Contraceptive Prevalence Rate

Definition
The Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) is the percent of women of reproductive age who are using (or whose partner is using) a contraceptive method at a particular point in time.

The CPR is most frequently reported for women married or in regular sexual union. Reproductive age is considered to be 15 to 49 years, although in some settings the lower-age bound can be as young as 13 years and the upper-age bound can end at 44 years.

The measure covers use of all contraceptive methods but it can also be confined to use of modern methods (female or male sterilization, intrauterine devices, implants, injectables, pills, female or male condoms, diaphragm, foam, spermicides, Standard Days Method, and lactational amenorrhea method).

The source of data required to assess the CPR is a population-based survey.

Calculation

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\frac{\text{# of women of reproductive age (married or in union) using a contraceptive method}}{\text{Total # of women of reproductive age (married or in union)}} \times 100
\]

Purpose
The CPR provides a measure of population coverage of contraceptive use, taking into account all sources of supply and all contraceptive methods. Technically, the CPR is a ratio, not a rate. It is the most widely reported measure of outcome for family planning programs at the population level. Contraceptive prevalence is also an indicator of access to family planning services.

The contraceptive prevalence rate has increased across all regions and globally. The use of safe and effective contraception is critical in the reduction of unwanted pregnancies. As seen in the graph below, globally a majority of couples, where the woman is of reproductive age, use some form of contraception (63%), a gain of 14 points from 49% in 1980. In the sub-Saharan African region, only about one in five couples practice contraception.
Increases in contraceptive prevalence are associated with declines in fertility, since a population’s level of contraceptive use is highly correlated with its birth rate. Per the graph for Thailand, as contraceptive use increased from 15% in 1969 to 73% in 2005, the total fertility rate (average number of births per woman) declined from 6.11 to 1.5.1

Significant increases in contraceptive use have recently been observed in Malawi, Rwanda, and Ethiopia.1,2 Unlike trends for Asian and Latin American regions, contraceptive use levels have climbed up from nearly negligible levels in most sub-Saharan African countries.

Sources
2ICF Macro. Measure DHS.