

Contraception-focused Preference-Aligned Fertility Management (PFM) Index: English Version Instrument and Scoring

Introduction

Preference-Aligned Fertility Management (PFM) is a broad construct that encompasses the degree to which individuals are acting in line with their own preferences for a spectrum of fertility management options, including contraception, abortion, and infertility treatment. The contraception-focused PFM Index (PFM) measures concordance between contraceptive preferences and actions specifically, capturing: (1) whether an individual's desire to use or not use contraception is met and (2) for contraceptive users, whether the individual wants to be using the specific method(s) they are using. This index was developed to help with the paradigm shift towards a contraception measurement framework that is grounded in principles of human rights and person-centeredness.

PFM Index Items

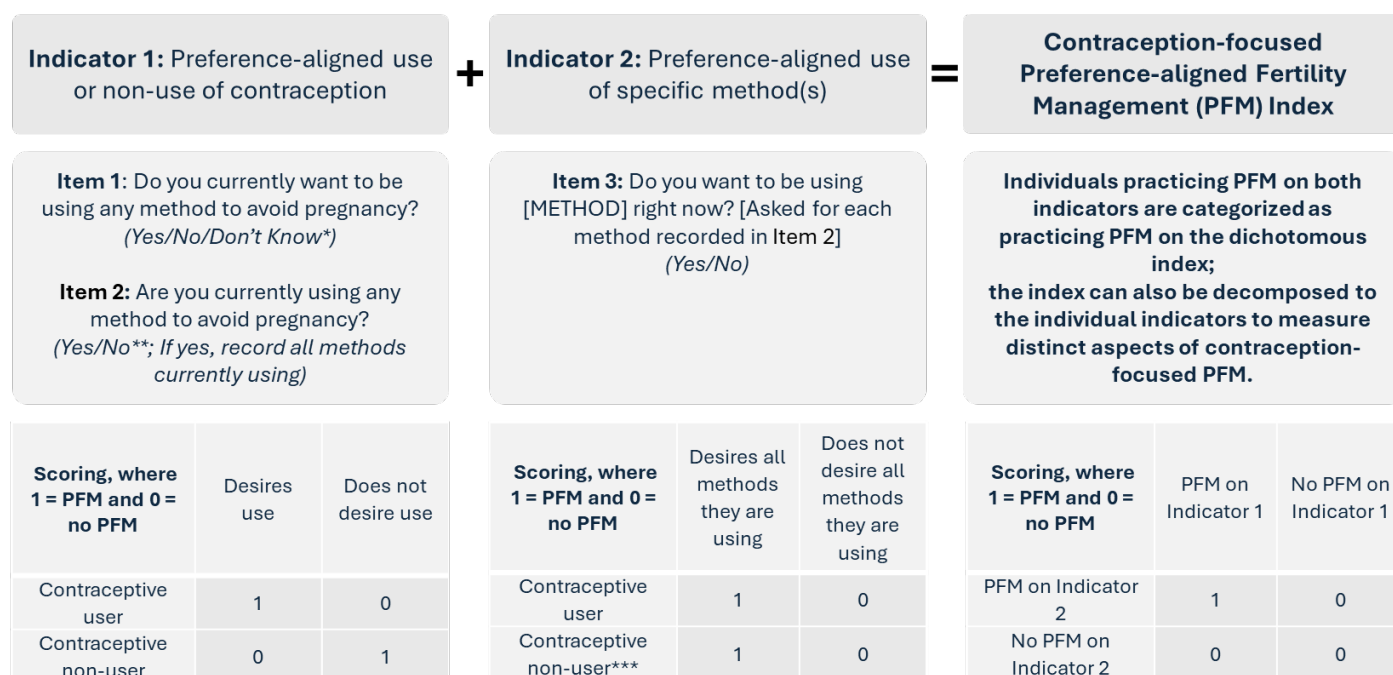
	PFM Items	Response Options
1.	Do you currently want to be using any method to avoid pregnancy?*	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know
2.	Are you currently using any method to avoid pregnancy?	☐ Yes ☐ No
3.	[If they answer YES to ITEM 2, record each method they are currently using and for each method ask:] Do you want to be using [METHOD] right now? [METHOD] _____ [METHOD] _____ [Add lines for more methods as necessary]	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No

*In the ICAN study in Uganda and Nigeria, we added the following clarification to this item to ensure participants considered the full range of contraceptive options in their response: "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." We also changed from asking about "methods to prevent pregnancy" to asking about "methods to avoid pregnancy" after cognitive interviewing showed some participants conflated pregnancy prevention with abortion, and added this additional clarification: "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."

Scoring the PFM Index

The binary PFM Index score (1=PFM, 0=No PFM) is calculated based on two standalone indicators. When scores on both indicators are "1," an individual receives a score of "1" (PFM) on the overall index; otherwise, the score is "0" (No PFM). See **Figure** below for a visual representation. For **Indicator 1, "Preference-aligned use or non-use of contraception,"** participants are scored as "1" when answers to Items 1 and 2 are aligned, indicating that they want to use a method and are using a method, or that they do not want to use a method and are not using a method (i.e., they answer YES to Item 1 and YES to Item 2 *or* answer NO to question 1 and NO to question 2). When responses are not aligned on Items 1 and 2, they are scored as "0" on Indicator 1. For **Indicator 2, "Preference-aligned use of specific method(s),"** participants are scored as "1" when they answer YES to Item 3, indicating they desire to be using the specific method(s) they are currently using or, for non-users, when they receive a score of "1" on Indicator 1. Those using multiple methods must answer YES for all methods to receive a score of "1" on Indicator 2. When responses to at least one method on Item 3 are NO, or if the score on Indicator 1 is "0," the participant is scored as "0" on Indicator 2.

PFM Index, English Version



*Individuals who selected "Don't Know" (n=5 in this study) were excluded from the analyses.

** The original proposal for measuring PFM included a fourth item for individuals who report "sometimes" use of contraception [4]. However, because no individuals in the present study reported "sometimes" use, we did not use the originally proposed Item 4 in this study.

*** Non-users' score on Indicator 2 is always equivalent to their score on Indicator 1

Figure. Calculation of the contraception-focused PFM Index. Reprinted from Holt et al., 2025.

Standalone Use of Each PFM Indicator

Each indicator comprising the index can also stand alone. This means that one individual could be practicing PFM on Indicator 1 but not practicing PFM on specific method based on Indicator 2. For instance, they could respond that they are using contraception and want to be using contraception (*Preference-aligned use of contraception*, Indicator 1) but the method they are currently using is not the method they want to be using right now (currently *no preference-aligned use of specific method*, Indicator 2).

References:

Defining the PFM Construct: Holt, K., Galavotti, C., Omoluabi, E., Challa, S., Waiswa, P. and Liu, J. (2023), Preference-Aligned Fertility Management as a Person-Centered Alternative to Contraceptive Use-Focused Measures. *Studies in Family Planning*, 54: 301-308. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sifp.12228>.

Validation of PFM Index: Holt, K., Rouselinne, G., Amongin, D., Omoluabi, E., Chung, S., Birabwa, C., Dimowo, S., Challa, S., Waiswa, P., Idiodi, I., Phillips, B., Nanono, S., Jegede, A., Liu, J., Wasswa, R., Nmadu, G., Okoli, C., Tijani, A., Galavotti, C. Validation of the contraception-focused Preference-aligned Fertility Management Index in Uganda and Nigeria. *Contraception*, 2025 Jan 10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2025.110813>.

Other PFM Index versions:

The PFM Index is also available in Hausa, Igbo, Langi/Luo, and Lusoga on the ICAN website [here](#). We are also in the process of examining validity of the PFM Index in the United States context.