

Reading and Understanding PFHS Tables

Statistical tables can look intimidating at first glance. This flyer suggests ways to read and understand tables from the 2012 Jordan Population and Family Health Survey final report.

Example I: Current Use of Contraception A Question Asked of a Subgroup of Survey Respondents

Step 1: Read the title and subtitle. They tell you the topic and the specific population group being described. In this case, the table is about current use of contraception by currently married women age 15-49. This is a subgroup of survey respondents.

Step 2: Scan the column headings—the top horizontal row. They describe how the information is categorized. In this case, each column represents a contraceptive method: any method, any modern method, and any traditional method. The last column lists the number of women interviewed.

Step 3: Scan the row headings—the first vertical column. These show the different ways the data are divided into categories based on population characteristics. In this case, the table presents contraceptive use among married women by number of living children, urban-rural residence, region of residence, governorate of residence, Badia or camp areas, educational level, and wealth. Most of the tables in PFHS report will be divided into these same categories.

Step 4: Look at the very last row at the bottom of the table. These percentages represent the totals of all married women age 15-49 who are currently using a method of contraception. In this case, 61.2% of currently married women age 15-49 are currently using any method of contraception, 42.3% are using any modern method, and 18.9% are using any traditional method.

Step 5: To find out what percentage of married women with no education are currently using a modern contraceptive method, draw two imaginary lines, as shown on the table. This shows that 31.8% of married women age 15-49 with no education are currently using a modern method of contraception.

Table 7.3 Current use of contraception by background characteristics
Percent distribution of currently married women age 15-49 by contraceptive method currently used, according to background characteristics, Jordan 2012

Background characteristic	Any method	Any modern method	Any traditional method	Number of women
Number of living children				
0	1.5	0.2	1.3	930
1-2	52.4	32.0	20.5	2,880
3-4	70.5	49.4	21.1	3,673
5+	75.2	55.3	19.9	3,317
Residence				
Urban	61.1	42.7	18.3	8,983
Rural	61.7	40.2	21.6	1,818
Region				
Central	61.1	42.7	18.4	6,839
North	61.3	42.3	19.0	2,966
South	61.0	39.5	21.5	996
Governorate				
Amman	60.5	41.6	18.9	4,262
Balqa	60.0	41.6	18.4	724
Zarqa	63.1	46.5	16.7	1,564
Madaba	62.1	42.2	19.9	289
Irbid	61.7	43.9	17.8	1,892
Mafraq	59.5	36.7	22.8	528
Jarash	61.8	42.7	19.2	306
Ajloun	61.6	41.0	20.6	239
Karak	59.2	40.0	19.3	420
Tafiela	64.1	41.5	22.6	161
Ma'an	58.4	30.7	27.7	163
Aqaba	63.7	43.2	20.5	253
Badia				
Badia	57.8	36.6	21.2	666
Non Badia	61.4	42.7	18.7	10,135
Camps				
Camp	60.8	45.4	15.4	387
Non camp	61.2	42.2	19.0	10,414
Education				
No education	45.6	31.8	13.8	226
Elementary	53.4	36.6	16.8	788
Preparatory	60.6	43.5	17.1	1,547
Secondary	64.7	46.0	18.7	4,863
Higher	59.3	38.5	20.8	3,376
Wealth quintile				
Lowest	58.0	40.6	17.4	1,975
Second	60.9	41.8	19.1	2,179
Middle	59.9	41.1	18.9	2,364
Fourth	64.0	45.0	19.1	2,274
Highest	62.9	43.1	19.8	2,009
Total	61.2	42.3	18.9	10,801

Practice: Use this table to answer the following questions (answers are upside down, below):

- What percentage of married women with 5+ children are using a modern method of contraception?
- In which governorate are married women least likely to use modern method of contraception?
- Compare married women in the lowest wealth quintile to married women in the highest wealth quintile— which group is more likely to use any modern method of contraception?

(a) 55.3% (b) Ma'an-30.70% (c) Married women in the highest wealth quintile are most likely to use modern contraceptive. (45.0%). Important to note that women in the fourth wealth quintile are most likely to use modern contraceptive. (45.0%).

Example 2: Prevalence and treatment of symptoms of ARI A Question Asked of a Subgroup of Survey Respondents

Step 1: Read the title and subtitle. In this case, the table is about two separate groups of children: (a) children under age five, and (b) children under age five with symptoms of ARI.

Step 2: Identify the two panels. First identify the columns that refer to children under age five (a), and then isolate the columns that refer only to children under age five with symptoms of ARI (b).

Step 3: Look at the first panel. What percentage of children under age five have symptoms of ARI? It's 6.8%.

Now look at the second panel. How many children under age five are included in this group? Only 656, or about 6.8% of the 9,637 children under age five who have symptoms of ARI. The second panel is a subset of the first panel.

Step 4: Only approximately 7% of the children under age five in the survey reported symptoms of ARI. Once these children are further divided into the background characteristic categories, there may be too few cases for the percentages to be reliable.

For example, look to see the percentage of children with symptoms of ARI that sought treatment or advice from a health facility or provider among children with mothers who have an elementary education: 85.1%. This percentage is in parentheses because there are fewer than 50 women (unweighted) in this category. Readers should use this number with caution—it may not be accurate. (For more information on weighted and unweighted numbers, see Example 4.)

Look also to see the percentage of children with symptoms of ARI that sought treatment or advice from a health facility or provider among children with mothers who have no education. There is no number in this cell—only an asterisk. This is because fewer than 25 children (unweighted) reported seeking treatment or advice. Results for this group are not reported. The subgroup is too small, and therefore the data are not reliable.

Practice: Use this table to answer the following questions (answers are upside down, below):

- In what age group is symptoms of ARI the most common?
- What percentage of children under age five with symptoms of ARI sought treatment or advice from a health facility or provider in Aqaba governorate? Can you use this number with confidence?

Table 10.5 Prevalence and treatment of symptoms of ARI

Among children under age five, the percentage who had symptoms of acute respiratory infection (ARI) in the two weeks preceding the survey and among children with symptoms of ARI, the percentage for whom advice or treatment was sought from a health facility or provider, according to background characteristics, Jordan 2012

Background characteristic	Among children under age five:		Among children under age five with symptoms of ARI:	
	Percentage with symptoms of ARI ¹	Number of children	Percentage for whom advice or treatment was sought from a health facility or provider ²	Number of children
Age in months				
<6	3.9	851	(91.0)	34
6-11	9.5	913	81.2	86
12-23	8.4	1,941	79.7	164
24-35	8.0	1,950	74.1	156
36-47	5.7	1,965	78.9	113
48-59	5.1	2,018	68.6	104
Sex				
Male	8.4	5,018	79.1	420
Female	5.1	4,619	74.0	236
Mother's smoking status				
Smokes cigarettes/tobacco	9.7	712	83.2	69
Does not smoke	6.6	8,925	76.5	587
Residence				
Urban	6.9	7,852	75.8	541
Rural	6.4	1,784	84.2	114
Region				
Central	6.6	5,897	78.9	387
North	7.0	2,811	74.2	197
South	7.7	929	76.4	71
Governorate				
Amman	6.6	3,547	79.0	233
Balqa	5.4	691	73.1	37
Zarqa	7.4	1,391	79.8	102
Madaba	5.3	268	(86.2)	14
Irbid	6.7	1,696	74.0	113
Mafraq	7.0	559	71.3	39
Jarash	9.3	327	78.6	31
Ajloun	6.1	229	74.6	14
Karak	6.7	398	83.2	27
Tafiela	8.6	155	77.4	13
Ma'an	8.1	166	63.5	13
Aqaba	8.5	211	(75.2)	18
Badia				
Badia	6.6	753	70.4	50
Non Badia	6.8	8,884	77.8	606
Camps				
Camp	9.2	377	(77.5)	35
Non camp	6.7	9,260	77.2	621
Mother's education				
No education	7.9	204	*	16
Elementary	5.7	608	(85.1)	35
Preparatory	6.8	1,279	85.7	87
Secondary	6.7	4,493	77.0	300
Higher	7.1	3,052	73.3	218
Wealth quintile				
Lowest	6.4	2,225	79.9	142
Second	7.3	2,142	74.3	156
Middle	7.8	2,069	83.5	161
Fourth	6.0	1,866	71.9	111
Highest	6.4	1,335	73.5	86
Total	6.8	9,637	77.2	656

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹ Symptoms of ARI (cough accompanied by short, rapid breathing which was chest-related and/or by difficult breathing which was chest-related) is considered a proxy for pneumonia.

² Excludes pharmacy, and other.

Note: When parentheses or asterisks are used in a table, the explanation will be noted under the table. If there are no parentheses or asterisks on a table, you can proceed with confidence that enough cases were included in all categories that the data are reliable.

a) 6-11 months—9.5% of children under age five in this age group have symptoms of ARI. b) 75.2%, but because this is based on only 25-49 cases, you should use this number with caution.

Example 3: Place of Delivery

Interpreting, Comparing, and Understanding Patterns

Step 1: Read the title and subtitle. In this case, the table is about place of delivery among live births in the 5 years before the survey.

Step 2: Identify the indicators in the top most row. In this shortened table there are just 2 indicators: births delivered at home and births delivered in a health facility.

Step 3: Look at the bottom of the first column to determine what percentage of births occurred at home: It's 1.2%.

Now look at the bottom of the second column to determine what percentage of births occurred in a health facilities: it's 98.8%. In Jordan, almost all births are delivered in a health facility.

Step 4: Look at the row headings to identify the background characteristics. In this table, place of delivery is disaggregated by mother's age at birth, birth order, antenatal care visits, residence, region, governorate, Badia or camp areas, mother's education, and wealth quintile.

Step 5:

Answer the following questions to understand how place of delivery varies throughout Jordan:

- What are the lowest and the highest percentages (range) of home births within the governorates? Home births range from a low of 0.1% in Balqa and Ajloun to a high of 2.0% in Ma'an.
- Look for patterns: Do facility births vary by background characteristics? For example, is there a clear pattern of facility delivery by wealth? By mother's level of education? By birth order?
- Answers: Births from the poorest households are more likely to occur at home, while 100% of births from the wealthiest households occur in health facilities. Health facility births are also more common among more educated women. As women have more children, higher birth order births are less likely to occur in a health facility. Women who have had 4+ antenatal care visits are very likely to deliver in a health facility (99.2%), while only 90.0% of births with no ANC are delivered in a health care facility.

Table 9.6 Place of delivery			
Percent distribution of live births in the five years preceding the survey by place of delivery and percentage delivered in a health facility, according to background characteristics, Jordan 2012			
Background characteristic	Home	Percentage delivered in a health facility	Number of births
Mother's age at birth			
<20	2.6	97.4	559
20-34	1.1	98.9	7,535
35-49	1.2	98.8	1,739
Birth order			
1	0.7	99.3	2,354
2-3	1.3	98.7	3,809
4-5	1.0	99.0	2,368
6+	2.4	97.6	1,302
Antenatal care visits¹			
None	10.0	90.0	58
1-3	9.0	91.0	303
4+	0.8	99.2	6,214
Residence			
Urban	1.4	98.6	8,010
Rural	0.7	99.3	1,823
Region			
Central	1.3	98.7	6,014
North	1.3	98.7	2,867
South	0.9	99.1	952
Governorate			
Amman	1.7	98.3	3,622
Balqa	0.1	99.9	703
Zarqa	1.0	99.0	1,412
Madaba	0.5	99.5	276
Irbid	1.6	98.4	1,729
Mafraq	1.5	98.5	574
Jarash	0.4	99.6	333
Ajloun	0.1	99.9	232
Karak	0.8	99.2	410
Tafiela	0.7	99.3	157
Ma'an	2.0	98.0	170
Aqaba	0.5	99.5	215
Badia			
Badia	1.4	98.6	769
Non Badia	1.2	98.8	9,064
Camps			
Camp	0.4	99.6	388
Non camp	1.3	98.7	9,446
Mother's education			
No education	4.9	95.1	207
Elementary	4.2	95.8	628
Preparatory	0.9	99.1	1,308
Secondary	1.4	98.6	4,599
Higher	0.3	99.7	3,091
Wealth quintile			
Lowest	3.1	96.9	2,292
Second	0.5	99.5	2,179
Middle	1.0	99.0	2,115
Fourth	0.9	99.1	1,893
Highest	0.0	100.0	1,354
Total	1.2	98.8	9,833

Total includes 1 woman for whom data on number of antenatal care visits was not known.
¹ Includes only the most recent birth in the five years preceding the survey.

- What does this mean? To improve maternal and newborn health, more births should be delivered in health facilities. With limited resources, programs should target less educated, poor women, and those living in Ma'an to improve their access to and use of health care facilities for delivery services. It also appears that reaching women at antenatal care increases their chances of delivering in a health care facilities.

Example 4: Understanding Sampling Weights in PFHS Tables

A sample is a group of people that have been selected for a survey. In PFHS surveys, the sample represents the entire national population. Most countries want to collect data and report information both for the entire country and also for a country's regions or governorates. For the 2012 JPFHS, the survey sample is representative nationally, at the urban-rural level, for each of the 12 governorates, and for two special domains: the Badia areas and people living in refugee camps.

PFHS surveys are designed to provide these national and governorate level statistics. We want the sample surveyed in each governorate to resemble the actual population of that governorate, just as we want the national sample to resemble the actual population of the country. If the governorates in a particular country vary in size and especially if some governorates have very small populations, then a randomly-drawn sample may not include enough people from each region for analysis.

For example, let's say that you have enough money to interview 11,352 women for a survey that should be representative of both the governorates and the entire country (as in the Jordan table below). In Jordan, the governorates are not evenly distributed: some governorates are more heavily populated (such as Zarqa), while others have smaller populations (such as Tafiela).

A sampling statistician can determine how many women should be interviewed in each governorate in order to get reliable statistics. In the case of Jordan, the **blue column (1)** shows the actual number of women selected and interviewed in each governorate, ranging from 781 in Ma'an to 1,139 in Zarqa. With these numbers, there are enough interviews to get reliable results in each governorate.

With this distribution of interviews, some governorates are overrepresented and some governorates are underrepresented. For example, the population of Ma'an is about 2% of the entire Jordanian population. In contrast, the population of Zarqa is approximately 15% of the Jordanian population. Zarqa's population is approximately 7.5 times larger than the population in Ma'an. But as the blue column shows, the PFHS survey has interviewed only about 1.5 times as many people in Zarqa as in Ma'an (1,139 versus 781). This does not accurately represent the population of the country.

Table 3.1 Background characteristics of women

Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15-49 by selected background characteristics, Jordan 2012

Background characteristic	Number of women		
	Weighted percent	Weighted number	Unweighted number
Governorate			
Amman	39.2	4,454	1,106
Balqa	6.7	765	945
Zarqa	14.6	1,659	1,139
Madaba	2.7	303	861
Irbid	17.5	1,986	1,137
Mafraq	5.0	562	1,000
Jarash	2.8	320	945
Ajloun	2.2	251	898
Karak	3.9	441	873
Tafiela	1.5	167	819
Ma'an	1.6	178	781
Aqaba	2.3	265	848
Total 15-49	100.0	11,352	11,352

In order to get statistics that are representative of the entire country, the distribution of the women in the sample needs to resemble the distribution of the women in the country. Women from a smaller governorate, like Ma'an, should only contribute a small amount to the national total. Likewise, women from a larger governorate, like Zarqa, should contribute more. Therefore, PFHS statisticians mathematically adjust or "weight" the number of women from each governorate so that each governorate's contribution to the total is proportionate to the actual population of the country. The numbers in the **purple column (2)** represent the "weighted" values. The total sample size of 11,352 women has not changed, but the distribution of the women in the governorates has been changed to represent their contribution to the total population size.

How do statisticians weight each category? They recalculate the categories to reflect the real population of the country. If you were to compare the **light red column (3)** to the actual population distribution of Jordan, you would see that women in each governorate are contributing to the total sample with the same weight that they contribute to the population of the country. The weighted number of women in the survey now accurately represents how many women live in Zarqa and how fewer women live in Ma'an.

With sampling and weighting, it is possible to interview enough women to provide reliable statistics at both the national and governorate level without distorting the overall distribution of the population within the country. In general, only the weighted numbers are shown in each of the PFHS tables, so don't be distressed if these numbers seem low: they may actually represent a larger number of women interviewed. And remember, the table will use parentheses and asterisks to warn you if there are too few unweighted cases in any category.