

Unmet Need for Family Planning Among Thai Women

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Objectives of the present study, using data from the 1997 Contraceptive Prevalence Survey for analysis, are: 1) to determine the level of unmet need for family planning among the currently married women in reproductive age (15-49 years) while the contraceptive prevalence rate is approaching maturity; 2) to find out about the demographic and social characteristics of women who should but are not using contraception and how these characteristics are related to their purpose of contraception (for birth spacing or limiting).

Results of the analysis indicate that there is an inverse relationship between contraceptive prevalence rate and the rate of unmet need for family planning. As contraceptive prevalence rate increases the unmet need for family planning rate tends to decrease. Though the level of currently married women in reproductive age who should but are not using contraception is relatively low, the total potential demand for family planning or the size of the market for family planning is still large. It is estimated that as of mid-1996, there will be approximately 8.48 million customers, or about 78.1 percent of currently married women in reproductive age.

Determination of the relationships, using the chi-square test, between demographic and social characteristics of women who should but are not using contraception and purposes of contraception shows no relationship except the relationships with women's number of children ever born and number of children still alive. Implications of these findings are that if the family planning program strives to attain the status of "Family Planning for All," all potential users, regardless of their type or region of residence, age and educational background have to be encouraged and facilitated to use contraception irrespective of their purposes of contraception, namely, birth spacing or birth limiting.