

## Unwanted Pregnancy and Factors Influencing it in Pregnant Mothers Referring to Semnan's Health Centers

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**Abstract:** Unwanted pregnancy is one of the most important causes of mother and child death. It ends up to illegal abortion and remains inevitable physical and mental consequences and also increased socio-economic hazards. Being wanted or unwanted pregnancy depends on the different factors such as socio-economic status, educational levels, parity and age of marriage. In the current study the relationship of the mentioned variables with the independent ones of unwanted pregnancy are investigated. This is a descriptive study using a cross-sectional method on 229 pregnant mothers attended to health centers of Semnan city. The data gathered by interviewing and completing a questionnaire and be analyzed using SPSS software. The means of mothers' ages and their age of marriage were reported 30.7 and 19.7 years respectively. The prevalence rate of unwanted pregnancy was 32.3 percent. Among the most important results was a significant relationship between age of marriage, current age, formal education, number of children, occupation and monthly income with type of pregnancy. Early marriage, low educational level of mothers, incorrect use of the modern contraceptives, low income level and the cultural factors are the most effective factors on unwanted pregnancy. The results of the researches conducted in different areas of the country, pointed out that more than thirty percent of pregnancies is unwanted. Therefore, it seems to be necessary to do some activities such as educating correct use of contraceptives in order to reduce the rate of unwanted pregnancies in both rural and urban areas.

**Key words:** Unwanted pregnancy · Contraceptive methods

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### INTRODUCTION

Reproductive is one of the most important instincts of existence and especially human kinds. Increased population, however, has been a serious concern making worry all. One-third of approximately 200 million pregnancies per year around the world is unwanted. Meanwhile more than 90 percent of population increase belongs to developing countries. Researches conducted worldwide, show that the highest rate of population growth is related to the poorest countries. These countries are not able to provide the basic needs such as' accommodation, education, occupation, health and medical services in their communities due to the limited resources [1-2].

Out of 210 million pregnancies in the world per year, 100 millions (42 %) are unwanted, 50 millions end up to

abortion in which 20 millions of those occur in unhealthy conditions. About 95 percent of unhealthy abortions accomplished in developing countries that cause to nearly 200 deaths everyday [3-5]. Out of total, 529000 deaths of mothers caused by pregnancy and delivery worldwide, 99 percent happened in developing countries. In India only, 136000 mothers die because of their pregnancies [6]. By removing the unwanted pregnancies in general, the growth rate of population would be about 1% in the world [3].

A country-wide research done by Ministry of health in the year 2000 indicated that the rate of unwanted pregnancy in Iran is 22.6 percent. Taking it into account, young population of Iran, this fact should be more considered. Another study conducted in the year 2001, shows that the percentage of unwanted pregnancy is 7.4, 22, 31.3 and 46.3 in mothers with one, two, three and

four alive children respectively. This rate in the province of Semnan was reported 4.4, 14.6, 31.2 and 39.7. In another study using HBM in preventive methods in 1600 women in the south of Tehran, the rate of unwanted pregnancy is reported 28.2 [11]. Finally, a descriptive study on 600 women in Ardabil province in the year 2003, mentioned that unwanted pregnancy rate is 30.8 [12]. In brief, unwanted pregnancy happens for two reasons. First, non accessibility of contraceptives, illegal sexual behavior, religious beliefs, lack of knowledge about the role of contraceptive methods in preventing unwanted pregnancies, economic limitations, disagreement of family members and their fears of probable consequences of contraceptives on their fertility in the future and all other barriers that prevent women from deciding about using contraception methods. The second, failure of contraceptive methods. It is estimated that about 8 to 30 millions of pregnancies happen in a year, caused by the failure rate or incorrect use and carelessness in the time of using the devices [6-7].

Although, at the present time, 60 percent of women and their partners are using modern contraception methods worldwide, 350 millions of the couples have not yet enough information or access to these methods. About 120-150 married women which do not want to have a birth or in the time being are not ready to have a child, do not use any contraceptive which it is called unmet needs. Also, it is necessary to add 12-15 million unmarried women which do not want to have a birth but have not enough information about contraception methods or have not access to them to that numbers.

The difficulty of unwanted pregnancy is kind of crises that beside of been unexpected and suddenly in most cases have sorrowful results and can cause much stress and unhappiness for the woman and her family. This leads to discrimination which has detrimental effects on the health of women and it also cause different consequences such as home escaping, dangerous unhealthy abortion by unprofessional persons and if the pregnancy continue, the lack of attendance to health and reproductive center to get necessary antenatal care. Ultimately, if the baby gets birth pose lack of sufficient maternal care.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a descriptive, cross sectional study on 229 pregnant women with at least one child attended to the

Semnan's health centers. A questionnaire completed through interviewing the mothers was used to collect the data and SPSS applied to analyze them. Research objective is to identify the rate of unwanted pregnancy and examining its relationship with the variables such as age, occupation, educational level, parity and used contraceptive method. To find out the sample size, considering the most important objective of the study, identifying the rate of unwanted pregnancy, the estimation of the previous researches (about 30 percent), applying the formula of  $n = \frac{z^2pq}{d^2}$ , confidence coefficient= 90% and  $d=0.05$ , the sample size had been estimated 227.3 that in this study 229 cases sampled. ( $z=1.645$ ,  $p= \%30$ ,  $q= \%70$  and  $n=227.3$ )

## RESULTS

In this research 229 pregnant women attended to Health Centers of Semnan city with at least one child are studied. According to the findings, the mean of current age of mothers are 30.7 (19-45 years) and the mean of marriage age is 19.75 years. To identify the effective factors on the kind of pregnancy which is predicted as effective factors were studied and the results are as follow:

- Mothers under age of 24 and those with 40 and more, had more unwanted pregnancy rate in compare with the others, chi-square test shows a significant relationship between the age of mothers and the kind of pregnancy ( $P=0.000$ ).
- The highest percentage of unwanted pregnancy belongs to the illiterate mothers and the least belongs to those with academic educational level. In the other word as the educational level of mothers increases, the number of unwanted pregnancies is decreased ( $P= 0.001$ ).
- There is not a significant relationship between dependant variable (kind of Pregnancy) and the independent variable (contraceptive methods ( $P=0.891$ )). However, there is a significant relationship between the type of pregnancy and some another variables such as; mothers information sources ( $P= 0.005$ ), information before marriage ( $P= 0.000$ ), knowledge of contraceptive methods ( $P= 0.000$ ), birth interval ( $P= 0.000$ ), the number of mother live children ( $P=0.000$ ), use contraceptive method ( $P= 0.000$ ) and family income ( $P= 0.000$ ).

Table 1: The relationship of the type of pregnancy and important variables in the pregnant mothers attended to the Health Centers of Semnan city

Type of pregnancy variables		Wanted		Unwanted		P-Value In test X <sup>2</sup>
		Num.	%	Num.	%	
Current age of mother (years)	< 24	26	59.1	3	40.9	0.035 *
	25-29	61	80.3	25	19.7	
	30-34	32	66.7	31	33.3	
	35-39	23	62.2	28	37.8	
	40+	10	50.0	35	50.0	
Total		152	67.6	73	32.4	
Mothers' Educational level	Illiterate	4	36.4	7	63.6	0.001*
	elementary	23	57.5	17	42.5	
	Intermediate	32	65.3	17	34.7	
	High school	55	70.5	23	29.5	
	University	41	80.4	10	19.6	
Total		155	67.7	74	32.3	
Used Contraceptive methods	Not used	60	77.9	17	22.1	0.315
	Pill	51	61.4	32	38.6	
	natural	11	68.8	5	31.3	
	Condom	18	62.1	11	37.9	
	I.U.D	13	61.9	8	38.1	
	Injection & etc.	2	66.7	1	33.3	
Total		155	67.7	74	32.3	
Number of children	1	53	84.1	10	15.9	0/000*
	2	74	70.5	31	29.5	
	3	19	48.7	20	51.3	
	4+	9	40.9	13	59.1	
Total		155	67.7	74	32.3	
Age of Marriage (years)	< 18	56	60.2	37	39.8	0.024*
	19 - 24	79	69.3	35	30.7	
	25 +	19	90.5	2	9.50	
Total		228	68.9	103	31.1	
Income	Low	14	36.8	24	63.2	0/000*
	Middle	77	73.3	28	26.7	
	Good	64	74.4	22	25.6	
Total		155	67.7	74	32.3	
Informatin sources	H.center	90	64.7	49	35.3	0/000*
	R. & T.V.	21	72.4	8	27.6	
	Husband	3	42.9	4	57.1	
	Book & J.	11	73.3	4	26.7	
	Family & R.	28	75.7	9	24.3	
Total		153	67.4	74	32.6	
Occupation	H. holder	107	63.7	61	36.3	0/026*
	employed	47	78.3	13	21.7	
Total		154	67.5	74	32.5	

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings of the study, the prevalence rate of unwanted pregnancy is 32.3% which is similar to the published statistics in the

year 2004, indicating one-third of pregnancies are unwanted [13]. Other studies conducted in this domain such as Sershti *et al.* [14] and Kahnamoie *et al.* [12], reported about same results, 27.2 % and 30.8% respectively.

The mean, Median and Mode of mothers' age of marriage in the present study are 19.75, 19 and 18 years respectively. The measures for the current age of mothers are 30.7, 29 and 29 years. As shown the age group 25-29 has the least rate of unwanted and is matched by the mothers' age of marriage and type of pregnancy, which should be considered by policy makers and health planners. However, the lower and upper groups whose unwanted pregnancy are higher should be under more educational programs and care. Unwanted pregnancy among illiterate mothers and those with elementary education is high. On the other more educated mothers have lower rate of unwanted pregnancy. Kahnamoie *et al.*, in their study reported about the same results. They indicated that unwanted pregnancy in illiterate women was significantly more than educated mothers, 52.3% VS 26% [12]. In our study, mothers with elementary level of education had the most rate of unwanted pregnancy (42.5%). These findings show that having enough and sufficient education does help to control proper interval in pregnancies. Other words, those mothers with low level of education should receive more care and support. A noticeable percentage of mothers with unwanted pregnancy have used different contraceptive methods prior to the current pregnancy. This fact indicating that only providing and using contraceptive devices is not enough and it is also important to use those devices properly through a scientific supervision. Promoting family health services in the society would help this procedure. In a survey conducted in Kerman, Abazari *et al.* determined that 42% of mothers had unwanted pregnancies despite using contraceptives [15]. Two other studies done by Qazizadeh *et al.*, it is indicated that not adequate use of methods considered as the main cause of unwanted pregnancies in 49% of the study population [16, 17]. As was reported in the results, poor families have more unwanted pregnancies and reducing poverty in a population would decrease the health problems in general and unwanted pregnancies in particular. Therefore, these families should receive more attention in getting enough income, health care and education. The results of this study also show that partners don't have enough participation with their wives to prevent unwanted pregnancies making it necessary to have educational programs for men too. Sufficient control of pregnancy is very important in families with having enough number of children. This will provide the healthy conditions for both mother and child and will help in turn to control the entire population. Being employment of

women as reported in the present study, is considered as another important variable to reduce the rate of unwanted pregnancies.

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