

## **Partner acceptability to the new contraceptive vaginal ring, NuvaRing**

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**Objectives:** NuvaRing, the new combined contraceptive vaginal ring, has been shown to be highly acceptable to the majority of women during its clinical development, as it provides the same effectiveness as the pill, but with greater convenience. The main difference between NuvaRing and the pill is that due to its vaginal location, the male partner may be aware of the ring during intercourse. As both partners may be involved in choosing a particular contraceptive method, the acceptability of that method to both partners may influence the decision-making process. Another consideration for male partners may be concern about the possibility of the transfer of hormones during intercourse.

**Methods:** During the large efficacy studies in over 2300 women worldwide, women were asked by questionnaire if she or her partner felt the ring during intercourse. Separate to the study, a hypothetical calculation for male exposure to hormones transferred during intercourse was made.

**Results:** Fifteen percent of women and 30% of men said that they felt the ring occasionally. Furthermore, hardly any of the men minded their partners using the ring (6% for completers and 17% for discontinuers). Male exposure was calculated using the following considerations. Since NuvaRing is a very low dose method (15 µg ethinylestradiol and 120 µg etonogestrel per day), only very low concentrations of hormones are present in the vagina. In addition, the penis is only exposed to these hormones for a relatively short period of time – we used 20 min for duration of intimate contact, 3 times a week for the frequency of intercourse and 5% for hormone transfer (arbitrarily chosen). Based on these assumptions, the hypothetical male exposure is only 0.01% of the female daily exposure, and nowhere near pharmacologically active levels for men.

**Conclusions:** NuvaRing is a highly acceptable method of contraception for women and male partners alike. Male estrogen exposure is equivalent from taking one Marvelon tablet per year or to that in 37 liters of beer (100 ml/day).