

Researcher asks, 'is it time for another contraception revolution?'

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In an effort to protect the planet and preserve its natural treasures for future generations, another contraception revolution that provides

options for populations not currently being served by modern contraception may be the answer according to a Perspective in this week's *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The expanding human population is stressing the planet. Dangerous levels of greenhouse gases produced by humans are causing global warming and climate disruption. Rapid depletion of resources from forests and oceans is destroying natural habitats and further contributing to climate change. As the population continues to grow, these pressures will increase and become more critical. Currently there are 7.7 billion people on earth and the United Nations (UN) predicts that the [human population](#) will reach 9 billion by 2050 and probably 11.2 billion by the end of the century.

"With approximately 40 percent of pregnancies being unplanned, the time seems ripe for another contraception revolution to provide options for the diverse populations that are not currently being served by modern contraception," said corresponding author Deborah Anderson, Ph.D., professor of obstetrics/gynecology, microbiology and medicine at Boston University School of Medicine.

Anderson points out that while the contraception revolution of the 20th century produced several effective birth-control methods that reshaped society, there is a need for more contraception options. "New contraception concepts are emerging that could help fill the remaining gap including male contraception being tested in clinical trials. Also, there is a new approach called multipurpose prevention technology (MPT) that offers dual protection against [unintended pregnancy](#) and highly prevalent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as human immunodeficiency virus type-1 and herpes simplex virus type 2, which has been enthusiastically endorsed by women and is currently under development," she said.

Anderson believes appropriate leadership and an infusion of funding could reignite contraception research, education and services. "This investment would be quickly offset by savings in [health care](#) and other costs attributable to pollution and [global warming](#), which in the U.S. currently total \$240 billion per year and are expected to increase to \$350 billion per year in the next decade if drastic mitigation steps are not taken."

Provided by Boston University School of Medicine

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