

What do we call it and how do we talk about it?

Consumer messaging about preconception health



Sacramento, CA

May 22, 2008



Discovering “Meanings” of and “Methods” for promoting preconception health

MEANINGS--

What do consumers know, think and do?

- Market survey research
- Current knowledge
- Current reported behaviors that are relevant to PCH



METHODS--

How can we deal with so many topics in the preconception health bundle?

Findings from research

- Qualitative
- Quantitative



Placing Preconception Health Items on a consumer research survey



Porter Novelli's *HealthStyles* survey

- Understand consumer knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors
- Create vivid pictures of who we are trying to reach and how we might reach them
- Identify influencers and explore potential partnerships
- Understand media habits to discover message “placement” opportunities

Porter Novelli Surveys: Understanding the American Consumer

Adults

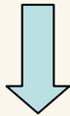
18-80 years old

Youth

9-18 years old

ConsumerStyles

Consumer behaviors and habits, including media



HealthStyles

Health beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, and social norms

Parent-child dyads



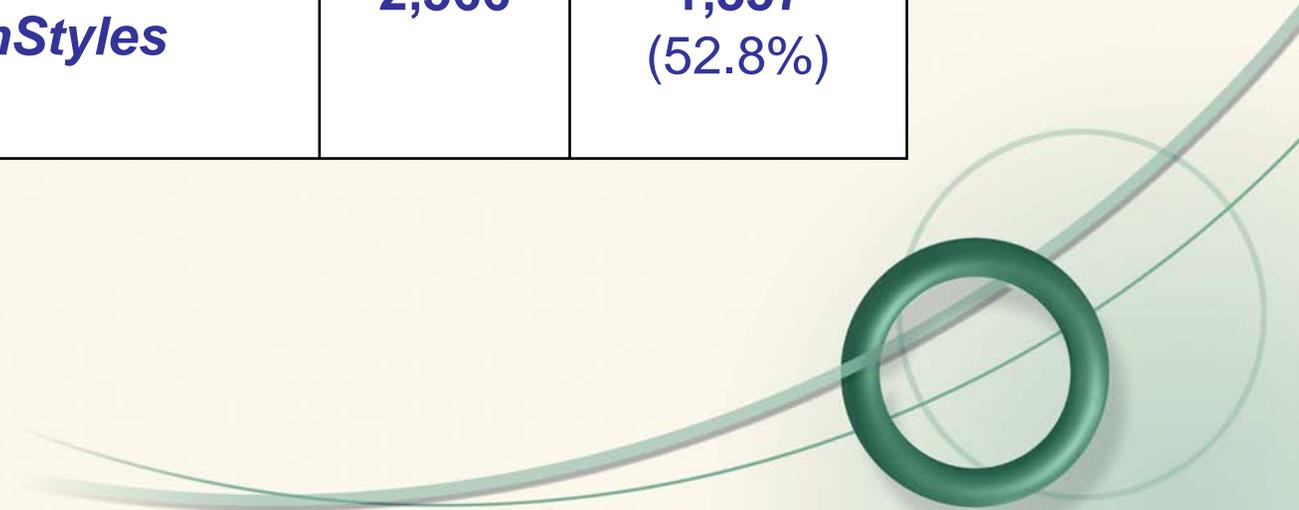
YouthStyles

Behavioral, motivational, & media habits

Survey Response

2007

Surveys	Sent	Returned
<i>ConsumerStyles</i>	20,000	11,758 (58.8%)
<i>HealthStyles</i>	6,600	4,398 (66.6%)
<i>YouthStyles</i>	2,566	1,357 (52.8%)



Key Demographics of Sample

- **Gender**

- 48.4% Males; 51.6% Females

- **Race/Ethnicity**

- 68.7% White; 11.8% Black; 12.8% Hispanic; 6.7% Other

- **Marital Status**

- 59% Married; 20.1% Never Married; 16.6% Widowed, Divorced, or Separated; 4.4% Domestic partnership



Key Demographics, cont'd

- **Education**

- 6% Less than High School; 26.3% High School Graduation; 36.4% Attended College; 19.0% Graduated from College; 12.3% Attended Grad School

- **Employment**

- 55% work full-time for others; 7% are full-time homemakers; 8.1% works part-time for others; 6.8% are self-employed; 5% are disabled or a student; 3.4% are temporarily unemployed

- **Household Income**

- 14.6% under \$15k; 12.3% between 15-25k; 16.6% between 25-40k; 17.7% between 40-60k; 38.7% >60k



In the past...

We asked **women** about –

- Awareness
- Attitudes
- Knowledge
- Behaviors
- Influencers
- Pregnancy Intentions
- Birth Control



NEW in 2007...

We asked **men** and **women** about—

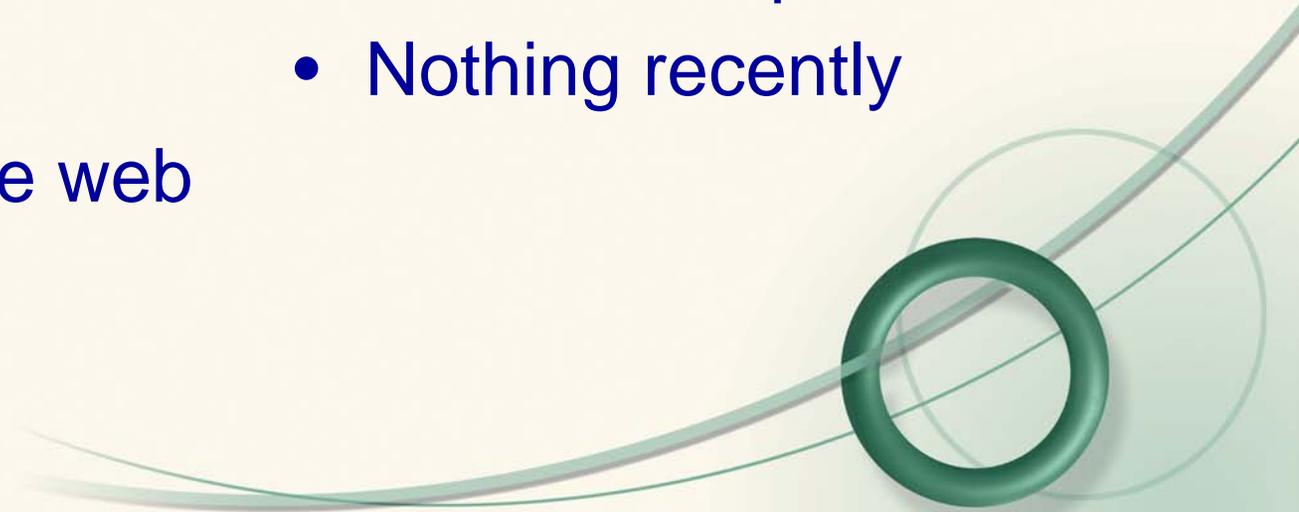
- Awareness of PCH recommendations
- Are they in a sexual relationship
- How many children they have and want
- How long they want to wait until beginning or adding to their family
- Actions taken to avoid pregnancy until ready
- Conversations about having children
- Actions important for women to do **BEFORE** they become pregnant



Awareness of PCH recommendations

If you have seen, heard or read anything about recommendations for preconception health anywhere recently, where was it?

- TV program
- Radio
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Internet or the web
- E-mail message
- Newsletter
- Some other places
- Nothing recently



Where seen, heard, read anything about PCH recommendations

Source	Male (%)	Female (%)
TV program	31.2	27.1
Radio	12*	8.2
Newspapers	15.6	13.2
Magazines	20.5	26.0*
Internet or web	7.0	8.6
E-mail message	2.0	2.1
Newsletter	4.0	2.9

Source	Male (%)	Female (%)
Insurance provider	5.5	5.2
Employer	3.2	1.9
Health care provider	10.7	15.7*
Some other places	4.8	7.1
Not specified	5.3	5.0
Nothing recently	50.5	46.6

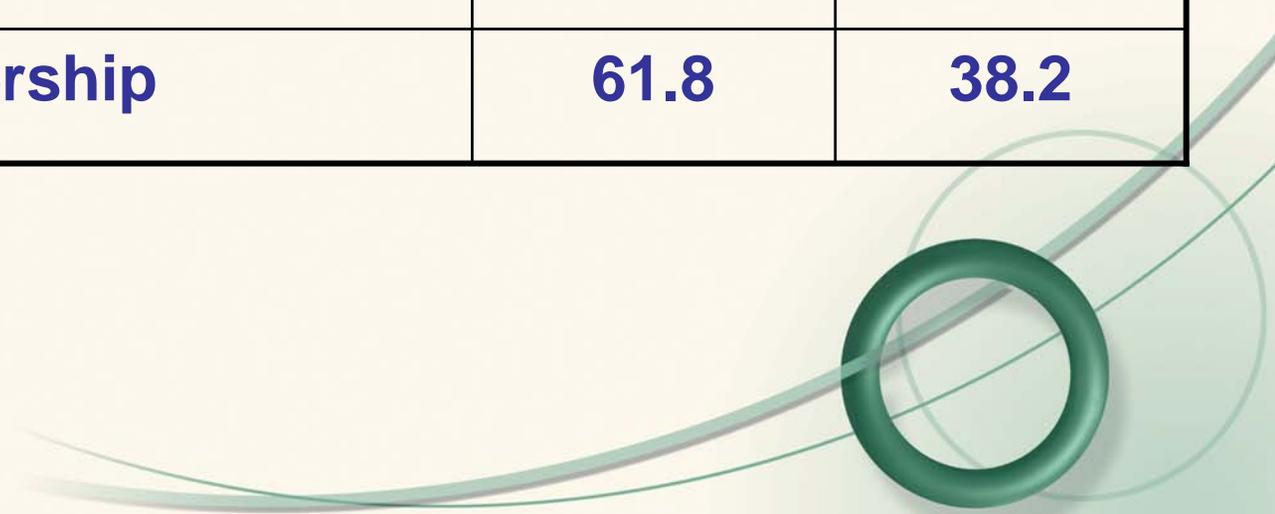
*Sig different p<.000

Are they in a sexual relationship

- Are you currently in a sexual relationship?
This was a Yes/No question.



YES - in a sexual relationship	Male (%)	Female (%)
Married	86.3	87.7
Divorced	45.5	54.5
Widowed	38.1	61.9
Separated	37.5	62.5
Never married	28.5	50.8
Domestic partnership	61.8	38.2



How many children they have & want

They were instructed to write in a number for each of the following two questions.

- How many children do you have?
- How many children do you want to have in all?



# children WANT # children HAVE	0 (%)	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	6 (%)
0	17	2.6	6.8	1.6	1.8	.3	.3
1	.3	10.5	4.1	1.3	.4	.2	0
2	.8	0	24	2.2	.5	.3	.1
3	.4	0	.1	11.8	1.1	.3	.1
4	.3	0	.1	0	5	.2	.3
5	.2	0	0	0	0	2.2	.1
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	.9

6.2% have more than what they wanted

71.4% have what they want

25.6% don't have what they want



How long they want to wait until beginning or adding to their family

From today, how long do you want to wait until you begin or add to your family?

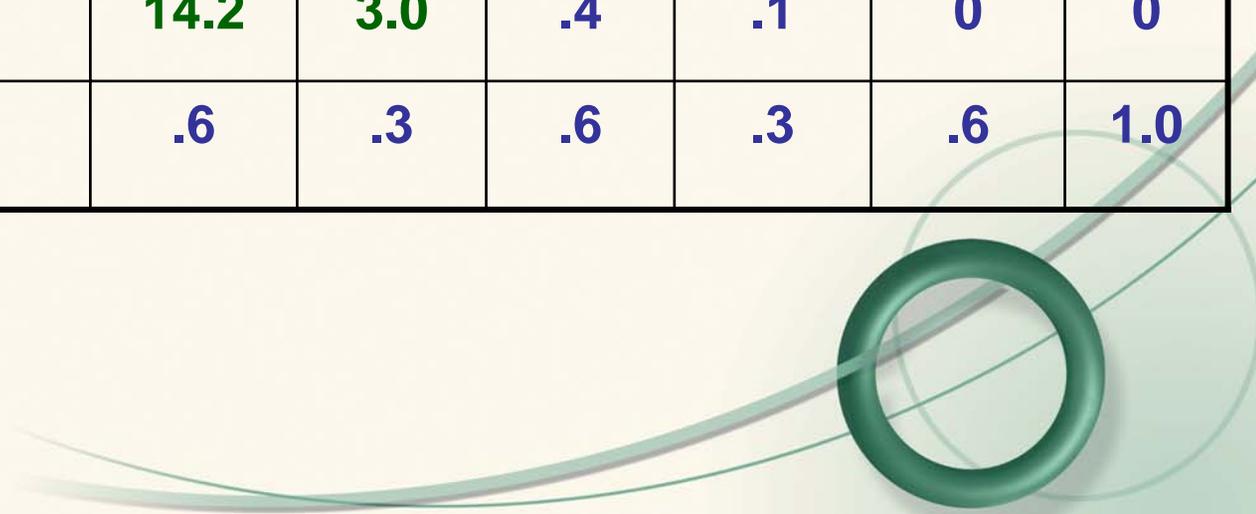
- Not applicable: I do not want any children
- I have had all my children
- Within the next year
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years



From today, how long do you want to wait until you begin or add to your family?	Male (%)	Female (%)
Not applicable: I do not want any children	26.3	24.5
I have had all my children	48.7	46.1
Within the next year	8.3	9.5
2-5 years	13.7	16.7
6-10 years	2.4	2.9
More than 10 years	.7	.3



From today, how long do you want to wait until you begin or add to your family?	18-24 (%)	25-34 (%)	35-44 (%)	45-54 (%)	55-64 (%)	65+ (%)
Not applicable: I do not want any children	9.1	15.8	31.2	32.7	32.5	29.6
I have had all my children	7.3	30.9	51.0	62.6	65.8	69.2
Within the next year	17.3	20.8	9.2	1.7	.6	0
2-5 years	51.6	29.2	7.6	2.5	.4	.2
6-10 years	14.2	3.0	.4	.1	0	0
More than 10 years	.6	.3	.6	.3	.6	1.0



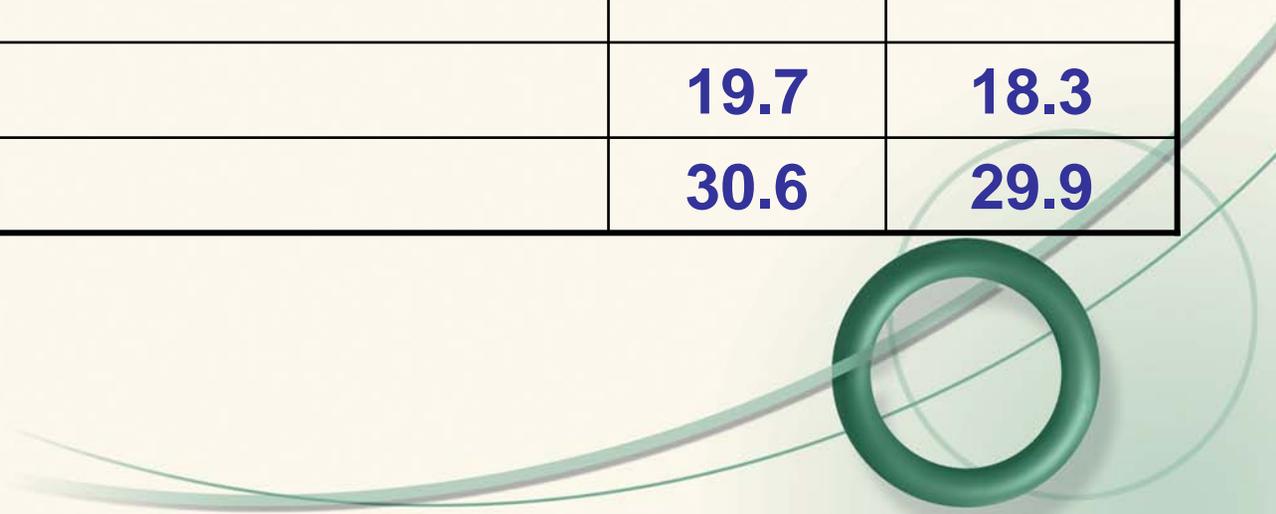
Actions taken to avoid pregnancy until ready

What are you doing to prevent a pregnancy until you are ready to have children?

- Not having sexual intercourse
- Consistently using an effective birth control method
- Ensuring that my partner uses an effective birth control method
- Relying on emergency contraception, if needed
- Using other contraception methods and hoping they work
- Other
- Nothing
- Not applicable: Am trying to get pregnant



What are you doing to prevent a pregnancy until you are ready to have children?	Male (%)	Female (%)
Not having sexual intercourse	9.5	11.7
Consistently using an effective birth control method	18.0	23.8
Ensuring that my partner uses an effective birth control method	8.2	4.2
Relying on emergency contraception, if needed	.6	.1
Using other contraception methods and hoping they work	2.7	1.4
Other	19.7	18.3
Nothing	30.6	29.9

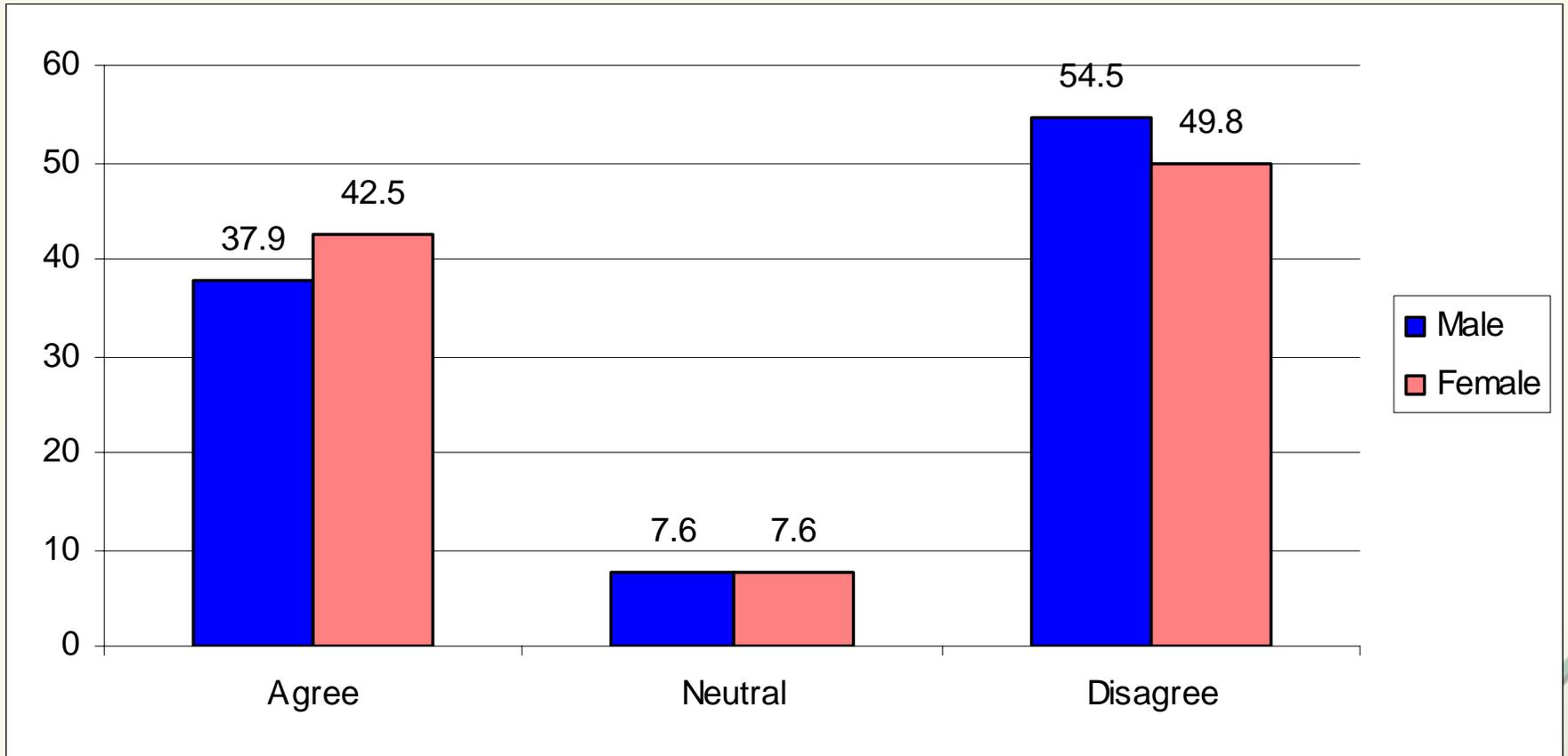


Conversations about having children

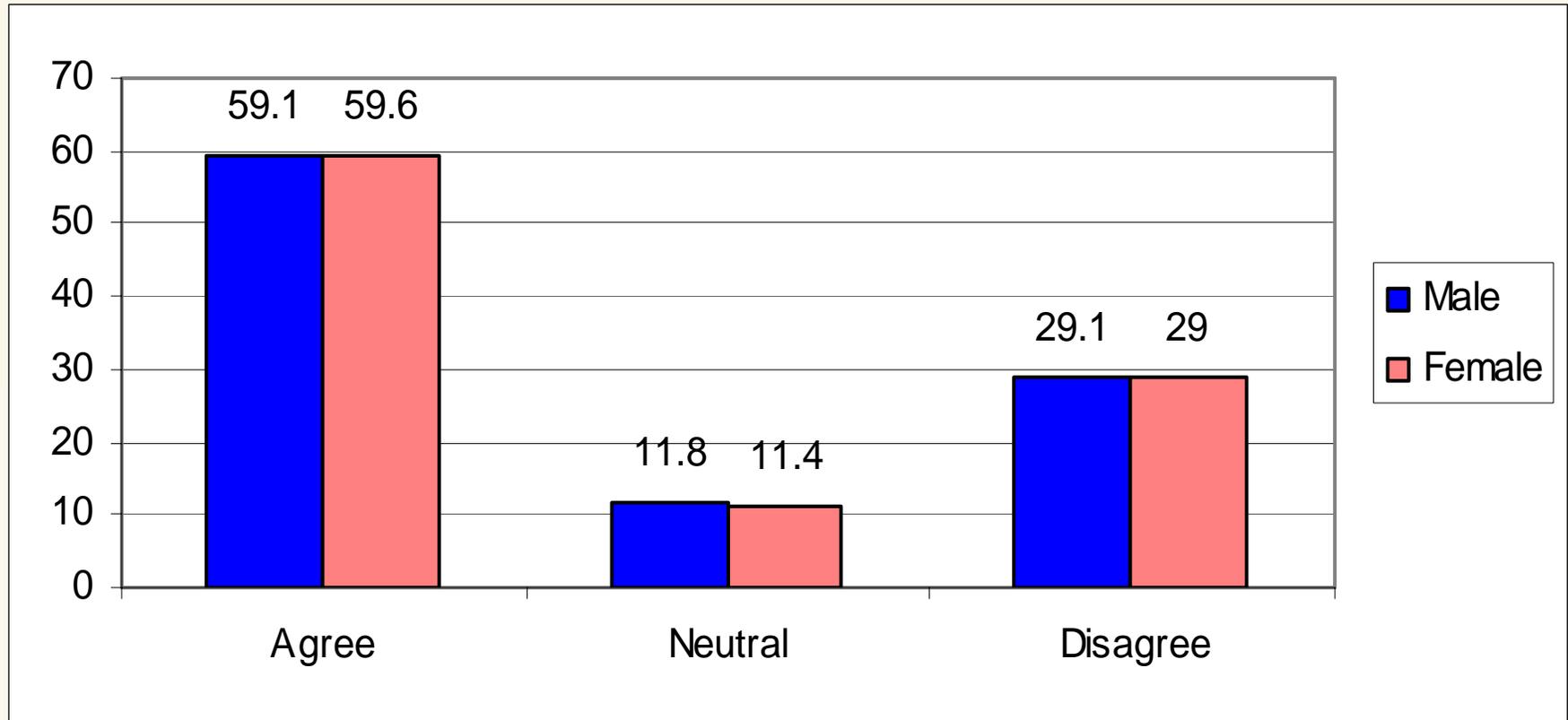
5 opinion questions with Likert scale response categories from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree—

- My partner and I had/have a plan for having a child
 - My partner and I talked about how many children we wanted/want to have
 - My partner and I talked about when we wanted/want to have a child
 - My partner and I talked about how to prevent a pregnancy
 - My partner and I would be happy if we accidentally became pregnant
 - My partner and I talked with a health care provider about having a child
- 

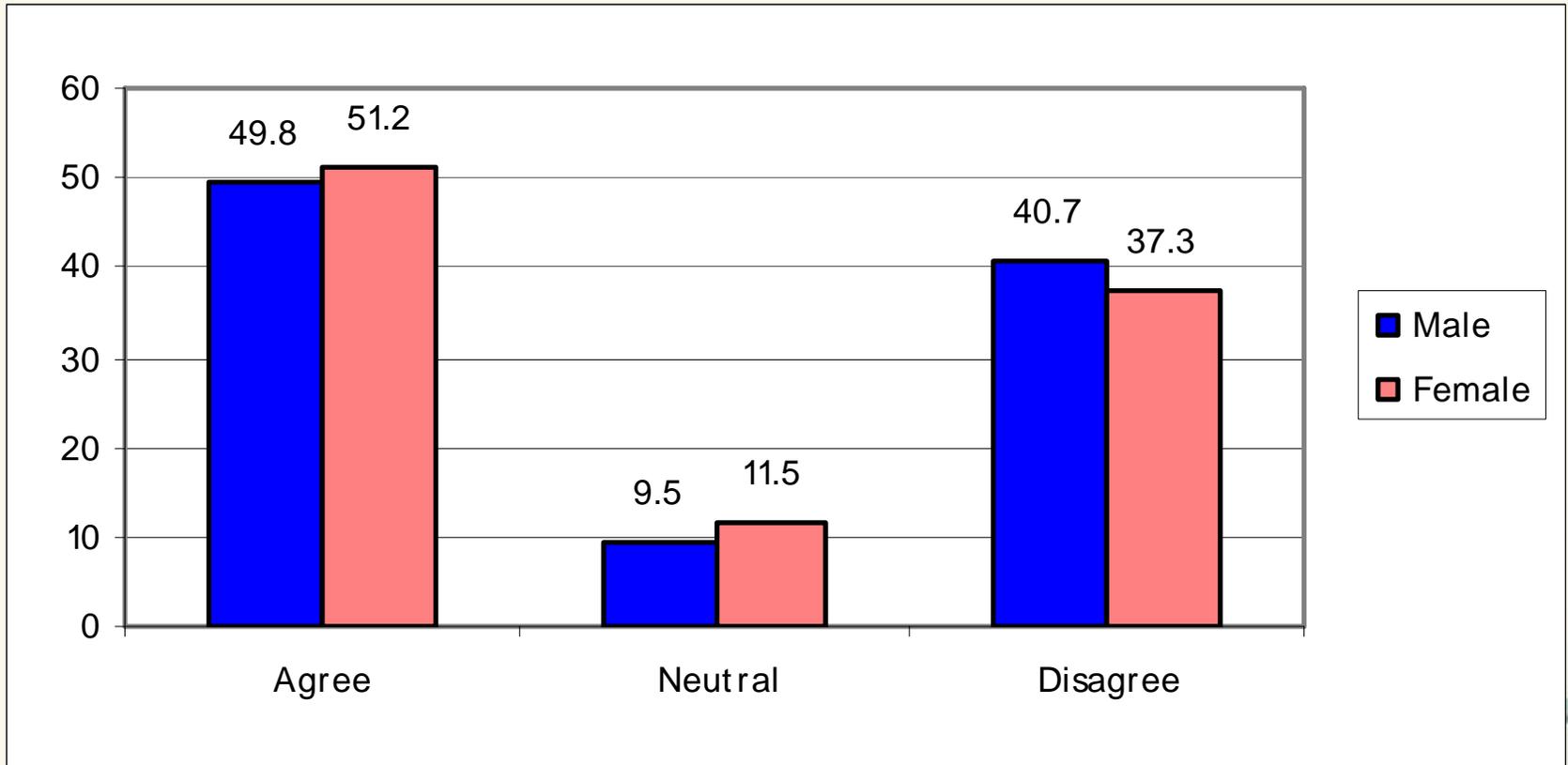
My partner and I had/have a plan for having a child



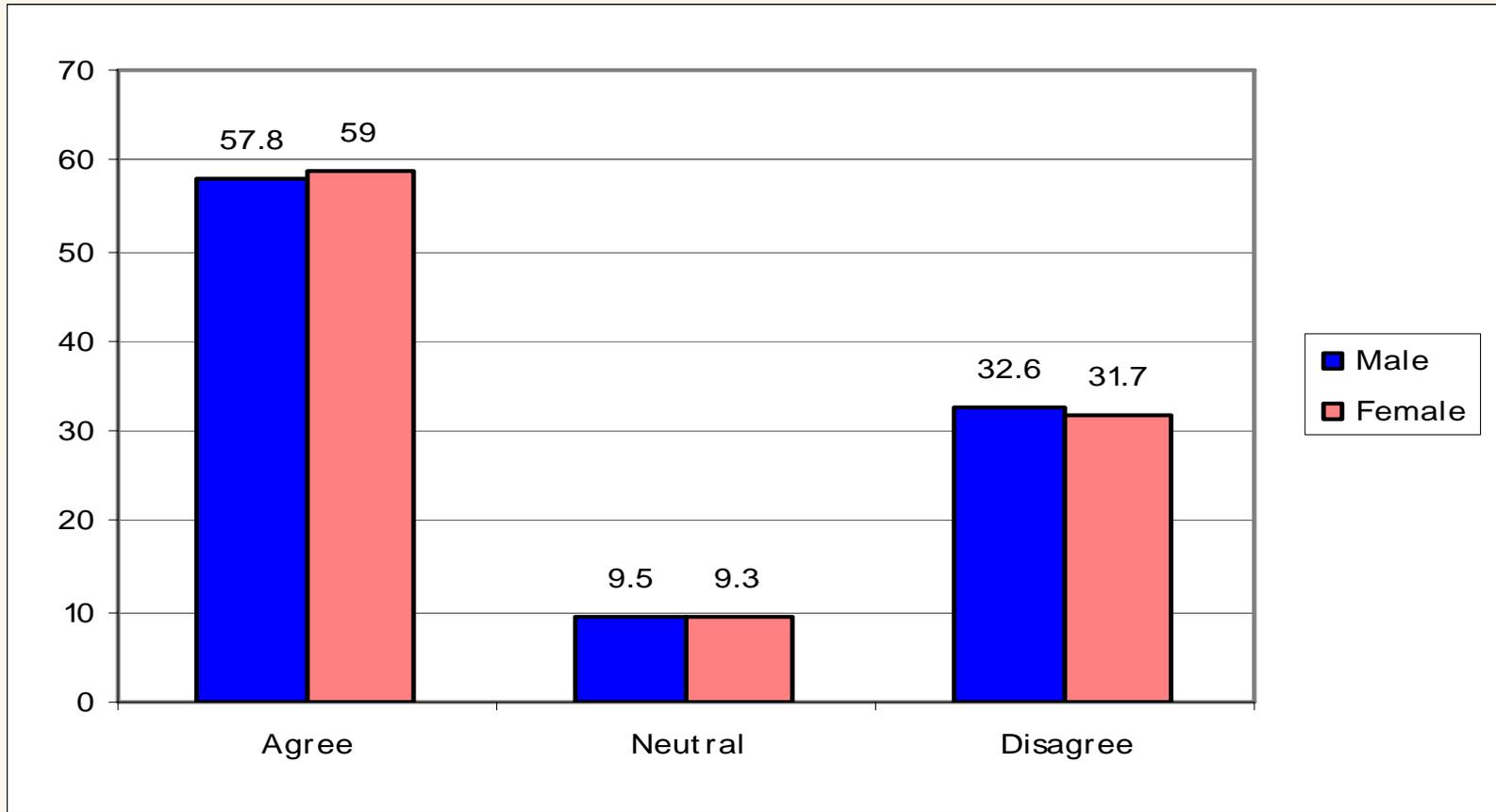
My partner and I talked about how many children we wanted/want to have



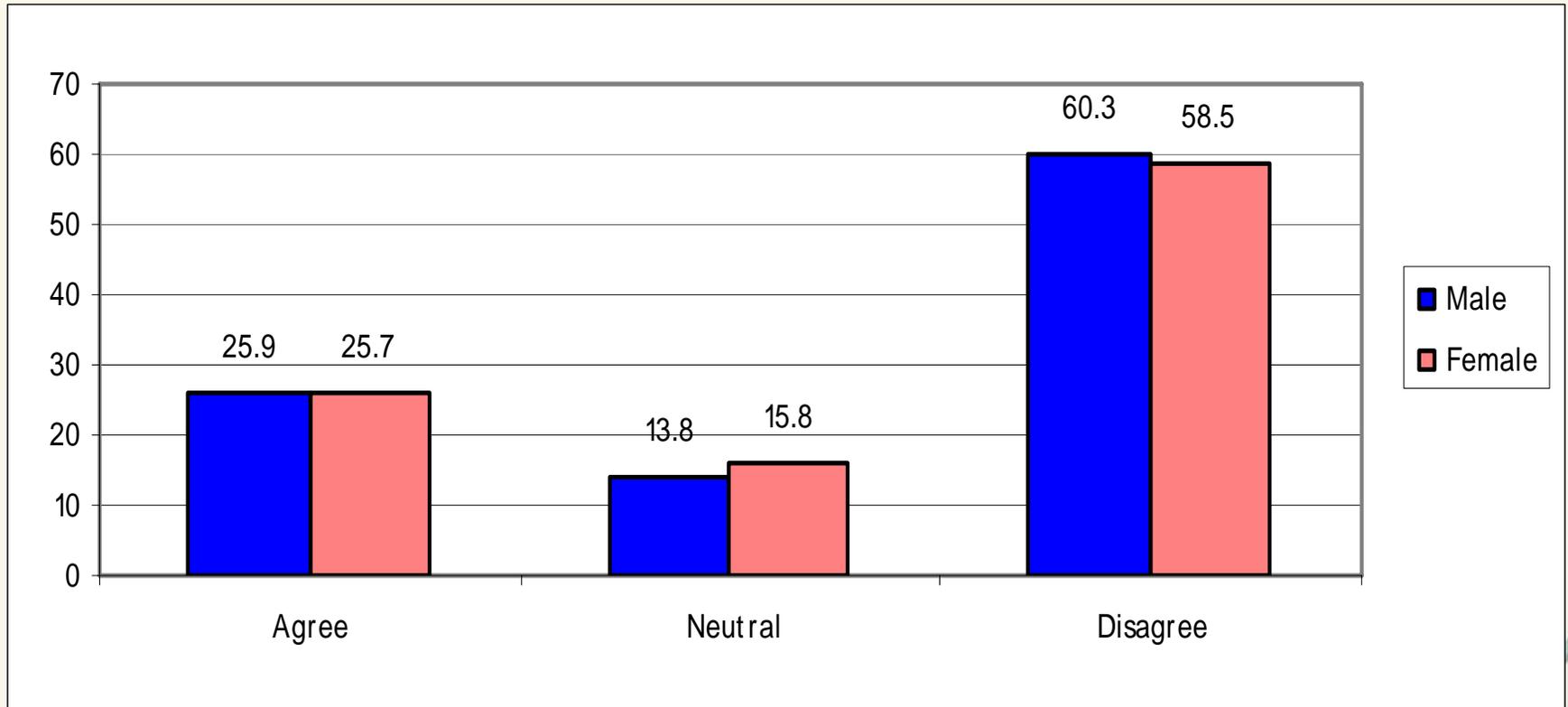
My partner and I talked about when we wanted/want to have a child



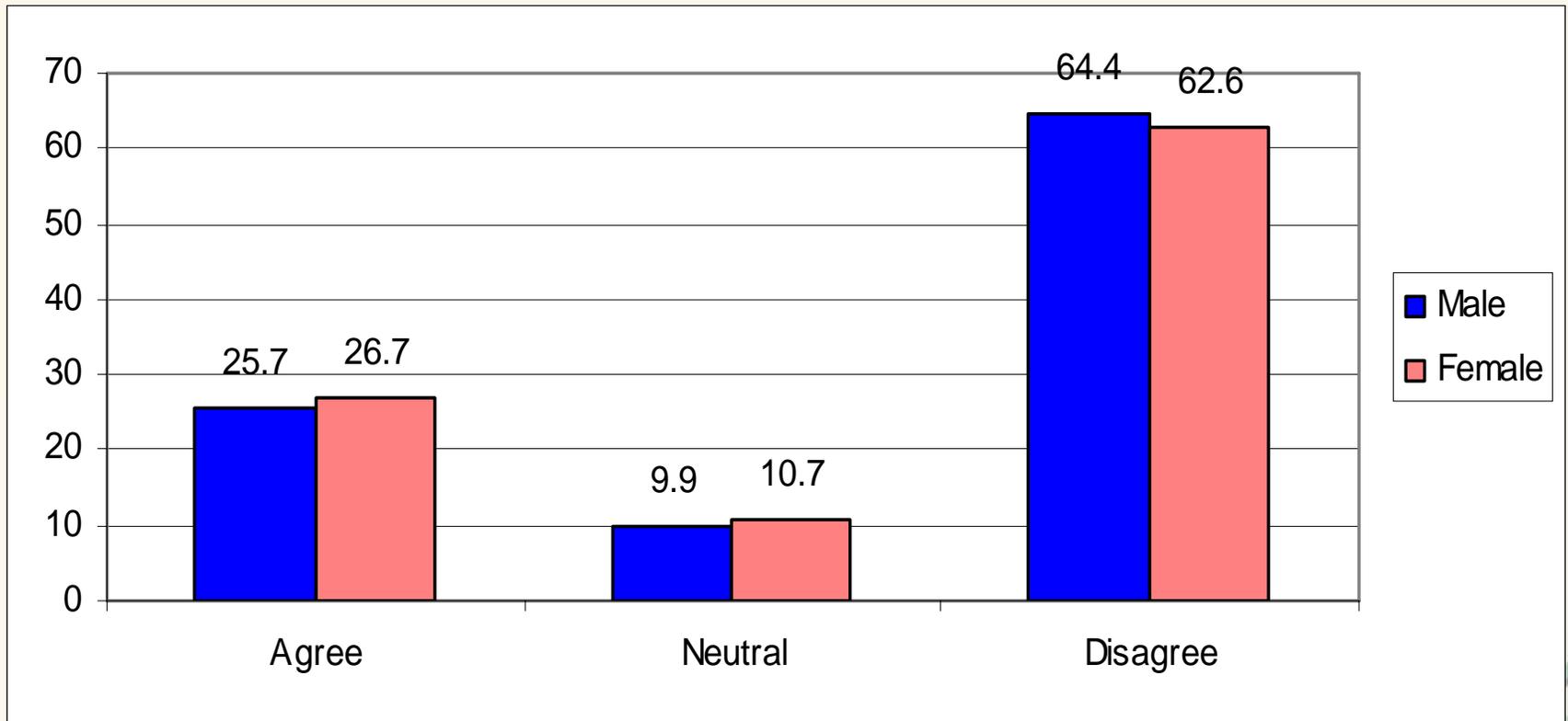
My partner and I talked about how to prevent a pregnancy



My partner and I would be happy if we accidentally became pregnant



My partner and I talked with a health care provider about having a child



Actions important BEFORE becoming pregnant

Which of the following actions have you heard are the most important things for women to do BEFORE they get pregnant?

- Talk to doctor
- Avoid illegal drugs
- Eat healthy diet
- Exercise
- Avoid drinking alcohol
- Avoid smoking
- Take meds only as directed
- Take folic acid
- Know family & medical histories
- Be up-to-date with vaccines
- Get a flu shot
- Nothing
- Not specified



Important Actions for Women To Do Before They Get Pregnant

Action	Male (%)	Female (%)
Talk to doctor	66.2	68.9
Avoid illegal drugs	79.2	85.1*
Eat a healthy diet	75.7	79.7
Exercise	41.1	48.5*
Avoid alcohol	79.2	83.0
Avoid smoking	82.1	86.8*
Take meds as directed	42.7	46.4

Action	Male (%)	Female (%)
Get folic acid	50.7	64.4*
Know family history	60.9	70.0*
Be up-to-date with vaccines	41.3	50.7*
Get a flu shot	21.4	24.5
Not specified	5.0	3.0
Nothing	6.1*	3.0

*Sig different p<.000

Implications for action

- Consider targeting younger audiences, especially 18-34 year olds
- Don't assume anything...ask specific questions
- Develop tools/cues for instigating conversations among couples regarding children, timing, contraception, health care involvement
- In the context of important “preparedness” efforts, consider positioning “pregnancy preparedness” in health promotion efforts among men and women

Message Bundling Research



Gettyimages.com

CDC funded extramural research project to the University of Georgia's Southern Center for Communication, Health, and Poverty

**Principal Investigators-
Karen King, Ph.D.
Vicki Freimuth, Ph.D.**

Two phases of the study:

- 1. Qualitative (focus group discussions)**
- 2. Quantitative (mall intercept interviews)**

Preconception Health Message Bundling Study



THE SOUTHERN CENTER FOR

Communication, Health & Poverty

Definition

Preconception Health is

**taking care of your body
before you get pregnant
to help increase the likelihood
that you will have a healthy baby.**

Purpose of Focus Group Study

To investigate

- (1) Preconception health awareness among women of reproductive age**
- (2) How women of reproductive age conceptualize preconception health**
- (3) If and how women of reproductive age group preconception health behaviors**

Description

- Period: During April and May 2007
- Participants: 70 women aged 18–34 who reported that they were likely or extremely likely to get pregnant in the next five years
- Place: Two southern cities (Atlanta & Columbia)

Segmentation Table

CITY	WOMEN WITH CHILDREN		WOMEN WITHOUT CHILDREN	
	Poor/Near Poor	Moderate/High Income	Poor/Near Poor	Moderate/High Income
Atlanta	1 group (9)	1 group (9)	1 group (8)	1 group (9)
Columbia	1 group (9)	1 group (9)	1 group (8)	1 group (9)

Findings

Differences by Family Status and Geographic Location

- **Across groups, there was little observed difference among groups of women with or without children and groups in Atlanta and Columbia.**
- **Because pregnancy may be a common and shared experience among women, the target of preconception health messages may be not only women of reproductive age. Mothers, aunts, and sisters may be “salient referents”.**
- **Salient referents are the people that they learn from and who motivate (or do not motivate) them to get preconception care and/or help them maintain good preconception health.**

Findings

Main Health Concerns

- **Across family status and income young women's main health concerns include:**
 - chronic diseases
 - chronic disease risk factors
 - sexual health
- **Preconception health was not commonly mentioned as a main health concern among participants in the focus groups.**

Findings

The Term Preconception Health

- **Across groups, most women had never heard of the term preconception health.**
- **Although women are not familiar with the term, they commonly associated preconception health with women's health before pregnancy.**
- **In some cases they linked it to preparing one's body for pregnancy to have a healthy baby.**
- **Most participants said the current definition of preconception health made sense; however, some participants recommended adding language about how health before pregnancy is linked to women's postpartum health.**

Findings

Important Preconception Health Behaviors

- **Participants indicated that the most important things for women who are considering getting pregnant to do include:**
 - **stop smoking**
 - **stop drinking**
 - **take prenatal vitamins**
 - **limit stress**
 - **tend to her mental and emotional health**
 - **get regular physical activity**
 - **have good communication with her partner**

Findings

Categories of Preconception Health Behaviors

- **The most common categories for PHC behaviors were:**
 - (1) medical management**
 - (2) screening/testing**
 - (3) behaviors specific to lifestyle change**
- **Participants viewed all preconception behaviors as important and had a difficult time identifying those that were most important.**
- **They suggested that the most important behaviors depend on a woman's lifestyle and personal situation.**

Findings

MAIN HEALTH CONCERNS

- Chronic disease
- Chronic disease risk factors
- Sexual health

OTHER HEALTH CONCERNS

- Vision
- Dental health
- Quality of food/diet
- Hygiene
- Bone health
- Getting enough calcium

Findings

Reasons why preconception health is not on list of main health concerns

- **Not trying to get pregnant soon**
- **Waiting until pregnancy occurs**
- **Never thought of preconception health**
- **Preconception health is not known or understood**

Experiment



Research Questions

- **Are bundled preconception health messages (PCH) equally, more or less effective than single messages among women ages 18-34?**
- **How many PCH messages can be bundled together while maintaining message effectiveness?**
- **What types of PCH messages can be bundled together to either enhance effectiveness or minimize ineffectiveness of the messages?**

Sample

- **698 women ages 18-34**
- **Likely or extremely likely to become pregnant in the next 5 years**
- **Quota sample:**
 - o **By age: 18-24, 25-34 years**
 - o **Education: Some college or less,
College grad or above**
 - o **Did or did not give birth previously**

Treatments

- **1 message**
- **3 messages** (same category with label)
- **4 messages** (same category with label)
- **4 messages** (different categories no label)
- **15 messages** (no categories)
- **15 messages** (categories with label)

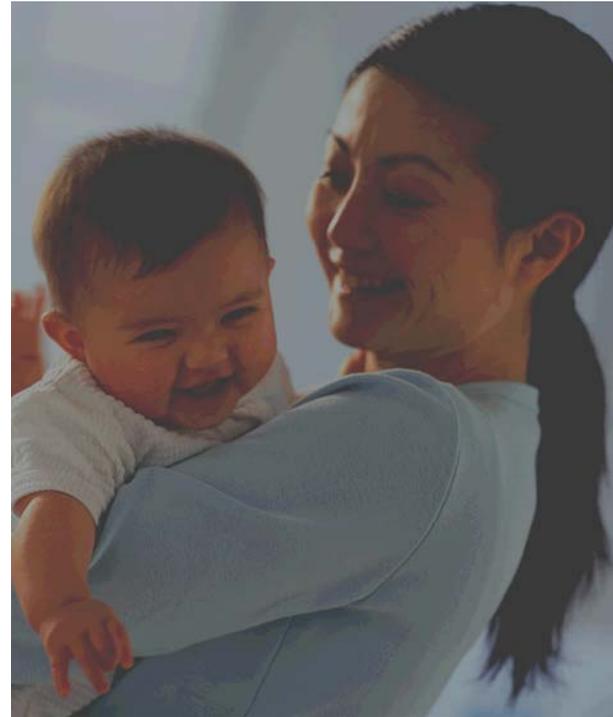
Sample Design

	<u>Atlanta</u>	<u>Columbia/Huntsville</u>	<u>Total</u>
All 15 messages (not in categories)	50	50	100
All 15 messages into 3 categories (with label)	50	49	99
4 messages each from different categories (no labels)	52	48	100
One category 3 messages (with label)	48	51	99
One category 4 messages (with label)	52	49	101
One message	53	47	100
Control	44	55	99
Grand Total			698

Within each treatment, respondents were quota sampled by age (18-24, 25-34), education (some college or less, college graduate +), and whether or not they had ever had given birth

Messages

- Randomly rotated within treatments to minimize order effects and the influence of specific messages



Research Protocol

- **Screener:**
 - Age (18-24, 25-34 years)
 - Likely or extremely likely of becoming pregnant in the next five years
 - With/with out children

- **View Brochure**



Brochure (front & back cover)



Brochure (inside)



To have a healthy baby, be sure you are healthy before you become pregnant.

Healthy women have healthier babies. Be sure you are as healthy as you can be before you're pregnant by following these tips:

- If you are diabetic, monitor diabetes and insulin.
- Do not use the acne drug, Accutane.
- Talk with your doctor about your use of blood thinners if you are taking them.
- If at risk, get vaccinated to prevent Hepatitis B disease.
- Take a vitamin with folic acid every day.
- Do not smoke.
- If at risk, get tested and treated for HIV and AIDS.
- If you have a thyroid problem, be sure to take the medicine your doctor has given you.
- Get to a healthy weight and do your best to stay there.



- Ask your doctor if you are a carrier of PKU, a rare genetic disorder.
- Know your family's health history.
- Make sure you have been vaccinated for Rubella: you might know it as "German measles".
- If at risk, get tested and treated for sexually transmitted diseases.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- If you are taking medicine to control seizures, talk with your doctor about your use of this medicine.



Take good care of your future baby starting today.

By the time you're ready to get pregnant, your baby will be ready to take on the world!



Research Protocol

- **Complete buffer activity (simple math sheet)**
- **Unaided questions (open-ended)**
- **Aided questions (handed a sheet)**
- **Demographics**

Average **Unaided** Awareness

	% Correct	Significance
1. Control	10.7%	Lower than all
2. One message	57%	
3. One category 3 messages	57.6%	
4. One category 4 messages	58.7%	
5. 4 messages each from different categories	50.5%	
6. All 15 messages not in categories	29.1%	Lower than 2-5
7. All 15 messages in 3 categories	26.9	Lower than 2-5

Average **Unaided** Awareness

- All combinations of messages were significantly higher than the control
- There was no difference in unaided awareness between 1, 3 or 4 messages

Average **Unaided** Awareness

- **Participants who saw all 15 messages had significantly fewer correct responses than all but the control group**
- **There was not a significant difference in the percentage of correct responses from those who saw the messages from one category versus those who saw the messages from multiple categories.**

Average **Unaided** Awareness

- **Some messages, such as eat healthy foods or exercise regularly, were reported even though they weren't specifically mentioned in the text. They may have been communicated by the brochure visuals.**



Average **Unaided** Awareness

- **1 message**
- **3 messages** (same category with label)
- **4 messages** (same category with label)
- **4 messages** (different categories)
- **15 messages** (not in categories)
- **15 messages** (in categories and labeled)

Average **Aided** Awareness

	% Correct	Significance
1. Control	16.0%	Lower than all
2. One message	76.0%	Higher than 1, 6, 7
3. One category 3 messages	71.0%	Higher than 1, 6, 7
4. One category 4 messages	72.0%	Higher than 1, 6, 7
5. 4 messages each from different categories	64.8%	Higher than 1, 7
6. All 15 messages not in categories	54.0%	Lower than 1-4, 7
7. All 15 messages into 3 categories	50.2	Lower than 1-5

Average **Aided** Awareness

- The same general pattern of responses was found for aided awareness as for unaided awareness
- All combinations of messages were significantly higher than the control
- There was no difference between 1, 3 or 4 messages in terms of unaided awareness or whether or not these messages were in categories ($p \leq .05$)

Average **Aided** Awareness

- **Participants who saw all 15 messages had significantly fewer correct responses**
- **There was no significant difference in the percentage of correct responses from those who saw the messages from one category versus those who saw the messages from multiple categories ($p \leq .05$)**

What Do Women Know?

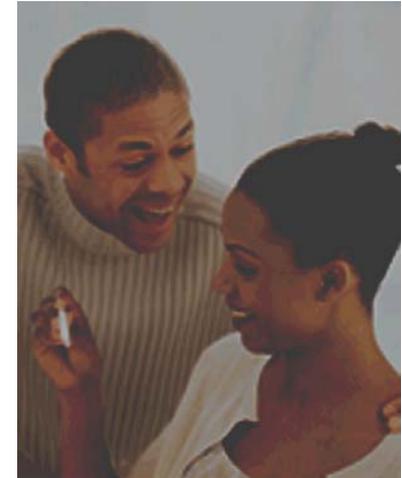
- **Best known messages (from control):**
 - **Smoking,**
 - **Alcohol consumption,**
 - **Eat healthy foods and**
 - **Exercise regularly**



None were reported by more than half of women

What Do Women Know?

- **There is some awareness of:**
 - **Folic acid (18%)**
 - **STDs (13%)**
 - **HIV/AIDS (12%)**
 - **Family health history (6%)**
- **For all other messages, there was less than 6% unaided awareness**



Implications for Message Design

- **Even when there is 1 message, only half can recall the message on an unaided basis (following distraction)**
- **Only three-fourths can recall the message on an aided basis**
- **Keep in mind that these were somewhat motivated respondents (likely/extremely likely to become pregnant in the next 5 years)**

Implications for Message Design

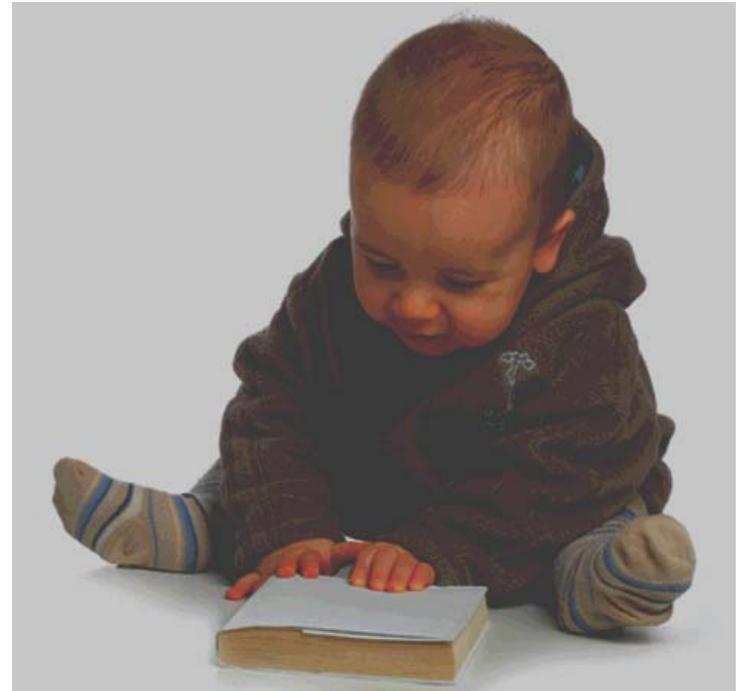
- **Pattern of results is consistent with aided and unaided measures**
- **Recall of 1-4 messages is about equal**
- **Results were less clear regarding the value of categorizing bundled messages. When 4 messages are bundled, there is higher (but not statistically significant) recall when messages are in categories**

Is Message Bundling Effective?

- ***YES*** — For up to 4 messages
- It is possible that placing bundled messages in categories may improve recall

Next Steps

- **Data analysis by demographics:**
 - **Age**
 - **Education**
 - **Race**



Take-aways

- Ask lots of specific questions
- Consider focusing on younger adult women
- Consider informing/involving MEN and other women as “influencers” of young women
- “Preconception health” does have meaning to women—it’s just not a high priority
 - Need to combine information & inspiration (motivational elements) to overcome issues of perceived IRRELEVANCY (e.g., I’m not planning to get pregnant)
- PCH messages can be bundled into categories that make sense
- Pen and paper check-lists can substantially increase awareness (by over 20% from unaided to aided)...use old fashioned aids 😊

We have much to learn & do...

Christine E. Prue, Ph.D.
cprue@cdc.gov

Thank You!

