

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILD MORTALITY AND  
FERTILITY AMONG EVER MARRIED WOMEN IN LAO PDR**



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Lowering the high fertility rate is a priority of the Lao PDR, especially in rural and remote areas. High rate of child mortality is a contributing factor to a couple's decision to have more children. This study attempts to examine the relationship between child mortality and fertility of married women aged 15-49 in Lao PDR. Data analyzed for this study are from 10,288 married women surveyed in the Lao Reproductive Health Survey conducted in 2005.

It is found that almost one-fourth of the samples had experience of child mortality. On average, the number of children born to a mother who has no experience of child death is 2.9, while it is 5.3 for those who have had such an experience. The results from multiple regression analysis demonstrated that after controlling for socio-economic and demographic factors, namely, education, employment status, ethnicity, place of residence, age, age at first marriage, contraceptive use, ideal number of children, and abortion experience, number of children died was positively related to the number of children born. An additional child dying increased the number of children born by 0.94 ( $P < 0.001$ ).

The results suggest that to effectively reduce fertility level, the child survival program should be strengthened. It can be done through improving the quality of newborn and child survival programs. This program will not only reduce child mortality but will also reduce fertility in the long term. The results of this study can not clarify if the relationship of child mortality and fertility is due to replacement or insurance effects, and this needs to be further explored.

**KEY WORDS: CHILD MORTALITY/FERTILITY/ LAO PDR**

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