

Males shun vasectomies due to myths, machismo

By Patricia B. Mirasol
Reporter

FILIPINO males who get no-scalpel vasectomies (NSV) are getting younger — but uptake of this permanent method of family planning (FP) remains low, according to the Commission on Population and Development (POPCOM).

“It’s one of the least methods being availed of. I don’t know if it reaches 1%,” said Jackylin D. Robel, acting regional director of POPCOM-National Capital Region, who estimated that males electing to undergo the procedure are in their 20s and 30s.

The Philippine Health Insurance Corp. reported 69 vasectomy claims in 2021, up from 27 in 2020, per POPCOM’s 2021 annual report.

NSV, as opposed to a traditional vasectomy that requires the use of a scalpel, involves a small puncture in the scrotum to cut and seal the tubes that carry sperm. It takes about 30 minutes in an outpatient setting.

The procedure, among the strategies devised by the National Program on Population and Family Planning to increase male involvement in family planning, is recommended for couples who are satisfied with the number of children they have, Ms.

Robel told *BusinessWorld* in a Sept. 26 Zoom call.

The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10354) requires family planning services such as ligation, vasectomy, and intrauterine device placement to be available in all government hospitals.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MANHOOD

The country’s machismo culture multiplies the misconceptions surrounding NSV, said Ms. Robel.

“Men think it may diminish their virility ... They have this misconception that something is being cut,” she said. “NSV is not like that. It’s only the vas deferens [the ducts that move sperm away from its storage place in the testicle] that’s being tied.”

A vasectomy does not decrease a man’s sex drive because it does not affect the production of the male hormone testosterone. It does not affect a man’s ability to get an erection either.

Ms. Robel notes that of the 52% of Filipinos who take to contraception, 14% use traditional methods. Figures from the NDHS reflect that use of traditional methods, like the withdrawal method, have decreased to 14% in 2017 from 17% in 2013.

“We want to improve the use of modern family planning methods among Filipinos,” she said.

The modern artificial FP methods are subdivided into short-acting (such as pills and condoms), long-acting (such as intrauterine devices and subdermal implants), and permanent (such as no-scalpel vasectomy or NSV and bilateral tubal ligation). Modern natural FP methods, meanwhile, include lactational amenorrhea and basal body temperature charting.

“Compared to modern artificial methods, it takes more time to train women on modern natural planning,” said Ms. Robel.

The Health department’s Field Health Service Information System reported 7.5 million users of modern FP methods by the end of 2021. This marks a 2% increase from 2020’s report of 7.4 million FP users.

The unmet need for FP likewise decreased to 10.1% in 2021 from 10.8% in 2017. As a result, the demand satisfied with a modern method increased to 58.1% in 2021 from 55.6% in 2017.

Ms. Robel said the pills are the most popular FP method, given their ease of use and convenience. More than half of Filipinos, women in particular, avail of free contraception in barangay health centers, she told *BusinessWorld*.

“Responsible parenthood is a shared responsibility of both men and women. Men play a very important role in family planning,” Ms. Robel said.

The ¾ rule: recommendations for voluntary outdoor masking

INDIVIDUALS who are fully vaccinated against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), physically distanced, and outdoors may not need to wear their masks, according to an epidemiologist.

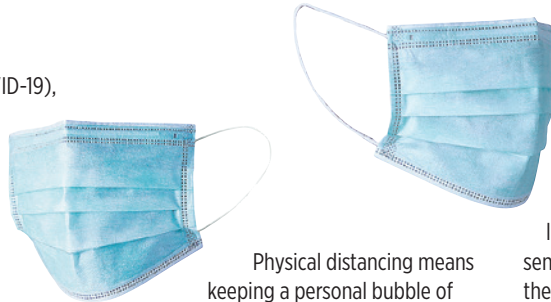
Remember the ¾ rule of voluntary masking when outdoors, said Dr. John Wong, an epidemiologist and chair of the Department of Health drug price advisory council, at a Sept. 23 session organized by the Healthcare Professionals Alliance Against COVID-19 and 702 DZAS FEBC radio.

The ¾ rule entails asking four questions:

- Am I fully vaccinated?
- Am I physically distanced?
- Am I outdoors?
- Do I need to mask?

“To keep safe, you need any three out of the four conditions,” he said.

“Vaccination is the easiest to comply with. Once you’ve done it, you can forget about it. All the other behaviors you have to pay attention to,” Dr. Wong said.



Physical distancing means keeping a personal bubble of 1–2 meters. Masks, meanwhile, have to be high quality, with N95, KN95, and KF94 variants being Dr. Wong’s recommendations.

Masking has other benefits too, he added, citing fewer deaths due to tuberculosis and pneumonia.

“The only change in behavior was masking ... Even if you’re outdoors, you’re not only protecting yourself from COVID-19 but also from other respiratory diseases,” he said. “The ¾ rule is a good rule of thumb for everyone.”

WHAT ABOUT INDOORS, IN CARS?

The calculus changes when the setting moves

indoors, even if a venue’s occupants get a negative result in their antigen test, which is not as sensitive as an RT-PCR (real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) test.

An indoor space’s carbon dioxide level can be measured with carbon dioxide sensors, Dr. Wong said. If the level is less than the maximum accepted concentration of 1,000 ppm (parts per million or µg/m3), then distancing and masking are encouraged.

“If you can distance, you may not have to wear a mask. If you can’t, better to wear [one],” he said.

“We don’t have too many regulations about air quality ... We go to malls, we don’t know what the air quality is,” Dr. Wong added. “I think this needs to be enforced better.”

Ventilation is also key when riding in a car with passengers of unknown vaccination status. “To improve ventilation, request that two of the windows are opened at least three inches,” he said. — Patricia B. Mirasol

OPINION

Ensuring patient safety

It is estimated that one in every 10 patients is harmed while receiving care because of a range of preventable adverse events, according to a presentation cited by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The WHO said that adverse events due to unsafe patient care is likely one of the 10 leading causes of death and disability globally.

Among the patient safety concerns mentioned by the WHO are medication errors, healthcare associated infections, unsafe surgical procedure, unsafe injection practices, diagnostic errors, unsafe transfusion practices, radiation errors, sepsis and blood clots.

Unsafe medication practices and medication errors are a leading cause of avoidable harm in healthcare across the world, according to the WHO. Medications can cause serious harm if incorrectly stored, prescribed, dispensed, administered or if monitored insufficiently.

Delivering quality essential health services devoid of errors can only be possible with patient safety. Patient safety aims to stave off and lower the risks, errors and harm during the provision of care.

Established in 2017 and observed on Sept. 17, World Patient Safety Day reaffirmed the objectives of the WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge: Medication Without Harm, an annual event also launched in 2017.

The challenge calls on stakeholders to prioritize and take early action in key areas associated with significant patient harm due to unsafe medication practices. These include high-risk situations, transitions of care, polypharmacy (concurrent use of multiple medications) and look-alike, sound-alike medications.

Medication errors occur when weak medication systems and human factors such as fatigue, poor environmental conditions or staff shortages affect the safety of the medication use process. This can result in severe patient harm, disability and even death. The WHO noted that the ongoing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly exacerbated the risk of medication errors and associated medication-related harm.

In 2008, the Department of Health (DoH) issued AO No. 2008-0023 to institutionalize quality assurance where patient safety is regarded as one of the key dimensions of quality healthcare. Correspondingly, the agency implemented its Patient Safety Program to provide a framework for quality and safe health services in all DoH hospitals and other health facilities.

Anchored on the Universal Health Care Law and the call of the 72nd World Health Assembly on Global Action on Patient Safety, the

DoH reaffirmed its commitment to promote and integrate patient safety in health service delivery to improve health systems and health outcomes. In February 2020, the DoH issued AO No. 2020-0007 enhancing the National Policy on Patient Safety in Health Facilities. The order provides guidance on the effective implementation and institutionalization of the Patient Safety Program in health facilities to improve safety in health service delivery, including that of the vulnerable population.

“Patient safety is a fundamental element of healthcare and is regarded as an essential component for improving health outcomes. The provision of safe and quality health service that is responsive to the needs of the people is a vital pillar in helping achieve Universal Health Care,” the DoH stated.

Meanwhile, the Patient Safety Movement (PSM), a global group with a presence in the Philippines, aims to achieve zero preventable patient harm and death across the globe by 2030. The PSM is also linking organizations and people for a collective advocacy on patient safety.

The biopharmaceutical industry, too, aims to develop and make available quality, safe and efficacious medicines and vaccines. Based on its commitment to public health, the industry collaborates with the WHO, regulatory, and other standard-setting bodies in the development and implementation of guidelines standardizing the quality of medicines. To protect patient health, consistent standards for quality should be applied everywhere.

Good Manufacturing and Good Distribution Practice (GMP/ GDP) inspections, for example, are part of the overall quality assurance system for medicines. Inspections are essential to evaluate commercial manufacturing capability, adequacy of manufacturing and control procedures, suitability of equipment and facilities, and effectiveness of the quality management system. All these, among other safety measures being implemented by the biopharmaceutical industry, ultimately benefit patients and assure them of their safety.

TEODORO B. PADILLA is the executive director of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), which represents the biopharmaceutical medicines and vaccines industry in the country. Its members are at the forefront of research and development efforts for COVID-19 and other diseases that affect Filipinos.



JOB OPENING

COMPANY NAME & ADDRESS:
AMERICAN POWER CONVERSION CORPORATION (A.P.C.) B.V.
Lot 1 Block 5 Phase 2, Cavite Economic Zone, PEZA, Rosario, Cavite

CONTACT DETAILS OF COMPANY:
MICAELA TAN Micaela.Tan@se.com;
ANN VIRGIL ARANEL annvirgil.aranel@se.com

AVAILABLE JOB VACANCY/POSITION:
ONE (1) PORTUGUESE PREMIUM
AND TECHNICAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- Receive and manage customer queries via media required by country/region of support.
- Answering incoming “Sales Related” calls and proactively qualify sales opportunities.
- Document all incoming calls using CRM tool.
- Promote Schneider’s existing and new products and solutions with a unique value proposition, cross selling and up selling with innovative, alternative solutions to replace the competitor’s product.
- Participate in various Technical and Customer Service and Sales Training Course as required.
- Support the sales team with generating assembling larger, more complex quotations and order follow up.
- Escalating problems to Technical Support Level 2 when standard troubleshooting techniques and databases cannot provide an adequate solution.
- To perform technical assistance with all internal and external customers for all of Schneider’s products
- Conduct initial troubleshooting and support of products by Schneider
- Dispatching a Field Service Engineer or its Service Partner of unscheduled on-site services.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor’s Degree preferably in Engineering (Electronics, Electronic) or its equivalent
- Experience in Technical Support is an advantage
- Must be fluent in both English and required language (French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Korean or Japanese language)
- Must possess excellent skills in listening, expressions and interrelationships
- Must be keen to details and be technically smart
- Must be capable in working independently and utilize sound judgment
- Ability to adjust quickly to reforming situations and express determination to achieve incessant improvement and excellent customer service
- Demonstrate ability to understand and explain technical information
- Ability to solve customer’s problems via telephone, chat, web and mail
- Willing to work in Cavite on a rotating work schedule

SALARY RANGE:
Ninety-Five Thousand Pesos [P95,000.00]

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POSITION: CLIENT CONTACT CENTRE MANAGER

JOB DESCRIPTION: Candidate shall supervise and manage the team that processes incoming leads via various communication methods including but not limited to phone, internet and SMS; and will need an excellent understanding of the client dealership’s departments and operations and be able to communicate its core function of the fixed-price sales to the team and prospects.

LOCATION: 19/F Uptown Place Tower 2, 11th Avenue, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Past work experience as an automotive department member or any similar role
- Experience with the Australian Used Car Market is a must
- Vehicle retail experience helpful
- Experience with analytics and lead management systems
- Excellent writing, communication, and presentation skills
- Proficient in full Microsoft Office suite, especially Excel and PowerPoint

Interested applicants may submit their application to Satellite Office Solutions Pty. Ltd. – Philippine Branch through email at recruitment@satelliteoffice.com.au

JOB OPENING

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Qualifications:

- Minimum of ten (10) years of Information Technology (IT) experience in a combination of the following industries: banking, telecom, insurance and/or healthcare
- Experience in deliveries using Agile Methodology.
- Experience on Windows 2000, XP, Win 7, Win 98, AS400

Key responsibilities:

- Compile programming using documentation, solution design, creation of functional specifications, use cases, test scenarios, test cases and functional tests.
- Involvement in all phases of project life cycle, planning, execution, monitoring, reporting, control and closure of the project.
- Accountable for appropriate testing (System integration, Performance Testing, Regression Testing, User Performance Testing & Deployment Verification Test etc.).
- Manage inter-dependencies between different delivery teams and with other IT projects.

TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES (PHILIPPINES) INC.
10F Panorama Tower, 34th Street, BGC, Taguig City
1634, Philippines
Tel no. +63-2-8663-3845
Email address: philippines.hr@tcs.com

JOB HIRING

10 – CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE
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5 – CONSULTANT MANAGER
5 – MARKETING MANAGER
5 – SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Qualifications:

- Graduate of Bachelor’s/College Degree in any field
- At least 1 year of working experience in a related position
- Flexible, trustworthy and willing to work under pressure
- Proficient in speaking and writing in English & Korean Hangul
- Good Interpersonal and communication skills
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- Must be College Graduate
- Can speak, read and write fluent English and Korean Language
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- Can work with minimal or without supervision
- At least 1 year working experience

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Concepcion: private sector helped pitch investments during Marcos visit

With the country’s leading tycoons making up the delegation, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s recently concluded six-day working visit to the US stirred excitement among some of the world’s largest private equity investors.

One of the highlights was a high-level roundtable meeting organized by Asia Society Philippines Chair Doris Magsaysay Ho and Vice Chair Myla Villanueva last Sept. 23, where some of the world’s largest private equity investors in aviation, big infrastructure, energy, fintech and payments, e-commerce, and digital infrastructure were in attendance.

Magsaysay-Ho made the introductions and Villanueva facilitated the discussions. The investors in attendance included former ambassador John Negroponte of McLarty Associates, Ken Mehman of KKR, Andrew Thomas of Stonepeak, Mark Tatum of NBA, Dinesh Kanna of Boston Consulting, Michael Kirban of VitaCoco, Proof of Learn founder Shiela Marcelo, Asia Society trustee Ashete Mehta of McKinsey, Nick Rohatyn of The Rohatyn Group, Itai Lemberger of Bow Wave Capital, Brian Franke of Indigo Partners, and Alibaba co-founder Joe Tsai, who is also already invested in Mynt, or GCash. Asia Society was instrumental in bringing in its network of investors, most of whom are already invested in the Philippines, and shared insights about opportunities as the new administration transforms the economy.

“This government has been very supportive of the private sector and public participation. The President is very keen to get the private sector involved and we are delighted with that,” said Ayala Corp. chairman Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala during the President’s visit. He added that it is now up to the private sector to maximize the favorable business environment under the Marcos administration.

“The President has quite cleverly gotten 30 of our country’s busiest CEOs to voluntarily work for him,” said Aboitiz CEO Sabin Aboitiz, who also is the convenor Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC), a group of leading businessmen directly advising the President.

“The private sector was in full force during the three major business briefings during the visit,” said Go Negosyo founder and RFM President and CEO Joey Concepcion, who also heads the Jobs committee of the PSAC.

“I think that the President’s winning the biggest mandate in Philippine history inspired the private sector to join in this bid to make the country a great investment destination. Likewise, it reflected in how the foreign investors were eager to connect with us, seeing how well attended the briefings were and how the meetings were on time and went on as scheduled,” Concepcion added.

Concepcion told the private gathering at Asia Society that the Philippines presents huge opportunities for foreign investors, especially



Some of the country’s biggest businessmen accompanied President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., seen here at a dinner hosted by LT Group’s Michael Tan: (from left): China Bank Chairman Hans Sy, LT Group COO Lucio Tan III, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s George Barcelon, President Marcos, RFM Corp. and Go Negosyo’s Joey Concepcion, and LT Group President Michael Tan.

in the area of public-private partnerships. He said public-private sector partnerships have met with success in the country, as proven by the country’s experience during the pandemic where private-public sector cooperation was crucial in securing vaccines, supporting mass testing, and coordinating with enforced lockdowns.

He added that these opportunities include a chance to promote inclusive growth in the country through MSMEs, which comprise almost all of the enterprises in the Philippines. “Our desire is to make this growth more inclusive; not just us, the big corporations, but the whole nation,” he said, adding that large corporations must help small enterprises scale up. “The opportunities in the Philippines are huge, and many still remain untapped,” he said. “There may be a lot of headwinds but we’re making progress,” he said.

The Philippines private sector at the Asia Society meeting was represented by the heads of the largest companies in the Philippines, including PSAC convenor and Aboitiz CEO Sabin Aboitiz, RFM Corp. president and CEO Joey Concepcion, Ayala Corp chairman Jaime Zobel de Ayala, Magsaysay Holdings CEO Doris Magsaysay Ho, JG Summit CEO Lance Gokongwei, GCash President Martha Sazon, and MDI founder Myla Villanueva.

The private meeting preceded the public address and discussion with the President hosted by Asia Society president and former Australia Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. President Marcos and his economic managers have emphasized the important role of private sector participation in the administration’s near- and medium-term agenda, and how it will support it through newly enacted liberalization laws and a healthy, productive workforce.