

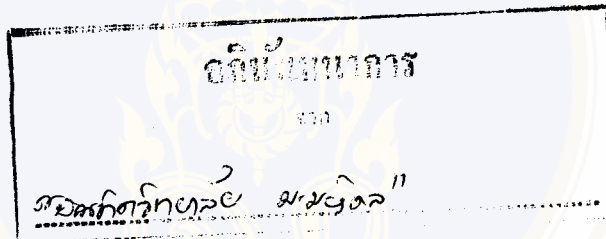


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THE RELATIONSHIP OF PREMARITAL CONCEPTION
TO SUBSEQUENT FERTILITY AMONG EVER-MARRIED WOMEN
IN THE PHILIPPINES

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A B S T R A C T

The fertility decline in the Philippines has but slightly affected younger women in the reproductive ages. Despite the rising age at marriage, an increase in fertility among younger women is associated with an upward trend of premarital sexual relationships and rapid second birth intervals. This study utilizes the 1988 National Demographic Survey (NDS) data to: determine the prevalence of premarital conception; identify different factors affecting premarital conception; and assess the extent to which premarital conception is related to subsequent fertility among 13,616 ever-married women aged 15-49.

The results of the descriptive analysis and cross tabulation procedures revealed that the incidence of premarital conception in the Philippines has increased and is prevalent across different groups, and especially among younger cohorts. Age at conception and age at menarche each

has a negative effect on premarital conceptions in the younger age at marriage group; education has an important role on premarital conception in urban rather than rural areas among the youngest marrying cohorts; urban-rural differentials affect most strongly the younger women; and incidence of premarital conceptions is highest among the professional/clerical group.

Both cross tabulation and life table procedure results indicate the existence of a relationship between premarital conception and subsequent fertility with a distinct effect at the shorter interval of 12 months, particularly for the younger and older age at marriage groups, which has important implications to the health of both mother and child. It further shows differentials in the pace of subsequent fertility among the following groups of women: women from urban areas; women born within the period 1954-1973; women with lower educational attainment; and women in the agriculture/production and non-gainful occupational groups.

Important implications of the study are: a) the need to reduce the effects of unwanted pregnancies, unplanned marriages and premarital childbearing among adolescents; b) expansion of programs on reproductive health education among adolescents and provision of contraceptive services to unmarried; and c) preventive measures to curtail the rapid pace of second births, as well as specific activities to increase knowledge on the risks of rapid subsequent births should be included in family planning services.