

## **Contraceptive use in Cameroon: 1991-2004.**

**Summary:** In every country, contraceptive behaviour has important implications for fertility and the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). There has been relatively little attention to the dynamic of contraceptive practices in Africa, however, particularly how patterns of method use may have changed during a period.

Also, despite the fact that choosing a contraceptive method is often a decision made by couples, little is known about the dynamic of perceptions of men and women, the characteristics of various method types, and in the importance that they attach to those characteristics when choosing a contraceptive method. Numerous differences between them may have an important influence on how couples make their method choices.

**Methods:** Data on contraceptive use were collected from 5,315 women in the 1991 DHS Survey, and from 3,220 women and 3,449 men in the 1998 and 2004 DHS Survey.

**Results:** Among Cameroonian women aged 15-49, current contraceptive use declined from 69% to 60% between 1984 and 1995. Pill use dropped from 19% to 17%, and IUD use declined from 6% to 3%. However, during the same period, condom use increased from 6% to 10%; tubal ligation declined from 24% to 17%, while vasectomy increased. In addition, the proportion of women sterilized for reasons other than contraception rose between 1984 and 1995. Men were less likely to rely on sterilization than were women (31% vs. 40%). Men reported higher levels of condom use (22%), but lower levels of pill use among their partners (9%), than did women (10% and 17%, respectively).

**Conclusions:** Contraceptive behaviour in Cameroon is unique: The stability in contraceptive use over the last decade has left Cameroon's overall contraceptive prevalence among the lowest in Africa. These changes in contraceptive behaviour complicate efforts to plan for social and health needs, particularly policy decisions focusing on reducing infections with STDs. These changes in contraceptive behaviour complicate efforts to plan for social and health needs, particularly policy decisions focusing on reducing infections with STDs.

Finally men and women have somewhat different priorities when choosing a contraceptive method. Despite many similarities between women and men in their perceptions about the characteristics of each method type, numerous differences between them may have an important influence on how couples make their method choices.

**From: Mr. Samuel KELODJOUÉ**

**CENTRE DE RECHERCHE SUR LES HAUTES TERRES (CEREHT)**

**UNIVERSITY OF DSCHANG FLSH/GAE**

**P.O BOX: 7854 Yaounde, Cameroon**

**Tel: (237) 22 21-02-80/77 76 61 56 Fax: (237) 2222-62-62**

**E..Mail : sakelod@hotmail.com**

Michèle GAN YON, Université de Yaoundé 1

