

Extended abstract:

Introduction:

This article investigates the extent to which women and teenage adults are contraceptive users. Univariate analysis of variance and simple descriptive statistics examined the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of subgroups of women in relation to childbearing and abortion procedures, fertility regulation (using a contraception) and attitudes and knowledge about reproductive health and family issues.

Data and methods:

The analysis presented in this paper is based on data from AOS 2001/02 research, which was a part of my Master thesis: "Socio-economic and demographic determinants over fertility regulation at the population in Republic of Macedonia", defended December 2002 at University of Skopje, Institute of Sociology, Skopje-Republic of Macedonia.

This research had a representative sample of women aged 15-49 and a young adult sample aged 15-27 in a town of Stip, Republic of Macedonia, former Yugoslavia.

AOS 2001/2002 survey used a quota sampling design by ethnic groups and education status according to the census of population in Stip, held 1994.

Although, the research was not conducted throughout all over Macedonia, but the received results and findings from this research project are highly representative for the whole territory of Republic of Macedonia as well, especially for the urban population.

Interviews were conducted in person by the above mentioned author with 600 respondents, from which, 400 were women and 200 teenage adults-young people.

The survey had an overall response rate of around 70%. The calendar method was used to collect retrospective histories of sexual activity, having children and contraceptive use. Sensitive answers about abortion were received as well. The survey included 77.2% Macedonian women, 7.5% Turkish, 7.9% gypsy women, 5.6% Vlachs and with 1.4% Serbians and 0.2% some others, or by education level, about 19% were respondents with low education, 50.6% were with middle education and about 28% were women with college and university diploma.

Respondents by ethnicity, except Macedonian women were ponderated, with aim to be representative in the sample because their real percentage in the municipality of Stip according to the census from 1994 was a half from the number included in the survey.

Young adults were represented with 44.44% males and 55.56% females or 19.8% young adults who were looking for a job, 24.2% employed adults, 21.72% college students and 33.84% were secondary grammar school students.

The AOS 2001/02 was held from September 2001-January 2002 in Stip, R. Macedonia.

Measures:

All measures are based on self-report at the time of interview.

The key dependent variables were children ever born, knowledge of methods for preventing pregnancy, ever use of contraception and current use of contraception. Women and young adults were categorized in two groups concerning having children and using contraception. First group were women with one or two ever born children and women with three and more children.

The second group includes also two groups of women-women who use a very effective modern methods for contraception(IUD, oral pills, condoms, sterilization, the implant, the injectable), and women users of some of the traditional methods(withdrawal, rhythm, washing etc.).

As mentioned before, socio-economic and demographic independent variables included ethnicity, family economic status, mother's educational attainment and age of the respondents. Family economic status was measured by income as a percentage of poverty level, which took account into household size. The age was considered as women up to 30 and women under 30 years old.

Results:

Not only were actual levels of childbearing extremely low in the population surveyed, but there was not no indication that large numbers of women want to have large families. Among Macedonian, Serbian and vlachian women 95.6% were with one or two children. Most of the half gipsy women in the sample had 3 and more children and about one-third of Turkish women were with three and more children. Similar was also concerning the educational level of the women, about two thirds of the women with low education had 3 and more children, and as we went to higher educational group we could see rapid decrease of women with 3 and more children, the group with the highest education had in 97.2% one or two children.

Differences in the numbers of live birth tended to be small among most respondents subgroups examined. There were virtually no differences between gipsy women and the low educational group of women or unemployed group and group of women with low income. Most of the gipsy women were under age of 30 years, they had 3 and more children mainly and they were with lower incomes and also had lower education, so, existed a mutually-dependent correlation between these categories.

Rates of induced abortion were relatively still very high(38.7%) at the respondents. The most strong relation of abortion rate was noticed between women with 30 years and over.

The knowledge of the most available methods for contraception was extremely widespread in the municipality of Stip. Knowledge of contraceptive methods was not an important obstacle to use effective contraception.

There was 48.8% of respondents that had ever used some modern methods and 48% reported that had used some traditional methods for contraception in the past. The

proportion ever using a modern methods was not strongly correlated with the age of the respondents. There were almost two-thirds women over 30 years who reported that had ever used modern methods of contraception with comparison to one third women under age of 30 years old.

The results of the AOS 2001/02 shown that traditional methods are still most common and most prevalent methods among women in Stip at the time of interview. More precisely ,23.6% from the all respondents currently used modern contraception and 62.8% used some of the traditional methods. Other 14% of respondents of women were non users of any kind of contraception.

Overall, the most commonly used contraceptive method were reported to be; withdrawal (52.2%), condoms(8%),IUD(8.2%), rhythm(8.4%).Oral contraceptives were used by about 4.7% of all women. About 2% of women had been contraceptive sterilized.

Current modern contraceptive use increased with the level of education and income level of the women .A 33% of respondents with high education were used some modern contraception with comparison to middle education group of women(24%) and low educated group(10%).There was significant differences about using modern contraceptives among different ethnic groups. Only one Turkish women and three gipsy women from all Turkish and gipsy women in the survey were using some modern method with comparison to one third of Macedonian ,Serbian or vlachian women.

Withdrawal was the most commonly current used method among those women with three or more children(90%).

Naturalness of the traditional methods was the most important reason in the selection of withdrawal and other traditional methods among those women who were using currently some traditional contraceptive methods(61%), and as a second reason was fear from negative health effects associated with the use of modern contraceptive methods by about 25% of women.

Survey results showed a clear need for increasing the awareness of women about modern contraceptive methods.

A young adult sample showed that younger generations are better contraceptive users than the sample with the women, especially in regard to use more efficient methods. Over 61% of young adults used condom as a contraception currently, from those who were sexually active at the time of interview.

Only 25% of female teenage respondents reported that they had received gynecological examination and about 4% of young adults had unwanted/premarital pregnancy.

Importance:

In case, this abstract proposal will be accepted at the conference in Tours-France, that will be first public, scientific promotion and publishing of these results outside from Macedonia. Therefore, it seems that there should be open perspectives and support for this research work.

Cordially.

