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Unmet Need: 1990-1994

CHARLES F. WESTOFF
AKINRINOLA BANKOLE

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Charles F. Westoff is Professor of Demography and Sociology, Office of Population Research, Princeton University; Akinrinola Bankole is Research Staff, Office of Population Research, Princeton University.
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Preface

One of the most significant contributions of the DHS program is the creation of an internationally comparable body of data on the demographic and health characteristics of populations in developing countries. The DHS Comparative Studies series and the DHS Analytical Reports series examine these data across countries in a comparative framework, focusing on specific topics.

The objectives of DHS comparative research are: to describe similarities and differences between countries and regions, to highlight subgroups with specific needs, to provide information for policy formulation at the international level, and to examine individual country results in an international context. While Comparative Studies are primarily descriptive, Analytical Reports utilizes a more analytical approach.

The comparative analysis of DHS data is carried out primarily by staff at the DHS headquarters in Calverton, Maryland. The topics covered are selected by staff in conjunction with the DHS Scientific Advisory Committee and USAID.

The Comparative Studies are based on a variable number of data sets reflecting the number of countries for which data were available at the time the report was prepared. Each report provides detailed tables and graphs for countries in four regions: sub-Saharan Africa, the Near East and North Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Survey-related issues such as questionnaire comparability, survey procedures, data quality, and methodological approaches are addressed in each report, as necessary. Where appropriate, data from previous DHS surveys are used to evaluate trends over time.

Comparative Studies published under the current phase of the DHS program (DHS-III) are, in some cases, updates and expansions of reports published earlier in the series. Other reports, however, will cover new topics that reflect the expanded substantive scope of the DHS program.

It is anticipated that the availability of comparable information for a large number of developing countries will have long-term usefulness for analysts and policymakers in the fields of international population and health.

Martin Vaessen
Project Director
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