Depo Self-Administration Study

A 2018 study published in the journal *Contraception* from researchers at Planned Parenthood found that giving patients the option to self-administer the birth control shot (aka Depo) at home is safe, improves access, and means patients are more likely to continue using the shot. This study is a unique contribution to research on Depo, and is the largest U.S. study showing that women who choose to self-administer the birth control shot can use it effectively, are very satisfied, and experience fewer barriers to continued use. For more on this study and Planned Parenthood research, go to plannedparenthood.org/research.

The Study:

- Researchers randomly assigned 401 interested patients ages 16-44 requesting Depo at health centers in New Jersey and Texas to either self-administration or clinic administration.
- Those in the self-administration group were given the option of learning to self-administer the subcutaneous birth control shot at home.
- Health center staff taught participants in the self-administration group to self-inject and observed their first injection; they received instructions, a sharps disposal container, and three doses for home use.
- Participants in the clinic administration group received injections in the health center.
- All participants received injection reminders and Depo at no cost.
- Participants completed surveys at the time of enrollment, at six months, and at 12 months.

Who Participated:

- Participants ranged in age from 16-44. The average age was 26 years.
- Half self-identified as Hispanic (51%); 27% identified as Black and 18% as White.
- Forty-five percent had health insurance at enrollment, approximately half of which was Medicaid.
- Fifty percent of participants reported having trouble paying for medical care in the last year, and 26% had difficulty paying for transportation.
- Over half (56%) were current or past Depo users.

The Results:

- At one year, 69% of people in the self-administration group had used the shot continuously (i.e., no gaps in use), compared to 54% in the clinic group, a statistically significant 15% difference.
- Satisfaction with Depo at 12 months was high and similar between the self-administration and clinic groups.
- Among the self-administration group, 97% reported that self-administration was very or somewhat easy, and 87% said they would recommend it to a friend.
- Among the clinic group, 52% said that they would be interested in self-administration in the future.