

# Resolution of Uncertainty through Testing: The Impact of Pregnancy Tests on Family Planning Take-up in Uganda

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## Demand for, and Effect of, Pregnancy Tests

### Motivation

Women in developing countries, especially in Africa, bear heavy reproductive health burdens. Unmet need for contraception is high, 21% in sub-Saharan Africa.

Previous studies suggest a link between pregnancy tests and hormonal family planning, but do not determine the underlying pathways explaining their results (Stanback et al, 2013, Comfort et al., 2016).

**Do pregnancy test increase family planning uptake because they increase demand for family planning?**

### Provider Bias (*Supply*)

- Pregnancy tests allows non-menstruating women to obtain hormonal contraceptives when they may otherwise be denied.

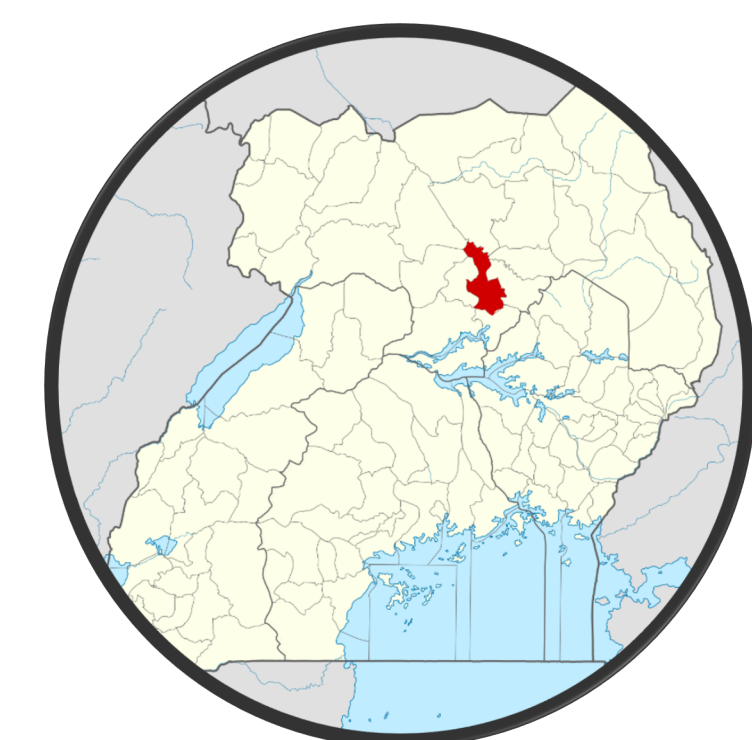
### Motivate Women (*Demand*)

- Pregnancy tests put women in an informed position to direct women to appropriate services.

### Research Questions

- How much pregnancy uncertainty do women in rural Uganda face?
- What is the demand for pregnancy testing?
- What is the impact of pregnancy tests on family planning take-up?

## Research Design: Northern Uganda



### Eligibility

- Ages 18-35
- Not pregnant
- No birth in past 6 weeks
- Has sexual partner
- Not using long-term modern family planning (sterilized, IUD, Implant...etc)



**N=1009**

May-June, 2019

July-August

August

**Baseline**

Survey  
+  
Intervention

**FP Outreach**

Offer Family  
Planning

**Follow-up**

Survey

### Randomization : On-the-spot vs Future-use Pregnancy Tests

- On-the-spot:** A urine-based pregnancy test conducted together with enumerators at baseline.
- Future-Use:** Home pregnancy test to keep for own use in the future. Offered at randomly assigned prices (free to 2000 Shillings).

		Future-use Pregnancy Test		
		Not Offered	Offered (Free)	Offered (\$)
On-the-spot	Not Offered	Control Group N=393	Only Future Use (Free) N=46	Only Future Use (\$) N=154
	Offered	Only On-the-spot N=220	On-the-spot and Future-use (Free) N=46	On-the-spot and Future-use (\$) N=150

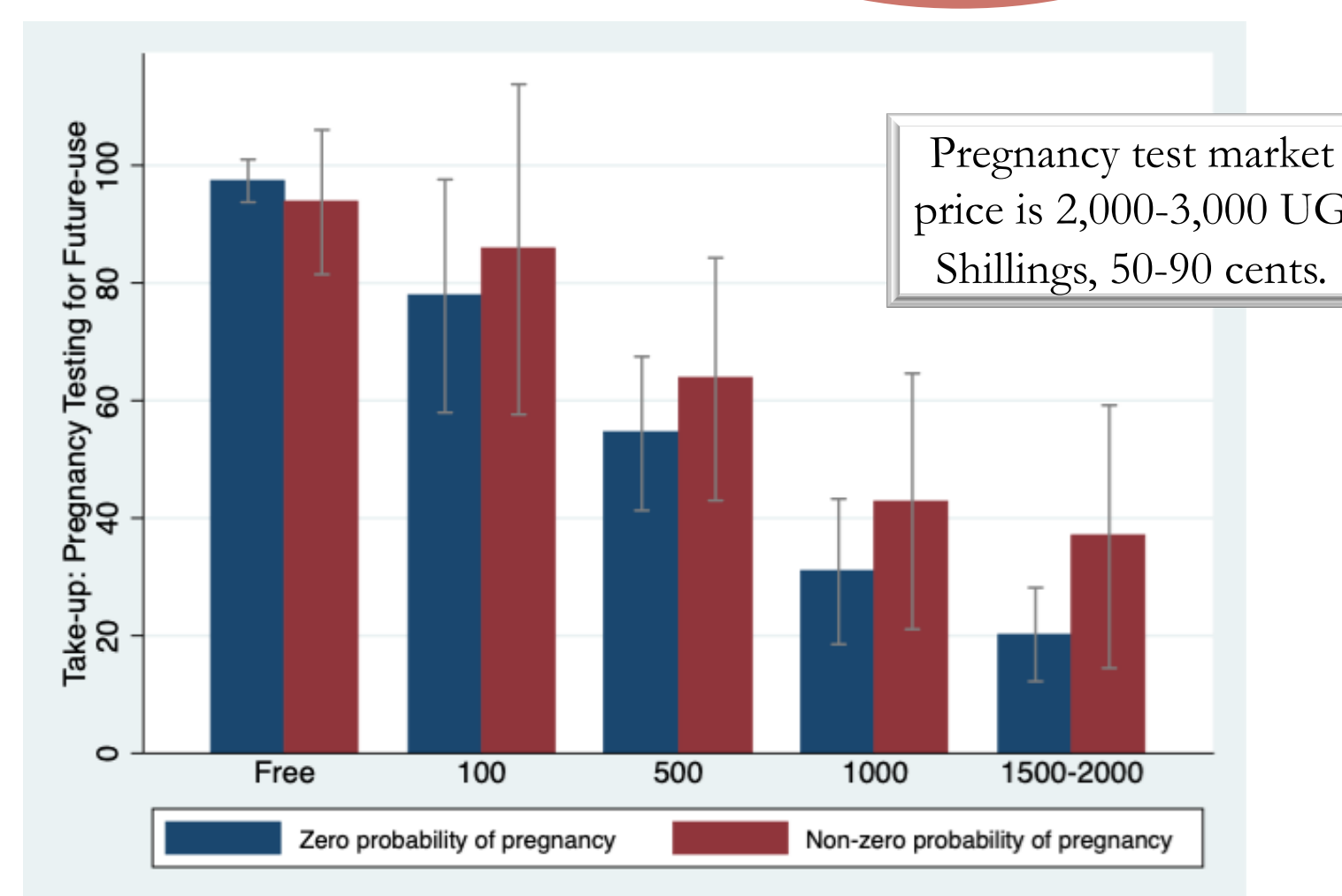
## Result 1: High Uncertainty in Rural Uganda

**22% report a non-zero likelihood of being pregnant.**  
Women who accepted the on-the-spot pregnancy test have higher uncertainty (27%) compared to ones who rejected (16%)

## Result 2: Demand for Pregnancy Testing

**57%**  
Only 57% of women offered a free on-the-spot pregnancy test accepted.

**97%**  
Almost all (97%) accepted pregnancy test for future use (free).



### Willingness to Pay

- 20% of women purchased the test at the 2000 shillings.
- Women with pregnancy uncertainty are less likely to change their purchasing decision due to prices.

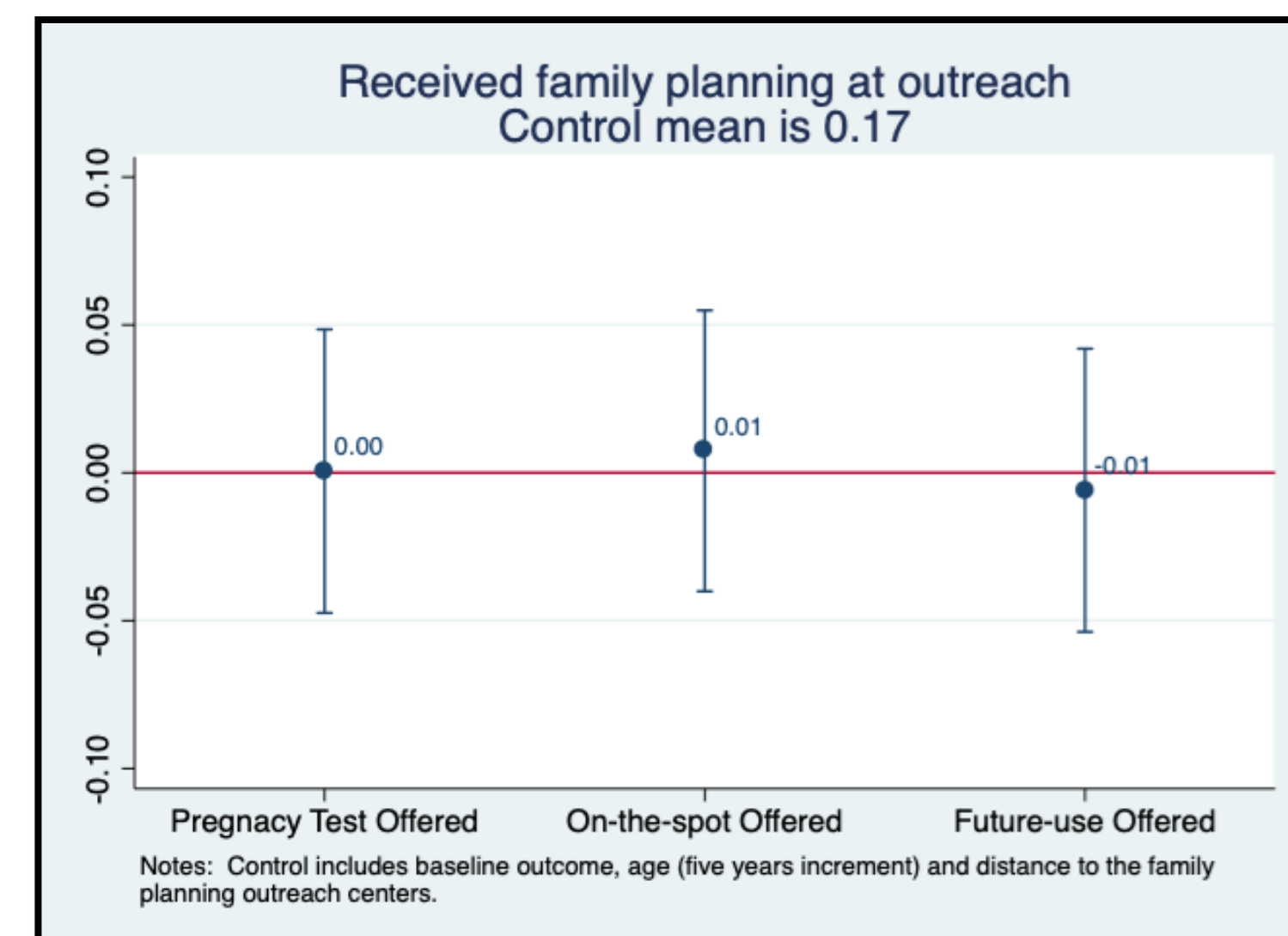
## Result 3: Impact on Family Planning

### The Impact of Pregnancy Tests on Beliefs

After the on-the-spot pregnancy test, beliefs of being pregnant decreased from 27% to 18%.

### Figure 3: The Impact of Pregnancy Test on Family Planning

Although pregnancy test changed beliefs about pregnancy status, pregnancy tests do not affect family planning take-up.



### Conclusion and Implications

- High rates of pregnancy uncertainty in women living in rural Uganda.
- Higher uncertainty is positively associated with higher demand for pregnancy testing.
- Although pregnancy tests resolve uncertainty, there is no effect of pregnancy test on family planning up-take.

**No evidence that knowledge of a negative pregnancy result increases the demand for family planning.**

### Discussion and Future Research

- Effect of positive results of pregnancy testing on early detection of pregnancy, maternal reproductive health, child outcomes.
- Change in sexual behavior including perceptions of risk in pregnancy.

## Acknowledgments

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