

Unmet Need for Family Planning among Young Women:

A Global Comparison of Levels, Trends, and Components

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1 Background

Unmet need for family planning has been an ongoing topic of fertility research since the 1960s when knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) surveys revealed a “KAP gap” in many countries. That is, given the stated fertility intentions of many women, nonuse of contraception is discrepant behavior. More than four decades after the concept’s emergence, unmet need has become a mainstay of demographic approaches to understanding fertility. It remains a critical measure for assessing women’s ability to achieve their reproductive intentions, estimating demand for family planning services, and monitoring the degree to which those services meet client needs.

In recent years, unmet need has received renewed attention as an advocacy and monitoring tool for family planning programs, becoming a key indicator (Indicator 5.6) for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators (IAEG) 2008). It is an important measure for assessing progress toward the Family Planning 2020 goal to extend family planning services to an additional 120 million women and girls by 2020 (Carr et al. 2012; Horton and Peterson 2012). As such, new scrutiny has been focused on the way in which unmet need is measured, with the objective of assuring that it is calculated consistently over time and across settings.

The concept of unmet need for family planning is notable for bringing together in one measure both contraceptive behavior and fertility preferences, a feature that distinguishes it from other fertility-related measures such as the contraceptive prevalence rate (Casterline and Sinding 2000). At the heart of the concept is the prevention of unintended pregnancy among women who want to avoid pregnancy (Jain 1999; Yinger 1998). As such, the early, basic definition of unmet need can be described as the *proportion of married women who do not want any (more) births, but who are not using contraception* (Casterline and Sinding 2000; Freedman, Coombs, and Chang 1972).

Efforts to develop methods to quantify this group of women were made by both Nortman and Westoff, who expanded the original definition in two important ways (Nortman 1982; Westoff 1978, 1988; Westoff and Pebley 1981). First, it was expanded to include certain women who are temporarily infecund, recognizing that women who are currently pregnant, breastfeeding, or amenorrheic may soon experience unmet need (Nortman 1982). The second extension of the definition made the distinction between two types of unmet need: unmet need for spacing births and unmet need for limiting fertility (Westoff 1988). Third, the concept has been applied to unmarried, sexually active women, an important extension of the algorithm as the age of sexual debut has declined and sexual experience and fertility becomes increasingly separated from the institution of marriage in many countries (Kothari et al. 2012; Lloyd 2005), the exclusion of unmarried women from the unmet need algorithm has become increasingly problematic (Dixon-Mueller and Germain 1992; Yinger 1998). Currently, the field generally defines unmet need for family planning as the *proportion of fecund, sexually active women who want to limit or delay childbearing (beyond two years), but who are not using contraception* (Becker 1999; Bongaarts and Bruce 1995; Casterline and Sinding 2000; Yinger 1998).

The Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) Program has been collecting data with which to calculate unmet need for family planning and data on adolescents and youth for more than three decades, since the first phase of survey implementation (1984-89) (Kothari et al. 2012). An increasing number of surveys now interview both married and unmarried women alike, facilitating measurement of unmet need for both populations. However, the algorithm for estimating unmet need has evolved over time and been applied inconsistently. For example, there has been variation in 1) specification of the duration of postpartum amenorrhea, 2) application of a “contraceptive calendar,” and 3) use of data on contraceptive discontinuation (Bradley et al. 2012). Because international monitoring efforts (e.g., the MDGs and FP2020) require stable unmet need indicators, the DHS program recently undertook efforts to standardize and simplify the algorithm for unmet need. The results of this initiative reveal earlier estimates to have

underestimated unmet need where contraceptive calendar data had been applied and smaller changes elsewhere (Bradley et al. 2012). Updated estimates for all women of reproductive age are reported in DHS Analytical Study No. 25 (Bradley et al. 2012).

Young women, particularly unmarried women, may disproportionately experience unmet need for family planning due to their unique fertility preferences associated with this stage of the life course. Alternately, they may experience higher levels of unmet need where they lack full knowledge of their options, access to services is lacking (particularly those designed for young people or for spacing needs generally), or where programs underestimate needs of youth. This study examines the current state of young women's need for family planning and the extent to which unmet need in this population equals or exceeds unmet need in the general population of women of reproductive age. The study uses data from recent DHS surveys and applies the revised, standard definition of unmet need. This definition is fully comparable across settings and over time. This algorithm is applied both to married women and to unmarried women who have been sexually active within the 30 days preceding the survey.

1.1 Study Objectives

The study first describes *current levels* of unmet need for family planning and demand for family planning among women age 15-24 and investigates *trends* in unmet need among *young married* women and among *young unmarried, sexually active* women. Finally, it explores current levels and trends in the *components* of unmet need, namely exposure to the risk of pregnancy through marriage or non-marital sexual activity, fertility preferences, and the use or non-use of contraception.

Specifically, this report addresses the following questions:

- In which regions/countries is unmet need and total demand for family planning higher/lower among young women?
- Has unmet need among young women declined over time? Which regions have had the sharpest decreases?
- How does unmet need and total demand for family planning compare between young married women and young sexually active unmarried women?
- What proportion of young women is married and what proportion is unmarried and sexually active? What are their fertility desires? What proportion of young women is using contraception? How many are using modern methods versus traditional methods? How have these patterns changed over time?

2 Data and Methods

This study uses Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data from 142 surveys in 61 countries that conducted a DHS survey since the year 2000. Current survey data are supplemented by data from up to two prior surveys—supplying as many as three data points per country—to establish trends over time for 47 countries.

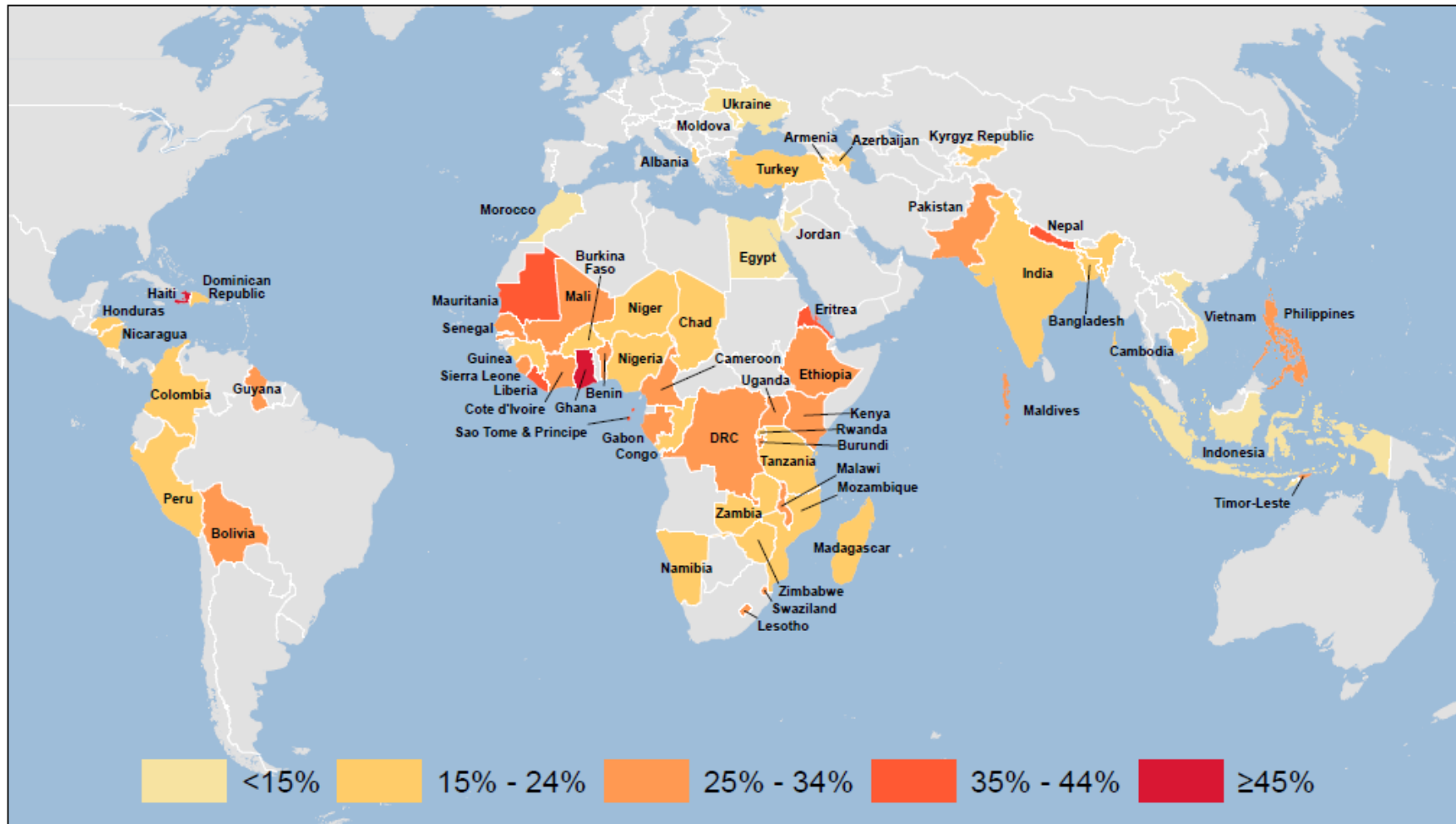
This study calculates total demand for family planning, unmet need for family planning, and proportion of demand satisfied for young women. Section 3 presents current levels and trends in unmet need among married women age 15-24; Section 4 presents this information for unmarried women and compares unmet need by marital status. Analysis of unmet need among unmarried women is necessarily limited to the 91 surveys in 41 countries that interviewed *all* women age 15-49; surveys that sampled only *ever-married* women are excluded.

Finally, Section 5 describes current levels and trends in the underlying components of unmet need for family planning. These components include two measures describing the population at risk of pregnancy: 1) proportion married or in union by exact ages 15 and 18, and 2) proportion unmarried and sexually active in the past 30 days; one measure describing fertility desires (wanting no more children, wanting a child after 2 years or more, wanting a child immediately); and current use of contraception (use of a modern method, a traditional method, or no method).

Throughout the study, I apply the revised algorithm for unmet need (Bradley et al. 2012). Use of the term “married women” refers to women in formal marriages *or* living in union. The revised algorithm for unmet need considers all women currently using any contraceptive method to have a met need for family planning, without distinction of method type. Where distinctions are made between use of modern methods and use of traditional methods, the following are classified as modern methods, in keeping with previous DHS work in this area (e.g. Westoff 2012): pill, IUD, injections, female or male condom, foam/jelly, diaphragm, implants, lactational amenorrhea method, and female or male sterilization. Traditional methods mainly comprise withdrawal and periodic abstinence.

The data are not pooled; rather analyses are conducted separately for each survey. All data are weighted within each survey to account for undersampling or oversampling of geographic districts and non-response; weighted sample sizes are reported throughout the study. Regional averages are calculated giving equal weight to each country, regardless of sample or population size.

Map 1. Unmet need for family planning among married women age 15-24



3 Current Levels of Unmet Need for Family Planning among Young Married Women

3.1 Geographic Distribution of Unmet Need for Family Planning among Young Married Women

Map 1 displays the geographic distribution of the prevalence of unmet need for family planning among married women age 15-24. It indicates that, among young, married women, unmet need is *highest* in West African countries, namely in Eritrea, Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, and São Tomé and Príncipe, and, in other regions, in Haiti, and Nepal. Unmet need among young married women is *lowest* in Indonesia and Vietnam in South and Southeast Asia and in many of the East European and Central Asian and Middle Eastern and North African countries surveyed.

3.2 Unmet Need and Demand for Family Planning among Young Married Women

Table 1 presents the most recent DHS estimates of unmet need for family planning and current use of contraception among married women age 15-24. It also shows total demand for family planning, which is the sum of the percentage of women with unmet need plus the percentage currently using contraception (i.e., those with “met need”), and the proportion of demand satisfied, which is the percentage of women currently using contraception divided by total demand.

On average among countries in this study¹, unmet need among married women age 15-24 is highest in West and Central Africa, at nearly 30 percent; this region includes five of the top ten countries in terms of unmet need. West and Central Africa is followed by East and Southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South and Southeast Asia, with one or two top ten countries each; in these regions, unmet need is experienced by nearly one-quarter of married women age 15-24. Unmet need is much lower in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region and in the Middle East and North Africa region, where levels are generally below 20 percent. Among individual countries, unmet need among married women age 15-24 is highest in Ghana (45.7%) and Haiti (44.8%) and lowest in Indonesia (8.0%) and Egypt (8.8%).

Table 1. Current levels and trends in unmet need, current use of contraception, and demand for family planning among currently married women age 15-24

Region and country	Year	Unmet need	Current use	Total demand	% demand satisfied	Weighted number
West and Central Africa						
Benin	2006	28.3	13.1	41.4	31.6	2,886
Benin	2001	26.0	15.7	41.7	37.6	1,155
Benin	1996	25.9	16.0	41.9	38.2	1,094
Burkina Faso	2010	23.3	13.3	36.6	36.3	3,728
Burkina Faso	2003	27.2	12.2	39.4	31.0	2,739
Burkina Faso	1998-99	25.5	11.3	36.8	30.7	1,511

¹ Regional averages are unweighted averages and exclude those countries for which current DHS survey data is unavailable.

Region and country	Year	Unmet need	Current use	Total demand	% demand satisfied	Weighted number
Cameroon	2011	25.2	20.3	45.5	44.6	2,803
Cameroon	2004	20.4	25.5	45.9	55.6	2,391
Cameroon	1998	18.8	19.2	38.0	50.5	1,176
Chad	2004	20.9	10.5	31.4	33.4	1,478
Chad	1996-97	16.2	4.4	20.6	21.4	1,991
Congo Brazzaville	2011-12	26.3	43.2	69.5	62.2	1,495
Congo Brazzaville	2005	23.8	46.1	69.9	66.0	1,093
Congo Democratic Republic	2007	31.6	17.6	49.2	35.8	1,941
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	30.9	15.3	46.2	33.1	1,512
Côte d'Ivoire	1998-99	31.3	12.8	44.1	29.0	534
Côte d'Ivoire	1994	27.8	12.0	39.8	30.2	1,526
Gabon	2012	32.7	31.6	64.3	49.1	953
Gabon	2000	29.8	38.2	68.0	56.2	950
Ghana	2008	45.8	20.9	66.7	31.3	499
Ghana	2003	44.6	19.9	64.5	30.9	667
Ghana	1998	45.4	20.4	65.8	31.0	674
Guinea	2005	20.7	9.9	30.6	32.4	1,474
Guinea	1999	21.5	5.0	26.5	18.9	1,459
Liberia	2007	41.8	6.6	48.4	13.6	991
Mali	2006	30.1	8.5	38.6	22.0	3,968
Mali	2001	30.1	7.5	37.6	19.9	3,165
Mali	1995-96	28.3	5.4	33.7	16.0	2,278
Mauritania	2000-02	35.0	6.3	41.3	15.3	1,155
Niger	2006	14.7	9.2	23.9	38.5	2,440
Niger	1998	17.3	8.1	25.4	31.9	2,188
Niger	1992	16.5	4.0	20.5	19.5	1,837
Nigeria	2008	19.8	7.7	27.5	28.0	5,523
Nigeria	2003	16.2	7.5	23.7	31.6	1,456
Nigeria	1999	21.9	6.8	28.7	23.7	1,406
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008-09	43.3	34.2	77.5	44.1	395
Senegal	2010-11	30.6	8.1	38.7	20.9	2,764
Senegal	2005	32.9	7.2	40.1	18.0	2,849
Sierra Leone	2008	26.7	4.2	30.9	13.6	1,171
Regional average¹		29.3	15.6	44.9	34.7	37,176
East and Southern Africa						
Burundi	2010	28.0	20.4	48.4	42.1	1,307
Eritrea	2002	34.8	4.5	39.3	11.5	1,530
Eritrea	1995	33.3	7.1	40.4	17.6	937
Ethiopia	2011	25.5	31.5	57.0	55.3	2,527
Ethiopia	2005	36.7	14.2	50.9	27.9	2,284
Ethiopia	2000	38.1	6.3	44.4	14.2	2,669
Kenya	2008-09	30.3	33.3	63.6	52.4	1,170
Kenya	2003	33.9	24.9	58.8	42.3	1,297
Kenya	1998	31.7	28.1	59.8	47.0	1,234
Lesotho	2009	28.4	39.9	68.3	58.4	1,151
Lesotho	2004	32.3	28.8	61.1	47.1	1,072

Region and country	Year	Unmet need	Current use	Total demand	% demand satisfied	Weighted number
Madagascar	2008-09	21.2	32.1	53.3	60.2	3,390
Madagascar	2003-04	21.6	20.9	42.5	49.2	1,291
Madagascar	1997	27.3	12.3	39.6	31.1	1,256
Malawi	2010	26.2	38.5	64.7	59.5	4,639
Malawi	2004	30.6	26.5	57.1	46.4	3,071
Malawi	2000	31.0	23.1	54.1	42.7	3,257
Mozambique	2011	23.1	9.5	32.6	29.1	2,940
Mozambique	2003	17.1	24.5	41.6	58.9	2,683
Mozambique	1997	24.8	3.0	27.8	10.8	2,163
Namibia	2006-07	23.4	51.3	74.7	68.7	516
Namibia	2000	29.5	45.4	74.9	60.6	400
Namibia	1992	25.1	28.4	53.5	53.1	394
Rwanda	2010	16.0	43.6	59.6	73.2	1,087
Rwanda	2005	34.4	12.1	46.5	26.0	1,045
Rwanda	2000	29.7	9.7	39.4	24.6	1,135
Swaziland	2006-07	28.4	45.9	74.3	61.8	431
Tanzania	2010	22.7	26.0	48.7	53.4	1,610
Tanzania	2004-05	23.4	20.8	44.2	47.1	1,990
Tanzania	1999	21.5	23.2	44.7	51.9	777
Uganda	2011	34.3	20.4	54.7	37.3	1,505
Uganda	2006	35.2	19.1	54.3	35.2	1,528
Uganda	2000-01	33.1	18.4	51.5	35.7	1,616
Zambia	2007	24.3	38.5	62.8	61.3	1,169
Zambia	2001-02	26.3	29.8	56.1	53.1	1,524
Zambia	1996	24.6	22.4	47.0	47.7	1,705
Zimbabwe	2010-11	15.5	53.7	69.2	77.6	1,662
Zimbabwe	2005-06	15.0	54.8	69.8	78.5	1,648
Zimbabwe	1999	13.5	50.5	64.0	78.9	1,134
Regional average¹		25.5	32.6	58.1	56.1	26,634
Middle East and North Africa						
Egypt	2008	8.8	40.5	49.3	82.2	3,133
Egypt	2005	9.9	40.8	50.7	80.5	3,690
Egypt	2000	10.7	38.5	49.2	78.3	2,785
Jordan	2009	13.6	39.7	53.3	74.5	1,320
Jordan	2007	14.4	41.1	55.5	74.1	1,466
Jordan	2002	19.3	38.5	57.8	66.6	864
Jordan	1997	21.3	32.9	54.2	60.7	980
Morocco	2003-04	10.1	53.2	63.3	84.0	1,441
Morocco	1992	21.6	31.9	53.5	59.6	930
Regional average¹		10.8	44.5	55.3	80.5	5,894
Eastern Europe and Central Asia						
Albania	2008-09	17.5	53.3	70.8	75.3	467
Armenia	2010	18.1	37.1	55.2	67.2	518
Armenia	2005	18.9	39.3	58.2	67.5	582
Armenia	2000	19.1	50.5	69.6	72.6	610
Azerbaijan	2006	15.9	32.3	48.2	67.0	848

Region and country	Year	Unmet need	Current use	Total demand	% demand satisfied	Weighted number
Kyrgyz Republic	2012	20.9	19.3	40.2	48.0	1,053
Kyrgyz Republic	1997	12.3	45.5	57.8	78.7	551
Moldova	2005	13.0	62.3	75.3	82.7	765
Turkey	2003	16.2	58.5	74.7	78.3	664
Turkey	1998	21.1	48.6	69.7	69.7	1,186
Turkey	1993	19.9	44.6	64.5	69.1	1,355
Ukraine	2007	12.0	61.4	73.4	83.7	517
Regional average¹		16.2	46.3	62.5	74.1	4,832
South and Southeast Asia						
Bangladesh	2011	15.9	54.0	69.9	77.3	5,322
Bangladesh	2007	18.1	48.2	66.3	72.7	3,470
Bangladesh	2004	17.9	48.4	66.3	73.0	3,657
Cambodia	2010	17.2	40.2	57.4	70.0	2,061
Cambodia	2005	24.2	32.1	56.3	57.0	2,034
Cambodia	2000	36.8	13.5	50.3	26.8	1,447
India	2005-06	23.2	27.5	50.7	54.2	23,508
India	1998-99	24.5	23.8	48.3	49.3	24,154
India	1992-93	31.0	16.3	47.3	34.5	26,388
Indonesia	2012	8.0	58.2	66.2	87.9	4,644
Indonesia	2007	9.8	59.0	68.8	85.8	4,766
Indonesia	2002-03	9.0	58.1	67.1	86.6	4,672
Maldives	2009	32.5	22.5	55.0	40.9	1,300
Nepal	2011	39.3	25.8	65.1	39.6	2,553
Nepal	2006	34.7	25.8	60.5	42.6	2,389
Nepal	2001	33.8	19.3	53.1	36.3	2,573
Pakistan	2006-07	25.2	13.0	38.2	34.0	2,022
Pakistan	1990-91	29.0	5.2	34.2	15.2	1,459
Philippines	2008	26.6	41.8	68.4	61.1	1,283
Philippines	2003	28.5	39.6	68.1	58.1	1,334
Philippines	1998	31.6	36.2	67.8	53.4	1,212
Timor-Leste	2009-10	33.8	14.3	48.1	29.7	1,343
Vietnam	2002	10.8	53.8	64.6	83.3	603
Vietnam	1997	13.7	49.5	63.2	78.3	845
Regional average¹		23.2	35.1	58.4	60.2	44,639
Latin America and Caribbean						
Bolivia	2008	30.1	52.7	82.8	63.6	1,735
Bolivia	2003	30.7	53.2	83.9	63.4	2,051
Bolivia	1998	33.8	40.2	74.0	54.3	1,224
Colombia	2010	16.8	68.6	85.4	80.3	4,456
Colombia	2005	16.4	68.0	84.4	80.6	3,668
Colombia	2000	18.7	65.7	84.4	77.8	1,140
Dominican Republic	2007	21.4	55.6	77.0	72.2	3,209
Dominican Republic	2002	24.6	50.6	75.2	67.3	3,175
Dominican Republic	1999	28.6	42.1	70.7	59.5	165
Guyana	2009	31.5	36.0	67.5	53.3	564

Region and country	Year	Unmet need	Current use	Total demand	% demand satisfied	Weighted number
Haiti	2012	44.8	33.4	78.2	42.7	1,654
Haiti	2005-06	43.9	31.7	75.6	41.9	1,524
Haiti	2000	46.4	27.7	74.1	37.4	1,333
Honduras	2011-12	14.7	64.5	79.2	81.4	3,235
Honduras	2005-06	23.3	55.2	78.5	70.3	2,944
Nicaragua	2001	18.2	62.5	80.7	77.4	2,035
Nicaragua	1998	24.5	48.6	73.1	66.5	2,280
Peru	2010	18.6	70.1	88.7	79.0	1,950
Peru	2005	19.8	67.9	87.7	77.4	3,322
Peru	2000	22.0	62.1	84.1	73.8	2,551
Regional average¹		24.5	55.4	79.9	69.3	18,838

¹Regional average of *most recent DHS survey* from each country in the region.

Demand for family planning is substantially higher in Latin America and the Caribbean (79.9%) than in the other regions, indicating that high levels of use of contraception (55.4%) among young married women coexist with high levels of unmet need (24.5%). Demand for family planning is lowest, on average, in West and Central Africa (44.9%). Because unmet need is generally quite high, this region also has the lowest average proportion of demand satisfied (32.6%). This pattern contrasts with the Middle East and North Africa, which has the second lowest demand for family planning (55.3%) but the highest proportion of demand satisfied (80.5%). For the countries surveyed in this report, the overall proportion of demand that is satisfied averages 57.7 percent.

Figure 1 uses aggregate data for each region to compare unmet need, current use of contraception, and demand for family planning among young married women by five-year age group (15-19 and 20-24). Figure 2 compares levels of unmet need among married women age 15-19 and married women age 20-24 among individual countries in each region included in this study.

West and Central Africa has the highest level of unmet need in both age groups, followed by Latin America and Caribbean and East and Southern Africa in the 15-19 age group, then followed by East and Southern Africa and South and Southeast Asia in the 20-24 age group. In most regions, unmet need is higher among married women age 15-19 than those age 20-24. This difference is particularly acute in Latin America and the Caribbean where, on average, unmet need is nearly eight percentage points higher among married women age 15-19. The Middle East and North Africa, where unmet need is relatively low, is the only region where the opposite pattern is observed. In Egypt and Jordan, unmet need is higher among married women age 20-24 than among those age 15-19; in Morocco, there is little difference between the two age groups. Demand for family planning and the proportion of demand satisfied are higher among married women age 20-24 than among those age 15-19 in every region.

Figure 1. Regional comparison of unmet need for family planning, current use of contraception, and percentage of demand satisfied between currently married women age 15-19 and currently married women age 20-24, most recent DHS surveys, 2000-2012

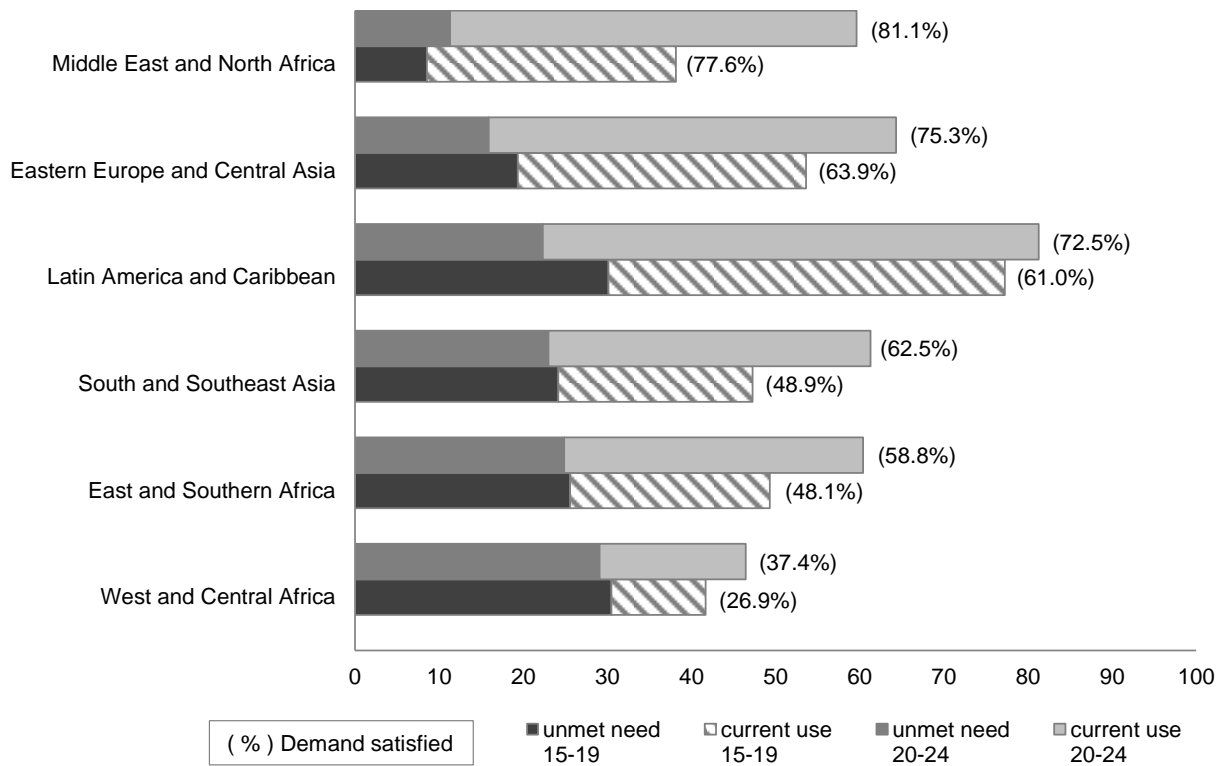
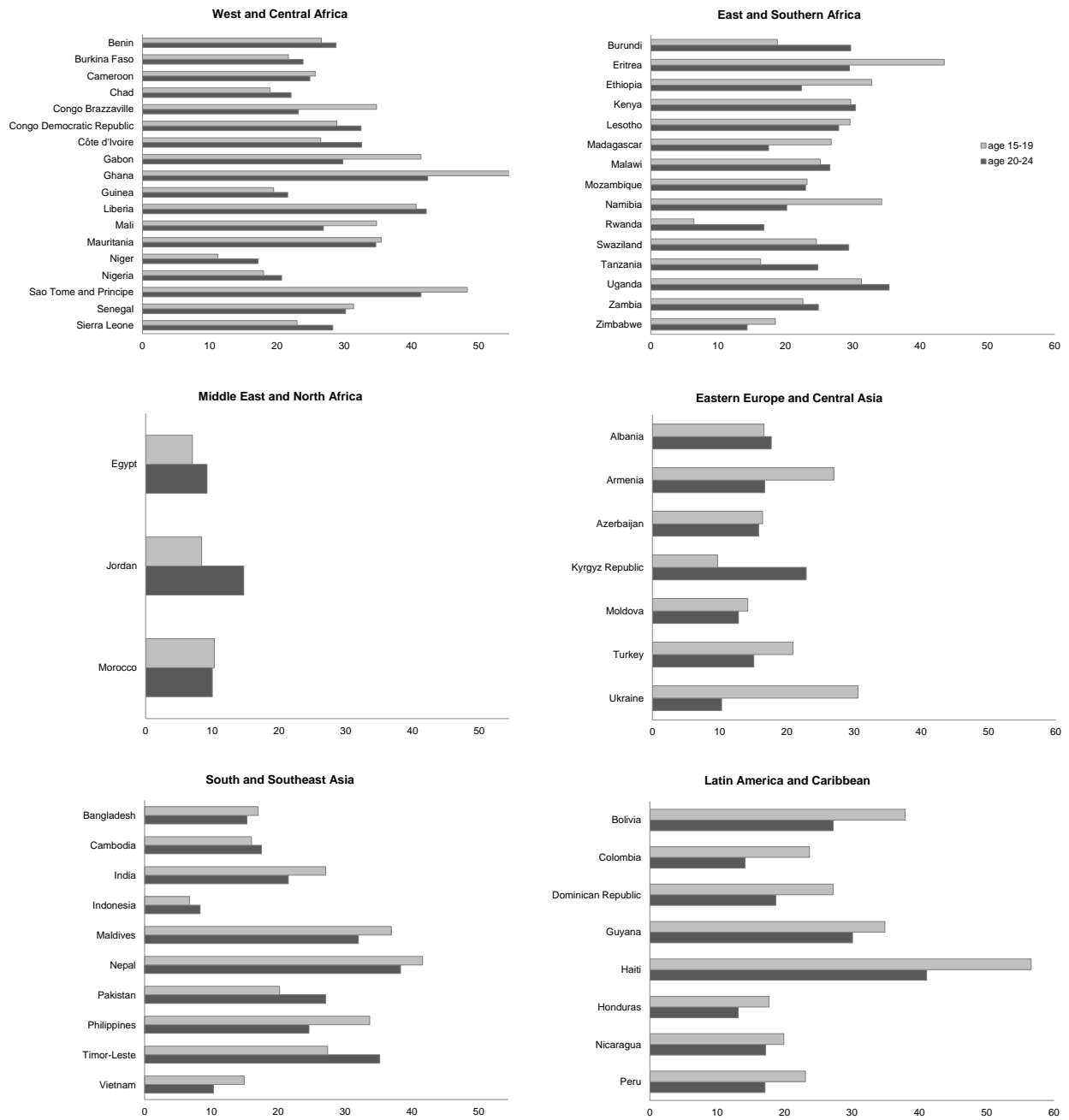


Figure 2. Comparison of total unmet need for family planning between currently married women age 15-19 and age 20-24, most recent DHS surveys, 2000-2012



3.2.1 West and Central Africa

While West and Central Africa has the highest average level of unmet need (29.3%), the regional average masks substantial variation (Table 1). Unmet need ranges from 14.7 percent among married women age 15-24 in Niger to 45.7 percent in Ghana. In these same countries, unmet need ranges from 11.2 to 61.7 percent among women age 15-19 compared with 17.2 to 42.4 percent among women age 20-24 (Figure 2). Along with Ghana (45.7%), São Tomé and Príncipe (43.3%), Liberia (41.8%), Mauritania (35%), and Gabon (32.7%) are all included in the ten study countries with the highest levels of unmet need among young married women. Meanwhile, Guinea (20.8%), Niger (14.7%), and Nigeria (19.8%) stand out as having relatively low levels of unmet need in the region. Comparing the two age groups (married women age 15-19 and married women age 20-24) in Figure 2, neither age group has consistently greater unmet need than the other; however, where differences are greatest, unmet need is higher among married women age 15-19.

Demand for family planning is lowest in Niger (23.9%) and Nigeria (27.5%) and highest in São Tomé and Príncipe (77.5%), Congo (Brazzaville, 69.6%), and Ghana (66.6%) (Table 1). The proportion of demand satisfied is highest in Congo (Brazzaville) at 62.1 percent, the only country in the region to exceed 50 percent. The proportion of demand satisfied is particularly low in Sierra Leone (13.6%), Liberia (13.6%), and Mauritania (15.3%).

3.2.2 East and Southern Africa

Several points are notable regarding patterns of unmet need among married women age 15-24 in East and Southern Africa (Table 1). First, while unmet need is relatively high overall (25.5%), few countries in this region have levels of unmet need that exceed 30 percent compared with West and Central Africa. These are Eritrea (34.8%), Kenya (30.2%), and Uganda (34.3%). Second, there is less variation across countries than in West and Central Africa. Unmet need among married women age 15-24 is lowest in Rwanda (16%) and Zimbabwe (15.5%); the remaining ten countries in the region have levels of unmet need between 20 and 29 percent.

While, on average, unmet need is greater among married women age 15-19 compared with those age 20-24, there is no consistent pattern as to which age group is more disadvantaged with regard to unmet need at a national level (Figure 2). Unmet need is substantially higher among those age 15-19 in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Namibia, higher among those age 20-24 in Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania, and nearly equal in Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia.

On average, total demand for family planning in East and Southern Africa exceeds that in West and Central Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, and is similar to that in South and Southeast Asia (Table 1). It ranges from a low of 32.6 percent in Mozambique and 39.3 percent in Eritrea to a high of 74.3 percent in Swaziland and 74.7 percent in Namibia. The regional average is 58.1 percent. In Eritrea and Mozambique, unmet need combines with low levels of use of contraception (4.5% and 9.5%, respectively) to produce a low proportion of demand satisfied (11.5% and 29.1%, respectively). The country with the highest proportion of demand satisfied among married women age 15-24 is Zimbabwe (77.6%), which also has the lowest level of unmet need (15.5%) and the highest level of use of contraception (53.7%) in the region.

3.2.3 Middle East and North Africa

In the Middle East and North Africa, low level of unmet need (10.8%) among married women age 15-24 combine with low demand for family planning (55.3%) such that a high proportion of that demand is satisfied (80.3%) by use of contraception (44.5%) (Table 1). Within this region, unmet need is

lowest in Egypt (8.8%) and highest in Jordan (13.5%). While unmet need is generally higher among married women age 20-24 compared with those age 15-19 year olds (a different pattern than found in other regions), this difference is particularly pronounced in Jordan where unmet need is 6.3 percentage points higher among married women age 20-24 (14.7%) than among those age 15-19 (8.4%) (Figure 2).

3.2.4 Eastern Europe and Central Asia

After the Middle East and North Africa, the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region has the second lowest level of unmet need (16.2%) among married women age 15-24 (Table 1). Unmet need ranges from 12.0 percent in Ukraine to 20.9 percent in the Kyrgyz Republic. As in most other regions, unmet need is higher among married women age 15-19 in some countries and higher among married women age 20-24 in other countries (Figure 2). Differences are particularly large in several countries. Unmet need is more than 10 percentage points higher among married women age 15-19 (27.0%) in Armenia than among those age 20-24 (16.7%) and approximately three times higher in Ukraine (30.6% and 10.3%, respectively). In contrast, unmet need is twice as high among married women age 20-24 as among those age 15-19 in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Use of contraception is relatively high among married women age 15-24 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, compared with other regions (Table 1). Total demand and the proportion of demand satisfied, therefore, is also generally high. For example, in Turkey, 58.5 percent of married women age 15-24 are currently using contraception. Combined with the 16.2 percent of women who have an unmet need for family planning, the total demand for family planning is 74.7 percent; however, more than three-quarters (78.3%) of that demand is satisfied.

3.2.5 South and Southeast Asia

Unmet need among married women age 15-29 in South and Southeast Asia ranges from a high of 39.3 percent in Nepal to a low of 8.0 percent in Indonesia (Table 1). The average of the countries surveyed in the region is 23.2 percent. Current use of contraception is high in Indonesia (58.2%), Bangladesh (54.0%), and Vietnam (53.8%) and low in Pakistan (13.0%) and Timor-Leste (14.3%). Total demand for family planning is lowest in Pakistan (38.2%), where just over one-third (34.0%) of that demand is satisfied. Total demand is highest in Bangladesh (69.9%), with more than three-quarters (77.3%) of that demand satisfied. On average, the demand profile in South and Southeast Asia resembles that in East and Southern Africa, with total demand for family planning estimated at 58.4 percent and more than half (60.2%) of that demand satisfied. While demand for family planning is consistently higher among married women age 20-24, compared with those age 15-19, there is no clear, region-wide pattern regarding age and unmet need (Figure 2).

3.2.6 Latin America and the Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean, levels of unmet need among married women age 15-24 are similar to those in South and Southeast Asia and East and Southern Africa, averaging 24.5 percent in surveyed countries (Table 1). There is considerable variation within the region, however. Haiti has the second highest level of unmet need (44.8%) among all the countries surveyed in the study. Unmet need is also relatively high in Guyana (31.5%) and Bolivia (30.1%), at about 30 percent. Honduras has the lowest level of unmet need in the region (14.7%). Unmet need in the remaining Latin America and Caribbean countries ranges from 16.8 percent in Colombia to 21.5 percent in the Dominican Republic.

The Latin America and the Caribbean region has the highest average levels of use of contraception (55.4%) and the highest total demand for family planning (79.9%) of all the regions in the

study. However, with just 69.3 percent of demand satisfied, demand still outpaces use of contraception, which puts Latin America and the Caribbean in the middle of all the regions for which DHS data are available.

There is little variation in levels of demand for family planning, which range from 67.5 percent in Guyana to 88.7 percent in Peru. Variations in levels of unmet need and use of contraception do combine, however, to produce substantial variation in the proportion of demand satisfied, from a low of 42.7 percent in Haiti to a high of 81.4 percent in Honduras. Use of contraception is generally high in the region, with the exception of Guyana and Haiti, where a little more than one third of married women age 15-24 currently use some method of contraception, levels that are low for this region.

3.3 Trends in Unmet Need and Demand for Family Planning among Young Married Women

Of the 61 countries included in this report, 47 have multiple surveys that can be used to examine trends over time in unmet need for family planning among married women. Multiple surveys are available for 13 countries in each of the two African regions, three countries each in the Middle East and North Africa and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, eight countries in South and Southeast Asia, and seven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Table 1 also presents trends in the levels of unmet need, current use of contraception, total demand for family planning, and the proportion of demand satisfied for married women age 15-24 in the 47 countries in which multiple surveys have been conducted. No statistical tests were conducted to determine if observed changes over time are significant.

Generally, the situation trends toward a decline in levels of unmet need among married women age 15-24. This trend is frequently accompanied by increases in current use of contraception that have kept pace with or exceeded increases in total demand for family planning, with the result that the proportion of demand satisfied has also increased over successive surveys. These trends vary in degree and pace of change within and across regions, and have not everywhere been universal in their direction toward reduced unmet need. Of concern are the 10 countries in which women age 15-24 have experienced an *increase in unmet need* over time: Benin, Cameroun, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, and Mali (West and Central Africa), Eritrea and Zimbabwe (East and Southern Africa), Kyrgyz Republic (Eastern Europe and Central Asia), and Nepal (South and Southeast Asia).

3.3.1 West and Central Africa

Four countries in West and Central Africa—Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, and Senegal—show decreasing unmet need among young married women while six countries—Benin, Cameroun, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, and Mali—show increasing unmet need. Levels of unmet need have fluctuated in the remaining three countries, without a clear trend. This stands in contrast to other regions in which a majority of countries show a trend of declining unmet need among married women age 15-24.

3.3.2 East and Southern Africa

The majority of countries in East and Southern Africa show declines in unmet need over time among married women age 15-24. The decline is particularly notable in Ethiopia where unmet need fell 12.6 percentage points between 2000 and 2011. This trend is accompanied by a dramatic increase in current use of contraception, from 6.3 percent among married women age 15-24 in 2000 to 31.5 percent in 2011—and a nearly four-fold increase in the proportion of demand satisfied. Substantial changes are also evident in Madagascar, where unmet need declined more than six percentage points between 1997

and 2008-09; this decline was accompanied by an almost tripling of use of contraception (from 12.3% to 32.1%) and a near doubling of the proportion of demand satisfied (from 31.1% to 60.2%).

In contrast to the dominant trend in the region, two countries, Eritrea and Zimbabwe, experienced increases in unmet need among married women age 15-24. Three countries show fluctuations in the level of unmet need with no clear trend.

3.3.3 Middle East and North Africa

Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco all experienced declining unmet need among married women age 15-24. Use of contraception and, therefore, demand for family planning have fluctuated over time. The general trend is toward greater use of contraception and the proportion of demand satisfied also trends upward.

3.3.4 Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Armenia and Turkey show steady progress toward lower levels of unmet need among married women age 15-24, accompanied by increases in use of contraception (in Turkey), demand for family planning, and the proportion of demand satisfied. On the other hand, the Kyrgyz Republic exhibits a deteriorating situation with regards to unmet need. Unmet need among married women age 15-24 increased 8.6 percentage points and current use of contraception fell sharply from 45.5 percent in 1997 to 19.3 percent in 2012. While total demand for family planning declined so did the proportion of demand satisfied, from more than three-quarters to less than half of married women age 15-24 with a need for family planning.

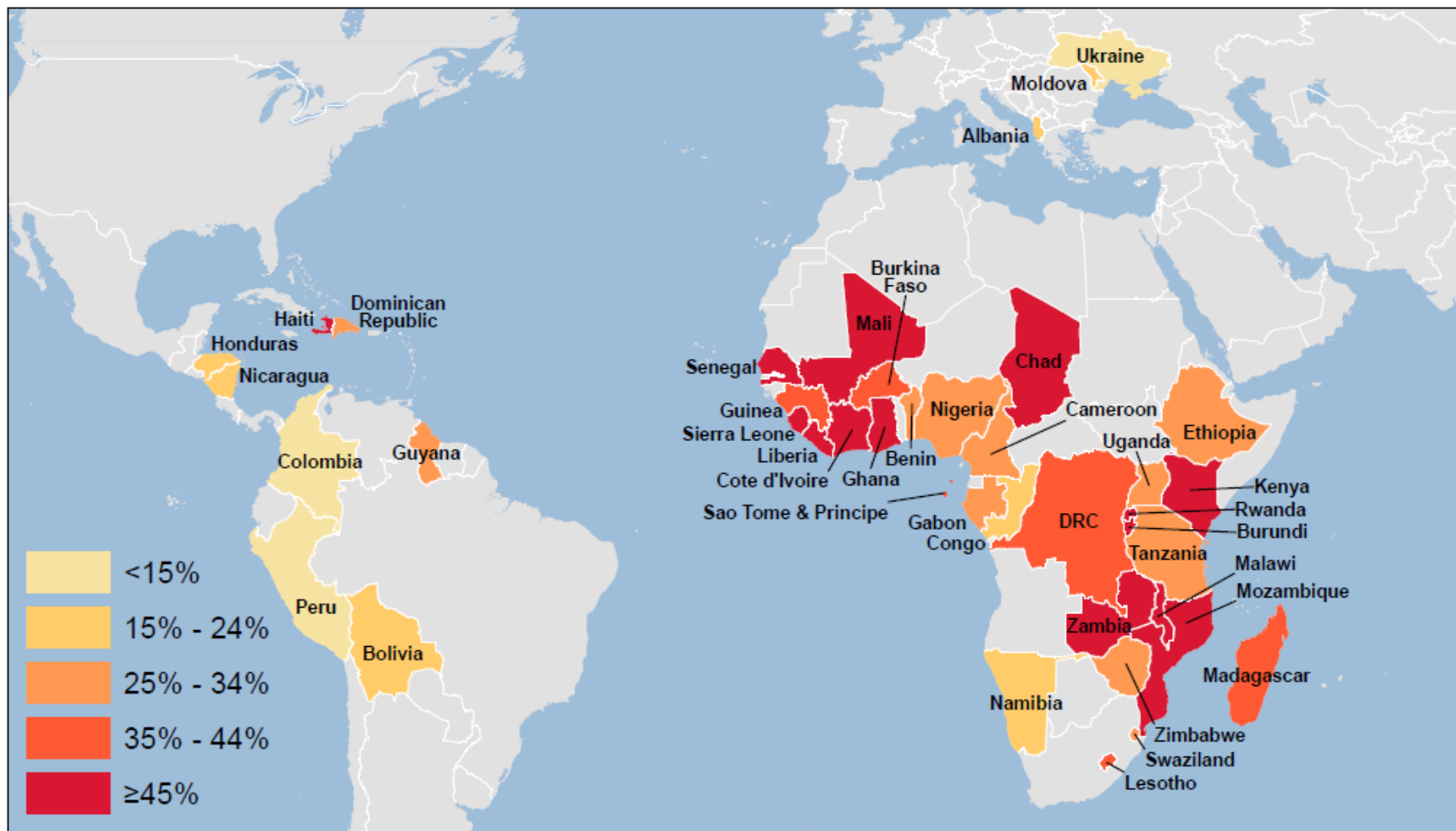
3.3.5 South and Southeast Asia

Seven of the eight countries in South and Southeast Asia with multiple surveys exhibit the general pattern of declining unmet need and increasing use of contraception, demand for family planning, and proportion of demand satisfied among married women age 15-24. These trends are particularly pronounced in Cambodia and Pakistan. In Indonesia, unmet need is lower (8.0%) in 2012—and proportion of demand satisfied is higher—than in either of the two preceding surveys (9.0% in 2002-03 and 9.8% in 2007); however, the decline was not steady, but occurred after an increase in 2007. Also, levels of use of contraception in Indonesia fluctuated across successive surveys. The trend in unmet need in Nepal is the opposite of the general pattern, with unmet need increasing from 33.8 percent in 2001 to 39.3 percent a decade later. Use of contraception increased during this period but it is overshadowed by a 12 percentage point increase in the demand for family planning.

3.3.6 Latin America and Caribbean

The countries surveyed in Latin America and the Caribbean show that in general unmet need has declined among married women age 15-24 and the proportion of demand for family planning satisfied has increased over time. While unmet need in Haiti is lower in 2012 (44.8%) than it was in 2000 (46.4%), there appears to have been a slight increase since the intervening survey in 2005-06 (43.9%). At the same time, current use of contraception, demand for family planning, and the proportion of demand satisfied all increased in Haiti. On the other hand, Bolivia shows a steady decline in unmet need between 1998 (33.8%) and 2008 (30.1%) but use of contraception has fluctuated. It appears that in Bolivia the greatest changes in unmet need and use of contraception occurred between the 1998 and 2003 surveys, with more modest changes occurring between the 2003 and 2008 surveys.

Map 2. Unmet need for family planning among unmarried, sexually active women age 15-24



4 Unmet Need for Family Planning among Young Unmarried Women

4.1 Geographic Distribution of Unmet Need for Family Planning among Young Unmarried Women

Map 2 displays the geographic distribution of the prevalence of unmet need for family planning among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24. Forty-one of the 61 countries included in this study have the necessary survey data by which to estimate unmet need in this population. No countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, in the South and Southeast Asia region, and few countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region collected these data. The map uses the same scale as Map 1, which illustrates the prevalence of unmet need among young *married* women. Map 2 indicates that, among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, unmet need is highest in the two African regions and in Haiti. Unmet need is lowest in Colombia, Peru, and the Ukraine.

4.2 Unmet Need and Demand for Family Planning among Young Unmarried Women

Table 2 presents the most recent DHS estimates of unmet need for family planning, current use of contraception, total demand for family planning, and the proportion of demand satisfied, among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 as well as trends, where available, in these indicators. Recall that the algorithm for calculating unmet need among unmarried women defines “sexually active” based on respondents’ reports of having had sexual intercourse within the 30 days prior to the survey. Any underreporting of sexual activity by unmarried women due to social desirability bias is likely to bias downward estimates of unmet need in this population (Lavrakas 2008). Thus, this study may underestimate the true magnitude of unmet need among young unmarried women.

Unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 ranges from a low of 7.3 percent in Ukraine to a high of 69.5 percent in Senegal. Countries in West and Central Africa and East and Southern Africa have, on average, the highest levels of unmet need among unmarried women, at about 40 percent. Unmet need is lowest, on average, in the three countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where it averages 15.4 percent. Correspondingly, use of contraception is highest in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (80%) and lowest in the two African regions (46.6% and 46.3%, respectively).

Table 2. Current levels and trends in unmet need, current use of contraception, and demand for family planning among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24

Region and country	Year	Unmet need	Current use	Total demand	% demand satisfied	Weighted number
West and Central Africa						
Benin	2006	29.7	59.9	89.6	66.9	494
Benin	2001	47.3	39.8	87.1	45.7	223
Benin	1996	31.3	54.9	86.2	63.7	151
Burkina Faso	2010	34.8	59.2	94.0	63.0	276
Burkina Faso	2003	33.0	58.4	91.4	63.9	239
Burkina Faso	1998-99	37.8	49.0	86.8	56.5	148
Cameroon	2011	25.5	64.2	89.7	71.6	643
Cameroon	2004	18.2	74.2	92.4	80.3	365
Cameroon	1998	13.9	55.0	68.9	79.8	334

Region and country	Year	Unmet need	Current use	Total demand	% demand satisfied	Weighted number
Chad	2004	56.8	9.8	66.6	14.7	39
Chad	1996-97	26.3	10.1	36.4	27.7	98
Congo Brazzaville	2011-12	17.1	75.7	92.8	81.6	876
Congo Brazzaville	2005	15.2	77.7	92.9	83.6	660
Congo Democratic Republic	2007	37.5	49.9	87.4	57.1	442
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	50.6	39.7	90.3	44.0	776
Côte d'Ivoire	1998-99	28.7	59.2	87.9	67.3	246
Gabon	2012	28.5	60.7	89.2	68.0	897
Gabon	2000	24.7	64.3	89.0	72.2	599
Ghana	2008	48.7	48.1	96.8	49.7	175
Ghana	2003	46.6	46.9	93.5	50.2	162
Ghana	1998	44.0	42.5	86.5	49.1	138
Guinea	2005	44.2	46.9	91.1	51.5	218
Guinea	1999	42.6	47.8	90.4	52.9	144
Liberia	2007	58.1	26.6	84.7	31.4	717
Mali	2006	50.1	28.5	78.6	36.3	70
Mali	2001	44.3	23.2	67.5	34.4	262
Mali	1995-96	46.1	36.6	82.7	44.3	195
Nigeria	2008	33.2	62.9	96.1	65.5	1,034
Nigeria	2003	41.1	52.7	93.8	56.2	245
Nigeria	1999	35.0	59.1	94.1	62.8	239
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008-09	35.9	51.3	87.2	58.8	105
Senegal	2010-11	69.5	24.6	94.1	26.1	77
Sierra Leone	2008	47.4	38.2	85.6	44.6	344
Regional average¹		41.7	46.6	88.4	52.8	7,183
East and Southern Africa						
Burundi	2010	62.2	16.7	78.9	21.2	44
Ethiopia	2011	26.4	60.6	87.0	69.7	101
Ethiopia	2000	34.2	45.6	79.8	57.1	87
Kenya	2008-09	47.1	44.3	91.4	48.5	138
Kenya	2003	40.2	51.4	91.6	56.1	142
Kenya	1998	47.5	38.4	85.9	44.7	246
Lesotho	2009	38.6	50.1	88.7	56.5	164
Lesotho	2004	40.4	46.1	86.5	53.3	131
Madagascar	2008-09	41.6	40.2	81.8	49.1	485
Madagascar	2003-04	36.7	38.2	74.9	51.0	267
Madagascar	1997	37.5	25.5	63.0	40.5	325
Malawi	2010	46.2	39.0	85.2	45.8	302
Malawi	2004	52.6	26.5	79.1	33.5	163
Malawi	2000	56.1	23.7	79.8	29.7	222
Mozambique	2011	47.2	31.4	78.6	39.9	656
Mozambique	2003	28.1	48.8	76.9	63.5	661
Mozambique	1997	52.4	11.8	64.2	18.4	308
Namibia	2006-07	16.1	77.2	93.3	82.7	665
Namibia	2000	29.4	56.1	85.5	65.6	380
Namibia	1992	8.4	35.2	43.6	80.7	510
Rwanda	2010	54.4	33.4	87.8	38.0	96

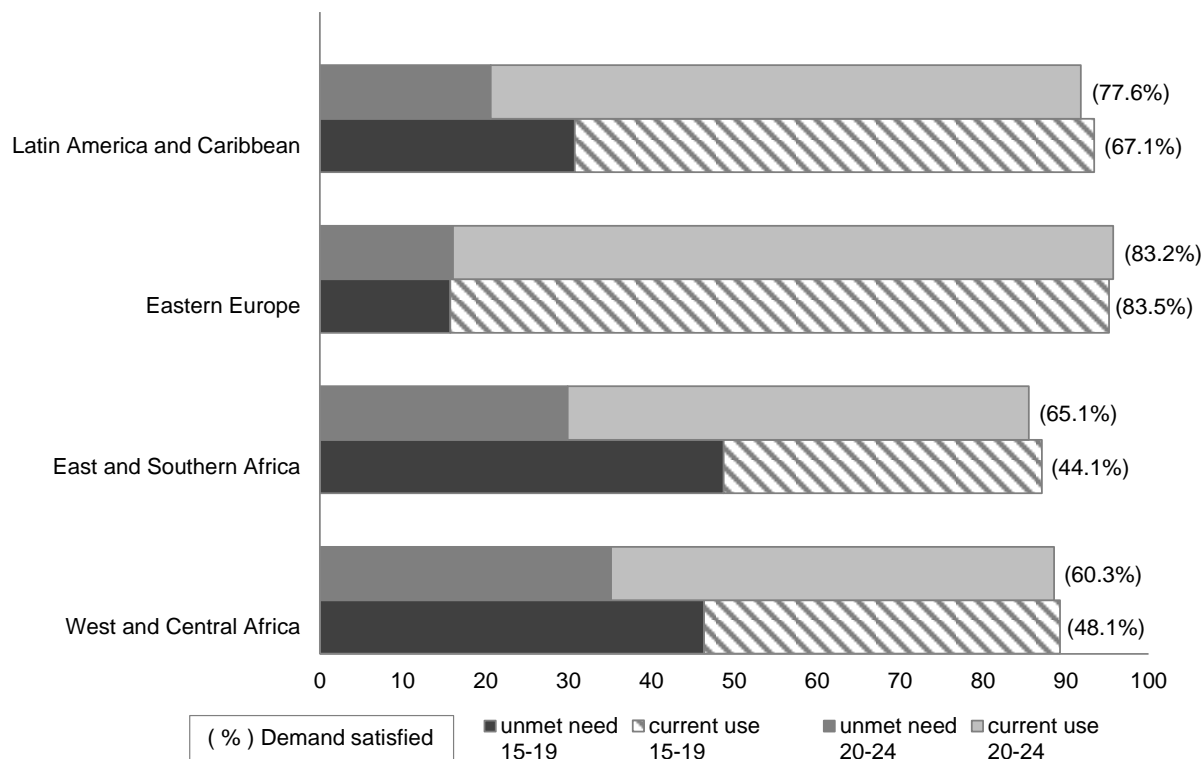
Region and country	Year	Unmet need	Current use	Total demand	% demand satisfied	Weighted number
Swaziland	2006-07	34.4	59.6	94.0	63.4	291
Tanzania	2010	33.1	49.0	82.1	59.7	356
Tanzania	2004-05	40.9	39.2	80.1	48.9	318
Tanzania	1999	41.8	34.3	76.1	45.1	210
Uganda	2011	33.8	49.8	83.6	59.6	160
Uganda	2006	33.3	47.8	81.1	58.9	178
Uganda	2000-01	33.2	52.6	85.8	61.3	152
Zambia	2007	44.6	46.6	91.2	51.1	179
Zambia	2001-02	42.3	28.4	70.7	40.2	211
Zambia	1996	46.8	21.7	68.5	31.7	301
Zimbabwe	2010-11	31.8	50.4	82.2	61.3	89
Zimbabwe	2005-06	36.4	48.3	84.7	57.0	78
Zimbabwe	1999	31.0	41.9	72.9	57.5	77
Regional average¹		39.8	46.3	86.1	53.8	3,726
Eastern Europe and Central Asia						
Albania	2008-09	15.6	77.3	92.9	83.2	90
Moldova	2005	23.3	72.3	95.6	75.6	182
Ukraine	2007	7.3	90.4	97.7	92.5	280
Regional average¹		15.4	80.0	95.4	83.9	552
Latin America and Caribbean						
Bolivia	2008	20.6	77.2	97.8	78.9	337
Bolivia	2003	31.3	60.9	92.2	66.1	316
Bolivia	1998	21.7	60.2	81.9	73.5	98
Colombia	2010	14.4	82.2	96.6	85.1	3,120
Colombia	2005	15.2	80.4	95.6	84.1	2,058
Colombia	2000	10.7	83.2	93.9	88.6	520
Dominican Republic	2007	29.3	54.8	84.1	65.2	1,017
Dominican Republic	2002	30.6	53.8	84.4	63.7	544
Guyana	2009	27.9	66.7	94.6	70.5	185
Haiti	2012	58.8	35.1	93.9	37.4	681
Haiti	2005-06	56.5	35.1	91.6	38.3	319
Haiti	2000	52.5	36.9	89.4	41.3	236
Honduras	2011-12	17.1	73.9	91.0	81.2	486
Honduras	2005-06	21.6	68.2	89.8	75.9	261
Nicaragua	2001	22.2	63.0	85.2	73.9	173
Nicaragua	1998	36.4	44.9	81.3	55.2	74
Peru	2010	8.9	87.9	96.8	90.8	648
Peru	2005	8.1	90.3	98.4	91.8	1,010
Peru	2000	17.3	79.5	96.8	82.1	492
Regional average¹		24.9	67.6	92.5	73.1	6,647

¹Regional average of most recent DHS survey from each country in the region.

Figure 3 displays aggregate data for each region with which to compare sexually active, unmarried women age 15-19 and age 20-24 on unmet need, current use of contraception, and total demand for family planning. Looking at the two age groups that comprise the population of sexually active, unmarried women in this study, there is little difference in total demand for family planning: similar proportions of those age 15-19 and those age 20-24 want to avoid pregnancy. However,

differences between age groups in unmet need for family planning and use of contraception are substantial. In all regions except Eastern Europe and Central Asia, unmet need is at least ten percentage points *higher* and use of contraception is about ten percentage points *lower* among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-19 compared with those age 20-24. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia there is almost no difference between the two age groups.

Figure 3. Regional comparison of unmet need for family planning, current use of contraception, and percentage of demand satisfied between sexually active, unmarried women age 15-19 and currently married women age 20-24, most recent DHS surveys, 2000-2012



4.2.1 West and Central Africa

Table 2 indicates that, on average, West and Central Africa has the highest levels of unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 (41.7%). Seven of the ten countries with the highest levels of unmet need among those surveyed are in this region. They are Senegal (69.5%), Liberia (58.1%), Chad (56.8%), Côte d’Ivoire (50.6%), Mali (50.1%), Ghana (48.7%), and Sierra Leone (47.4%). However, unmet need is not universally high throughout the region. Cameroon (25.5%) and Congo (Brazzaville) (17.1%), for instance, rank in the lowest third among the countries surveyed.

Use of contraception among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 varies greatly in the region, from a low of 9.8 percent in Chad to a high of 75.7 percent in Congo (Brazzaville). Because demand for family planning is consistently high in West and Central Africa (averaging 88.4%)—Chad (66.6%) is an outlier—it is primarily use of contraception that dictates the proportion of demand for family planning that is satisfied. The proportion of demand satisfied ranges from 26.1 percent in Senegal

where use of contraception is lowest to 81.6 percent in Congo (Brazzaville) where use of contraception is highest.

4.2.2 East and Southern Africa

East and Southern Africa closely follows West and Central Africa with unmet need averaging 39.8 percent among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 (Table 2). Two of the ten countries with the highest levels of unmet need—Burundi (62.2%) and Rwanda (54.4%)—are in this region. As with West and Central Africa, two countries (Ethiopia and Namibia) rank in the lowest third among those surveyed. Unmet need ranges greatly from a low of 16.1 percent of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in Namibia to 62.2 percent in Burundi. Current use of contraception has a similarly wide range, from 77.2 percent in Namibia to 16.7 percent in Burundi. These disparate combinations of unmet need and use of contraception yield total demand for family planning that falls in a more narrow range from 78.6 percent in Mozambique to 94.0 percent in Swaziland. At the same time, the proportion of demand satisfied ranges from a low of 21.2 percent in Burundi to 82.7 percent in Namibia.

4.2.3 Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Only three countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia—Albania, Moldova, and Ukraine—collected the relevant data for estimating unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24. This region has the lowest level of unmet need (15.4%), the highest level of use of contraception (80.0%), and the highest total demand for family planning (95.4%) among the countries providing this data (Table 2). Albania and Moldova are similar with regard to the proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 who are currently using contraception (77.3% and 72.3%, respectively), although unmet need is slightly higher in Moldova (23.3%) than in Albania (15.6%). Use of contraception in Ukraine (90.4%) is the highest of all the countries in the study; Ukraine also has the lowest level of unmet need (7.3%) among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24.

4.2.4 Latin America and Caribbean

Unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in Latin America and the Caribbean is not as low as it is in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, but with an average of 24.9 percent among the countries supplying data, the region fares substantially better than the two African regions (Table 2). Relatively high levels of current use of contraception (67.6 % on average) contribute to the high proportion of demand for family planning satisfied (73.1 percent).

Haiti stands out from its regional neighbors with a relatively high level of unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 (58.8%), the third highest among all the countries surveyed. It also has the lowest level of use of contraception in this population in the Latin America and Caribbean region (35.1%) and the lowest proportion of demand satisfied (37.4%). Peru stands out from its neighbors for the opposite reason. Unmet need in Peru (8.9%) is the lowest in the region and second lowest (after Ukraine) among all the countries surveyed. Although Peru does not have the highest total demand for family planning in the region (96.8%), it does have the highest level of current use of contraception among sexually active, unmarried young women (87.9%) and the highest proportion of demand satisfied (90.8%) in the region.

Excluding Haiti and Peru, unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in the remaining countries in the region ranges from 14.4 percent in Colombia to 29.3 percent in the Dominican Republic. Current use of contraception among this population in the Latin America and Caribbean region ranges from 35.1 percent in Haiti or, excluding this outlier, from 54.8 percent in the Dominican Republic

to 87.9 percent in Peru. There is less variation in total demand for family planning, which exceeds 90 percent in most countries. In only two of the eight countries in this region, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, is total demand somewhat lower, at about 85 percent. The proportion of demand satisfied ranges from 37.4 percent in Haiti or, again excluding this outlier, from 65.2 percent in the Dominican Republic to 90.8 percent in Peru.

4.3 Trends in Unmet Need and Demand for Family Planning among Young Unmarried Women

Table 2 also presents trends in unmet need, current use of contraception, total demand for family planning, and proportion of demand satisfied for countries in which multiple surveys collected data on sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24. No country in Eastern Europe conducted multiple surveys of this population, so data are shown only for West and Central Africa, East and Southern Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. As noted elsewhere in this study, no statistical tests were conducted to determine if observed changes over time are statistically significant.

4.3.1 *West and Central Africa*

In the majority of countries in West and Central Africa, unmet need has increased among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24. This is the case for eight of the 11 countries with trend data: Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali. In some countries such as Burkina Faso and Guinea, there have been increases in unmet need among young unmarried women at the same time there have been decreases among their married counterparts.

Chad and the Côte d'Ivoire illustrate two contrasting patterns of increasing unmet need. Use of contraception has been relatively static in Chad; the increase over time in unmet need accounts entirely for the concurrent increase in demand for family planning. In Côte d'Ivoire, demand for family planning has remained high, but a decline in use of contraception of about 20 percentage points resulted in a sharp increase in unmet need.

In the remaining three countries, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria, unmet need has declined over time among young unmarried women, although some countries with three surveys show fluctuations in the downward trend. Benin and Nigeria had large increases in unmet need in the intervening surveys (2001 in Benin and 2003 in Nigeria) before settling at levels barely lower than those of surveys in the late 1990s.

4.3.2 *East and Southern Africa*

Unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 has generally fallen in East and Southern Africa. Six countries have seen declines: Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia; however, these declines have not always been steady. Fluctuations in levels of unmet need in Kenya and Zambia, for example, suggest a need for longer term data to establish the overall direction of trends.

Levels of unmet need have also fluctuated in Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, without clear indication of increasing or decreasing trends. In Namibia, unmet need, which was strikingly low among young unmarried women in 1992 (8.4%)—as was overall demand for family planning (43.6%)—more than tripled by 2000 (29.4%); this was followed by a decline in 2006-07 (16.1%), although this level of unmet need is still nearly double that of 1992. In Mozambique, unmet need was initially relatively high at 52.4 percent in 1997 before falling to 28.1 percent in 2003 and then rising to 47.2 percent in 2011. Modest increases in demand for family planning mean that movement in one direction in

the level of unmet need is accompanied by movement in the level of use of contraception in the opposite direction—i.e., increases in unmet need are accompanied by declines in use of contraception, and vice versa. In Uganda and Madagascar, unmet need has increased although the magnitude of these changes is very small. In Uganda, unmet need crept up from 33.2 percent in 2000-01 to 33.8 percent in 2011 among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24.

4.3.3 *Latin America and Caribbean*

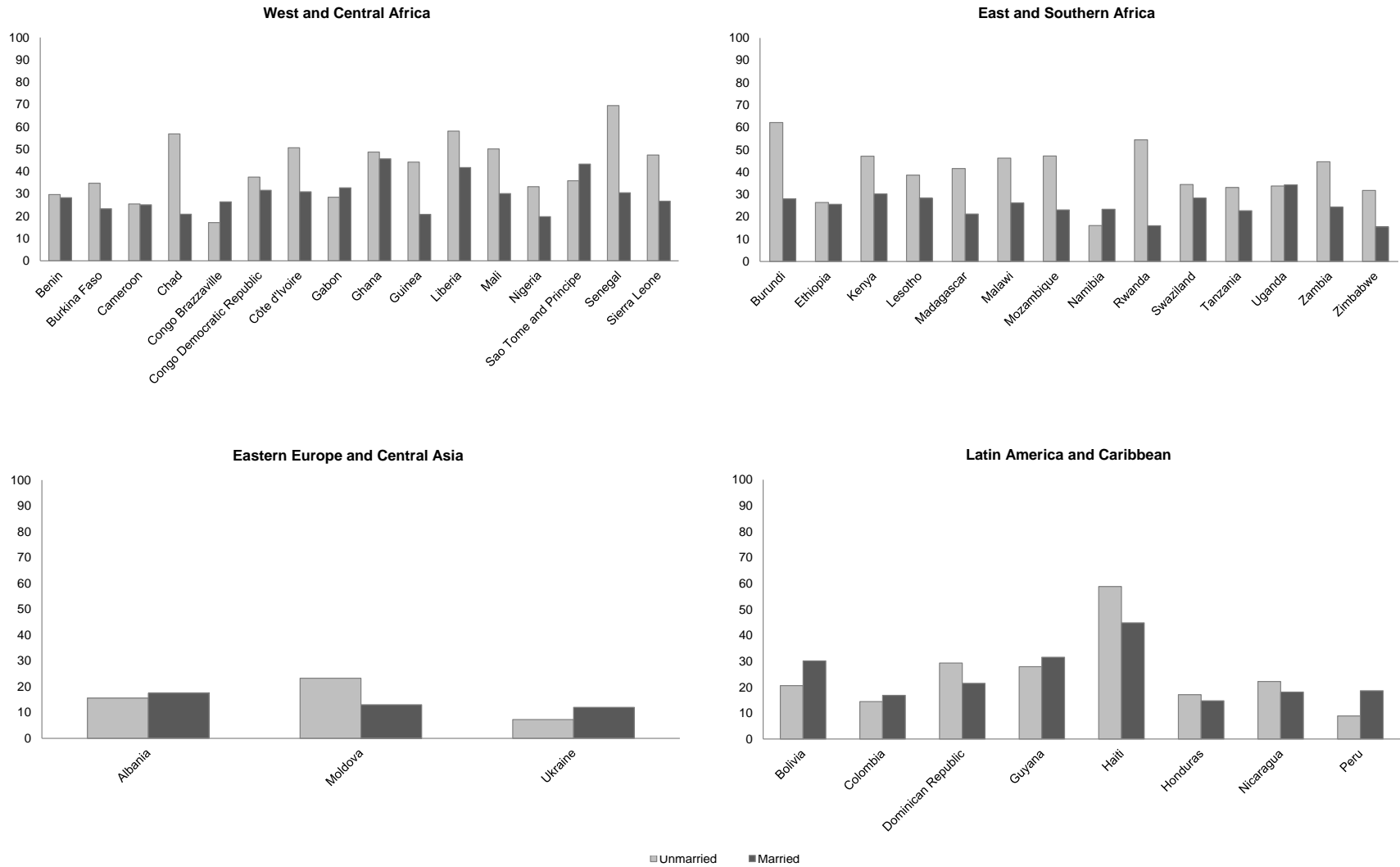
Demand for family planning has been steady and high in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the exception of Bolivia where it has been increasing. Unmet need has declined among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in most countries and the pattern occurs in both age groups. Unmet need fell by 14 percentage points between 1998 and 2001 in Nicaragua and by more than eight percentage points between 2000 and 2010 in Peru. There was a modest one percentage point decline in Bolivia between 1998 and 2008 (from 21.7% to 20.6%), with an intervening sharp increase to 31.3 percent in 2003. Use of contraception has increased in this population over time as unmet need has declined.

Contrasting with the dominant trend, unmet need has increased slightly among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in Colombia (from 10.7% in 2000 to 14.4% in 2010) and, to a larger extent, in Haiti (from 52.5% in 2000 to 58.8% in 2012). Use of contraception has declined by small degrees in both countries.

4.4 Comparison of Unmet Need among Young Unmarried and Young Married Women

Figure 4 provides a comparison of unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 and married women the same age, by region, for all countries in which both populations were surveyed. Data come from the most recent survey in each country. In most regions, the predominant pattern is that of greater unmet need among unmarried women. The overall average is 35.9 percent for young unmarried women, compared with 25.9 percent for married women.

Figure 4. Comparison of total unmet need for family planning between currently married women age 15-24 and unmarried, sexually active women age 15-24, most recent DHS surveys, 2000-2012



4.4.1 *West and Central Africa*

In West and Central Africa, unmet need is generally higher among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 than among married women age 15-24. Unmet need is, on average, almost 12 percentage points higher for young unmarried women. This pattern is not universal, however, with unmet need higher among married women in Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Differences between the groups are negligible in Benin and Cameroon. Where differences are sizable, however, young unmarried women experience higher levels of unmet need than do young married women. Differences are particularly marked in Chad and Senegal (36 and 39 percentage points, respectively).

4.4.2 *East and Southern Africa*

Sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 also experience greater unmet need than married women in nearly all of the East and Southern African countries. Namibia and Uganda are the two exceptions, with unmet need higher among married women than among unmarried women. In Ethiopia, unmet need is similar across marital status. Differences by marital status, averaging 15 percentage points, are larger in East and Southern Africa compared with West and Central Africa: unmet need is 39.8 percent, on average, among young unmarried women and 24.8 percent among young married women. Larger differences occur in Rwanda (38 percentage points), Burundi (34 percentage points), Mozambique (24 percentage points), and Madagascar (20 percentage points), among other places.

4.4.3 *Eastern Europe and Central Asia*

Differences by marital status are generally modest in the three Eastern Europe and Central Asia countries for which comparisons can be made. In Albania and Ukraine, unmet need is slightly higher among married women age 15-24, compared with sexually active, unmarried women the same age (about 2 percentage points higher in Albania and about 5 percentage points higher in Ukraine). Unmet need is higher by about 10 percentage points among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in Moldova.

4.4.4 *Latin America and Caribbean*

Patterns of unmet need by marital status are more varied in Latin America and the Caribbean. Unmet need among women age 15-24 is higher among sexually active, unmarried women in four countries but higher among married women in four countries. Differences may not be statistically significant in some countries. On average, unmet need is higher among young unmarried women (24.9%) than among young married women (24.5%)—a difference of just 0.4. Sexually active, unmarried women are more disadvantaged with regard to unmet need status in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, whereas married women are more disadvantaged in Bolivia and Peru.

5 Components of Unmet Need

Unmet need for family planning is somewhat unusual as a demographic indicator in that it is a composite indicator with both attitudinal and behavioral components. This section of the study unpacks and explores the various components underlying the indicator among women age 15-24, with the aim of expanding our insight into the unmet need indicator, itself.

The indicator is first applied to the *population of women at risk of pregnancy*, either because they are married (and who are, therefore, assumed to be sexually active) or unmarried women who explicitly report they were sexually active in the past 30 days. Table 3 presents current levels and trends in the proportion of women age 15-24 who are first married by age 15 and by age 18. Table 4 provides current levels and trends in the proportion of unmarried women age 15-24 who are sexually active.

Next, young women's need for family planning is established by *women's reports of current fertility intentions*. Women who want a child within the next two years are categorized as having *no need* for family planning; women who want a child after two or more years are categorized as having a *need for spacing*; and, women who want no (more) children are categorized as having a *need for limiting*. Tables 5 and 6 present the percent distribution of desires for a(nother) child, which is the specific survey item used in the algorithm for the unmet need indicator. As in previous tables, current levels and trends are presented separately for married women and sexually active, unmarried women.

Lastly, *current use of contraception* among young women age 15-24 is the indicator used to determine whether need for family planning is “met” or remains “unmet.” Tables 7-8 provide data on current use of contraception by method type, for both married women and sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24. Levels and trends in current use of contraception are presented separately for married women and sexually active, unmarried women.

5.1 Exposure to the Risk of Pregnancy through Marriage

Table 3 presents the proportion of women age 15-24 who experience their first marriage or union by age 15 and by age 18. The *highest* proportions of women married or in union by these two ages are in West and Central Africa, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean, East and Southern Africa, and South and Southeast Asia. The *lowest* proportions of women married or in union by age 15 and by age 18 are in the Middle East and North Africa and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Table 3 shows trends in the proportion of women age 15-24 first married or in union by age 15 and by age 18 for countries with multiple DHS surveys. The results indicate that, overall, the proportions of young women marrying by age 15 or by age 18 have decreased over time in most regions, although these trends are not universal in Latin America and the Caribbean or in East and Southern Africa. This finding means that the proportion of young women who are at risk of unmet need (or met need) through marriage is declining. This trend may be offset, in whole or part, if the proportion that is sexually active among unmarried young women is sizable and/or increasing.

Table 3. Current levels and trends in the proportion of young women married by age 15 and by age 18

Region and country	Year	First marriage by 15						First marriage by 18	
		Age 15-19		Age 20-24		Age 15-24		Age 20-24	
		%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n
West and Central Africa									
Benin	2006	46.0	667	21.7	2,219	27.3	2,886	64.3	2,219
Benin	2001	39.5	287	21.1	867	25.7	1,155	65.8	867
Benin	1996	32.2	308	20.4	786	23.7	1,094	66.9	786
Burkina Faso	2010	38.0	1,043	24.8	2,686	28.5	3,728	77.8	2,686
Burkina Faso	2003	31.7	878	17.7	1,861	22.1	2,739	74.5	1,861
Burkina Faso	1998-99	38.2	488	21.0	1,023	26.5	1,511	80.7	1,023
Cameroon	2011	53.7	868	31.6	1,935	38.5	2,803	69.5	1,935
Cameroon	2004	55.7	828	35.0	1,563	42.1	2,391	73.0	1,563
Cameroon	1998	52.4	430	34.2	746	40.9	1,176	73.9	746
Chad	2004	62.5	571	56.2	907	58.6	1,478	88.3	907
Chad	1996-97	61.6	801	48.1	1,190	53.5	1,991	87.5	1,190
Congo Brazzaville	2011-12	47.3	413	21.1	1,083	28.4	1,495	64.5	1,083
Congo Brazzaville	2005	35.7	257	18.9	836	22.9	1,093	60.0	836
Congo Democratic Republic	2007	43.7	457	24.1	1,484	28.7	1,941	66.6	1,484
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	42.6	418	27.7	1,094	31.8	1,512	68.4	1,094
Côte d'Ivoire	1998-99	53.5	186	26.6	349	36.0	534	65.0	349
Côte d'Ivoire	1994	54.1	517	31.7	1,008	39.3	1,526	73.9	1,008
Gabon	2012	42.1	241	17.6	711	23.8	953	56.1	711
Gabon	2000	52.1	287	30.0	663	36.7	950	67.2	663
Ghana	2008	43.5	85	17.7	414	22.1	499	62.4	414
Ghana	2003	38.7	137	19.0	530	23.0	667	63.1	530
Ghana	1998	41.9	122	19.7	552	23.7	674	65.3	552
Guinea	2005	59.2	587	47.9	888	52.4	1,474	87.7	888
Guinea	1999	67.3	580	51.1	879	57.5	1,459	86.0	879
Liberia	2007	51.3	251	31.4	739	36.5	991	74.8	739
Mali	2006	70.5	1,566	45.7	2,402	55.5	3,968	85.8	2,402
Mali	2001	65.8	1,178	48.2	1,987	54.7	3,165	85.4	1,987
Mali	1995-96	67.4	915	53.0	1,363	58.8	2,278	89.0	1,363
Mauritania	2000-02	62.7	408	43.0	747	50.0	1,155	70.2	747
Niger	2006	75.6	1,014	61.8	1,426	67.6	2,440	91.8	1,426
Niger	1998	74.1	1,027	65.2	1,160	69.4	2,188	92.7	1,160
Niger	1992	84.2	779	74.8	1,059	78.8	1,837	95.1	1,059
Nigeria	2008	66.8	1,863	43.1	3,659	51.1	5,523	73.8	3,659
Nigeria	2003	72.7	545	44.7	911	55.2	1,456	77.4	911
Nigeria	1999	71.8	472	46.3	934	54.9	1,406	72.4	934
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008-09	34.4	110	13.2	285	19.1	395	66.4	285
Senegal	2010-11	56.0	832	30.4	1,932	38.1	2,764	66.1	1,932
Senegal	2005	58.3	1,014	29.9	1,836	40.0	2,849	70.5	1,836
Sierra Leone	2008	52.6	359	46.1	812	48.1	1,171	78.9	812
Regional average¹		52.7	11,753	33.6	25,423	39.2	37,176	73.0	25,423

Table 3. – Continued

Region and country	Year	First marriage by 15						First marriage by 18	
		Age 15-19		Age 20-24		Age 15-24		Age 20-24	
		%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n
East and Southern Africa									
Burundi	2010	11.1	201	9.7	1,106	9.9	1,307	50.7	1,106
Eritrea	2002	46.9	580	38.1	950	41.5	1,530	76.6	950
Eritrea	1995	69.5	366	45.6	571	55.0	937	81.0	571
Ethiopia	2011	49.6	765	37.0	1,762	40.8	2,527	73.6	1,762
Ethiopia	2005	63.0	711	48.0	1,574	52.7	2,284	80.3	1,574
Ethiopia	2000	63.0	862	42.3	1,807	49.0	2,669	78.6	1,807
Kenya	2008-09	26.0	212	16.2	958	18.0	1,170	57.1	958
Kenya	2003	33.8	333	11.5	965	17.2	1,297	52.0	965
Kenya	1998	22.4	285	14.7	948	16.5	1,234	52.8	948
Lesotho	2009	23.6	292	9.4	860	13.0	1,151	50.3	860
Lesotho	2004	19.2	293	9.9	779	12.4	1,072	57.1	779
Madagascar	2008-09	50.2	1,332	30.7	2,058	38.4	3,390	70.9	2,058
Madagascar	2003-04	46.7	416	24.8	875	31.9	1,291	66.8	875
Madagascar	1997	52.8	434	26.2	822	35.4	1,256	70.2	822
Malawi	2010	30.4	1,171	24.1	3,469	25.7	4,639	74.6	3,469
Malawi	2004	31.0	788	22.7	2,283	24.8	3,071	70.6	2,283
Malawi	2000	30.1	934	21.3	2,324	23.8	3,257	69.2	2,324
Mozambique	2011	46.1	1,136	27.7	1,804	34.8	2,940	70.1	1,804
Mozambique	2003	54.5	936	36.5	1,747	42.8	2,683	77.8	1,747
Mozambique	1997	47.3	825	39.0	1,337	42.1	2,163	75.8	1,337
Namibia	2006-07	37.7	118	15.5	398	20.6	516	49.0	398
Namibia	2000	45.1	74	13.5	326	19.4	400	46.9	326
Namibia	1992	27.9	86	12.2	307	15.6	394	47.6	307
Rwanda	2010	8.1	89	4.0	998	4.4	1,087	30.4	998
Rwanda	2005	11.5	65	6.2	980	6.5	1,045	41.7	980
Rwanda	2000	14.3	172	6.5	963	7.7	1,135	51.4	963
Swaziland	2006-07	25.9	88	5.1	343	9.4	431	38.6	343
Tanzania	2010	29.1	399	19.4	1,210	21.8	1,610	65.7	1,210
Tanzania	2004-05	33.4	590	18.2	1,400	22.7	1,990	69.8	1,400
Tanzania	1999	35.5	227	17.6	550	22.8	777	65.0	550
Uganda	2011	26.3	409	23.6	1,097	24.3	1,505	66.2	1,097
Uganda	2006	28.7	380	25.7	1,148	26.5	1,528	74.2	1,148
Uganda	2000-01	40.5	466	30.2	1,150	33.2	1,616	77.7	1,150
Zambia	2007	35.0	280	21.6	889	24.8	1,169	66.3	889
Zambia	2001-02	38.6	438	22.1	1,086	26.8	1,524	70.3	1,086
Zambia	1996	32.7	498	21.3	1,207	24.6	1,705	70.7	1,207
Zimbabwe	2010-11	26.1	452	12.3	1,210	16.0	1,662	56.6	1,210
Zimbabwe	2005-06	24.1	448	14.4	1,200	17.0	1,648	60.6	1,200
Zimbabwe	1999	24.8	314	11.5	820	15.2	1,134	55.1	820
Regional average¹		31.5	7,524	19.6	19,112	22.9	26,634	59.8	19,112

Table 3. – Continued

Region and country	Year	First marriage by 15						First marriage by 18	
		Age 15-19		Age 20-24		Age 15-24		Age 20-24	
		%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n
Middle East and North Africa									
Egypt	2008	19.2	605	8.7	2,527	10.7	3,133	47.7	2,527
Egypt	2005	21.3	792	10.4	2,898	12.7	3,690	48.9	2,898
Egypt	2000	25.6	599	13.5	2,187	16.1	2,785	50.5	2,187
Jordan	2009	30.1	242	5.8	1,078	10.3	1,320	43.1	1,078
Jordan	2007	21.9	233	6.9	1,233	9.3	1,466	42.3	1,233
Jordan	2002	28.4	154	7.8	710	11.5	864	46.8	710
Jordan	1997	34.8	203	8.8	777	14.2	980	52.1	777
Morocco	2003-04	29.5	346	15.8	1,095	19.1	1,441	55.6	1,095
Morocco	1992	31.2	253	13.9	677	18.6	930	58.2	677
Regional average¹		26.3	1,193	10.1	4,700	13.4	5,894	48.8	4,700
Eastern Europe and Central Asia									
Albania	2008-09	18.5	110	4.7	358	8.0	467	42.1	358
Armenia	2010	0.9	68	1.3	450	1.2	518	30.6	450
Armenia	2005	7.1	78	1.8	504	2.5	582	38.3	504
Armenia	2000	16.4	99	6.6	511	8.2	610	52.4	511
Azerbaijan	2006	16.7	151	4.3	697	6.5	848	39.0	697
Kyrgyz Republic	2012	2.8	158	0.7	896	1.1	1,053	30.8	896
Kyrgyz Republic	1997	9.7	91	0.4	460	1.9	551	51.2	460
Moldova	2005	19.3	136	6.2	629	8.6	765	47.1	629
Turkey	2003	25.1	237	10.7	1,019	13.4	1,257	50.9	1,019
Turkey	1998	33.2	262	14.2	924	18.4	1,186	52.9	924
Turkey	1993	28.3	329	14.4	1,026	17.8	1,355	54.0	1,026
Ukraine	2007	13.9	45	3.2	472	4.1	517	35.0	472
Regional average¹		13.9	905	4.4	4,521	6.1	5,425	39.4	4,521
South and Southeast Asia									
Bangladesh	2011	59.8	1,925	49.1	3,396	52.9	5,322	85.9	3,396
Bangladesh	2007	64.4	1,376	52.9	2,094	57.4	3,470	86.5	2,094
Bangladesh	2004	75.3	1,536	58.7	2,121	65.6	3,657	88.2	2,121
Cambodia	2010	24.8	382	8.6	1,679	11.6	2,061	48.7	1,679
Cambodia	2005	23.5	363	11.9	1,671	14.0	2,034	54.8	1,671
Cambodia	2000	21.4	438	17.2	1,009	18.5	1,447	59.7	1,009
India	2005-06	48.5	6,726	29.7	16,782	35.1	23,508	72.5	16,782
India	1998-99	50.2	8,106	33.7	16,122	39.2	24,229	74.3	16,122
India	1992-93	52.4	8,897	35.5	17,491	41.2	26,388	75.8	17,491
Indonesia	2012	26.1	890	8.9	3,754	12.2	4,644	43.9	3,754
Indonesia	2007	28.2	814	11.8	3,952	14.6	4,766	50.5	3,952
Indonesia	2002-03	35.6	912	15.5	3,761	19.4	4,672	56.3	3,761
Maldives	2009	0.7	111	1.5	1,188	1.4	1,300	22.6	1,188
Nepal	2011	39.1	792	24.6	1,761	29.1	2,553	65.3	1,761
Nepal	2006	39.3	784	27.4	1,606	31.3	2,389	76.3	1,606
Nepal	2001	47.7	930	33.9	1,643	38.9	2,573	80.9	1,643

(Continued...)

Table 3. – Continued

Region and country	Year	First marriage by 15						First marriage by 18	
		Age 15-19		Age 20-24		Age 15-24		Age 20-24	
		%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n
Pakistan	2006-07	42.9	559	23.5	1,463	28.8	2,022	62.8	1,463
Pakistan	1990-91	49.3	418	30.0	1,041	35.5	1,459	70.3	1,041
Philippines	2008	26.6	283	10.3	1,000	13.9	1,283	44.5	1,000
Philippines	2003	30.8	239	7.9	1,095	12.0	1,334	43.8	1,095
Philippines	1998	30.9	244	9.4	967	13.7	1,212	47.7	967
Timor-Leste	2009-10	35.2	243	12.8	1,100	16.8	1,343	55.7	1,100
Vietnam	2002	12.9	67	3.2	536	4.3	603	40.8	536
Vietnam	1997	11.7	129	3.9	716	5.1	845	44.6	716
Regional average¹		31.7	11,978	17.2	32,659	20.6	44,639	54.3	32,659
Latin America and Caribbean									
Bolivia	2008	35.2	472	14.8	1,263	20.4	1,735	55.5	1,263
Bolivia	2003	38.2	427	16.1	1,624	20.7	2,051	60.8	1,624
Bolivia	1998	38.7	263	13.6	961	18.9	1,224	55.4	961
Colombia	2010	41.9	1,249	18.3	3,207	24.9	4,456	56.2	3,207
Colombia	2005	44.9	934	17.1	2,735	24.2	3,668	57.7	2,735
Colombia	2000	40.7	325	15.8	814	22.9	1,140	58.2	814
Dominican Republic	2007	54.7	1,050	36.0	2,159	42.1	3,209	70.0	2,159
Dominican Republic	2002	56.9	1,017	32.8	2,158	40.6	3,175	72.4	2,158
Dominican Republic	1999	62.2	46	27.1	119	36.9	165	59.8	119
Guyana	2009	38.8	166	16.6	398	23.1	564	57.8	398
Haiti	2012	42.7	404	12.6	1,250	20.0	1,654	50.1	1,250
Haiti	2005-06	51.1	448	18.9	1,076	28.4	1,524	66.9	1,076
Haiti	2000	43.1	376	16.9	957	24.3	1,333	56.9	957
Honduras	2011-12	50.9	1,144	23.2	2,091	33.0	3,235	65.7	2,091
Honduras	2005-06	52.2	914	28.9	2,030	36.2	2,944	70.8	2,030
Nicaragua	2001	54.8	701	35.1	1,334	41.9	2,035	76.9	1,334
Nicaragua	1998	61.5	848	36.1	1,432	45.5	2,280	78.2	1,432
Peru	2010	32.3	480	13.5	1,470	18.1	1,950	57.6	1,470
Peru	2005	34.2	812	15.3	2,510	19.9	3,322	53.2	2,510
Peru	2000	35.9	582	15.6	1,969	20.3	2,551	54.4	1,969
Regional average¹		43.9	5,666	21.3	13,172	27.9	18,838	61.2	13,172

¹Regional average of most recent DHS survey from each country in the region.

5.1.1 West and Central Africa

In the 18 countries in West and Central Africa for which data are available, an average of 39.2 percent of women age 15-24 are married by age 15; this is the *highest proportion among all the regions*. Within West and Central Africa, this proportion ranges from a low of 19.1 percent among women age 15-24 in São Tomé and Príncipe to a high of 67.6 percent in Niger. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of women age 20-24 are married by age 18, with proportions ranging from 56.1 percent in Gabon to 91.8 percent in Niger.

Table 3 shows trends in age at marriage (by age 15 and by age 18) among women age 15-24 in 13 countries in West and Central Africa that have multiple DHS surveys. The general trend is toward decreasing proportions of young women marrying by age 15. The largest changes are seen in Niger and Côte d'Ivoire: the proportion marrying by age 15 in Niger decreased from 78.8 percent to 67.6 percent and in Côte d'Ivoire the proportion decreased from 39.3 percent to 31.8 percent. The opposite trend is seen in Chad and Congo (Brazzaville) where the proportion of young women marrying by age 15 among 15-24 year olds has increased (from 53.5 percent to 58.6 percent in Chad and from 22.9 percent to 28.4 percent in Congo, Brazzaville).

Trends in the proportion of women age 20-24 marrying by age 18 largely mirror trends for women age 15-24 marrying by age 15. These proportions have decreased in the majority of countries in the region. In contrast, the proportions marrying by age 18 and by age 15 have increased in Chad and Congo (Brazzaville). A different scenario emerges in Guinea and Nigeria where the proportion marrying by age 15 has declined over time while the proportion marrying by age 18 has increased. This pattern suggests a shift away from the earliest marriages, but not out of adolescence altogether.

5.1.2 East and Southern Africa

In East and Southern Africa more than 20 percent of women age 15-24 (22.9%) are married by age 15. While marriage this early is rare in Rwanda (4.4 percent), Swaziland (9.4 percent), and Burundi (9.9 percent), it exceeds 40 percent in Eritrea and Ethiopia. On average, nearly 60 percent of women age 20-24 (59.8%) are married by age 18 in the region. The proportion ranges from less than one-third of women age 20-24 in Rwanda (30.4%) to more than three-quarters of women in Eritrea (76.6%).

Compared with West and Central Africa, there is not as clear a trend away from early marriage in East and Southern Africa. A larger number of countries in East and Southern Africa have increasing proportions of women marrying by age 15 or by age 18 over time. The proportion of women age 15-24 marrying by age 15 and the proportion of women age 20-24 marrying by age 18 have declined in six countries and increased in six countries, with the two proportions almost always moving in the same direction. However, in Tanzania, the proportion marrying by age 15 has declined modestly while the proportion marrying by age 18 has increased slightly (after a large increase in 2004-05). In Zambia, the proportion marrying by age 15 in 2007 is nearly the same as it was in 1996, while the proportion marrying by age 18 has declined more than four percentage points during the same period.

5.1.3 Middle East and North Africa

Early marriage is uncommon in the three countries representing the Middle East and North Africa: Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco. On average, only 13.4 percent of women age 15-24 are married or in union by age 15 (Table 3), although the percentage in Morocco (19.1%) is nearly double that of Egypt (10.7%) or Jordan (10.3%). At the same time, nearly half (48.8%) of women age 20-24 have married by age 18. There is less variation among the three countries in the proportion marrying by age 18, which ranges from 43.1 percent in Jordan to 55.6 percent in Morocco. Table 3 shows that there has been a decline over time in the proportion of women age 15-24 marrying by age 15 and the proportion of women age 20-24 marrying by age 18 in both Egypt and Jordan. These proportions have increased in Morocco.

5.1.4 Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The Eastern Europe and Central Asia region has the *lowest proportion of young women who were first married by age 15 or age 18*. On average, only 6.1 percent of women age 15-24 in this region are married by age 15. The range is from less than two percent in the Kyrgyz Republic (1.1%) and Armenia

(1.2%) to 13.4 percent in Turkey. More than one-third (39.4%) of women age 20-24 are married by age 18; again, this is the lowest proportion of all the regions. The proportion married by age 18 ranges from 30.6 percent in Armenia to 50.9 percent in Turkey. Table 3 shows that there has been a decline over time in the proportion of young women marrying by age 15 and by age 18 in the three countries for which multiple DHS surveys are available—Armenia, Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkey.

5.1.5 South and Southeast Asia

Among the countries in South and Southeast Asia included in this study an average of 20.6 percent of women age 15-24 are married by age 15. The proportion ranges from 1.4 percent in the Maldives to more than half of women age 15-24 in Bangladesh (52.9%). Only in the Maldives and Vietnam are less than 10 percent of young women married by age 15. On average, more than half of women age 20-24 (54.3%) are married by age 18. The proportion ranges from 40.8 percent in Vietnam to 85.9 percent in Bangladesh.

The proportion marrying by age 15 and by age 18 has declined over time in every country in South and Southeast Asia. Some of the steepest declines are in this region, suggesting a rapid shift away from early marriage.

5.1.6 Latin America and Caribbean

Marriage at a young age is common in Latin America and the Caribbean. Table 3 shows that nearly three in 10 women age 15-24 (27.9%) are married or in union by age 15. This proportion ranges from 18.1 percent in Peru to 42.1 percent in the Dominican Republic. On average, 61.2 percent of women age 20-24 have married by age 18; the range extends from 50.1 percent in Guyana to 76.9 percent in Nicaragua.

Trends over time in age at marriage vary among young women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The proportion married or in union by age 15 among women age 15-24 has increased in Bolivia, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic. In these same countries, the proportion married or in union by age 18 among women age 20-24 has declined in Colombia, stayed the same in Bolivia—after a sizable increase in 2003—and increased in the Dominican Republic. The proportion married by age 15 and the proportion married by age 18 both declined in Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Peru. In Haiti, the decline in the proportion married by these ages between the 2000 survey and the most recent survey in 2012 was interrupted by an increase in the 2005-06 survey, before falling sharply to levels below 2000 in the 2012 survey.

5.2 Exposure to the Risk of Pregnancy through Sexual Activity outside of Marriage

Table 4 indicates the proportion of all unmarried women age 15-24, by five-year age group, who report being sexually active in the past 30 days. The data are from 41 countries with samples of never-married women. It also demonstrates trends in the proportion of unmarried women age 15-24 who report being sexually active in the past 30 days. These data are from 29 countries with multiple DHS surveys that include never-married women. As mentioned previously, social desirability bias may result in an underreporting of sexual activity among unmarried women and this bias may be larger among the youngest women and in settings with the most conservative norms regarding gender and premarital sexual activity. A further consideration is that these norms, and hence, social desirability bias, are subject to change over time, potentially making it difficult to discern whether a *change in reported levels of sexual activity* represents *actual change in sexual activity* or a change in inclination to report the behavior.

Therefore, the estimates of sexual activity among unmarried women age 15-24 should be regarded as conservative estimates. Likewise, the observed trends in sexual activity among unmarried women age 15-24 reported should be interpreted with caution.

On average, the proportion of unmarried women age 15-24 who are sexually active is *highest* in West and Central Africa (18.8%) and *lowest* in East and Southern Africa (9.7%). The proportion is similar in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (12.3%) and Latin America and Caribbean (12.8%). No data on this indicator is available for countries in the Middle East and North Africa or South and Southeast Asia.

The trends data do not indicate a consistent trend toward greater sexual activity in this population; rather, the proportion reported to be sexually active declines in about as many countries as it increases. Regarding the denominator for the unmet need indicator (women at risk of pregnancy) among young women, this finding suggests that decreases in the proportion marrying at young ages is not everywhere offset by increases in non- or pre-marital sexual activity among young unmarried women. Changes in the proportion experiencing unmet need among young sexually active, unmarried women is not consistently due to more women moving into this classification.

Table 4. Current levels and trends in the percentage sexually active among unmarried women age 15-24, by five-year age group

Region and country	Year	Age 15-19		Age 20-24		Total age 15-24	
		%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n
West and Central Africa							
Benin	2006	11.3	2,400	23.0	963	14.7	3,363
Benin	2001	13.3	946	28.1	348	17.2	1,293
Benin	1996	12.8	767	22.5	234	15.1	1,001
Burkina Faso	2010	6.6	2,270	20.1	625	9.5	2,895
Burkina Faso	2003	8.3	1,899	19.7	413	10.4	2,311
Burkina Faso	1998-99	11.8	955	26.0	136	13.5	1,091
Cameroon	2011	10.9	2,721	29.1	1,192	16.4	3,913
Cameroon	2004	10.2	1,856	25.6	689	14.3	2,545
Cameroon	1998	20.3	851	42.2	382	27.1	1,233
Chad	2004	3.6	789	6.3	165	4.1	954
Chad	1996-97	7.0	915	19.2	178	8.9	1,093
Congo Brazzaville	2011-12	26.4	1,785	42.8	946	32.1	2,732
Congo Brazzaville	2005	26.1	1,309	48.3	657	33.5	1,967
Congo Democratic Republic	2007	15.4	1,573	25.3	790	18.7	2,363
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	23.7	1,605	46.1	859	31.5	2,464
Côte d'Ivoire	1998-99	24.0	590	45.7	229	30.1	819
Gabon	2012	28.5	1,543	49.4	925	36.3	2,468
Gabon	2000	24.6	1,300	46.8	597	31.6	1,897
Ghana	2008	9.3	940	19.1	463	12.5	1,403
Ghana	2003	9.1	1,011	14.7	482	10.9	1,493
Ghana	1998	9.6	788	18.1	347	12.2	1,135

(Continued...)

Region and country	Year	Age 15-19		Age 20-24		Total age 15-24	
		%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n
Guinea	2005	14.0	1,061	26.5	264	16.5	1,326
Guinea	1999	11.5	742	28.3	207	15.1	949
Liberia	2007	36.2	1,061	53.4	624	42.6	1,685
Mali	2006	3.2	1,538	7.7	276	3.9	1,814
Mali	2001	12.0	1,387	27.2	352	15.1	1,739
Mali	1995-96	13.8	968	26.5	231	16.2	1,200
Nigeria	2008	9.7	4,630	23.7	2,474	14.6	7,104
Nigeria	2003	9.9	1,171	22.1	583	14.0	1,754
Nigeria	1999	7.9	1,303	23.1	587	12.6	1,889
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008-09	12.2	444	29.3	175	17.0	619
Senegal	2010-11	1.4	2,597	3.2	1,288	2.0	3,885
Sierra Leone	2008	22.2	839	42.0	374	28.3	1,214
Regional average¹		14.7	27,796	27.9	12,403	18.8	40,202
East and Southern Africa							
Burundi	2010	1.1	2,158	2.7	726	1.5	2,884
Ethiopia	2011	1.1	3,244	5.7	1,169	2.3	4,413
Ethiopia	2000	1.5	2,848	4.2	1,053	2.2	3,901
Kenya	2008-09	4.6	1,549	8.7	757	6.0	2,305
Kenya	2003	4.4	1,523	10.3	727	6.3	2,250
Kenya	1998	9.5	1,566	16.3	599	11.4	2,165
Lesotho	2009	4.5	1,493	14.0	693	7.5	2,186
Lesotho	2004	4.1	1,417	10.8	684	6.2	2,101
Madagascar	2008-09	10.7	2,624	26.8	762	14.3	3,386
Madagascar	2003-04	13.3	1,112	23.0	516	16.4	1,629
Madagascar	1997	15.6	1,119	29.9	503	20.0	1,623
Malawi	2010	4.7	3,834	11.3	1,086	6.1	4,920
Malawi	2004	5.4	1,604	12.9	586	7.4	2,190
Malawi	2000	7.6	1,933	12.0	634	8.7	2,567
Mozambique	2011	20.3	1,924	40.9	650	25.5	2,575
Mozambique	2003	26.5	1,517	36.5	709	29.7	2,227
Mozambique	1997	20.0	1,010	32.5	326	23.1	1,336
Namibia	2006-07	11.7	2,128	28.5	1,457	18.5	3,584
Namibia	2000	12.4	1,425	20.0	1,013	15.6	2,438
Namibia	1992	20.7	1,172	33.0	811	25.7	1,984
Rwanda	2010	1.5	2,857	3.2	1,685	2.1	4,541
Swaziland	2006-07	8.2	1,185	27.5	703	15.4	1,889
Tanzania	2010	9.6	1,773	26.6	699	14.4	2,472
Tanzania	2004-05	10.0	1,655	25.1	607	14.0	2,262
Tanzania	1999	16.5	682	37.3	261	22.3	943
Uganda	2011	4.9	1,639	15.1	532	7.4	2,171
Uganda	2006	5.1	1,556	17.4	562	8.4	2,118
Uganda	2000-01	8.1	1,149	16.6	354	10.1	1,503
Zambia	2007	7.6	1,294	16.8	481	10.1	1,775
Zambia	2001-02	9.3	1,374	14.3	578	10.8	1,952
Zambia	1996	12.6	1,506	17.7	623	14.1	2,129

Table 4. – Continued

Region and country	Year	Age 15-19		Age 20-24		Total age 15-24	
		%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n	%	Weighted n
Zimbabwe	2010-11	1.9	1,493	9.6	631	4.2	2,124
Zimbabwe	2005-06	2.0	1,704	5.9	752	3.2	2,456
Zimbabwe	1999	2.4	1,133	10.4	474	4.8	1,606
Regional average¹		6.6	29,195	17.0	12,031	9.7	41,225
Eastern Europe and Central Asia							
Albania	2008-09	2.3	1,368	9.4	619	4.5	1,987
Moldova	2005	5.7	1,282	22.0	494	10.3	1,776
Ukraine	2007	8.0	737	41.4	534	22.0	1,272
Regional average¹		5.3	3,387	24.3	1,647	12.3	5,035
Latin America and Caribbean							
Bolivia	2008	4.3	3,046	13.9	1,474	7.4	4,521
Bolivia	2003	3.7	3,448	12.4	1,508	6.4	4,956
Bolivia	1998	1.7	2,234	6.1	995	3.0	3,229
Colombia	2010	17.0	7,851	39.2	4,553	25.2	12,404
Colombia	2005	13.8	5,969	34.1	3,611	21.5	9,579
Colombia	2000	10.1	1,939	27.7	1,174	16.7	3,113
Dominican Republic	2007	9.7	4,530	24.5	2,351	14.8	6,881
Dominican Republic	2002	5.3	3,533	18.0	1,990	9.9	5,523
Guyana	2009	8.9	850	29.5	369	15.2	1,219
Haiti	2012	10.5	2,948	23.1	1,601	15.0	4,549
Haiti	2005-06	6.8	2,252	17.9	928	10.0	3,180
Haiti	2000	5.1	1,966	14.1	962	8.1	2,927
Honduras	2011-12	5.5	3,918	13.3	2,039	8.2	5,957
Honduras	2005-06	2.9	3,596	9.2	1,699	4.9	5,295
Nicaragua	2001	3.0	2,440	9.2	1,071	4.9	3,511
Nicaragua	1998	1.5	2,459	3.7	990	2.2	3,450
Peru	2010	5.9	3,799	22.0	1,929	11.3	5,728
Peru	2005	5.2	6,742	17.1	3,851	9.5	10,593
Peru	2000	3.8	5,063	10.8	2,769	6.3	7,833
Regional average¹		8.1	29,382	21.8	15,387	12.8	44,770

¹Regional average of most recent DHS survey from each country in the region.

5.2.1 West and Central Africa

In West and Central Africa an average of 18.8 percent of unmarried women age 15-24 report being sexually active; this is the highest level of all the regions. Senegal, Mali, and Chad are at the low end of the range, with proportions ranging from 2.0 percent in Senegal to 4.1 percent in Chad; the proportion exceeds 30 percent in Congo Brazzaville (32.1%), Côte d'Ivoire (31.5%), and Gabon (36.3%), and reaches a high of 42.6 percent in Liberia. On average, the proportion of unmarried women age 20-24 who are sexually active (27.9%) is nearly twice that of unmarried women age 15-19 (14.7%). Table 4 shows that the proportion of unmarried women age 15-24 who report being sexually active has decreased in six of the 11 countries with multiple DHS surveys and increased in the remaining five countries.

5.2.2 East and Southern Africa

The proportion of unmarried women age 15-24 in East and Southern Africa who report being sexually active averages 9.7 percent, the lowest level of all the regions. The proportion ranges from 1.5 percent in Burundi to 25.5 percent in Mozambique. In contrast to West and Central Africa, the majority of countries (eight out of 14) in East and Southern Africa have proportions of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 below 10 percent. Comparing unmarried women age 15-19 with those age 20-24, the proportion who are sexually active is substantially higher in the older age group—more than twice as high among unmarried women age 20-24 (17.0%) as among those age 15-19 (6.6%) on average. The majority of countries in the region—eight of 11 with multiple DHS surveys—experienced a decline over time in the proportion of unmarried women age 15-24 who report being sexually active. Increases occur in three countries: Ethiopia, Lesotho, and Mozambique.

5.2.3 Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Only three countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia—Albania, Moldova, and Ukraine—have data on sexual activity among unmarried women age 15-24. The proportion of unmarried women who report being sexually active ranges from 4.5 percent in Albania to 22.0 percent in Ukraine; the average for the three countries is 12.3 percent. Comparing the two age groups—unmarried women age 15-19 and age 20-24—the percentage who are sexually active is more than four times higher among unmarried women age 20-24 (24.3%) than among those age 15-19 (5.3%).

5.2.4 Latin America and Caribbean

On average, 12.8 percent of unmarried women age 15-24 in Latin America and the Caribbean are sexually active. The range is from 4.9 percent in Nicaragua to 25.2 percent in Colombia. Comparing the two age groups—unmarried women age 15-19 and unmarried women age 20-24—the proportion sexually active is nearly three times higher among those age 20-24 (21.8%) than among those age 15-19 (8.1%). Table 4 shows that in all seven countries that have multiple DHS surveys there is a distinctive pattern of increase over time in the proportion of unmarried women age 15-24 who are sexually active. These changes are sizable in most countries; for example, in Bolivia the proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 more than doubles over the 10-year period from 3.0 percent to 7.8 percent. In Peru, the increase over a decade is from 6.3 percent to 11.3 percent.

5.3 Fertility Preferences: Desired Timing of Next Birth

Table 5 indicates the proportion of married women age 15-24 in three categories of desired timing of next birth, women who: 1) want a child (or another child) within two years, 2) after two or more years, or 3) want no (more) children. These categories correspond roughly, assuming fecundability, to 1) women with no need for family planning, 2) women with need for spacing, and 3) women with need for limiting. Table 5 also presents trends in desired timing of next birth for countries with multiple DHS surveys.

On average, most married women age 15-24 in all regions want to postpone a(another) birth for at least two years and that this preference has existed for some time. This finding indicates that the greatest need—met or unmet—among young married women is need for spacing and that this proportion exceeds the proportion with no need for family planning. Having no need for family planning is the second most common need category, on average, in all regions except in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table 5. Desire for a(nother) child among married women age 15-24, current levels and trends

Region and country	Year	Wants within 2 years	Wants after 2+ years	Wants no more	Weighted n
West and Central Africa					
Benin	2006	24.2	73.1	2.2	2,886
Benin	2001	26.9	70.5	2.5	1,153
Benin	1996	25.6	73.4	1.0	1,093
Burkina Faso	2010	24.5	74.1	1.1	3,728
Burkina Faso	2003	26.0	72.7	1.4	2,739
Burkina Faso	1998-99	24.9	73.2	1.9	1,511
Cameroon	2011	28.6	65.7	5.1	2,803
Cameroon	2004	31.2	64.9	3.6	2,390
Cameroon	1998	38.2	59.4	2.3	1,176
Chad	2004	34.4	63.6	1.2	1,478
Chad	1996-97	36.4	62.3	1.2	1,991
Congo Brazzaville	2011-12	10.6	85.1	4.1	1,495
Congo Brazzaville	2005	13.7	79.7	4.7	1,093
Congo Democratic Republic	2007	23.7	68.1	5.6	1,939
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	25.4	71.4	2.8	1,512
Côte d'Ivoire	1998-99	31.8	63.6	4.2	534
Côte d'Ivoire	1994	33.1	63.3	3.4	1,525
Gabon	2012	16.4	71.6	10.9	953
Gabon	2000	22.4	68.0	9.1	950
Ghana	2008	14.6	77.3	8.1	499
Ghana	2003	13.9	76.2	9.3	667
Ghana	1998	15.0	77.4	7.4	674
Guinea	2005	40.3	55.8	2.9	1,470
Guinea	1999	40.9	54.5	3.8	1,451
Liberia	2007	21.8	70.1	6.3	991
Mali	2006	30.4	66.2	2.6	3,968
Mali	2001	28.2	68.5	2.6	3,163
Mali	1995-96	27.4	71.4	1.1	2,276
Mauritania	2000-02	32.2	56.7	7.9	1,152
Niger	2006	37.1	62.3	0.2	2,440
Niger	1998	35.7	63.8	0.5	2,187
Niger	1992	38.7	60.0	1.0	1,837
Nigeria	2008	35.6	61.9	1.4	5,523
Nigeria	2003	47.4	51.2	1.4	1,450
Nigeria	1999	40.2	57.7	1.1	1,384
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008-09	6.4	69.0	22.9	395
Senegal	2010-11	36.1	62.1	1.7	2,764
Senegal	2005	30.6	67.8	1.4	2,841
Sierra Leone	2008	36.5	55.2	4.6	1,171
Regional average¹		26.6	67.2	5.1	37,167

(Continued...)

Table 5. – Continued

Region and country	Year	Wants within 2 years	Wants after 2+ years	Wants no more	Weighted n
East and Southern Africa					
Burundi	2010	15.3	81.1	3.3	1,307
Eritrea	2002	37.7	58.9	3.4	1,527
Eritrea	1995	20.9	74.6	3.8	934
Ethiopia	2011	19.1	68.5	12.4	2,527
Ethiopia	2005	19.3	61.6	18.8	2,284
Ethiopia	2000	25.3	63.4	11.1	2,669
Kenya	2008-09	18.4	60.3	21.2	1,170
Kenya	2003	21.2	59.3	19.2	1,297
Kenya	1998	21.6	58.6	19.6	1,232
Lesotho	2009	20.1	44.4	35.3	1,130
Lesotho	2004	21.6	50.1	27.7	1,071
Madagascar	2008-09	19.3	71.9	8.6	3,390
Madagascar	2003-04	23.9	64.9	11.1	1,291
Madagascar	1997	25.2	61.3	12.9	1,256
Malawi	2010	17.4	66.9	14.9	4,639
Malawi	2004	17.4	67.1	15.1	3,071
Malawi	2000	19.9	60.4	18.2	3,256
Mozambique	2011	40.8	48.3	10.0	2,940
Mozambique	2003	37.3	55.1	6.2	2,682
Mozambique	1997	38.0	58.2	2.5	2,147
Namibia	2006-07	17.0	40.1	41.4	515
Namibia	2000	18.8	39.4	41.1	400
Namibia	1992	30.3	49.8	18.3	388
Rwanda	2010	11.0	74.4	14.3	1,087
Rwanda	2005	16.5	69.7	13.6	1,045
Rwanda	2000	20.0	75.0	5.0	1,135
Swaziland	2006-07	13.2	40.4	45.4	431
Tanzania	2010	23.7	71.9	4.3	1,610
Tanzania	2004-05	26.4	67.4	6.2	1,990
Tanzania	1999	31.0	61.5	7.1	777
Uganda	2011	19.9	70.0	9.8	1,505
Uganda	2006	24.9	64.8	10.0	1,528
Uganda	2000-01	23.2	64.6	11.6	1,612
Zambia	2007	19.0	72.2	8.5	1,169
Zambia	2001-02	25.1	66.8	7.8	1,521
Zambia	1996	30.4	62.9	6.3	1,705
Zimbabwe	2010-11	20.6	67.7	11.6	1,662
Zimbabwe	2005-06	20.1	61.9	17.5	1,648
Zimbabwe	1999	24.7	61.2	14.1	1,134
Regional average¹		20.8	62.5	16.3	26,609

(Continued...)

Table 5. – Continued

Region and country	Year	Wants within 2 years	Wants after 2+ years	Wants no more	Weighted n
Middle East and North Africa					
Egypt	2008	27.3	53.6	19.1	3,133
Egypt	2005	25.8	53.0	21.2	3,690
Egypt	2000	26.8	51.1	21.9	2,785
Jordan	2009	29.1	63.0	7.5	1,320
Jordan	2007	24.1	64.3	11.2	1,466
Jordan	2002	27.6	66.8	5.6	864
Jordan	1997	27.5	57.7	14.4	980
Morocco	2003-04	27.0	59.2	13.6	1,441
Morocco	1992	29.4	57.9	12.1	929
Eastern Europe and Central Asia					
Albania	2008-09	23.5	64.1	10.9	467
Armenia	2010	25.5	63.8	8.1	518
Armenia	2005	22.0	54.3	23.1	582
Armenia	2000	22.9	45.4	31.0	610
Azerbaijan	2006	29.1	35.8	29.7	848
Kyrgyz Republic	2012	26.3	70.9	1.4	1,053
Kyrgyz Republic	1997	20.5	69.6	8.0	551
Moldova	2005	20.7	56.3	21.2	765
Turkey	2003	18.9	52.8	27.6	666
Turkey	1998	21.7	49.6	28.3	1,186
Turkey	1993	21.8	48.0	29.7	1,355
Ukraine	2007	21.8	66.6	8.0	517
Regional average¹		23.7	58.6	15.3	4,834
South and Southeast Asia					
Bangladesh	2011	17.7	52.8	28.5	5,322
Bangladesh	2007	19.7	52.5	27.1	3,470
Bangladesh	2004	20.8	52.8	26.1	3,802
Cambodia	2010	15.3	68.9	15.5	2,061
Cambodia	2005	13.8	65.9	19.4	2,034
Cambodia	2000	16.5	69.9	11.1	1,443
India	2005-06	28.1	39.7	21.5	23,508
India	1998-99	31.0	40.3	16.8	24,220
India	1992-93	26.7	51.4	13.2	25,512
Indonesia	2012	18.3	73.4	8.0	4,644
Indonesia	2007	18.4	67.8	13.6	4,766
Indonesia	2002-03	18.3	70.4	10.6	4,672
Maldives	2009	27.5	61.2	10.9	1,300
Nepal	2011	16.5	47.7	32.7	2,553
Nepal	2006	19.8	44.8	31.5	2,389
Nepal	2001	23.2	46.8	26.2	2,573
Pakistan	2006-07	38.4	49.6	10.8	2,021
Pakistan	1990-91	36.8	51.8	9.3	1,458

(Continued...)

Table 5. – Continued

Region and country	Year	Wants within 2 years	Wants after 2+ years	Wants no more	Weighted n
Philippines	2008	13.4	60.2	25.8	1,283
Philippines	2003	13.6	57.8	27.9	1,332
Philippines	1998	14.5	56.3	28.6	1,211
Timor-Leste	2009-10	12.3	83.0	3.3	1,343
Vietnam	2002	10.4	64.4	25.0	603
Vietnam	1997	11.9	61.7	26.4	845
Regional average¹		19.8	59.9	18.4	44,687
Latin America and Caribbean					
Bolivia	2008	7.8	43.1	48.5	1,735
Bolivia	2003	8.2	40.4	51.0	2,050
Bolivia	1998	10.4	37.6	51.1	1,219
Colombia	2010	11.3	52.0	29.0	4,490
Colombia	2005	10.5	48.8	34.7	3,706
Colombia	2000	13.1	45.9	37.9	1,140
Dominican Republic	2007	17.6	57.9	18.3	3,209
Dominican Republic	2002	18.3	52.2	22.3	3,174
Dominican Republic	1999	20.3	53.3	21.1	164
Guyana	2009	19.5	52.4	26.1	564
Haiti	2012	7.1	66.2	26.3	1,654
Haiti	2005-06	10.7	67.6	21.1	1,524
Haiti	2000	12.7	64.0	23.1	1,333
Honduras	2011-12	13.8	64.4	19.5	3,235
Honduras	2005-06	12.4	60.5	24.6	2,944
Nicaragua	2001	12.7	52.1	31.8	2,033
Nicaragua	1998	14.4	43.7	36.4	2,280
Peru	2010	7.4	57.8	34.1	1,950
Peru	2005	7.1	60.2	32.5	3,322
Peru	2000	7.3	53.6	38.2	2,550
Regional average		12.2	55.7	29.2	18,870

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to omission of women who are sterilized, infecund, or who are missing data

¹Regional average of *most recent DHS survey* from each country in the region.

Data on the current state of desired timing of a subsequent birth for sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 are presented in Table 6, as are trends for this population. These data indicate that a much larger proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 want to delay a birth for two or more years, compared with married women the same age. A smaller proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 wants a child within two years or wants no (more) children, compared with married women. This pattern is evident in all regions for which data are available on sexually active, unmarried women.

Table 6. Desire for a(nother) child among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, current levels and trends

Region and country	Year	Wants within 2 years	Wants after 2+ years	Wants no more	Weighted n
West and Central Africa					
Benin	2006	12.1	85.2	0.6	494
Benin	2001	14.0	85.2	0.5	223
Benin	1996	15.1	83.2	1.7	151
Burkina Faso	2010	10.0	89.6	0.0	276
Burkina Faso	2003	7.4	92.4	0.2	239
Burkina Faso	1998-99	10.9	88.3	0.8	148
Cameroon	2011	12.8	85.3	1.6	643
Cameroon	2004	12.4	86.1	1.3	365
Cameroon	1998	23.8	73.6	2.6	334
Chad	2004	20.2	78.9	0.7	39
Chad	1996-97	27.9	69.6	2.0	98
Congo Brazzaville	2011-12	11.2	87.0	1.0	876
Congo Brazzaville	2005	10.1	83.4	3.4	660
Congo Democratic Republic	2007	5.6	85.9	4.1	442
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	9.7	87.7	1.3	776
Côte d'Ivoire	1998-99	17.7	79.5	2.6	246
Gabon	2012	14.9	77.4	6.0	897
Gabon	2000	15.1	77.6	6.7	599
Ghana	2008	4.1	92.4	3.4	175
Ghana	2003	5.2	94.8	0.0	162
Ghana	1998	14.7	84.4	0.8	138
Guinea	2005	7.2	90.4	1.8	218
Guinea	1999	9.9	81.7	6.2	144
Liberia	2007	12.6	84.1	2.6	717
Mali	2006	6.8	83.1	6.8	70
Mali	2001	8.0	82.9	7.6	262
Mali	1995-96	7.4	89.9	1.6	195
Nigeria	2008	5.1	92.6	0.7	1,034
Nigeria	2003	4.5	93.2	0.8	245
Nigeria	1999	5.4	93.1	1.0	239
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008-09	20.7	69.9	7.4	105
Senegal	2010-11	0.7	94.8	4.5	77
Sierra Leone	2008	10.3	79.9	3.3	344
Regional average¹		10.3	85.3	2.9	7,183

(Continued...)

Table 6. – Continued

Region and country	Year	Wants within 2 years	Wants after 2+ years	Wants no more	Weighted n
East and Southern Africa					
Burundi	2010	10.5	80.8	2.2	44
Ethiopia	2011	17.5	55.8	24.3	101
Ethiopia	2000	20.1	51.5	28.2	87
Kenya	2008-09	11.8	81.5	6.3	138
Kenya	2003	12.1	73.3	14.1	142
Kenya	1998	12.7	72.0	15.3	246
Lesotho	2009	10.0	56.6	33.4	164
Lesotho	2004	13.5	50.3	33.3	131
Madagascar	2008-09	16.2	79.2	4.6	485
Madagascar	2003-04	15.7	64.2	17.0	267
Madagascar	1997	28.3	60.1	11.6	325
Malawi	2010	14.8	74.4	9.5	302
Malawi	2004	13.2	64.4	19.7	163
Malawi	2000	17.5	68.9	11.6	222
Mozambique	2011	23.6	69.4	6.5	656
Mozambique	2003	24.0	68.2	5.4	661
Mozambique	1997	30.0	59.7	6.2	308
Namibia	2006-07	9.4	60.3	28.4	665
Namibia	2000	11.9	61.7	24.5	380
Rwanda	2010	8.2	82.8	9.0	96
Swaziland	2006-07	5.9	44.3	49.4	291
Tanzania	2010	18.2	71.8	10.0	356
Tanzania	2004-05	18.8	71.4	9.9	318
Tanzania	1999	22.6	65.7	10.8	210
Uganda	2011	19.9	74.4	5.1	160
Uganda	2006	23.1	67.8	9.1	178
Uganda	2000-01	24.7	66.7	8.6	152
Zambia	2007	8.5	78.5	13.0	179
Zambia	2001-02	24.5	68.4	6.1	211
Zambia	1996	30.0	64.4	5.4	301
Zimbabwe	2010-11	24.3	57.1	17.3	89
Zimbabwe	2005-06	21.1	67.1	11.8	78
Zimbabwe	1999	26.9	57.4	15.7	77
Regional average¹		14.2	69.1	15.6	3,726

(Continued...)

Table 6. – Continued

Region and country	Year	Wants within 2 years	Wants after 2+ years	Wants no more	Weighted n
Eastern Europe and Central Asia					
Albania	2008-09	12.0	87.3	0.7	90
Moldova	2005	4.7	89.2	5.4	182
Ukraine	2007	4.0	92.3	2.7	280
Regional average¹		6.9	89.6	2.9	552
Latin America and Caribbean					
Bolivia	2008	8.4	78.5	13.1	337
Bolivia	2003	12.8	70.2	17.1	316
Bolivia	1998	14.8	54.7	27.8	98
Colombia	2010	4.7	77.5	15.5	3,120
Colombia	2005	9.2	74.1	15.7	2,058
Colombia	2000	11.3	71.4	16.7	520
Dominican Republic	2007	21.6	66.2	10.3	1,017
Dominican Republic	2002	22.7	58.0	16.9	544
Guyana	2009	7.9	81.8	9.1	185
Haiti	2012	5.8	87.7	5.9	681
Haiti	2005-06	7.5	88.6	3.9	319
Haiti	2000	9.3	88.2	2.5	236
Honduras	2011-12	12.9	73.4	13.3	486
Honduras	2005-06	13.6	68.2	17.2	261
Nicaragua	2001	15.7	58.8	25.2	173
Nicaragua	1998	8.5	56.3	33.2	74
Peru	2010	5.8	86.5	6.7	648
Peru	2005	5.8	88.4	5.8	1,010
Peru	2000	7.2	84.2	8.3	492
Regional average¹		10.4	76.3	12.4	6,647

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to omission of women who are sterilized, infecund, or who are missing data

¹Regional average of *most recent DHS survey* from each country in the region.

5.3.1 West and Central Africa

Countries in West and Central Africa, on average, have the *highest* proportion of married women age 15-24 who want to postpone having a child for two or more years (67.2%) and the *lowest* proportion of married women age 15-24 who want no more children (5.1%) (Table 5). The proportion of women who want a child after two or more years ranges from 55.2 percent in Sierra Leone to 85.1 percent in Congo (Brazzaville). At the same time, more than one-quarter (26.6%) of young married women would like a child within two years; only 5.1 percent want no (more) children. São Tomé and Príncipe stands out in the region because of the small proportion of married women age 15-24 who want a child within two years (6.4%) and the large proportion who want no (more) children (22.9%).

Table 5 demonstrates that, over time, the most frequently occurring trend among married women age 15-24 in West and Central Africa is an *increase* the proportion who want to *delay a birth by two or more years*. There has been a *decrease* in the proportion of married women age 15-24 who want a child *within two years* and a *decrease* in the proportion who *want no (more) children*. While the decline in the

proportion of young married women who want a child soon (within two years) is clear, the trend in the proportion wanting no (more) children varies across countries in the region.

Among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in West and Central Africa, the vast majority—85.3 percent, on average—want to delay having a child for two or more years (Table 6). Eastern Europe and Central Asia is the only region with a higher proportion (89.6%). When young unmarried women are compared with young married women in West and Central Africa, there is a difference of nearly 20 percentage points in the proportion wanting a child *after two or more years*—85.3 percent and 62.2 percent, respectively. The proportion of sexually active, unmarried women who want a child *within two years* averages 10.3 percent and ranges from less than one percent in Senegal to more than 20 percent in Cameroon and São Tomé and Príncipe. It is rare for sexually active, unmarried women in this age group to want to have no (more) children. In West and Central Africa the proportion of young unmarried women age who *want no (more) children* ranges from zero percent in Burkina Faso to 7.4 percent in São Tomé and Príncipe. Among the regions, West and Central Africa and Eastern Europe and Central Asia have the lowest proportions of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 who want no (more) children—both regions averaging 2.9 percent.

Trends in desire for a(nother) child among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 show *an even greater concentration*, compared to married women of the same age, of desires over time to postpone having a child for two or more years, rather than either wanting a child within two years or wanting no (more) children, both proportions that *decrease* over time (Table 6). Exceptions include Ghana, where there is an *increase* in the proportion wanting no more children, and Mali, where there is a *decrease* in both the proportion wanting a child soon (within two years) and the proportion wanting a child later (after two or more years), along with an *increase* in the proportion wanting no (more) children. The desire to have a child within two years declined almost universally among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, with the exception of Congo (Brazzaville) where there was a slight increase (from 10.1% to 11.2%).

5.3.2 East and Southern Africa

Compared with young married women in West and Central Africa, a smaller proportion of married women age 15-24 in East and Southern Africa want to have a child either within two years (20.8%) or after two or more years (62.5%) (Table 5). Although still the least common response to the question about desire for a(nother) child, a larger proportion of young married women in East and Southern Africa than in West and Central Africa want no (more) children (16.3% and 5.1%, respectively). The proportion of married women age 15-24 who want to postpone having a child for two or more years ranges from 40 percent in Namibia (40.1%) and Swaziland (40.4%) to more than 80 percent in Burundi (81.1%). Eritrea and Mozambique contrast with the general pattern, with a high proportion of young married women wanting a child within two years—37.7 percent in Eritrea and 40.8 percent in Mozambique—and, for Eritrea, a small proportion wanting no (more) children (3.4%). In contrast, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland have high proportions of young married women who want no (more) children (35.3%, 41.4%, and 45.4%, respectively).

As in West and Central Africa, Table 5 shows that the general trend over time has been a *decrease* in the proportion of married women age 15-24 who want a child within two years and an *increase* in either or both the proportion wanting to space or limit births; the two exceptions are Eritrea and Mozambique. In Eritrea, an increase in the proportion wanting a birth within two years was accompanied by a decrease in the proportion wanting to have a child after two or more years and a decrease in the proportion wanting no (more) children. In Mozambique, there was an increase in the proportion wanting a birth within two years, accompanied by a decrease in the proportion wanting to delay the next birth two or more years, and an increase in the proportion wanting no (more) children.

Desired timing of next birth among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in East and Southern Africa is similar to that among married women the same age. Typically, they want a child after two or more years rather than either wanting a child soon (within two years) or not wanting any (more) children (Table 6). As in the other regions, a greater proportion of young unmarried women want to delay the next birth while smaller proportions want a child soon or want no (more) children. However, compared with other regions, East and Southern Africa has, on average, the *lowest proportion* of sexually active, unmarried women who want to space the next birth by two or more years and the *highest proportions* who want a child within two years or want no (more) children. The shift over time away from wanting a child within two years to wanting (especially) to postpone the next birth is more evident among young sexually active, unmarried women than it is among their married counterparts (Table 6).

5.3.3 Middle East and North Africa

The Middle East and North Africa region, on average, has the *highest proportion* of married women age 15-24 who want a child within the next two years (27.8%) (Table 5). This proportion ranges from 27.0 percent in Morocco to 29.1 percent in Jordan. Nonetheless, the majority (58.6%) of young, married women in the region want to delay a subsequent birth for two or more years. This proportion ranges from 53.6 percent in Egypt to 63.0 percent in Jordan. Smaller proportions of young married women report that they want no (more) children, ranging from 7.5 percent in Jordan to 19.1 percent in Egypt. Table 5 shows that both Egypt and Morocco have seen an increase in the proportion of married women age 15-24 who want to postpone having a child for two or more years; trends in the other two categories vary. In Jordan, the proportion of young married women who want to postpone having a child for two or more years and the proportion who want to limit childbearing have both fluctuated over time; however, there has been an *increase* in the proportion who want a child within two years, from 27.5 percent to 29.1 percent.

5.3.4 Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The proportion of married women age 15-24 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia who want to postpone having a child after two or more years averages 58.6 percent and ranges from 35.8 percent in Azerbaijan to 70.9 percent in the Kyrgyz Republic (Table 5). Nearly one-quarter of married women this age (23.7%) want a child within two years on average, ranging from 18.9 percent in Turkey to 29.1 percent in Azerbaijan. The proportion wanting no (more) children ranges from 1.4 percent in the Kyrgyz Republic to 29.7 in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan stands out from the other countries in the region because of the relatively smaller proportion of young married women wanting to space the next birth (35.8%) and the larger proportions wanting the next birth soon (29.1%) or not at all (29.7%).

Table 5 shows that for the three countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia for which multiple DHS surveys are available—Armenia, Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkey—there has been an *increase* in the proportion of married women age 15-24 who want to delay having a child for two or more years and a *decrease* in the proportion who want to have no (more) children. The proportion wanting a child within two years has decreased in Turkey and increased in Armenia and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Among the three countries in the region—Albania, Moldova, and the Ukraine—with data on both married and sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, Table 6 indicates that, on average, the proportion of young women who want to delay the next birth two or more years is at least 30 percentage points *higher* among sexually active, unmarried women than among their married counterparts—89.6% and 58.6%, respectively. Among the four regions with data on sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, Eastern Europe and Central Asia has the *highest proportion* of these women who want a child after two or more years. The proportions wanting a child within two years or wanting no (more) children are small, a fraction of those of young married women. In particular, among the four regions with data

available, Eastern Europe and Central Asia has the *lowest proportion* of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 who want a child within two years (6.9%).

5.3.5 *South and Southeast Asia*

Although the majority of married women age 15-24 in South and Southeast Asia want to postpone a (next) birth two or more years (59.9%), on average, the region has the *second highest* proportion of married women wanting no more children (18.4%) and the *second lowest* proportion wanting a child within two years (19.8%) (Table 5). The proportion who want a (next) birth after two or more years ranges from 39.7 percent in India to 83.0 percent in Timor-Leste. The proportion who want to limit childbearing (i.e., have no (more) children) ranges from 3.3 percent in Timor-Leste to 32.7 percent in Nepal. The proportion who want a child within two years ranges from 10.4 percent in Vietnam to 38.4 percent in Pakistan. India is notable for having relatively similar proportions of women in all three categories. While Nepal and Pakistan have similar proportions of married women age 15-24 who want to delay a (next) birth two or more years (47.7% and 49.6%, respectively), they differ in the large proportion of women in Pakistan who want a birth soon (38.4%) and the large proportion of women in Nepal who want no (more) children (32.7%), and these proportions have increased over time (Table 5). Trends in desired timing of next birth in the other countries in South and Southeast Asia are more diverse, with the majority of countries experiencing an increase in the proportion of married women age 15-24 who want to limit or space births, although these trends have moved in opposite directions in some countries.

5.3.6 *Latin America and Caribbean*

The Latin America and the Caribbean region has the *highest proportion* of married women age 15-24 who want no (more) children and the *lowest proportion* who want a child soon or after two or more years (Table 5). On average, 55.7 percent of young, married women want a child after two or more years, ranging from 43.1 percent in Bolivia to 66.2 percent in Haiti. Bolivia is notable in the region for having one of the lowest proportions of young married women who want a child soon (7.8%) along with the highest proportion (48.5%) who want no (more) children.

In five of the seven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean with multiple DHS surveys, the proportion of married women age 15-24 who want a child within two years has *decreased* and the proportion wanting a child after two or more years has *increased* (Table 5). In Nicaragua and Peru, the proportion of young married women wanting to space a (next) birth increased but there is a concurrent increase in the proportion of young married women wanting a child soon (within two years). In Haiti and Peru, the proportion of married women age 15-24 wanting to limit (stop) childbearing has *increased* over time. Elsewhere in the region, the desire to limit childbearing has decreased.

Desired timing of next birth among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in Latin American and Caribbean is similar to that of their married counterparts: most sexually active, unmarried women want to space a (next) birth by two or more years (Table 6). However, there is a 20 percentage point difference between the two groups in the desire to space births. On average, 76.3 percent of sexually active unmarried women age 15-24 want to have a (next) birth after two or more years compared with 55.7 percent of young married women the same age. Smaller proportions of sexually active, unmarried women want to have a child soon (within two years) or to have no (more) children. There is a more than 16 percentage point difference in the opposite direction between the two groups in desire to limit childbearing. On average, 12.4 percent of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 want no (more) children compared with 29.2 percent of their married counterparts. Table 6 shows that, in general, there has been an *increase* over time in the proportion of sexually active, unmarried women who want to have a child after two or more years, with smaller proportions wanting a child within two years or wanting no (more) children. It is notable that in Haiti there has been a shift away from wanting a(nother) child—

either within two years or after two or more years—toward wanting no (more) children. In Nicaragua, the opposite pattern is seen: there has been an *increase* in the proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 who want a child within two years or after two or more years, and a *decrease* in the proportion wanting no (more) children.

5.4 Use of Contraception

Table 7 describes current use of contraception among married women age 15-24. This table presents 1) the proportion of women not using any contraceptive method (nonusers), 2) the proportion using a traditional method, and 3) the proportion using a modern method. Although the DHS algorithm for unmet need for family planning considers women using *any* method of contraception to have a *met need* for family planning and not unmet need (Bradley et al. 2012), service providers concerned with the efficacy of contraceptive methods may be interested in the distinction between modern method and traditional method use among young women.

Table 7. Current levels and trends in current use of contraception among married women age 15-24, by method type

Region and country	Year	No method	Traditional method	Modern method	Weighted n
West and Central Africa					
Benin	2006	86.9	8.7	4.3	2,886
Benin	2001	84.3	9.9	5.8	1,155
Benin	1996	84.0	13.4	2.6	1,094
Burkina Faso	2010	86.7	0.8	12.5	3,728
Burkina Faso	2003	87.8	4.3	7.8	2,739
Burkina Faso	1998-99	88.7	7.0	4.3	1,511
Cameroon	2011	79.7	5.4	14.9	2,803
Cameroon	2004	74.5	10.7	14.7	2,391
Cameroon	1998	83.7	12.0	4.3	1,176
Chad	2004	89.5	9.0	1.6	1,478
Chad	1996-97	96.1	2.8	1.0	1,991
Congo Brazzaville	2011	56.8	19.3	23.9	1,495
Congo Brazzaville	2005	53.9	32.5	13.7	1,093
Congo Democratic Republic	2007	82.4	12.4	5.1	1,941
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	84.7	5.0	10.2	1,512
Côte d'Ivoire	1998-99	87.2	6.7	6.0	534
Côte d'Ivoire	1994	88.0	8.7	3.3	1,526
Gabon	2012	68.4	10.2	21.4	953
Gabon	2000	61.8	24.2	14.0	950
Ghana	2008	79.1	5.2	15.6	499
Ghana	2003	80.1	5.1	14.8	667
Ghana	1998	79.6	8.7	11.7	674
Guinea	2005	90.1	4.2	5.7	1,474
Guinea	1999	95.0	1.9	3.1	1,459
Liberia	2007	93.4	1.3	5.3	991
Mali	2006	91.5	1.8	6.8	3,968
Mali	2001	93.7	0.7	5.6	3,165
Mali	1995-96	94.6	2.4	2.9	2,278

Table 7. – Continued

Region and country	Year	No method	Traditional method	Modern method	Weighted n
Mauritania	2000-02	93.7	2.5	3.8	1,155
Niger	2006	90.8	5.5	3.6	2,440
Niger	1998	91.9	4.4	3.7	2,188
Niger	1992	96.0	2.4	1.7	1,837
Nigeria	2008	92.3	2.2	5.5	5,523
Nigeria	2003	92.5	2.0	5.5	1,456
Nigeria	1999	93.4	4.5	2.1	1,457
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008-09	65.8	1.8	32.4	395
Senegal	2010-11	91.9	0.7	7.4	2,764
Senegal	2005	92.8	0.9	6.4	2,849
Sierra Leone	2008	95.8	0.5	3.7	1,171
Regional average¹		84.4	5.4	10.2	37,176
East and Southern Africa					
Burundi	2010	79.6	4.2	16.3	1,307
Eritrea	2002	95.5	0.7	3.8	1,530
Eritrea	1995	92.9	4.2	2.8	937
Ethiopia	2011	68.5	1.2	30.2	2,527
Ethiopia	2000	93.7	1.7	4.7	2,669
Kenya	2008-09	66.7	4.8	28.5	1,170
Kenya	2003	75.1	5.0	19.9	1,297
Kenya	1998	71.9	6.8	21.4	1,234
Lesotho	2009	60.1	1.0	38.9	1,151
Lesotho	2004	71.2	1.1	27.7	1,072
Madagascar	2008-09	67.9	8.8	23.2	3,390
Madagascar	2003-04	79.1	5.3	15.7	1,291
Madagascar	1997	87.7	5.5	6.9	1,256
Malawi	2010	61.5	3.5	35.1	4,639
Malawi	2004	73.5	3.4	23.2	3,071
Malawi	2000	76.9	3.2	19.9	3,257
Mozambique	2011	90.5	0.2	9.3	2,940
Mozambique	2003	75.5	3.9	20.6	2,683
Mozambique	1997	97.0	0.5	2.5	2,163
Namibia	2006-07	48.7	2.7	48.6	516
Namibia	2000	54.6	1.2	44.2	400
Namibia	1992	71.6	4.7	23.7	394
Rwanda	2010	56.4	2.4	41.2	1,087
Rwanda	2005	87.9	4.7	7.3	1,045
Rwanda	2000	90.3	5.2	4.5	1,135
Swaziland	2006-07	54.1	1.7	44.2	431
Tanzania	2010	74.0	5.0	20.9	1,610
Tanzania	2004-05	79.2	5.4	15.4	1,990
Tanzania	1999	76.8	6.9	16.3	777
Uganda	2011	79.6	2.1	18.4	1,505
Uganda	2006	80.9	4.9	14.2	1,528
Uganda	2000-01	81.6	3.5	14.9	1,616

Table 7. – Continued

Region and country	Year	No method	Traditional method	Modern method	Weighted n
Zambia	2007	61.5	7.4	31.2	1,169
Zambia	2001-02	70.2	8.1	21.7	1,524
Zambia	1996	77.6	9.4	12.9	1,705
Zimbabwe	2010-11	46.3	1.0	52.6	1,662
Zimbabwe	2005-06	45.2	1.1	53.7	1,648
Zimbabwe	1999	49.5	2.0	48.5	1,134
Regional average		67.4	3.1	29.5	26,634
Middle East and North Africa					
Egypt	2008	59.5	3.7	36.8	3,133
Egypt	2005	59.2	3.2	37.6	3,690
Egypt	2000	61.5	2.0	36.5	2,785
Jordan	2009	60.3	11.9	27.8	1,320
Jordan	2007	58.9	11.0	30.0	1,466
Jordan	2002	61.5	13.0	25.4	864
Jordan	1997	67.1	11.6	21.3	980
Morocco	2003-04	46.8	4.5	48.6	1,441
Morocco	1992	68.1	2.6	29.4	930
Regional average¹		55.5	6.7	37.7	5,894
Eastern Europe and Central Asia					
Albania	2008-09	46.7	43.8	9.4	467
Armenia	2010	62.9	20.9	16.2	518
Armenia	2005	60.7	22.6	16.7	582
Armenia	2000	49.5	29.2	21.3	610
Azerbaijan	2006	67.7	24.1	8.2	848
Kyrgyz Republic	2012	80.7	1.9	17.4	1,053
Kyrgyz Republic	1997	54.5	9.4	36.1	551
Moldova	2005	37.7	22.2	40.1	765
Turkey	2003	43.5	27.9	28.6	664
Turkey	1998	51.4	21.1	27.5	1,186
Turkey	1993	55.4	20.9	23.6	1,355
Ukraine	2007	38.6	16.7	44.8	517
Regional average¹		54.0	22.5	23.5	4,832
South and Southeast Asia					
Bangladesh	2011	46.0	4.6	49.4	5,322
Bangladesh	2007	51.8	4.7	43.5	3,470
Bangladesh	2004	52.3	7.0	40.7	3,803
Cambodia	2010	59.8	11.2	29.0	2,061
Cambodia	2005	67.9	10.5	21.6	2,034
Cambodia	2000	86.5	2.7	10.8	1,447
India	2005-06	72.5	6.9	20.6	23,508
India	1998-99	80.0	4.3	15.7	24,229
India	1992-93	83.8	3.5	12.7	26,738
Indonesia	2012	41.8	1.1	57.0	4,644
Indonesia	2007	41.0	1.4	57.6	4,766
Indonesia	2002-03	41.9	1.6	56.5	4,672

Table 7. – Continued

Region and country	Year	No method	Traditional method	Modern method	Weighted n
Maldives	2009	77.5	6.3	16.2	1,300
Nepal	2011	74.2	5.0	20.9	2,553
Nepal	2006	74.2	2.6	23.2	2,389
Nepal	2001	80.7	2.7	16.6	2,573
Pakistan	2006-07	87.0	4.1	8.8	2,022
Pakistan	1990-91	94.8	1.9	3.3	1,459
Philippines	2008	58.2	13.3	28.5	1,283
Philippines	2003	60.4	12.6	27.0	1,334
Philippines	1998	63.8	15.1	21.1	1,212
Timor-Leste	2009-10	85.7	1.1	13.2	1,343
Vietnam	2002	46.2	12.7	41.1	603
Vietnam	1997	50.5	10.5	39.0	845
Regional average¹		64.9	6.6	28.5	44,639
Latin America and Caribbean					
Bolivia	2008	47.3	19.7	33.0	1,735
Bolivia	2003	46.8	19.2	34.1	2,051
Bolivia	1998	59.8	21.9	18.3	1,224
Colombia	2010	31.8	5.6	62.6	4,490
Colombia	2005	32.4	10.3	57.3	3,706
Colombia	2000	34.3	12.3	53.4	1,140
Dominican Republic	2007	44.4	3.4	52.2	3,209
Dominican Republic	2002	49.4	5.1	45.4	3,175
Dominican Republic	1999	57.9	9.2	32.9	165
Guyana	2009	64.0	1.7	34.3	564
Haiti	2012	66.6	1.8	31.6	1,654
Haiti	2005-06	68.3	7.3	24.4	1,524
Haiti	2000	72.3	5.8	21.9	1,333
Honduras	2011-12	35.5	7.3	57.2	3,235
Honduras	2005-06	45.0	7.2	47.8	2,944
Nicaragua	2001	37.5	2.1	60.4	2,035
Nicaragua	1998	51.4	2.1	46.5	2,280
Peru	2010	29.9	19.3	50.8	1,950
Peru	2005	32.1	18.5	49.4	3,322
Peru	2000	37.9	13.2	49.0	2,551
Regional average¹		44.6	7.6	47.8	18,872

¹Regional average of *most recent DHS survey* from each country in the region.

Table 7 indicates that most married women age 15-24 are not currently using contraception. Only in Latin America and the Caribbean does a majority—55.4 percent, on average—use a method of contraception. In every other region in this report, the majority of young married women do not use any contraceptive method. When contraception is used however, a greater proportion of young married women in all regions use a modern method than a traditional method. Use of *modern methods* by married women age 15-24 is highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (averaging 47.8%), followed by the Middle East and North Africa (where it averages 37.7%). Eastern Europe and Central Asia is distinctive because of the high proportion of young married women using *traditional methods* (22.5%), almost the

same proportion of young married women are using modern methods (23.5%). In other regions the proportion of young married women using traditional methods is less than 10 percent.

Table 7 also provides trend data on current use of contraception among married women age 15-24 in countries with multiple DHS surveys. It demonstrates *a strong and nearly universal trend toward increased use of modern contraceptive methods*. At the same time, however, there is variation as to whether the *increase* in the use of modern methods is accompanied by 1) a *decrease* in nonuse of contraception and an *increase* in the use of traditional methods, or 2) an *increase* in nonuse of contraception and a *decrease* in the use of traditional methods, or 3) a *decrease* in both nonuse of contraception and use of traditional methods.

Table 8 presents current use of contraception among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, by method type, for countries with DHS data on unmarried women. It indicates that, compared with *married* women age 15-24 a greater proportion of *sexually active, unmarried* women age 15-24, in all regions, are currently using a contraceptive method. Still, the majority of young unmarried women in both African regions (West and Central Africa and East and Southern Africa) do not use any method of contraception. Use of modern methods among this population is highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (56.0%), followed closely by Eastern Europe and Central Asia (54.5%). Use of traditional methods is higher among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, on average, than it is among their married counterparts. Again, use of traditional methods is highest in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (25.5%), although more than twice as many young unmarried women in this region use modern methods (54.5%).

Table 8. Current levels and trends in use of contraception among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, by method type

Region and country	Year	No method	Traditional method	Modern method	Weighted n
West and Central Africa					
Benin	2006	40.1	28.9	31.0	494
Benin	2001	60.2	22.3	17.5	223
Benin	1996	45.1	42.4	12.6	151
Burkina Faso	2010	40.8	1.6	57.6	276
Burkina Faso	2003	41.6	2.9	55.5	239
Burkina Faso	1998-99	51.0	6.8	42.2	148
Cameroon	2011	35.8	10.8	53.4	643
Cameroon	2004	25.8	22.7	51.5	365
Cameroon	1998	27.2	51.9	20.9	334
Chad	2004	90.2	0.0	9.8	39
Chad	1996-97	83.7	7.9	8.4	98
Congo Brazzaville	2011-12	24.3	28.7	47.0	876
Congo Brazzaville	2005	22.3	52.6	25.0	660
Congo Democratic Republic	2007	50.1	25.8	24.1	442
Côte d'Ivoire	2012	60.3	9.3	30.4	776
Côte d'Ivoire	1998-99	40.8	31.5	27.8	246
Gabon	2012	39.3	9.6	51.1	897
Gabon	2000	35.7	34.0	30.4	599
Ghana	2008	51.9	18.1	30.0	175
Ghana	2003	53.1	14.3	32.6	162
Ghana	1998	57.5	19.5	23.0	138
Guinea	2005	53.1	11.3	35.6	218
Guinea	1999	52.2	18.4	29.4	144
Liberia	2007	73.4	4.6	22.0	717
Mali	2006	71.5	6.1	22.4	70
Mali	2001	71.1	8.8	20.2	262
Mali	1995-96	63.4	12.7	23.9	195
Nigeria	2008	37.1	18.5	44.5	1,034
Nigeria	2003	47.3	12.8	39.9	245
Nigeria	1999	42.3	25.4	32.3	248
São Tomé and Príncipe	2008-09	48.7	0.5	50.8	105
Senegal	2010-11	75.4	0.8	23.9	77
Sierra Leone	2008	61.8	11.7	26.5	344
Regional average¹		53.4	11.6	35.0	7,183

(Continued...)

Table 8. – Continued

Region and country	Year	No method	Traditional method	Modern method	Weighted n
East and Southern Africa					
Burundi	2010	83.3	1.2	15.5	44
Ethiopia	2011	39.4	6.1	54.4	101
Ethiopia	2000	54.4	7.3	38.4	87
Kenya	2008-09	55.7	4.0	40.3	138
Kenya	2003	48.6	11.7	39.7	142
Kenya	1998	61.6	12.2	26.2	246
Lesotho	2009	49.9	1.3	48.8	164
Lesotho	2004	53.9	0.6	45.5	131
Madagascar	2008-09	59.8	17.4	22.8	485
Madagascar	2003-04	61.8	17.4	20.8	267
Madagascar	1997	74.5	17.5	7.9	325
Malawi	2010	61.0	0.6	38.4	302
Malawi	2004	73.5	1.4	25.1	163
Malawi	2000	76.3	0.8	22.9	222
Mozambique	2011	68.6	0.1	31.3	656
Mozambique	2003	51.2	3.4	45.4	661
Mozambique	1997	88.2	2.6	9.2	308
Namibia	2006-07	22.8	0.2	77.0	665
Namibia	2000	43.9	0.3	55.7	380
Rwanda	2010	66.6	0.0	33.4	96
Swaziland	2006-07	40.4	0.8	58.8	291
Tanzania	2010	51.0	7.5	41.5	356
Tanzania	2004-05	60.8	3.5	35.7	318
Tanzania	1999	65.7	6.0	28.3	210
Uganda	2011	50.2	8.2	41.6	160
Uganda	2006	52.2	7.4	40.4	178
Uganda	2000-01	47.4	4.1	48.5	152
Zambia	2007	53.4	2.7	43.9	179
Zambia	2001-02	71.6	3.1	25.3	211
Zambia	1996	78.3	4.9	16.8	301
Zimbabwe	2010-11	49.6	0.0	50.4	89
Zimbabwe	2005-06	51.7	1.2	47.1	78
Zimbabwe	1999	58.1	0.0	41.9	77
Regional average¹		53.7	3.6	42.7	3,726

(Continued...)

Table 8. – Continued

Region and country	Year	No method	Traditional method	Modern method	Weighted n
Eastern Europe and Central Asia					
Albania	2008-09	22.7	48.4	29.0	90
Moldova	2005	27.7	24.3	48.0	182
Ukraine	2007	9.6	3.8	86.6	280
Regional average¹		20.0	25.5	54.5	552
Latin America and Caribbean					
Bolivia	2008	22.8	31.2	46.0	337
Bolivia	2003	39.1	26.6	34.3	316
Bolivia	1998	39.8	30.9	29.3	98
Colombia	2010	18.2	6.9	74.9	3,188
Colombia	2005	19.8	14.1	66.1	2,106
Colombia	2000	16.8	24.0	59.2	520
Dominican Republic	2007	45.2	5.1	49.7	1,017
Dominican Republic	2002	46.2	9.4	44.4	544
Guyana	2009	33.3	3.4	63.2	185
Haiti	2012	64.9	2.5	32.7	680
Haiti	2005-06	63.1	8.3	28.6	319
Haiti	2000	60.7	9.3	30.0	236
Honduras	2011-12	26.1	14.4	59.5	486
Honduras	2005-06	31.8	9.8	58.4	261
Nicaragua	2001	37.0	7.1	55.9	173
Nicaragua	1998	55.1	7.4	37.6	74
Peru	2010	12.1	21.7	66.2	648
Peru	2005	9.7	27.4	62.9	1,010
Peru	2000	20.5	36.6	42.9	492
Regional average¹		32.5	11.5	56.0	6,714

¹Regional average of most recent DHS survey from each country in the region.

Table 8 also displays the trends in current use of contraception among unmarried women age 15-24 for countries with multiple DHS surveys that include this population. As with married women age 15-24 there is strong trend toward *increased* use of modern methods of contraception. The concurrent trends in nonuse of contraception and use of traditional methods are as varied among young unmarried women as they are among young married women.

5.4.1 West and Central Africa

Among married women age 15-24, West and Central Africa has the *lowest level* of use of contraception—15.6 percent. Conversely, 84.4 percent of young married women are not using any method of contraception (Table 7). Nonuse of contraception ranges from 56.8 percent in Congo (Brazzaville) to 95.8 percent in Sierra Leone. Use of modern methods (10.2%) is nearly double that of traditional methods (5.4%). The differential in use of traditional versus modern methods is perhaps greatest in São Tomé and Príncipe where 1.8 percent of young married women use traditional methods and 32.4 percent use modern methods. Notably, this level of use of modern methods in São Tomé and

Príncipe is the highest for the region. The pattern is reversed in Chad and Niger, where a greater proportion of young married women use traditional methods than use modern methods.

In all the countries for which trend data are available use of modern methods among married women age 15-24 has *increased* over time (Table 7). In eight of 13 countries, this increase has been accompanied by a *decrease* in both nonuse of contraception and use of traditional methods. However, in Benin, Congo (Brazzaville), and Gabon, nonuse of contraception has increased along with use of modern methods, while use of traditional methods has decreased. In Chad and Niger, use of both traditional and modern methods has increased while the proportion not using any method has decreased.

Table 8 shows that, compared with married women age 15-24, a smaller proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 are not using contraception (84.4% and 53.4%, respectively). The proportion of nonusers among young sexually active, unmarried women ranges from 24.3 percent in Congo (Brazzaville) to 90.2 percent in Chad. Use of modern methods, which averages 35.0 percent among young unmarried women, is more than triple the level among young married women. The percentage of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 who use a modern method of contraception ranges from 9.8 percent in Chad to 57.6 percent in Burkina Faso. Use of traditional methods in this region is higher than in either East and Southern Africa or Latin America and the Caribbean. Use of traditional methods averages 11.6 percent among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, ranging from zero use in Chad to 28.9 percent in Benin.

Trends in current use of contraception among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, presented in Table 8, indicate that use of modern methods has generally *increased* in this population just as it has among young married women with one exception, Mali. At the same time, use of traditional methods has *decreased* over time in every country in the West and Central Africa region. The proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 not using any contraceptive method has *increased* in seven of 11 countries and *decreased* in the remaining four countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Nigeria.

5.4.2 East and Southern Africa

More than two-thirds (67.4%) of married women age 15-24 in East and Southern Africa, on average, are not using any method of contraception; only West and Central Africa has a higher proportion of nonusers (Table 7). The proportion not using any method in East and Southern Africa ranges from 46.3 percent in Zimbabwe to 95.5 percent in Eritrea. These two countries, respectively, have the *highest* proportion (52.6%) and the *lowest* proportion (3.8%) of young married women using a modern method. At the same time, use of modern methods exceeds use of traditional methods in all of the countries in the region. Averaging just 3.1 percent, East and Southern Africa has the *lowest* proportion of married women age 15-24 using traditional methods.

As in other regions, use of modern methods by married women age 15-24 has generally *increased* over time (Table 7). Among the countries in East and Southern Africa with multiple DHS surveys, all show an *increase* over time in the use of modern methods, with the exception of Eritrea. This trend has been accompanied by a *decrease* in the proportion of young married women not using any method of contraception. (In Eritrea, the proportion of young married women not using contraception actually *increased* from 92.9 percent in 1995 to 95.5 percent in 2002.) Use of traditional methods among young married women has *decreased* alongside the *decrease* in the proportion not using any method of contraception and the *increase* in the use of modern methods—with the exception of Malawi, where use of traditional methods has increased modestly.

Among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24, East and Southern Africa averages the *highest* levels of nonuse of contraception (53.7%) (Table 8). The proportion not using any method of contraception is nonetheless lower among young unmarried women than it is among young married women. Nonuse of contraception is lowest in Namibia (22.8%) and highest in Burundi (83.3%). Use of modern methods by sexually active, unmarried women in East and Southern Africa averages 42.7 percent. Use of traditional methods is generally low—as it is among young married women—averaging 3.6 percent. Madagascar stands out in the region because 17.4 percent of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 in that country use traditional methods. Elsewhere in the region the proportion using traditional methods is less than 10 percent.

Over time, the general trend among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 has been an *increase* in the use of modern methods accompanied by a *decrease* in both nonuse of contraception and use of traditional methods (Table 8). The reverse trend occurs in Uganda. In Tanzania, there has been an *increase* in the use of both traditional and modern methods.

5.4.3 Middle East and North Africa

In the Middle East and North Africa, the proportion of married women age 15-24 who are not using any method of contraception averages 55.5 percent and ranges from 46.8 percent in Morocco to 60.3 percent in Jordan (Table 7). The level of nonuse in Egypt (59.5%) is similar to that in Morocco. Use of modern methods is *higher*, on average, in the Middle East and North Africa than in any other region except Latin America and the Caribbean, ranging from 27.8 percent in Jordan to 48.6 percent in Morocco. Only in Jordan does use of traditional methods exceed 10 percent of married women age 15-24. This proportion is less than five percent in Egypt and Morocco.

Table 7 indicates that use of modern methods has *increased* in this population over time and the proportion of women not using any method of contraception has *decreased*. In Egypt and Morocco these changes have been accompanied by an *increase* in the use of traditional methods—although the proportions are still relatively low. In Jordan, use of traditional methods has fluctuated over time.

5.4.4 Eastern Europe and Central Asia

After Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Central Asia has the lowest proportion of married women age 15-24 who are not using contraception (Table 7). On average, 54.0 percent of young married women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are not using any contraceptive method, ranging from 37.7 percent in Moldova to 80.7 percent in Azerbaijan. At the same time, use of modern methods is quite low. Less than one-quarter (23.5%) of young married women use modern methods, ranging from 8.2 percent in Azerbaijan to 40.1 percent in Moldova. In contrast, the region has the *highest level* of use of traditional methods. The Kyrgyz Republic is the exception in the region, with only 1.9 percent of married women age 15-24 using traditional methods. The average is 22.5 percent, with a high of 43.8 percent of young married women use traditional methods in Albania.

The three countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia for which multiple DHS surveys are available—Armenia, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Turkey—displays a different trend in use of contraception over time compared to the other regions in this report (Table 7). In Armenia and the Kyrgyz Republic, use of contraceptive methods, either traditional or modern, has declined over time while nonuse of contraception has increased. Only in Turkey has use of contraception increased. In this country, increases are seen in use of both modern and traditional methods, although use of traditional methods outpaces use of modern methods.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia has the *lowest proportion* of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 not using any method of contraception (Table 8). This proportion, which averages 20.0 percent for the three countries in the region with DHS data on this population, is less than half that among young married women, and ranges from 9.6 percent in the Ukraine to 27.7 percent in Moldova. Correspondingly, use of both modern methods (54.5%) and traditional methods (25.5%) is *high* relative to the other regions and exceeds use among young married women. Use of traditional methods is highest in Albania, at 48.4 percent, and relatively low in Ukraine (3.8 percent).

5.4.5 South and Southeast Asia

On average, nearly 65 percent of married women age 15-24 in South and Southeast Asia are not using contraception, while more than 35 percent are using a contraceptive method of some kind. Use of modern methods is fourfold that of traditional methods (28.5% and 6.6%, respectively) (Table 7). However, there is substantial variation within the region. Nonuse of contraception is lowest in Indonesia (41.8 percent) and highest in Pakistan (87 percent). Use of a modern methods averages 28.5 percent, but ranges from 8.8 percent in Pakistan to 57 percent in Indonesia. Use of traditional methods is lowest in Timor-Leste and Indonesia (both 1.1%), but exceeds 10 percent in Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

Throughout the region, use of modern methods has *increased* and nonuse of contraception has *decreased* among married women age 15-24 over time (Table 7). Use of traditional methods has increased in five of the eight countries with trends data but has decreased in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

5.4.6 Latin America and Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean has, on average, the *highest level* of use of modern methods and the *lowest level* of nonuse of contraception among married women age 15-24 (Table 7). Use of modern methods, which averages 47.7 percent, is highest in Colombia (62.6%) and lowest in Bolivia (33.0%) and Haiti (31.6%). The proportion of young married women not using any method of contraception is 44.6 percent, ranging from 29.9 percent in Peru to 66.6 percent in Haiti. Latin America and the Caribbean has relatively high levels of use of traditional methods, with an average of 7.6 percent of young married women using these methods. Use of traditional methods is uncharacteristically high in Bolivia and Peru, exceeding 19 percent in these countries.

Trends in use of contraception among married women age 15-24 in Latin America and the Caribbean reflect the broader global trends (Table 7). The proportion of young married women using a modern method of contraception has *increased* while the proportion not using any method has *decreased*. The change has been especially large in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, countries in which nonuse of contraception has decline by at least 12 percentage points over a period of about 10 years. In most countries, use of traditional methods has *decreased* as use of modern methods has increased and nonuse of contraception has decreased. However, the proportion using traditional methods increased in Honduras and Peru and remains unchanged in Nicaragua.

Latin America and the Caribbean also has the *highest level* of use of modern methods among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 (Table 8). This proportion, which averages 56.0 percent, ranges from 32.7 percent in Haiti to 74.9 percent in Colombia. As with other regions, these levels of use of modern methods are higher among young unmarried women than they are among young married women. The proportion not using any method of contraception averages 32.5 percent among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 and ranges from 12.1 percent in Peru to 64.9 percent in Haiti. Use of traditional methods in Latin America and the Caribbean is *low* relative to the other regions, averaging

11.5 percent among young unmarried women; however, there is considerable variation within the region. Only 2.5 percent of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 use traditional methods in Haiti—where overall use of contraception is low—but this proportion rises to 21.7 percent in Peru and to 31.2 percent in Bolivia.

While use of modern methods has demonstrably *increased* over time among sexually active unmarried women age 15-24 in Latin America and the Caribbean (Table 8), the trends in nonuse of contraception and in use of traditional methods are more varied. Nonuse of contraception among young unmarried women has *declined* in five of the seven countries with trend data available, but *increased* in Colombia and Haiti. Use of traditional methods has *increased* in Bolivia and Honduras—along with an increase in the use of modern methods—but decreased elsewhere. Thus, in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Peru there has been a shift away from nonuse of contraception and use of traditional methods toward increased use of modern methods.

6 Limitations and Conclusions

6.1 Limitations

This study focuses specifically on the youth population in 61 low and middle income countries. It covers a wide range of topics related to unmet need in this population and applies a consistent measure by which to compare levels of unmet need across countries and over time. Although this study counts these attributes among its strengths, it also has several limitations that deserve mention.

First, the DHS Program does not have global coverage of survey data for all countries. This is especially the case for data on never married women. Averages of countries within the regions described in this study should not be mistaken for overall regional averages due to this lack of complete coverage. Second, the study is descriptive in nature and no tests are conducted to determine if differences between groups or changes over time are indeed statistically significant and no causality can be attributed to trends in different factors that coincide temporally. Finally, the estimates of unmet need among unmarried women rely on respondents accurately and truthfully reporting recent sexual activity. Recall errors regarding the timing of most recent sexual intercourse and social desirability bias surrounding sexual activity outside of marriage may yield misreporting of “sexually active” status and thus result in an underestimate of unmet need in this population.

6.2 Conclusions

Renewed attention is being paid to *unmet need for family planning*, catalyzed in part by FP2020’s initiative to increase investment in family planning services (Carr et al. 2012; FP2020 2013). Young people are a core focus of this initiative, as evidenced by the prominent youth contingent at FP2020 activities (FP2020 2013). This study is the first examination of DHS data specifically focused on young women age 15-24 that uses the recently revised algorithm for unmet need for family planning. The estimates produced are comparable across countries and over time. The following are among this study’s key findings.

Among the six regions in this study, unmet need for family planning among married women age 15-24 is highest in the West and Central Africa region (29.3%). Among individual countries, unmet need is highest among young married women in Ghana (45.7%) and Haiti (44.8%) and lowest in Indonesia (8.0%) and Egypt (8.8%). Unmet need for family planning in this population is predominantly unmet need for spacing.

Total demand for family planning (unmet need plus current use of contraception) among young married women is highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (79.9 percent) and lowest in West and Central Africa (45 percent). On average, only slightly more than half (53.4 percent) of this demand is satisfied among study countries.

Unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 is highest in the two African regions, at around 40 percent—West and Central Africa (41.7%) and East and Southern Africa (39.8%). Among individual countries, it is highest in Senegal (69.5%) and lowest in Ukraine (7.3%).

Total demand for family planning among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 is consistently high, about 90 percent in all regions. The vast majority of young sexually active, unmarried women simply do not want to become pregnant at the present time. What varies is the proportion of demand for family planning that is satisfied, which ranges from 51.9 percent in West and Central Africa to 83.8 percent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Over time, unmet need among married women age 15-24 has *declined* in the majority of countries—51 of the 61 countries included in the study. West and Central Africa is an exception: six of the 10 countries in which unmet need has *increased* are in this region. Increases in current use of contraception among married women age 15-24 have kept pace with or exceeded increases in total demand for family planning. As a result, the proportion of demand for family planning satisfied has generally increased over time.

Trends in unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 are less consistently encouraging than the trends seen among young married women. Unmet need among young unmarried women has decreased in about half the countries in the study but increased or fluctuated over time in the remaining countries. In particular, unmet need among sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 has increased in the majority of countries in West and Central Africa. Demand for family planning has remained steady, and relatively high, over time.

The proportion of women who are married by age 15 or by age 18 is highest in West and Central Africa and lowest in the Middle East and North Africa and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The general trend is toward delaying marriage, with the proportion marrying by age 15 or by age 18 declining over time. Possible exceptions to this trend exist in Latin America and the Caribbean and East and Southern Africa.

The proportion of unmarried women age 15-24 who report that they are sexually active is highest in West and Central Africa (18.8%) and lowest in East and Southern Africa (9.7%). The data do not indicate a consistent trend over time; rather, the proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 declines in nearly as many countries as it increases (14 and 15 countries, respectively). It does increase, however, in all seven Latin America and Caribbean countries that provided data on this population.

Most married women age 15-24 want to postpone a (next) birth for two or more years; the range is from 55.7 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean to 67.2 percent in West and Central Africa. This preference has existed for some time and has become even more normative over time. A much larger proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 want to postpone a (next) birth for two or more years than do married women the same age, in just about every country. The range is from 69.1 percent in East and Southern Africa to 89.6 percent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. As with young married women, the preference to wait two or more years for a (next) birth has become stronger over time among young unmarried women.

Most married women age 15-24 do not use any contraceptive method. In all regions, less than 50 percent of married women are currently using contraception, except in Latin America and the Caribbean, where use of contraception is 55.4 percent among married women age 15-24. Use of modern methods of contraception exceeds use of traditional methods, although use of traditional methods is relatively high in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. A higher proportion of sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 use contraception compared with their married counterparts. However, the majority of women age 15-24 in both Africa regions do not use any method of contraception. Use of modern methods has increased over time among both married women age 15-24 and sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24.

Overall, unmet need for family planning has declined over time among young women age 15-24 in many countries—especially among young married women. However, levels of unmet need remain substantial in West and Central Africa. In general, sexually active, unmarried women age 15-24 want to avoid a pregnancy to a greater degree than do married women. Unmet need is generally higher among unmarried women than married women, and higher among younger women (age 15-19) than older women (age 20-24).

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