

# DKT International

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REPORTS/FINDINGS

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## DOES THE PHILIPPINES NEED A NEW CONTRACEPTIVE PILL?:

### A FOCUS GROUP REPORT

#### INTRODUCTION

DKT International commissioned a focus group discussion to determine the viability of introducing a new contraceptive pill to the Philippine market. The six objectives of the study, together with discussion results, are elaborated in the "Findings" below.

In March 1993, two focus groups were held in San Fernando in La Union State in the Philippines. One group comprised nine pill users; the other, seven non-pill users. The participants were all married women ages 24 to 40, with the majority having small families of from one to three children. The pill user group tended to be better educated than the non-users. Two-thirds of the participants were housewives, while the rest worked in offices, and one was a fish vendor.

The non-pill user group reported a much lower income than their counterparts. More families in the pill user group had dual incomes; spouses of pill users were more likely to be employed in more permanent jobs, with higher incomes. With one exception, all of the participants in the group are Roman Catholic.

#### FINDINGS

The six objectives of the focus group discussion, followed by the findings, are described below:

**1. To determine primary concepts, images, values and benefits associated with family planning and pill usage.**

The primary concept associated with the words "family planning" is control, as in controlling the number of children in a family, and therefore being able to provide them with a good future.

A second theme expressed by both groups was that family planning allowed them to provide better care for their children. For pill users, "better care" extended also to the husbands: they articulated more willingness to respond to the sexual advances of their husbands without undue worry.



For non-pill users, the savings generated by having fewer children was perceived as a major benefit of family planning. They cited "high prices, low income" as among the major reasons for practicing family planning. Pill users identified the difficulty of doing housework and child care with too many children.

## 2. To pinpoint pivotal elements influencing pill usage/non-usage as well as primary factors associated with choice of brand and continuity of brand use.

The primary reason for not practicing family planning, according to non-pill users, was rumors about the pill heard from friends and neighbors. The five major misconceptions cited by both groups are: 1) the pill can lead to cancer; 2) it leads to weight gain or even obesity; 3) the pill has many discomforting side effects; and 4) it has bad effects if used for a long period of time; and 5) the pill dries the milk of breastfeeding mothers.

For the non-pill users who were family planning acceptors and for two pill users who were full-time housewives, the decision to practice family planning was influenced most by their husbands. For most pill users, however, it was their own decision to practice family planning.

## 3. To identify the most persistent rumors and misconceptions that prevent pill acceptance/usage.

The two primary reasons cited for using the pill over other family planning methods: 1) it gives the option of having more children later on and 2) users are comfortable with it. A third reason was that it is easy to use.

Brand loyalty was not highly valued among the participants of this focus group. With the exception of the newest pill user, the rest had used several brands. The primary reason for shifting brands was to avoid discomfort and side effects.

The assumption that brand shifting will be affected by price was not supported by participants in this focus group discussion. Given a choice between a pill costing P5 and one at P20, they would choose the P20 if it suited them better. Increasing the P20 price to P25 or P30 would still be acceptable if the effects were also better. However, participants consider the drugstore cost of P50 to P65 per cycle as too high.

## 4. To tally respondents perceptions and comparative positioning for existing brands of pills in their area.

Pill preferences among respondents were as follows:

First Mentioned:

Logynon - 3

Nordiol, Nordette, Triqueral, Logentrol, Marvellon, Diane -1

Second Mentioned:

Femenal -3

Logentrol, Triquelar, Micropil, Nordette - 1

Logynon has a very good image in the market. Two negative factors were associated with Logentrol: it has side effects and while it used to be given out free, clients are now asked to pay for it. Negative reactions to Nordiol and Nordette include the perception that it results in temper outbursts and dizziness.

## 5. To test acceptability, preference and impact of selected brand names for pills.

Among the brand names tested, Pearl registered the most positive feedback in both groups. It was viewed as "high class and decent", and sounded imported, and "unique". In addition, the name Pearl did not reveal itself as a contraceptive, which minimized embarrassment when purchasing it.

Micropil also generated a positive response, including the fact that it sounded "imported". Respondents also associated it with "smallness", which meant ease in taking the pills — and linking small size with "more low dose." On the negative side, Micropil was perceived as suggesting microbes, or being less effective, or "micro".

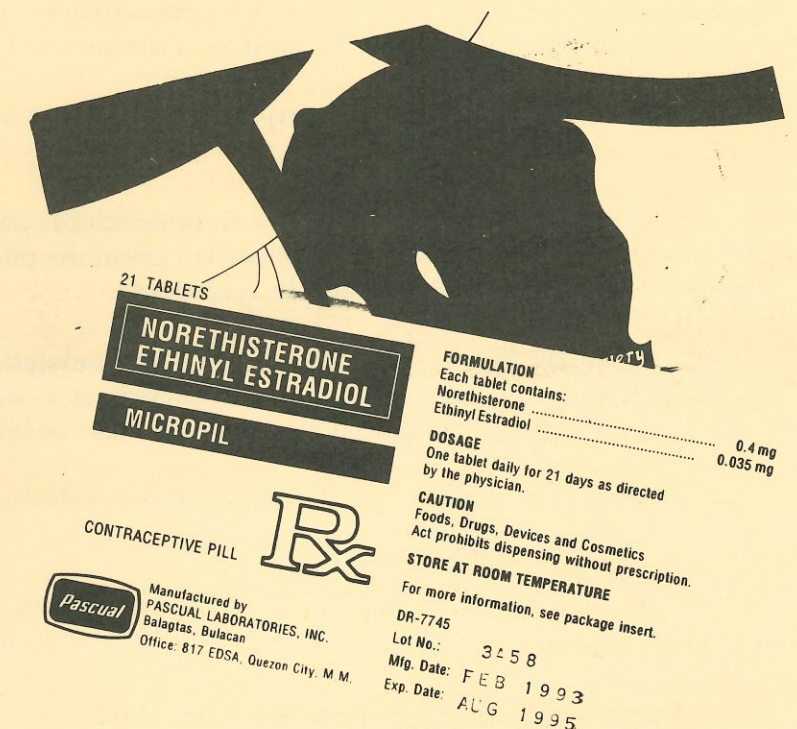
Although Trust was perceived as a good name, evoking feelings of trust, respondents felt it is too closely associated with the condom, and therefore should not be chosen.

Lorondal was perceived negatively in terms of sound association, sounding out-of-tune, cacophonous, and too close to Logentrol.

Similarly, Duofem and Monofem were unacceptable. Duofem was described as difficult to pronounce and was associated with bad odor. Monofem had a regional connotation of stupid, dim-witted, and was also associated with stuttering.

Focus group participants listed the following criteria in selecting a brand name for a contraceptive pill:

- Should be feminine
- Should connote effectiveness and dependability
- Should be unique (to avoid confusion or misassociation)





**6. To solicit suggestions, recommendations and preferences vis-a-vis price, packaging, promotional pitch (e.g. distribution system, distribution centers/outlets, critical points for launching campaign, preferred endorsers).**

In order to launch a new pill, the proper message must be pitched — for example, “What difference will the pill make in my life?”

Respondents in both groups indicate that there are three areas that should be emphasized:

- protecting/caring for the family — in terms of a better future, better care of children, more money/resources available
- caring for the self: maintaining good looks
- strengthening/caring for the marital relationship: being able to have a loving, worry-free relationship with the husband

The suggestion was made to explore the use of a “negative” appeal — that is, motivating the consumer by what they can lose, or problems they could face rather than emphasizing the reward angle.

The fact that the lower income participants among the non-users group identified the husband as a potent force suggests the need for a complementary campaign directed at the male.

The media campaign should stress the “hiyang” or level of comfort of the pill to differentiate it from other brands.

A promotional campaign should incorporate educational as well as advertising messages. Negative misconceptions should be dispelled about the pill’s side effects. An advice type of column in a newspaper should also be considered.

In a secondary type of campaign, personal testimonials (from famous persons, for example) could be employed. Also, the pill could be piggybacked with the Trust condom, and thus enhance credibility. “Tupperware” parties could also be part of the launch campaign.

A promotional pricing strategy was suggested, either in the form of “buy one, get one free” or an outright gift sampling of one free cycle.

Due to the large number of brands on the market, it was felt that a dealer/distributor incentives program should be developed to ensure primary visibility of the product in the outlet, or point of purchase.

In terms of packaging, participants felt the proper packaging was essential to attract consumer attention. The suggested color was pink or white, with a strong preference for pink. The outside container should be recyclable, and multi-purpose — i.e. can be used as a coin purse, jewelry case, etc. In this way it would have a “high class association”. For those who preferred an illustration, the silhouette of an attractive, smiling Filipina woman was suggested.