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Services for Men at Publicly Funded Family Planning Agencies, 1998-1999

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- » [table of contents](#)
- » [search the PSRH archive](#)
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CONTEXT: Men's reproductive health needs are receiving increased attention, but most family planning clinic clients are female, and clinics have reported barriers to serving men.

METHODS: A 1999 survey of publicly funded agencies that administer family planning clinics asked several questions about current policies and services and the number of men served in 1998. Data on 17 services were collected, as well as the proportion of clients who were male and agencies' barriers to serving men.

RESULTS: The services most commonly offered to men in 1999 were condom provision and sexually transmitted disease (STD) counseling (95% of all agencies), contraceptive counseling (93%), and STD treatment (90%) and testing (89%). The proportions offering various male reproductive health services were lowest among hospital-based clinics. Eighty-seven percent of agencies served some male contraceptive or STD clients in 1998; those that did served a mean of 255 men and a median of 50. The male client caseload increased between 1995 and 1998 at 53% of agencies, and four out of five agencies were interested in serving more men in the future. The most commonly reported barriers to serving men were men's unawareness that services were available (58%) and inadequate agency funding (55%).

CONCLUSIONS: Although most clients of publicly funded family planning agencies are women, a nonnegligible number are men. Additional efforts are needed to determine the best way to deliver reproductive health services to men.

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