

Access to family planning in rural communities primarily served by Catholic versus non-Catholic hospitals: a mystery caller study



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Background

- Catholic health care is prevalent and growing^{1,2}
- Catholic hospitals account for one in six acute care hospital beds (14.5%)¹
- 46 hospitals are considered “sole community hospital providers” (SCPs)¹
 - Refers to care in remote locations¹
 - 3 SCPs in CO are Catholic-owned³
 - Grand Junction, Durango, Cañon City
- Catholic health care facilities are expected to follow the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*
 - Restricts common reproductive services⁴

Purpose

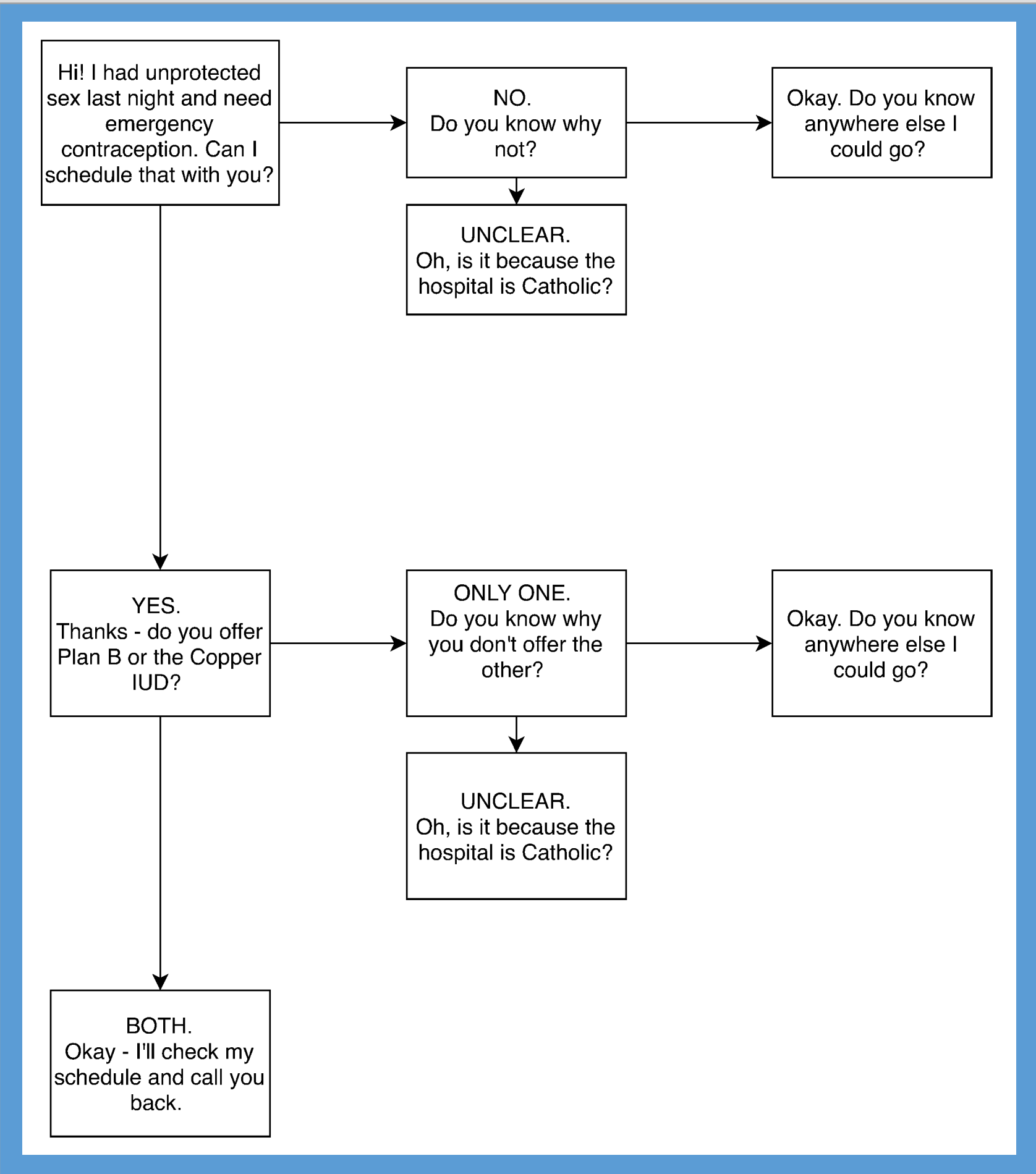
- To delineate reproductive health access in 3 rural Coloradoan communities served by Catholic SCPs compared to three similarly sized communities with Non Catholic SCPs.
- To understand the proportion of denials secondary to Catholic affiliation.
- To understand the proportion of clinics that provide direct referral (name and number) when services were denied.

Methods

- Searched all general Ob/Gyn, Family Practice, and Midwifery practices by zip code
- Called each clinic five different times
- Used structured telephone scripts to query about availability of:

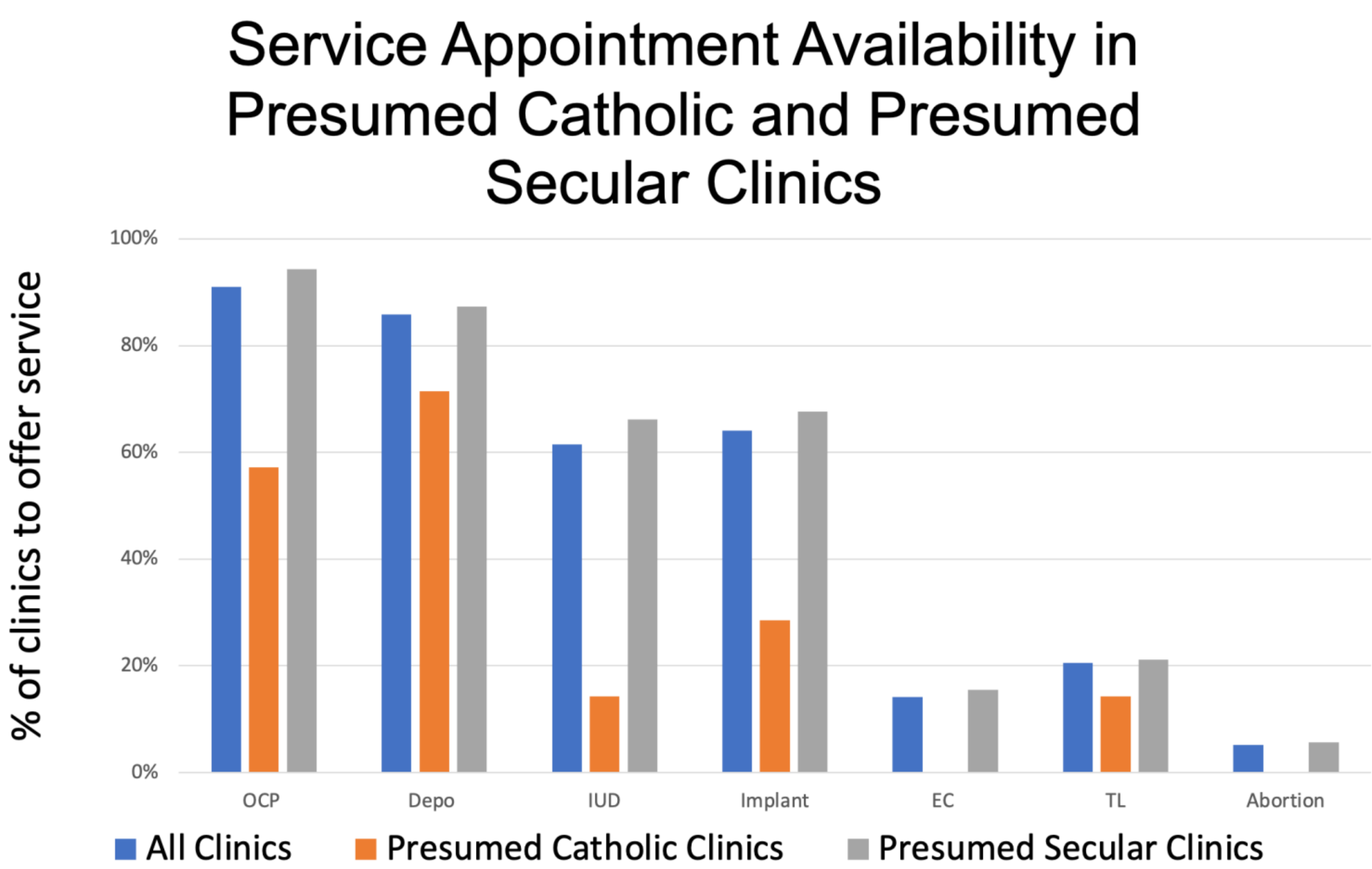
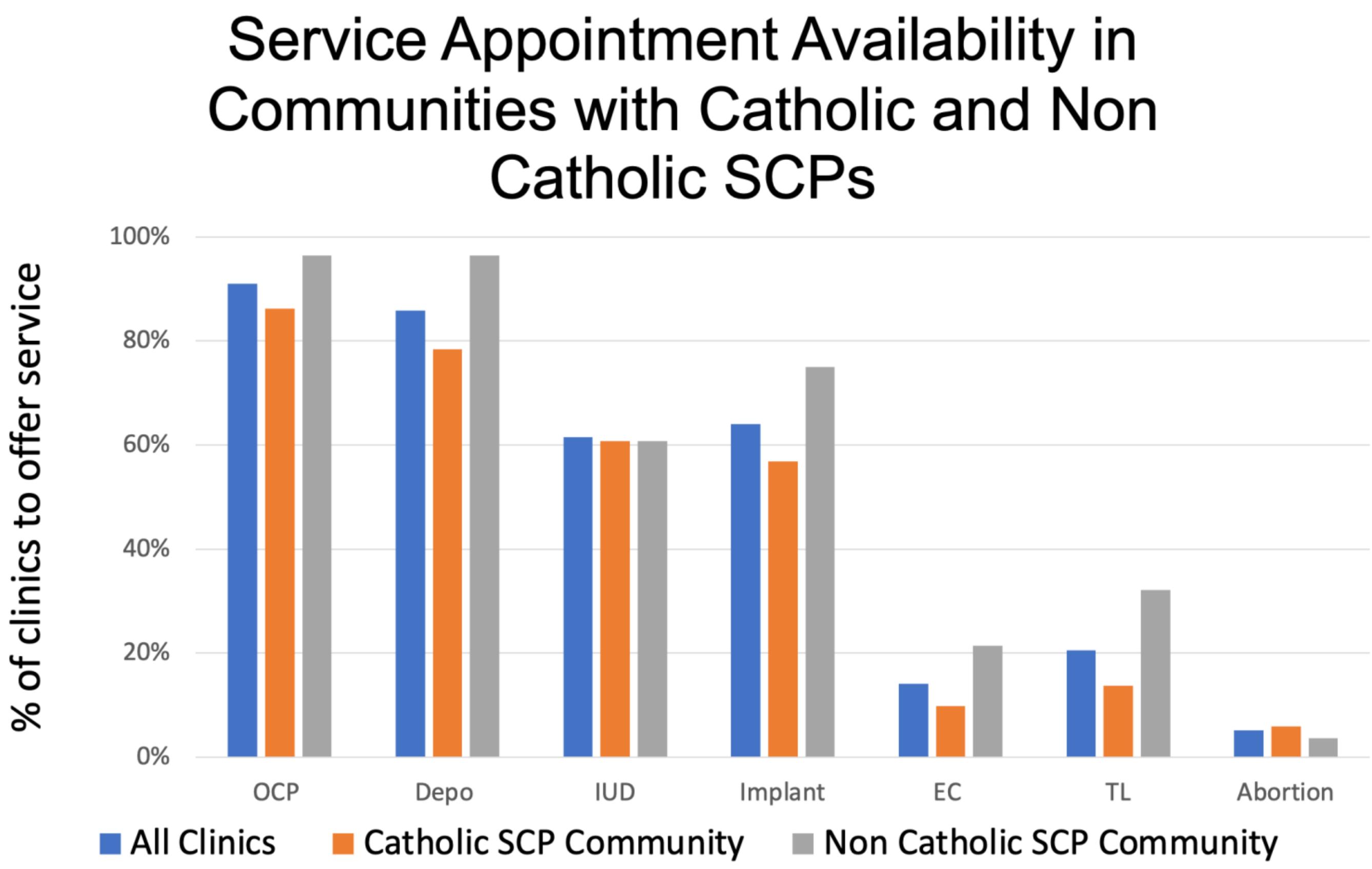
- Short-acting reversible contraception (oral contraceptive pill [OCP], injection [DMPA])
- Long-acting reversible contraception (intrauterine device [IUD], implant)
- Emergency contraception (EC)
- Tubal ligation
- Abortion

Ex: Phone script for EC



Results

Community	Catholic SCP Communities			Non Catholic SCP Communities			Total	% of Total Clinics
	Grand Junction	Durango	Cañon City	Greeley	Montrose	Sterling		
Ob/Gyn	5	3	1	2	2	1	14	18%
Family Med	16	9	9	6	6	5	51	65%
Midwifery	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	4%
Health Department	1	1	0	1	1	1	5	6%
Other	1	2	0	1	1	0	5	6%
Total	25	16	10	10	10	7	78	100%



Overall reasons for Denial n(%)	Catholic affiliation	Service Unavailable	Out of Scope	Other
OCP	2(28.6)	3(42.9)	1(14.3)	1(14.3)
Depo	2(18.2)	6(54.5)	1(9.1)	2(18.2)
IUD	4(13.3)	6(20)	10(33.3)	10(33.3)
Implant	4(14.3)	7(25.0)	8(28.6)	9(32.1)
EC	3(4.5)	36(53.7)	6(9.0)	22(32.8)
TL	1(1.6)	4(6.5)	53(85.5)	4(6.5)
Abortion	6(8.1)	6(8.1)	27(36.5)	35(47.3)

Direct Referral Offered	Total Denials	Total Direct Referrals n(%)
OCP	7	5(71.4)
Depo	11	5(45.5)
IUD	30	15(50)
Implant	28	15(53.6)
EC	67	29(43.3)
TL	62	33(53.2)
Abortion	74	27(36.5)

Discussion

- In comparing Catholic SCP hospital communities vs. non-Catholic SCP hospital communities, a lack of service appointment for DMPA injection was significant ($p = 0.01$)
- In comparing presumed Catholic clinics to all other clinics, lack of appointment availability for was significant for OCP ($p = 0.01$) and IUD ($p = 0.01$).
- Across all communities, there was of low availability of EC (14.1%), tubal ligations (20.5%), and abortions (5.1%).
- Predominant reason for denial varied based on service between service unavailable, out of scope of provider, and other. Less common was Catholic-owned affiliation
- There were inconsistent direct referrals, indicating a caller may have a hard time obtaining a service.

Limitations

- Our results may not be generalizable to other SCPs outside of Colorado.
- Zip codes searched may not capture adjacent communities and services provided
- We may have missed providers based on online searches.
- The information given by the scheduler may reflect bias.
- Schedulers may not be aware of provider practices.

Conclusion

There was some restriction to family planning services secondary to Catholic health care affiliation. Across all rural communities, there was little access to many forms of contraception.

References

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Thank You

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