

Correlates of Unmet Need for Family Planning among Married Women in South Africa

Abstract

Significance/Background:

Unmet Need for family planning is investigated because of its direct impact on women's total fertility, contribution to maternal mortality as a result of illegal and unsafe termination of pregnancy and for its use for evaluation of family planning programmes in South Africa. The aim of the study is to establish the correlates of unmet need for spacing, limiting and total unmet need for family planning in South Africa and make recommendations for strategies that would help family planning programmes to address unmet need among currently married women in South Africa.

Main question/hypothesis

This paper asks the following questions:

1. What are the major factors influencing unmet need in South Africa?
2. Have these factors changed over the years?

The following hypotheses will be tested:

1. Unmet need for family planning in South Africa is declining.
2. Unmet need is influenced by demographic and socio-economic characteristics of women.

Methodology: This study utilizes data extracted from the 1998 and 2003 South African Demographic Health Surveys. Bivariate and multivariate analyses were used to determine the factors affecting unmet need in South Africa. The analysis was limited to currently married women.

Results/Key findings: The results revealed that the total levels of unmet need for family planning declined from 15.0 per cent in 1998 to 13.7 per cent in 2003. Unmet need to space births was 4.7 per cent and 4.8 per cent in 1998 and 2003 respectively while unmet need to limit further childbearing declined from 10.3 per cent and 9.0 per cent in 1998 and 2003 respectively. Significant variation in the prevalence of unmet need was found among provinces and population groups in South Africa. Age, province, educational attainment and parity were associated with unmet need in South Africa. The multivariate analyses indicate that the province of residence, population group, educational level of the respondents, partner's approval of family planning, number of living children, partner's and respondent's occupation were found to be the most significant factors correlated with unmet need for spacing among South African women of reproductive age aged 15-49 in 1998 -2003 period. While age of the respondents, province of residence, population group of the respondents, educational level of the respondents, partner's approval of family planning, number of living children, partner's and respondent's occupation were the only explanatory factors for unmet need for limiting the number of children a woman will have throughout her reproductive years. With regard to the total unmet need for the South African women under study, age of the

respondents, population group of the respondents, educational level of the respondents, partner's approval of family planning, number of living children, partner's and respondent's occupation were found to be the most significant factors correlated with total unmet need for family planning in the study.

Knowledge contribution: The findings have some important policy implications. It is therefore, recommended that raising the status of women through education and skills development, increasing participation of men in sexual and reproductive health, promoting communication between couples are of prime importance in eradicating barriers to the use of contraceptive methods.

Key Words: Unmet need, family planning, logistic regression, South Africa

**Table 1: Levels and patterns of unmet need by selected characteristics of women, 1998 and 2003
SADHS**

		1998			2003	
Age	Unmet need to space	Unmet need to limit	Total Unmet need	Unmet need to space	Unmet need to limit	Total Unmet need
15-19	24.66	1.37	26.03	16.67	5.56	22.22
20-24	12.88	5.36	18.24	14.46	3.21	17.67
25-29	7.01	6.01	13.01	7.94	5.84	13.79
30-34	4.17	9.05	13.22	5.78	7.57	13.35
35-39	2.63	12.41	15.04	1.83	9.00	10.83
40-44	2.21	12.46	14.67	1.42	11.94	13.36
45-49	0.93	16.85	17.77	1.38	14.06	15.44
Place of Residence						
Urban	2.79	8.19	10.97	4.36	7.74	12.10
Rural	7.52	13.56	21.08	5.47	11.04	16.51
Province of residence						
Western Cape	2.43	2.80	5.22	3.66	7.93	11.59
Eastern Cape	4.80	16.64	21.44	7.95	16.56	24.50
Northern Cape	2.52	5.88	8.40	4.70	9.09	13.79
Free State	2.54	6.76	9.30	8.22	8.88	17.11
Kwazulu Natal	5.89	11.67	17.56	1.89	5.30	7.20
North West	2.27	10.80	13.07	3.37	13.46	16.83
Gauteng	3.13	9.56	12.69	3.80	8.54	12.34
Mpumalanga	5.84	12.66	18.51	2.32	8.94	11.26
Limpopo	10.20	11.62	21.82	10.49	10.16	20.66
Population Group						
Black/African	5.91	12.37	18.28	5.46	10.03	15.50
Coloured	2.37	6.01	8.38	5.08	8.72	13.80
White	0.66	3.99	4.65	3.41	5.11	8.52
Asian/Indian	0.81	4.86	5.67	1.86	6.12	7.98

Respondent level of Education						
No Education	6.19	19.15	25.34	2.36	15.57	17.92
Primary	5.88	13.16	19.04	4.75	13.95	18.70
Secondary	4.33	8.15	12.48	5.28	6.98	12.26
Higher	1.17	3.28	4.45	3.70	4.44	8.15
Husband's approval of FP						
Disapproves	9.49	13.53	23.03	9.89	13.19	23.08
Approves	3.26	9.02	12.28	3.58	6.95	10.53
Don't Know	4.94	13.65	18.59	5.10	15.29	20.38
Discuss FP with Husband						
Never	4.17	11.60	15.77	¹	-	-
Once or Twice	5.95	9.94	15.89	-	-	-
More often	3.81	9.18	13.00	-	-	-
No. Of Children						
0	7.78	0.94	8.73	9.34	3.11	12.45
1-2	5.47	6.58	12.05	6.30	6.90	13.20
3-5	3.66	12.73	16.38	2.36	11.32	13.68
6+	2.51	28.32	30.83	0.00	23.02	23.02
Partner's Educational level						
No Education	7.21	17.12	24.32	5.16	13.10	18.25
Primary	5.25	12.21	17.46	3.11	13.44	16.56
Secondary	4.52	8.64	13.16	5.38	7.68	13.06
Higher	1.47	4.82	6.29	3.93	4.59	8.52
Don't know	5.00	16.67	21.67	8.33	3.33	11.67
Partner's occupation						
Prof., Tech., Manager	1.81	5.66	7.47	3.47	6.48	9.95
Clerical	6.51	7.10	13.61	4.64	4.64	9.27
Sales	0.00	8.00	8.00	1.98	4.95	6.93
Agric-self employed	0.00	13.33	13.33	7.43	11.88	19.31
Services	4.03	8.76	12.80	5.56	11.90	17.46
Skilled manual	5.16	11.41	16.57	6.49	6.49	12.99
Unskilled manual	5.23	11.50	16.74	3.80	9.93	13.73
Respondent's occupation						
Not working	6.20	12.32	18.52	5.69	9.72	15.41
Professional	0.30	5.42	5.72	2.97	4.09	7.06
Clerical	2.69	7.07	9.76	2.15	6.01	8.15
Sales	0.00	2.63	2.63	5.68	5.68	11.36
Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.62	13.85	18.46
Agric employee	1.33	4.44	5.78	5.79	11.97	17.76

¹ No data available

Household & Domestic	2.87	7.79	10.66	4.69	7.81	12.50
Skilled manual	3.99	9.59	13.58	2.50	7.50	10.00
Unskilled manual	4.71	10.33	15.04	2.42	10.48	12.90

Table 2: Logistic Regression of combined effects of socio-demographic, economic and partner's characteristics on Unmet Need for Family Planning among South African women of reproductive age between 1998 and 2003

Background Variables	1998			2003		
	Unmet need to space	Unmet need to limit	Total Unmet need	Unmet need to space	Unmet need to limit	Total Unmet need
Age	O.R	O.R	O.R	O.R	O.R	O.R
15-19	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
20-24	0.64	2.587	0.742	2.172	0.188*	0.91
25-29	0.406*	2.526	0.513	1.011	0.516	0.699
30-34	0.255**	3.797	0.515	0.76	0.612	0.63
35-39	0.170**	5.367	0.609	0.317	0.718	0.558
40-44	0.209**	6.184	0.732	0.486	1.071	0.855
45-49	0.072**	12.014*	1.181	0.576	1.359	1.147
Place of Residence						
Urban	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
Rural	1.316	1.176	1.259	0.693	1.206	1.025
Province of residence						
Western Cape	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
Eastern Cape	1.079	5.788**	3.485**	2.22	1.969	2.255*
Northern Cape	0.739	1.801	1.273	0.884	0.907	0.924
Free State	0.632	2.267*	1.441	1.639	1.189	1.426
KwaZulu-Natal	1.718	3.345**	2.698**	0.782	0.522	0.594
North West	0.46	3.339**	1.812	0.972	1.679	1.475
Gauteng	1.032	4.478**	2.735**	0.546	1.388	1.068
Mpumalanga	1.133	3.338**	2.320**	0.613	1.022	0.917
Limpopo	1.701	3.057**	2.647**	4.113*	0.89	1.686
Population Group						
Black/African	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
Coloured	0.678	0.944	0.855	1.398	1.222	1.285
White	0.307*	0.375**	0.362**	0.938	0.886	0.898
Asian/Indian	0.160*	0.418**	0.324**	0.825	1.686	1.35
Respondent level of Education						
No Education	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
Primary	0.645	0.716*	0.677**	1.865	0.765	0.93

Secondary	0.475**	0.586**	0.542**	1.06	0.508*	0.587
Higher	0.433	0.234**	0.272**	0.84	0.551	0.574
Husband's approval of FP						
Disapproves	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
Approves	0.364**	0.690**	0.515**	0.296**	0.446**	0.355**
Don't Know	0.461**	1.429	0.983	0.335*	1.519	0.941
Discussed FP with Husband/Partner						
Never	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
Once or Twice	1.162	0.815	0.932	-	-	-
More often	0.79	1.018	0.932	-	-	-
No. Of Living Children						
0	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
1-2	0.836	4.409**	1.506	0.796	2.527	1.242
3-5	0.553	5.115**	1.515	0.316*	2.897*	1.107
6+	0.251**	10.343**	2.385**	0	3.462*	1.161
Partner's education level						
No Education	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
Primary	0.79	0.909	0.857	0.83	1.172	1.094
Secondary	0.808	1.038	0.956	1.284	1.226	1.282
Higher	0.645	1.492	1.177	1.812	0.909	1.296
Don't know	0.722	1.363	1.123	2.489	0.452	1.08
Partner's occupation						
Prof., Tech., Manager	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
Clerical	3.175*	0.995	1.53	1.174	0.67	0.878
Sales	0	1.719	1.464	0.369	0.532	0.461
Agric-self employed	0	4.421*	3.976*	1.598	0.911	1.093
Services	2.054	1.225	1.365	1.092	1.121	1.127
Skilled manual	2.331	1.346	1.579	1.459	0.673	0.911
Unskilled manual	1.827	1.099	1.253	0.912	1.022	1.003
Don't Know	0	1.078	0.837	1.241	0.889	0.971
Respondent's occupation						
Not working	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C	R.C
Professional	0.135	0.819	0.647	0.908	0.696	0.721
Clerical	1.143	0.94	0.978	0.458	1.001	0.749
Sales	0	0.328	0.253	0.916	0.645	0.767
Agric-self employed	1.411	0	0	0.963	1.102	1.018
Services	0.257*	0.446*	0.372**	1.768	1.308	1.462
Household & Domestic	-	-	-	1.803	0.906	1.174
Skilled manual	0.837	0.697	0.712	0	1.049	0.698
Unskilled manual	0.738	0.703**	0.692**	0.207	1.29	0.882
Constant	-2.884	-1.569	-1.569	-2.95	-2.216	-1.75

2 log likelihood	1412.107	2585.58	3340.549	591.792	1067.529	1441.505
Model Chi-Square	302.354	443.131	464.905	155.75	148.255	144.463
Overall% correctly predicted	94.7	88.2	83.4	95.1	90	85.2

**Significant at $p \leq 0.01$; *Significant at $p \leq 0.05$; RC = Reference Category; O.R = Odds Ratio which is displayed as Exp (B) in SPSS output