

Factors influencing couples' unmet need for contraception in Kenya

Abstract:

Many studies on unmet need have been women-based with some passing inferences made for men and couples yet reproductive decisions are not made by women alone, but are dyadic in nature. This paper examines couple's unmet need for contraception in Kenya by using the married couple as the unit of analysis, rather than the individual man or woman. The paper specifically estimates couple's unmet need and identifies factors that have influenced this. The data used is from the matched couple data derived from the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, 1998 (KDHS). Only fecund couples in monogamous unions are included in the analysis. The results give the total couple's unmet need of 16.5 percent (which is 7.5 percent lower than the level of unmet need for currently married women and 3.7 percent higher than the Bankole-Ezeh estimate of couples' unmet need, using 1993 KDHS). About 7 percent of this accounted for unmet need for limiting while 9.8 percent accounted for unmet need for spacing. In terms of factors influencing couple's unmet needs, region of residence, ethnicity, number of living children and couples' discussion of and other reproductive health issues, were the most significant predictors of couples' unmet need. In order to reduce the unmet need, region specific programs should be emphasized and that couple's should be encouraged to make joint decisions on reproductive health issues.