is **uneven**

- **Including EC in national guidelines on post-rape care** standardizes EC as an essential treatment component
Front-Line EC Provision in Post-Rape Care

- Front-line responders & organizations should:
  - Be trained in EC provision
  - Stock EC
  - Offer EC on-site immediately
  - Counsel women about EC

- Policies should allow non-health providers (like police officers) to provide EC
  - Where not permitted: Put referral systems in place
Enforcing Laws & Policies That Protect Survivors

- Monitoring and enforcement of policies is critical

- Must address “conscientious objection” laws and practices
  - Should mandate alternative means to access EC
Recommendations

- **Governments should implement & enforce policies** ensuring prompt on-site provision of EC

- **Health care institutions, policies, training, & supply systems** should support EC provision

- **Non-health professionals** should be authorized to provide ECPs or referrals

Failure to ensure rape survivors’ EC access may harm women’s physical & psychological health and violates women’s human rights.
What can you do?

- **Distribute the fact sheet**
  - Available on our website: [www.emergencycontraception.org](http://www.emergencycontraception.org)

- **Join our listserv**
  - Email Hilary Lawton: [hlawton@fcimail.org](mailto:hlawton@fcimail.org)
Thank you!

- Questions?
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