

RESEARCH BRIEF

Sterilization in India: Incidence, prevalence and age pattern of use

Sterilization has had a complex history in India. This study analyzed the prevalence, incidence and age patterns of female sterilization in India from 1992 to 2016. It discusses the role of voluntary sterilization in India's method mix, particularly as there are shifts to modern, reversible family planning (FP) methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS



As older women “age out” of reproductive ages, policies and programs should focus on increasing the method mix to support and meet the needs of younger women for voluntarily reversible methods.



With considerable variation by state and age group, programs and policies need to tailor approaches to meet clients' needs for voluntary contraceptive methods.



Efforts to promote male involvement in FP should be considered, including counseling on voluntary male sterilization.





Photo Credit: Population Council

According to NFHS-4, of the 119 million modern contraceptive users in India, 90 million underwent sterilization. However, this analysis demonstrates a decrease in age-specific prevalence of female sterilization, which may be due to more women using reversible methods.

FINDINGS

- The combined male and female sterilization prevalence increased from 30.8% (1992-93) to 38.3% (2005-06) and then declined to 36.3% (2015-16).
- Between 2005-06 and 2015-16, the age-specific prevalence of sterilization declined across age groups, with the highest percent decreases in the 25-34 age group.
- There was a steady decline in male sterilization, from 3.5% (1992-93) to 0.3% (2015-16). The contribution of male sterilization to total sterilization prevalence reduced from 11.4% (1992-93) to 0.8% (2015-16).
- The age-specific incidence rate of sterilization is highest among those aged 25-29 (3.5 per 100 women per year) but has decreased over time.

METHOD

Data on married women (aged 15-49 years) from NFHS-1 (1992-93), 2 (1998-99), 3 (2005-06) and 4 (2015-16) were used to measure prevalence, incidence and the age pattern of sterilization overall, and in selected states.

RASTA

RASTA (Research and Analyses for Scientific Transformation and Advancement) is a multi-institutional research utilization initiative led by Population Council.

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EVIDENCE

The Evidence Project uses implementation science—the strategic generation, translation, and use of evidence—to strengthen and scale up family planning and reproductive health programs to reduce unintended pregnancies worldwide. The Evidence Project is led by the Population Council.

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