



EXPANDING ACCESS VIA MOBILE PHONES: FERTILITY AWARENESS AND STANDARD DAYS METHOD®

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USAID
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Fertility Awareness
for Community
Transformation

31 MILLION women in India have unmet need for family planning



MADHURI lives in a village with her husband's extended family. She works in a factory and doesn't have good access to health services.



MEERA lives with her husband, mother-in-law, and daughter. She wants to wait to have another baby so she can keep working.



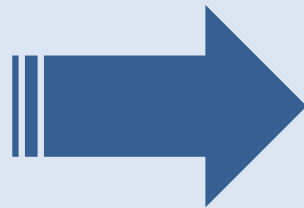
PRIYA is a final year BA student. She is preparing for her wedding at the end of the year, and wants to know more about her family planning options

Mobile phones can change this.

WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT & ACCESS FP...



**DID YOU
PICTURE
THESE?**





Can SMS about
fertility and FP
**change knowledge,
attitudes, or
behavior?**

Will it encourage
people to **take up
an FP method?**

CycleTel Humsafar

SDM Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy



- ✓ CycleTel is based on the **Standard Days Method® (SDM)**
- ✓ SDM is scientifically proven to be 95% effective in preventing pregnancy with correct use.
- ✓ CycleTel Humsafar alerts women of their fertile days each month **via SMS**, indicating when unprotected sex should be avoided to prevent unwanted pregnancies.
- ✓ Trained call center counselors available to support users.

Screens for
eligibility

At the start of
the service



Identifies the
fertile window

Repeated
monthly



Sends
reminder on 12
fertile days

Repeated
monthly



Connects to a
call center for
support

As and when
required

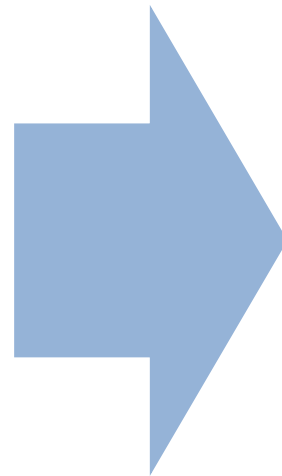
Bridging the Gap

Problem: Offering Standard Days Method (SDM) via phone does **NOT** address demand-creation or educating users.

Solution: Test if fertility awareness messages will help users understand fertility, feel comfortable using family planning, and bridge “adoption gap”.

CycleTel Family Advice

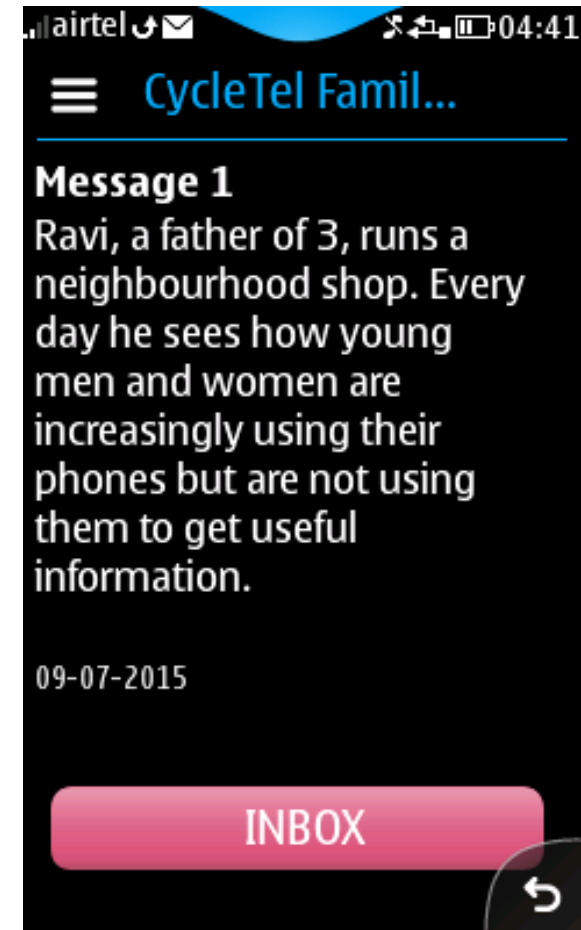
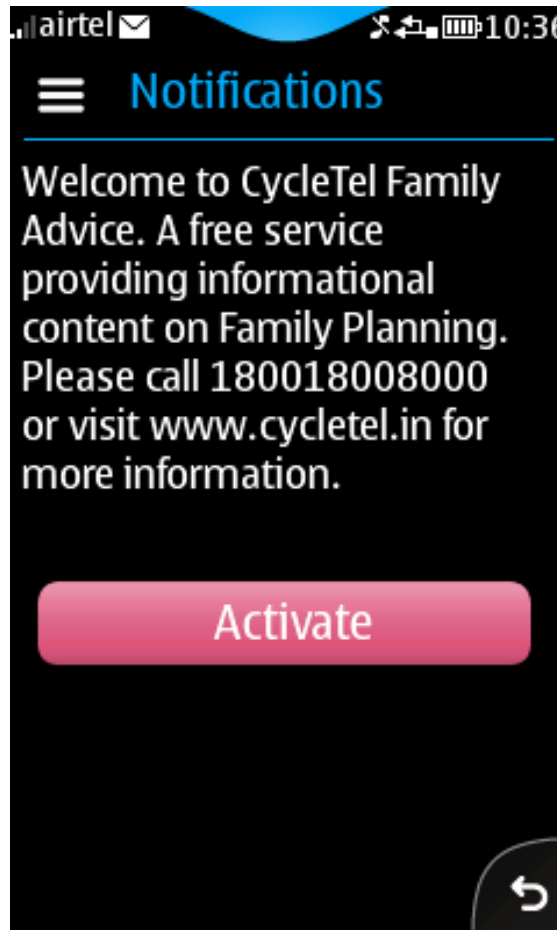
- ✓ Gain awareness of fertility
- ✓ Learn benefits of family planning
- ✓ Identify fertile days
- ✓ Seek family planning services



CycleTel Humsafar

SOLUTION: CYCLETEL FAMILY ADVICE

- ✓ **Educational** product
- ✓ 65 messages, delivered 4x a week over **16 weeks**,
- ✓ Users enter age, sex, and marital status
- ✓ Content tested through pilot testing (**20,000 users**), focus groups
- ✓ Messages organized into '**conversations**' between characters about fertility awareness



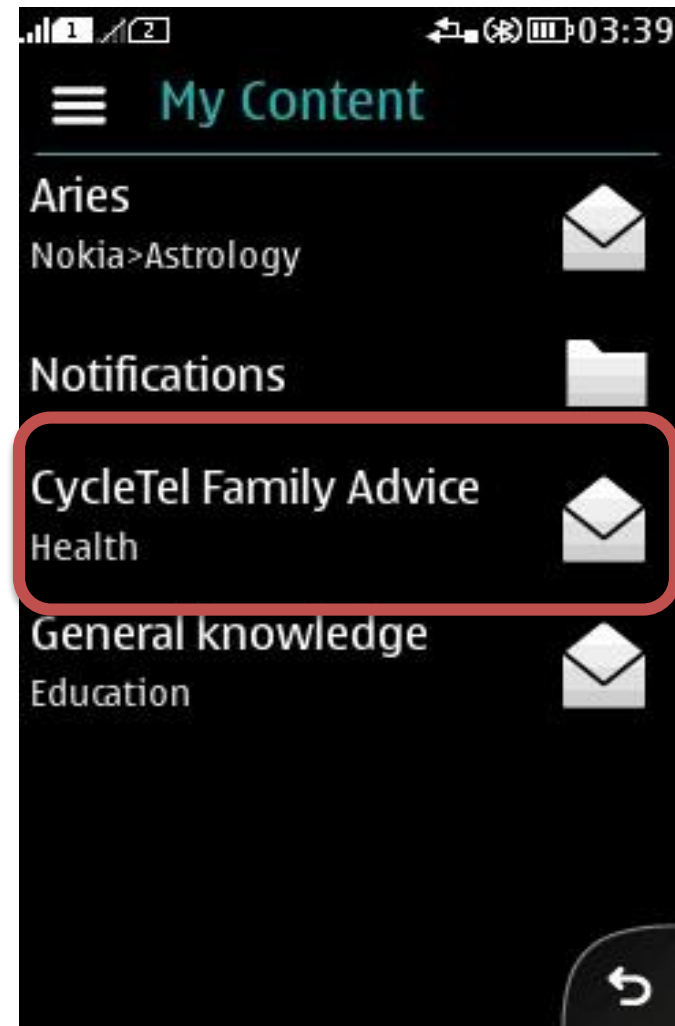
LIFE TOOLS PARTNERSHIP

IRH partnered with Life Tools, an information platform, pre-downloaded onto select Nokia handsets.

- ✓ **Target Market** –Entry-level smartphones and feature phones
- ✓ **Multi lingual** –Offers 12 languages
- ✓ **Built-in customer base and marketing channels** –User base of 50 million people



CycleTel Family Advice and CycleTel Humsafar widely available on Life Tools



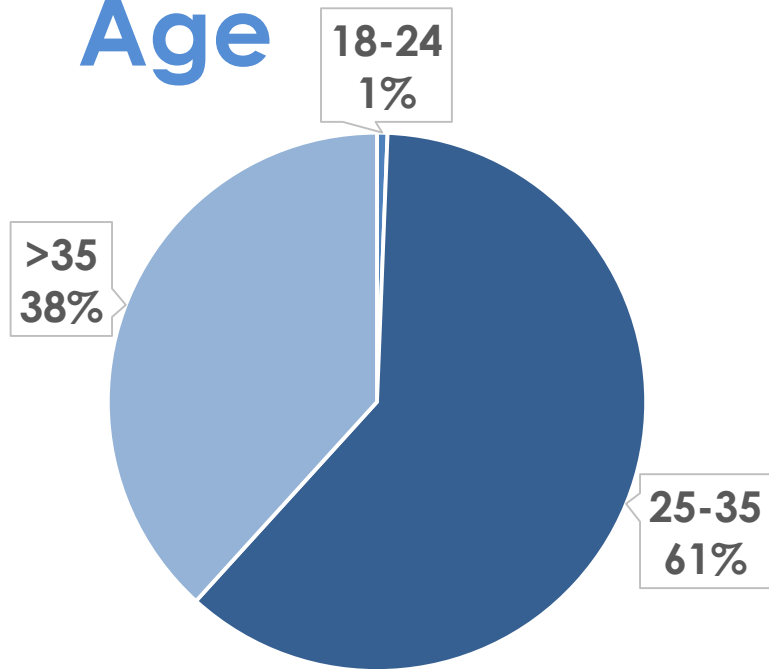
CYCLETEL FAMILY ADVICE OUTCOMES

TIME FRAME	OUTCOME
Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• #of users who recall basic messages,• Level of satisfaction with messages• # of users who share messages with partner or others
Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in FA knowledge,• Changes in attitudes and beliefs about birth spacing,• Increase in ability to track cycles• Knowledge of fertile days
Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in health seeking behavior, i.e. calling helpline• Enrolling in and using CycleTel Humsafar• Managing unsafe days while using CycleTel Humsafar• Use of other FP methods

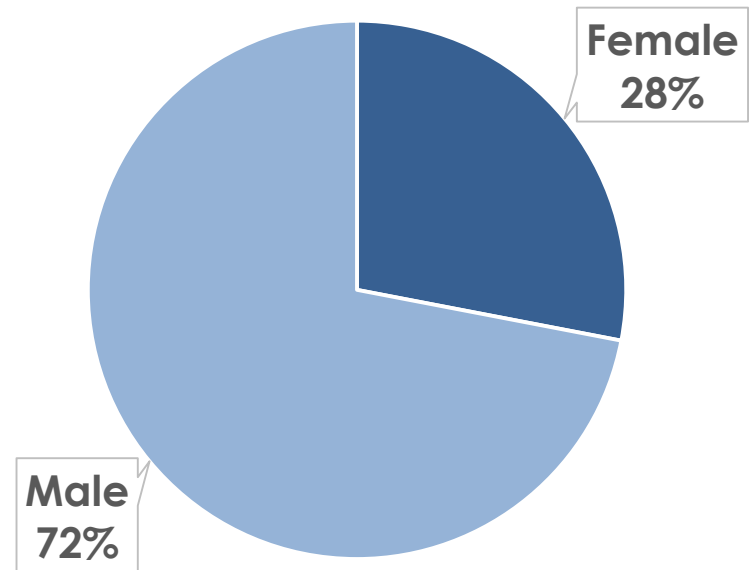
FAMILY ADVICE USER PROFILE

Total of 100,880 users (mean age 32.8 years), all married

Age

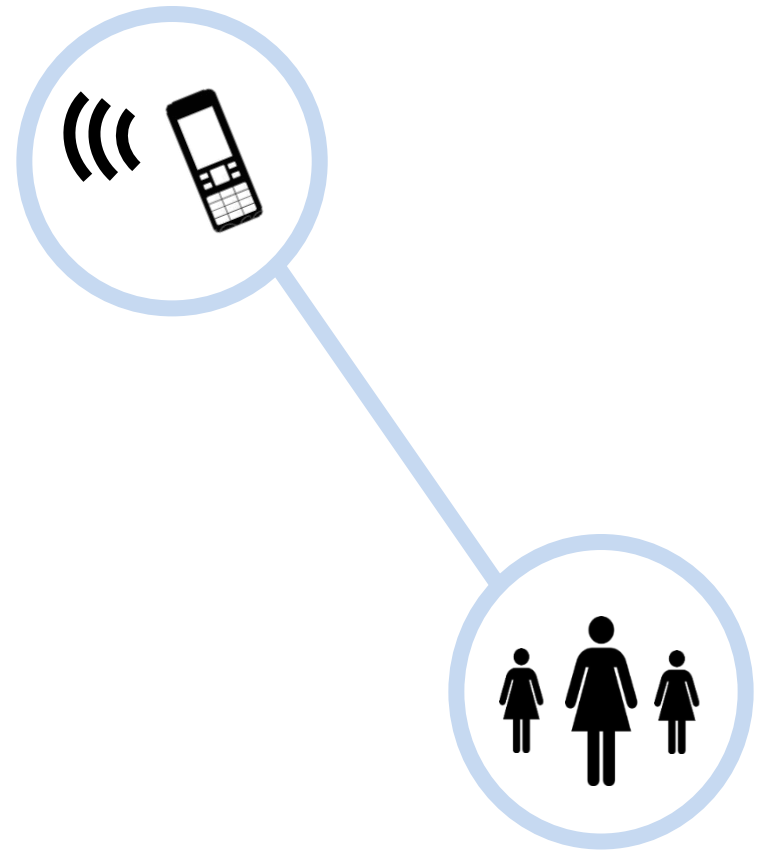


Sex



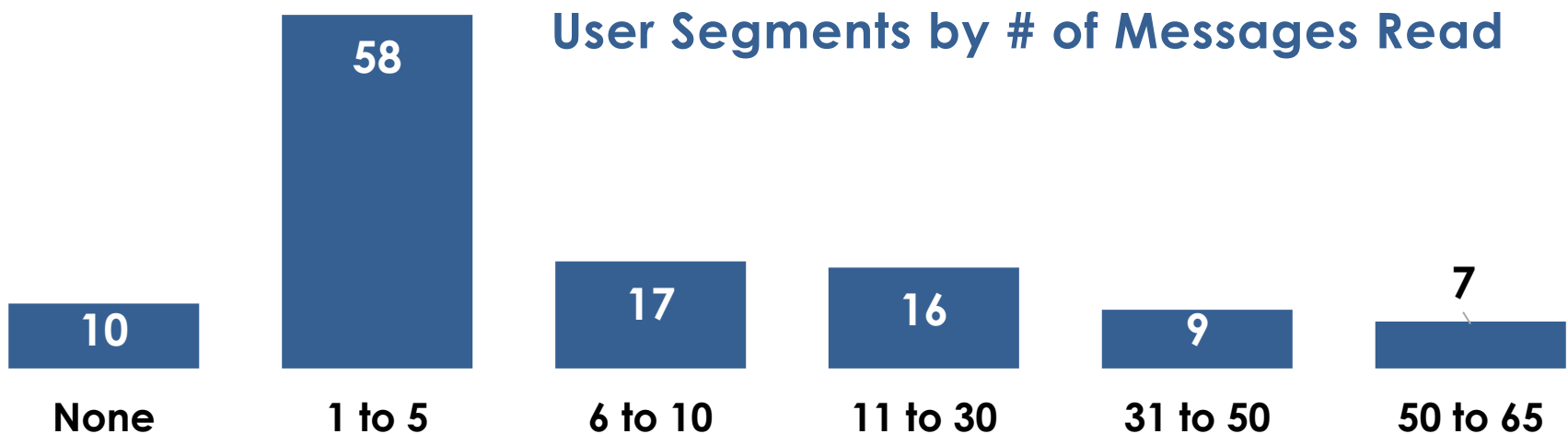
MHEALTH RESEARCH CHALLENGES

- ✓ Phone-based survey methodology at scale
- ✓ Trained counselors called 305 users at baseline (within one week of service start) but only 117 users at endline.
- ✓ Survey implementation was complicated by regulations, difficulties in reaching users, and lack of incentives for survey participants
- ✓ Questions on user demographics, use of CycleTel Family Advice, knowledge, attitudes and behavior around FP



THE MESSAGE & THE MEDIUM

- ✓ Challenges with **narrative format of messages** – 81% of users said they were satisfied with the service, but only 14% read more than 50% of messages.



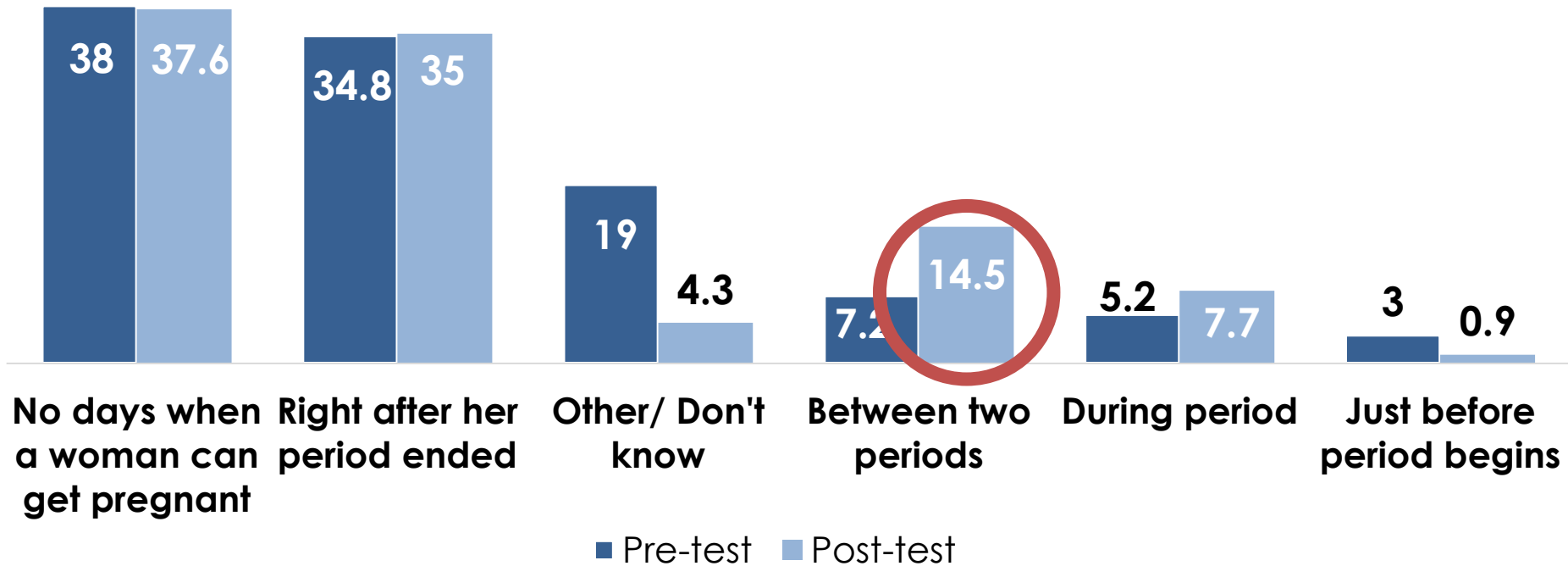


OUR FINDINGS

KNOWLEDGE

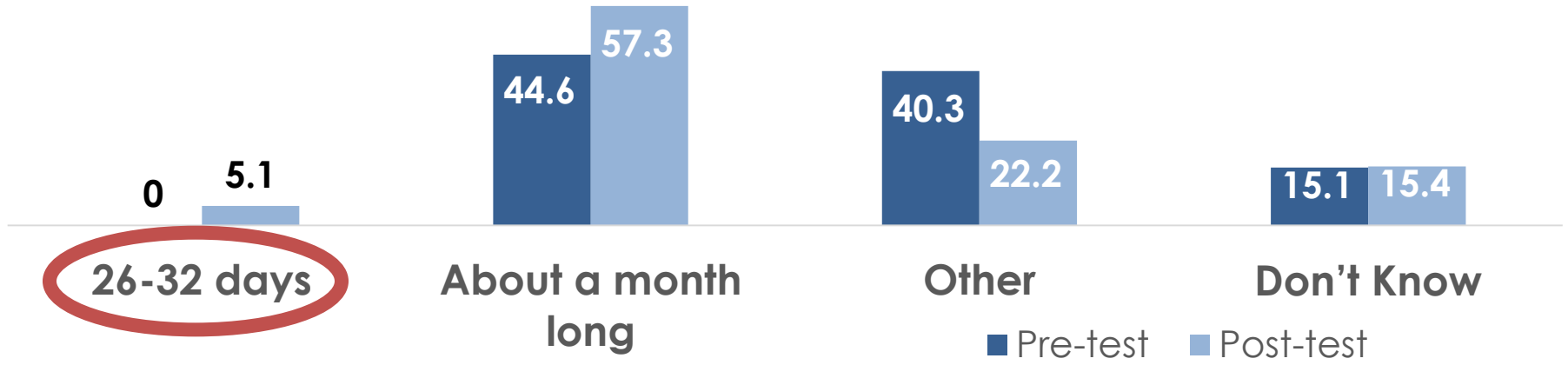
- ✓ Statistically significant increase in fertility awareness knowledge, including **knowledge of fertile days**

When are a woman's fertile days?

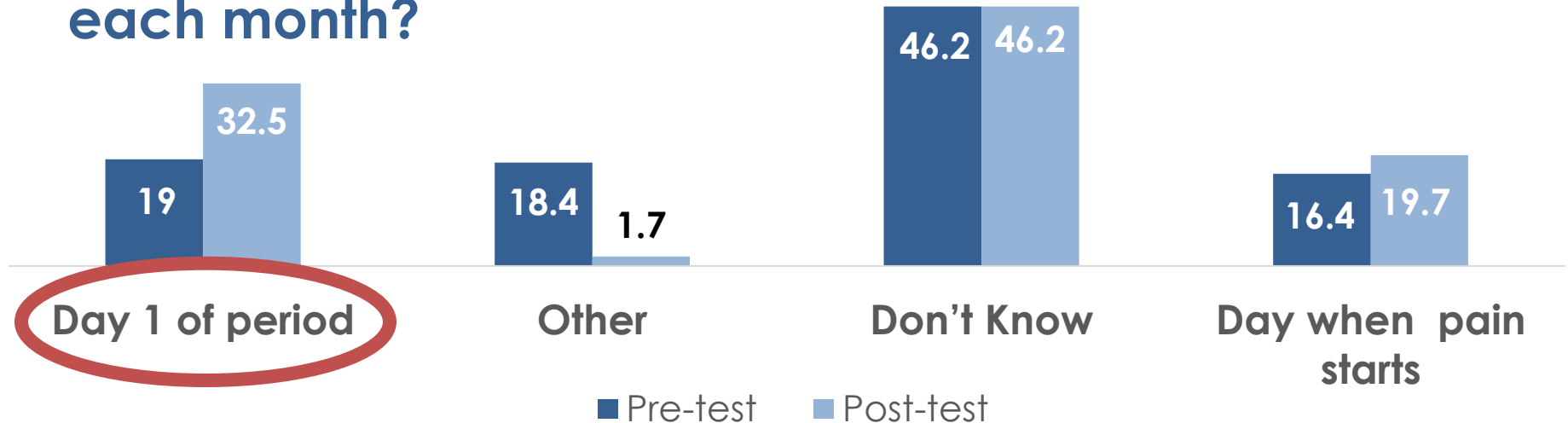


- ✓ Statistically significant increase in fertility awareness knowledge, including **knowledge of the menstrual cycle**

What is the length of a woman's menstrual cycle?



What is the first day of a woman's menstrual cycle each month?



ATTITUDES & BEHAVIORS



- ✓ No significant change in FP use (36% vs 32%)
- ✓ Post-test users who read >50% of the messages more likely to have discussed FP with someone than those who read fewer messages (34 vs. 19%).
- ✓ Post-test users more likely to agree that FP should be used to plan or prevent pregnancy (94 vs. 86%).
- ✓ Extended SMS campaigns may **not** be read by target audience.
- ✓ Messages did increase knowledge of fertility and FP for men and women, particularly for users who read the messages. **But** FA is still low.

A photograph of a rural village scene. In the foreground, a woman in a yellow and red sari is crouching on the ground, spreading a large mat of yellow grain. In the background, a man in a grey shirt and green pants is holding a young child. To the right, two women in traditional Indian attire are standing and talking. The scene is set in front of a blue-painted building with a tiled roof. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

What's next?

IRH will test:

1. The **impact** of a fertility awareness **Facebook page/marketing campaign** on knowledge and attitudes
2. Other distribution models for mobile FP products including a **social media ad campaign** and an **NGO partnership**



THANK YOU

www.irh.org | www.cycletel.org