

Agency in Contraceptive Decisions Scale: English Version

Agency in Contraceptive Decisions Scale for sub-Saharan Africa: English Version Instrument and Scoring

Introduction to Scale: The Agency in Contraceptive Decisions Scale measures “the ability of an individual to make and act on decisions related to whether to do something to avoid or delay pregnancy and what, if anything, to do when they are not actively trying to become pregnant.” This scale was originally developed and validated in Uganda and Nigeria and offers an innovative approach for measuring the extent to which people have agency to make empowered contraceptive decisions. The measure includes 15 items divided among four subscales: 1) Beliefs about Rights and Perceived Decision-making Control, 2) Decision-making Self-efficacy, 3) Knowledge Aligned with Preferences, and 4) Control over Use or Non-use. Depending on researchers’ interests and priorities, the subscales can be used alone or as part of a composite measure.

Instructions to be read by interviewer administering the scale: *“I would like to ask some questions about your preferences around avoiding pregnancy. All of these questions are about you and your personal needs and preferences. By “method to avoid pregnancy” I am referring to anything a person might use or do to avoid pregnancy. This includes condoms, withdrawal, standard days method, injectables, devices you put in your body, pills, or other ways. When I ask you questions about methods to avoid pregnancy, I mean doing something to make sure pregnancy does not happen at all – not about removing or washing away the pregnancy after it has happened. Please first respond with a “yes” or a “no” and then I’ll ask you to tell me if it’s “yes or strongly yes” or “no or strongly no.”*”

Note to enumerators: Ask participants to first respond with a “yes” or “no.” Then ask them “is that a yes or strongly yes?” or “is that a no or strongly no?”.

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Item		Response Options
Subscale 1: Beliefs about Rights and Perceived Decision-making Control <i>(related to what, if anything, to do to avoid pregnancy)</i>		
1.	Could you get a method to avoid pregnancy if you needed it?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
2.	Could you talk to a healthcare provider about ways to avoid pregnancy if you wanted to?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
3.	Do you believe the government should provide methods to avoid pregnancy for free?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
4.	Should people have the right to be told about the available ways to avoid pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No

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5.	Should people have the right to choose from different ways to avoid pregnancy if they want to do so?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
6.	Do you believe that women's choices about avoiding pregnancy are unfairly limited because of community views of women?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
7.	Is it your decision who you tell or do not tell about if you are doing something to avoid pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
8.	Do you decide for yourself whose opinions you listen to about avoiding pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
Subscale 2: Decision-making Self-efficacy <i>(related to what, if anything, to do to avoid pregnancy)</i>		
9.	If a family member did not support your choice, would you still be able to do what is best for you related to avoiding pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
10.	Are you confident you can do what is best for you related to avoiding pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
11.	If something or someone stood in your way, could you find a way to do what you want related to avoiding pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
Subscale 3: Knowledge Aligned with Preferences <i>(related to what, if anything, to do to avoid pregnancy)</i>		
12.	Do you know different ways to avoid pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
13.	At this point in your life, do you know what you want to know about avoiding pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No

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Subscale 4: Control over Use or Non-use (interference with one's ability to act on decisions related to what, if anything, to do to avoid pregnancy)		
14.	Is someone in your life making you do something you don't want to do related to avoiding pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No
15.	Is someone in your life stopping you from doing something you want related to avoiding pregnancy?	☐ Strongly Yes ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Strongly No

Scoring the Agency in Contraceptive Decisions Scale

Responses for each item should be coded as follows, “strongly no”=0, “no”=1, “yes”=2, “strongly yes”=3. A stronger affirmative response represents greater agency. The scale includes several negatively worded items (questions 14 and 15 above) that should be reverse scored (i.e. “strongly no”=3; “strongly yes”=0) to match this coding method. Scores are calculated by taking the mean of the items of interest (e.g., for the full scale, responses are summed and divided by 15; for subscales, the responses are summed and divided by the total number of subscale items). In the original scale construction, we used complete case analysis (i.e., only observations with valid responses on all scale items were included in psychometric analysis).

References:

Measurement Framework for the Agency in Contraceptive Decisions Scale: Holt, K., Challa, S., Alitubeera, P., Atuyambe, L., Dehlendorf, C., Galavotti, C., Idiodi, I., Jegede, A., Omoluabi, E., Waiswa, P., & Upadhyay, U. (2024). Conceptualizing Contraceptive Agency: A Critical Step to Enable Human Rights-Based Family Planning Programs and Measurement. *Global health: Science and Practice*, 12(1), e2300299. <https://doi.org/10.9745/GHSP-D-23-00299>.

Development and Validation of the Agency in Contraceptive Decisions Scale: Challa, S., Upadhyay, U., Wasswa, R., Nanono, S., Idiodi, I., Okoli, C., Alitubeera, P., Amongin, D., Jegede, A., Tijani, A., Birabwa, C., Atuyambe, L., Dimowa, S., Nmadu, A., Dehlendorf, D., Omoluabi, E., Waiswa, P., Holt, K. Development and Validation of the Agency in Contraceptive Decisions Scale in Uganda and Nigeria. *Studies in Family Planning* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1111/sifp.70033>.

Other Agency in Contraceptive Decisions Scale versions:

The Agency in Contraceptive Decisions Scale is also available in Hausa, Igbo, Langi/Luo, and Lusoga on the ICAN website [here](#). **A version for the United States context has also been adapted and validated:** Challa, S., Spiller, K., Upadhyay, U. D. & Holt, K. P083 - ADAPTATION AND VALIDATION OF THE CONTRACEPTIVE AGENCY SCALE FOR THE US. *Contraception* 139, 110662 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2024.110662>.