

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