

Abstract

This study aims at identifying factors that affect unmet need for contraception in Zambia. In particular, the study seeks to estimate the magnitude of unmet need for spacing and limiting by selected socio-economic, socio-cultural and demographic background characteristics of the women, and to identify factors that have significant effects on unmet need for contraception in Zambia. Data are drawn from the 1996 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey. The results obtained show 27 per cent of the currently married women had unmet need for contraception with 19 per cent of them having unmet need for spacing and 8 per cent for limiting. The study also found significant socio-economic and demographic differentials in the levels of unmet need for contraception among the study population. The correlates of unmet need for spacing were found to be the current age of the woman, region of residence, number of living children and spousal communication. Whereas the correlates for unmet need for limiting were found to be the current age of the woman, religion, number of living children and type of place of residence. The correlates of total unmet need for contraception were found to be the age of the woman, region of residence, the number of living children, and the woman's approval of family planning. The study recommends that concerted efforts be made to eliminate unmet need for contraception by increasing the number of health facilities providing family planning services, and making existing ones to function better and to be more sensitive to women's culture and socio-economic circumstances. In addition, there is also need to increase the number of health personnel.