

## **Explanatory factors for the persistence over time of unmet need for family planning among women in union in Côte d'Ivoire.**

**Significance/background :** Since adhering to the 1994 ICPD recommendations, Côte d'Ivoire has put in place several measures to increase contraceptive use. However, contraceptive use remains low (15.5% in 2016). This low contraceptive prevalence is due in part to the persistence over time of unmet need in FP, which even though declining, remains at a high level (30.4% in 1994; 28.9% in 1998 and 27.1% in 2012). The importance of unmet need in FP in the country would also stem from the fact that the desired TFR has always been lower than the actual observed TFR. This tends to delay the fertility transition in the country and therefore negates the country's efforts to achieve a demographic dividend.

The general objective of this study is therefore to contribute to the improvement of knowledge of the factors that are at the origin of the persistence over time of unmet need in FP among women in union in Côte d'Ivoire and to provide decisionmakers with useful leads for social action through the identification of the drivers of the variation of this phenomenon.

**Main Question :** 'The study attempts to answer several questions, the main one being: What factors explain the persistence of unmet need in FP over time? More specifically, it will seek to answer the following questions: How do levels of NPOs in FP vary over time according to certain characteristics related to the demand for and supply of FP services? What are the explanatory factors for the occurrence of unmet need in FP that are common and specific to the different study years?

**Methodology :** The data for this study are derived from the 1994 and 1998-1999 DHS and the 2011-2012 DHS-MICS conducted in Côte d'Ivoire. The target population is women aged 15-49 years in union at the time of the three surveys and exposed to the risk of pregnancy. These women were 5271 in 1994, 1863 in 1998 and 6309 in 2012. The dependent variable of the present study is the variable "unmet need for FP", which relates women's desire to limit and/or space births to the non-use of contraception for this purpose. It was measured in three ways, allowing us to distinguish between three groups of women, namely those with a spacing unmet need (1), those with a limiting unmet need (2) and those with no unmet need in FP (0). The explanatory variables used are related to the two approaches of the study, namely the supply and demand of FP services. We used a descriptive analysis using the Chi-square statistic and an explanatory analysis using multinomial logistic regression.

**Results/key Findings :** Description of the differential evolution of NBS in FP among women in union in Côte d'Ivoire Among the 14 explanatory variables retained in this study, 6 maintain their significant association at the 5% threshold with the dependent variable, and this, in a continuous manner over time. These are region of residence, ethnicity, household standard of living, age at the time of the survey, age at first union and number of children born alive.

Trying to explain the persistence of unmet need in FP among women in union in Côte d'Ivoire

The multinomial logistic regression shows that certain factors remain significant over time at the 5% level in explaining the occurrence of SNLs in spacing and birth limitation.

- Factors common to both spaced and restricted unmet need and to the three years of the study

The number of children born alive to a woman is the only explanatory factor common to all three study years that explains the occurrence of all categories of SNL in FP.

- Factors specific to each category of unmet need in FP but common to all three study years.

The age of the woman at the time of the survey was found to be significantly and negatively related to the risk of occurrence of spaced unmet need in FP continuously over time.

Ideal family size, ethnicity, and religion were found to continuously explain the occurrence of unmet need in birth control.

**Knowledge Contribution :** The results of the explanatory analyses have made it possible to highlight the factors that explain the persistence of unmet need in FP among women in union in Côte d'Ivoire. Among the latter, we distinguish between those that are linked to both categories of SNL in FP (number of live births) and those that are not (age at the time of the survey, number of desired children, ethnicity, religion).

The results of this study enrich the existing literature on unmet need in family planning in Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, the existing literature contains several studies, but only a small number of them concern the Ivory Coast. The criticisms levelled at these studies concern, on the one hand, their age, which means that the programmatic recommendations they made are no longer relevant (as in the

case of the study by Djangoné, 1999 and Akoto et al., 2002). On the other hand, these studies only concern the descriptive aspect of the phenomenon, as is the case of the study by Essis et al. (2019) in relation to the profiling of women with unmet need in FP.

By combining both supply and demand approaches to FP services, this study provides a holistic view of the factors responsible for the persistence over time of spacing and limiting unmet need. Thus, it is important that future FP actions are undertaken more from a holistic and integrated perspective, for a considerable reduction unmet need in FP.