

FERTILITY PREFERENCES

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Insight into the fertility desires in a population is important, both for predicting future fertility and for estimating the potential unmet need for family planning. This chapter presents data from the ADHS on the fertility intentions of Armenian women, the need for family planning services, and desired family size. It also considers the potential effect on fertility if unwanted pregnancies were prevented.

8.1 FERTILITY PREFERENCES

In the ADHS, women were asked a series of questions about their fertility preferences. Table 8.1 shows the future reproductive intentions of currently married women by number of living children (including any current pregnancy). The majority of married Armenian women express a desire to control their future fertility. Almost three-fourths of the respondents (72 percent) state that they want no more children (Figure 8.1). As expected, the proportion of women who want no more children or are sterilized increases with parity. Nonetheless, it is significant that 3 percent of women with no living children and 20 percent of women with one living child do not want to have more children. According to Salvador and Danielian (1999), the majority of women involved in their study want to space or limit childbearing during the current economic climate. The majority of women with no living children or only one living child, however, do want to have another child (77 percent and 69 percent, respectively).

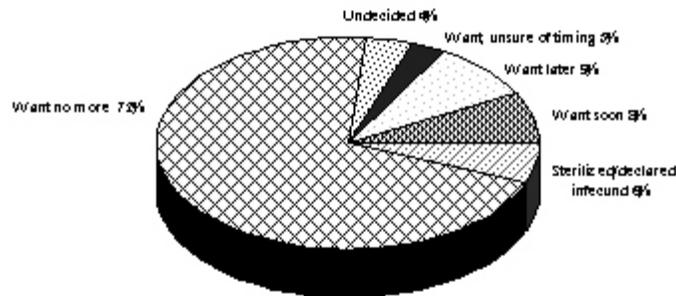
Table 8.1 Fertility preferences by number of living children

Percent distribution of currently married women by desire for children, according to number of living children, Armenia 2000

Desire for children	Number of living children ¹					Total
	0	1	2	3	4+	
Have another soon ²	68.4	22.4	4.3	1.4	0.6	7.8
Have another later ³	2.8	39.4	7.3	1.0	0.6	8.5
Have another, undecided when	5.9	6.7	3.1	0.6	0.9	2.7
Undecided	2.6	6.0	5.2	1.8	0.3	3.7
Want no more	3.3	19.7	75.8	89.8	90.4	71.7
Sterilized	0.9	2.1	2.1	3.2	4.7	2.7
Declared infecund	16.2	3.7	2.2	2.3	2.5	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of women	160	510	1,806	1,253	396	4,125

¹ Includes current pregnancy
² Wants next birth within 2 years
³ Wants to delay next birth for 2 or more years

Figure 8.1 Desire for More Children among Currently Married Women



Armenia DHS 2000

Table 8.2 shows the percentage of currently married women who want no more children by number of living children, and background characteristics. Overall, rural women are slightly more likely to want no more children than urban women. At lower parities, however, urban women are more likely than rural women to state that they want no more children.

It is interesting to note that women with higher education are less likely than women with lower levels of educational attainment to desire to limit their childbearing. This can be explained, in part, by the fact that women with higher education are at lower parities than women with less education (data not shown). It is possible that some women with a primary/middle school education had already attained the number of children desired at the time of the survey, while women with a higher education had not. Furthermore, the findings of a previous survey indicate that in Armenia, the higher the level of education, the better the standard of living (NSS, 2001b). It is possible, then, that women with higher education believe that they have the financial resources to provide for another child.

Table 8.2 Desire to limit childbearing

Percentage of currently married women who want no more children, by number of living children and background characteristics, Armenia 2000

Background characteristic	Number of living children ¹					Total
	0	1	2	3	4+	
Residence						
Urban	5.1	26.5	80.0	90.9	95.5	72.6
Rural	2.1	12.5	73.7	95.0	95.0	76.7
Education						
Primary/middle	*	(37.0)	71.0	89.8	98.1	74.6
Secondary	3.9	18.5	78.1	93.7	94.6	76.7
Secondary-special	6.0	19.4	78.5	94.2	95.5	75.6
Higher	(0.0)	25.3	78.1	88.0	*	66.3
Total	4.1	21.8	77.9	93.0	95.1	74.4

Note: Women who have been sterilized are considered to want no more children. Figures in parentheses are based on 25 to 49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹ Includes current pregnancy

8.2 NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING

Maternal health care services are concerned with defining the size of the population of women who have a potential need for family planning services and identifying women whose need for contraception is not being met. Currently married fecund women who either want no more children or want to wait at least two years before having another child, but who are not using contraception, are considered to have an *unmet need* for family planning.¹ Current users of family planning methods are said to have a *met need* for family planning. The *total demand* for family planning is the sum of the met need and unmet need for family planning.

Table 8.3 shows the demand for family planning services by background characteristics. The total demand for family planning among all women is 74 percent, and 84 percent of the demand is satisfied. The demand for limiting purposes (59 percent) is higher than the demand for spacing purposes (15 percent).

¹ For a description of the calculation, see footnote 1, Table 8.3.

Table 8.3 Need for family planning: currently married women

Percentage of currently married women with unmet need for family planning, and with met need for family planning, and the total demand for family planning, by background characteristics, Armenia 2000

Background characteristic	Unmet need for family planning ¹			Met need for family planning (currently using) ²			Total demand for family planning ³			Percentage of demand satisfied	Number of women
	For spacing	For limiting	Total	For spacing	For limiting	Total	For spacing	For limiting	Total		
Age											
15-19	14.2	3.5	17.7	21.9	3.6	25.5	41.0	8.1	49.1	64.0	99
20-24	8.7	6.3	15.0	32.4	22.9	55.3	43.3	30.0	73.3	79.5	511
25-29	3.5	8.9	12.5	22.2	47.4	69.6	27.5	56.9	84.3	85.2	625
30-34	1.2	11.3	12.5	13.8	57.6	71.4	15.6	70.0	85.5	85.4	660
35-39	1.5	9.5	11.0	6.0	64.9	70.9	7.7	74.7	82.4	86.7	816
40-44	0.6	11.3	11.9	1.8	56.9	58.7	2.5	68.3	70.8	83.1	773
45-49	0.0	7.9	7.9	0.8	38.1	38.9	0.8	46.0	46.8	83.1	640
Residence											
Urban	2.8	8.8	11.6	12.5	46.6	59.1	15.9	55.5	71.4	83.7	2,391
Rural	2.2	9.9	12.0	10.8	51.7	62.5	14.1	62.5	76.6	84.3	1,733
Region											
Yerevan	3.0	9.4	12.4	13.7	43.3	57.1	17.1	52.7	69.9	82.3	1,291
Aragatsotn	2.1	9.3	11.3	10.4	52.5	63.0	14.6	62.7	77.3	85.3	193
Ararat	2.3	7.6	9.9	11.9	54.4	66.3	15.7	62.8	78.5	87.4	449
Armavir	1.2	7.5	8.7	14.1	51.2	65.3	16.5	59.9	76.3	88.6	373
Gegharkunik	2.6	14.8	17.4	12.2	44.1	56.2	15.9	59.7	75.7	77.0	341
Lori	4.4	6.3	10.7	15.9	52.2	68.1	20.7	58.9	79.6	86.5	323
Kotayk	2.5	12.2	14.7	7.6	45.0	52.5	10.8	57.6	68.3	78.4	316
Shirak	1.0	10.3	11.2	8.7	56.7	65.4	9.9	67.3	77.2	85.5	388
Syunik	3.5	6.0	9.5	5.4	44.3	49.7	9.5	50.9	60.4	84.3	173
Vayots Dzor	4.7	7.5	12.2	12.5	53.4	65.9	17.2	60.9	78.1	84.4	79
Tavush	1.7	7.6	9.3	6.5	57.3	63.8	9.0	66.1	75.1	87.6	198
Education											
Primary/middle	4.3	10.6	14.9	9.5	40.6	50.2	15.4	51.6	67.0	77.8	276
Secondary	2.6	9.6	12.2	10.0	49.2	59.2	13.3	59.7	73.0	83.3	1,537
Secondary-special	2.1	10.0	12.1	11.7	50.4	62.1	14.6	60.6	75.1	83.9	1,603
Higher	2.8	6.4	9.1	16.7	47.2	63.8	20.1	53.7	73.8	87.7	708
Total	2.6	9.3	11.8	11.8	48.7	60.5	15.1	58.5	73.6	84.0	4,125

¹ *Unmet need for spacing* includes pregnant women whose pregnancy was mistimed, amenorrheic women who are not using family planning and whose last birth was mistimed, and fecund women who are neither pregnant nor amenorrheic and who are not using any method of family planning and say they want to wait two or more years for their next birth. Also included in unmet need for spacing are fecund women who are not using any method of family planning and say they are unsure whether they want another child or who want another child but are unsure when to have the birth unless they say it would not be a problem if they discovered they were pregnant in the next few weeks. *Unmet need for limiting* refers to pregnant women whose pregnancy was unwanted, amenorrheic women whose last child was unwanted, and fecund women who are neither pregnant nor amenorrheic and who are not using any method of family planning and who want no more children. Excluded from the unmet need category are pregnant and amenorrheic women who became pregnant while using a method (these women are in need of better contraception).

² *Using for spacing* is defined as women who are using some method of family planning and say they want to delay their next child or are undecided whether to have another. *Using for limiting* is defined as women who are using and who want no more children. Note that the specific methods used are not taken into account.

³ Nonusers who are pregnant or amenorrheic and whose pregnancy was the result of a contraceptive failure are not included in the category of unmet need, but are included in the total demand for contraception (since they would have been using had their method not failed).

Overall, 12 percent of the women have an unmet need for family planning, of which 3 percent is for spacing and 9 percent is for limiting. Unmet need is highest among the youngest women and among women with lower levels of educational attainment. Unmet need for family planning ranges from a low of 9 percent in Armavir and Tavush to a high of 17 percent in Gegharkunik.

8.3 FERTILITY PLANNING

In the ADHS, women were asked a series of questions about each of their children born in the five years preceding the survey—and, if pregnant, their current pregnancy—to determine whether the pregnancy was wanted *then* (planned), wanted *later* (mistimed), or *not* wanted (unplanned).

Table 8.4 shows the percent distribution of births in the five years before the survey by whether the birth was wanted then, wanted later, or not wanted. The data show that 83 percent of the births in the past five years were wanted at the time of conception. Nine percent were wanted later, and 8 percent of the births were not wanted at all at the time of conception. There is a strong relationship between planning status and birth order. For example, while 98 percent of first order births were wanted at the time of conception, 41 percent of fourth and higher order births were not wanted at all.

Table 8.4 Fertility planning status

Percent distribution of births (including current pregnancy) in the five years preceding the survey by fertility planning status, according to birth order and mother's age at birth, Armenia 2000

Birth order and mother's age at birth	Planning status of birth				Total	Number of births
	Wanted then	Wanted later	Not wanted	Missing		
Birth order						
1	98.2	1.4	0.2	0.2	100.0	713
2	81.0	17.5	1.4	0.0	100.0	619
3	71.3	12.3	16.2	0.2	100.0	333
4+	53.4	5.4	41.2	0.0	100.0	178
Age at birth						
<19	91.2	7.4	1.3	0.0	100.0	335
20-24	86.1	10.2	3.5	0.1	100.0	826
25-29	80.5	9.8	9.5	0.1	100.0	400
30-34	67.4	9.7	22.8	0.0	100.0	183
35-39	76.1	2.7	20.5	0.7	100.0	85
40-44	*	*	*	*	*	13
45-49	*	*	*	*	*	1
Total	83.2	9.2	7.5	0.1	100.0	1,843

Note: An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

8.4 IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN

In the ADHS, women were asked what they considered the ideal family size. This information was obtained by asking the respondents two questions. Respondents who had no children were asked, “If you could choose exactly the number of children to have in your whole life, how many would that be?” For respondents who had children, the question was, “If you could go back to the time when you did not have any children and could choose exactly the number of children to have in your whole life, how many would that be?” Responses to these questions are meant to be independent of the number of children that a respondent already has. However, there is typically a correlation between the actual number of children that respondents have and their

reported ideal. This correlation may be because respondents who want larger families have more children or because respondents adjust their ideal family size to match their actual family size or because of a combination of these factors.

Table 8.5 shows that virtually all Armenian women desire a family with several children. Almost half of all women (48 percent) say that two children are ideal and another quarter (26 percent) say that three children are ideal. One-fifth of women state that they prefer to have four or more children. Overall, the mean ideal number of children is 2.7 among all women and 2.8 among married women. There is a positive correlation between the actual and ideal number of children. For example, among all women, the mean ideal number of children increases from 2.3 among women with no children to 3.3 among women with four or more children.

<u>Table 8.5 Ideal number of children</u>						
Percent distribution of all women by ideal number of children and mean ideal number of children for all women and for currently married women, according to number of living children, Armenia 2000						
Ideal number of children	Number of living children ¹					Total
	0	1	2	3	4+	
0	1.0	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.4
1	7.0	5.5	2.5	2.2	2.6	4.2
2	62.4	60.9	49.6	22.9	33.1	48.3
3	17.3	23.2	25.9	44.2	15.3	26.0
4	8.2	7.4	19.0	24.9	38.5	16.8
5	0.8	1.1	1.5	3.1	3.1	1.7
6+	0.8	0.7	0.7	1.5	4.5	1.1
Non-numeric responses	2.5	0.8	0.8	1.0	3.0	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of women	2,056	658	1,964	1,330	422	6,430
Mean ideal number for:²						
All women	2.3	2.4	2.7	3.1	3.3	2.7
Number	2,004	653	1,949	1,317	409	6,333
Currently married women	2.6	2.3	2.7	3.1	3.3	2.8
Number	159	505	1,795	1,243	384	4,085

¹ Includes current pregnancy
² Means are calculated excluding women who gave non-numeric responses.

Table 8.6 shows the mean ideal number of children by age of woman and background characteristics. The mean ideal number of children increases with increasing age, from 2.3 children among women age 15-19 to 3.1 children among women age 45-49. In general, there is little significant variation in the mean ideal number of children by background characteristics.

There is an interesting relationship, however, between educational attainment and mean ideal number of children. As expected, among women age 40 and above, the higher the educational attainment, the smaller the mean ideal number of children. Among younger women, however, this relationship does not exist; for example, the ideal number of children among all women age 15-19 is 2.3, regardless of their educational background.

Table 8.6 Mean ideal number of children by background characteristics

Mean ideal number of children for all women, by age and background characteristics, Armenia 2000

Background characteristic	Current age of woman							Total
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
Residence								
Urban	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.6
Rural	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.4	2.8
Region								
Yerevan	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.5
Aragatsotn	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.6	2.8
Ararat	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.9	3.1	3.0	2.6
Armavir	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.5	2.8
Gegharkunik	2.2	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.8	3.4	3.5	2.7
Lori	2.2	2.3	2.3	(2.7)	2.6	2.9	(2.9)	2.5
Kotayk	2.4	2.5	2.7	(3.0)	3.2	3.3	3.4	2.9
Shirak	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.8
Syunik	2.3	2.2	2.2	(2.6)	3.0	3.1	3.3	2.7
Vayots Dzor	2.2	2.3	2.7	(2.9)	3.0	3.2	3.3	2.8
Tavush	2.2	2.4	2.5	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.4	2.7
Education								
Primary/middle	2.3	2.3	(2.2)	(2.6)	(2.7)	3.4	3.4	2.6
Secondary	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.3	2.7
Secondary-special	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.1	2.7
Higher	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.9	2.9	2.6
Total	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.1	2.7

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25 to 49 unweighted cases.

8.5 WANTED AND UNWANTED FERTILITY

Table 8.7 presents *wanted fertility rates*. Wanted fertility rates indicate the theoretical level of fertility that would result if all unwanted births were prevented. Unwanted births are those that exceed the respondent's ideal number. The comparison of observed total fertility rates and wanted fertility rates indicates the extent to which couples in a population successfully control their fertility in a given period. In Armenia, there is little difference between the observed total fertility rate (1.7 children per woman) and the wanted total fertility rate (1.5 children per woman). Similarly, only minor differences exist between actual and wanted fertility for population subgroups.

Table 8.7 Wanted fertility rates		
Total wanted fertility rates and total fertility rates for the three years preceding the survey, by background characteristics, Armenia 2000		
Background characteristic	Total wanted fertility rate	Total fertility rate
Residence		
Urban	1.3	1.5
Rural	1.7	2.1
Region		
Yerevan	1.3	1.4
Aragatsotn	1.6	2.0
Ararat	1.6	1.9
Armavir	1.4	1.7
Gegharkunik	2.0	2.5
Lori	1.9	2.1
Kotayk	1.1	1.3
Shirak	1.3	1.4
Syunik	1.3	1.6
Vayots Dzor	2.0	2.4
Tavush	1.7	2.2
Education		
Primary/middle	1.5	2.2
Secondary	1.5	1.9
Secondary-special	1.4	1.6
Higher	1.3	1.4
Total	1.5	1.7

Note: Rates are calculated based on births to women 15-49 in the period 1 to 36 months preceding the survey. The total fertility rates are the same as those presented in Table 4.2.