

“Unmet Need and demand for Family Planning-measurement and Conceptual Issues”

Joseph Ssonko, Makerere University

Allen Kabagenyi, Makerere University

This paper explores the determinants of unmet need for contraception among sexually active never-married women in Uganda. While most of the current historiography concentrates much on the unmet need and demand for family planning among the married, this research reveals the driving forces and limitations of access to contraceptives among never-married women. Secondary literature asserted that almost all societies in the world there is an increase in sexual activity among young persons (10-24) years which calls for a need for contraceptive use among them to prevent high risk of unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortion according to *Oye-Adeniran's work of Community-based study of contraceptive behaviour in Nigeria*. Contraception has been identified as an effective means of combating the problems of unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion. However, women and most especially young women who have always wanted to stop and or delay childbearing have not practiced contraception.

Methods - This study used secondary data from the 2016 Uganda Demographic and Healthy Survey data set. A total of 18506 women were interviewed, 4367 women were never-married and sexually active. Data was analyzed using Stata into frequency tables using actual tallies and percentages and association between the dependent and independent variables was tested using logistic regression. Ethical approval was sought from the Demographic health survey programme before conducting the study.

Results - Majority (68.19%) of the respondents were aged 15- 19, and most of the respondents (67.62%) were residing in rural areas with at least primary level of education (50.84%). The biggest proportion (32.61%) of the respondents was coming from richest income households, majority was Catholics (38.63%) and a small proportion (23%) was using modern contraceptives. 32 percent have an unmet need for family planning, and 51 percent are currently using a contraceptive method. The total demand for family planning among unmarried sexually active women is 83 percent, and at present 61 percent of the potential demand for family planning is being met. The odds of unmet need for contraception among sexually active never-married women were reduced for women in age 40-44 (OR=0.73), had higher education (OR=0.784), belonged to rich household (OR=0.894) and odds were highest amongst the

sexually active never-married women age 25-29 (OR=13.1176), no education (OR=1.503) and rural residence (OR=1.065).

Age, region, place of residence and education level were found to influence the need and demand for contraception use and family planning.

Conclusion – In conclusion, it is highly evident that there is an unmet need for contraception among sexually never-married women in Uganda and the economic growth and development of the country lies in its demographics. Well revised and practiced policies and strategies can help the country prosper, thus, challenges of access, acceptability, affordability and information have to be addressed by agencies, NGOs and government to ensure access to all individuals in need as a way of harnessing Africa's population dynamics for sustainable development. Therefore Uganda's demographic situation should be given attention of the highest order for her to gain the demographic dividend.