

Parity Progression Differentials: An analysis of users and non-users of contraception in Low Fertility Regions of Iran

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Contraceptive use dynamics presents a precise picture of the way which fertility has reached below replacement level in some regions in Iran. The purpose of this paper is to explore the extent of parity progression differentials among users and non-users of contraception since 1970. The 2005 Iran Low Fertility Survey conducted in four low fertility regions of Iran is used to meet the aim of the study. Survival analysis is applied to the information of the life time fertility and contraceptive use history of women aged 15–54 years to examine the impact of contraceptive use on the survival function of parity progression at each parity level zero to three. Moreover, the cessation of childbearing is analyzed to examine factors associated with sterilization adoption and limiting childbearing.

A sharp increase in contraceptive use is observed from the earliest to the most recent marriage cohort. No significant changes is observed on the progressing to the first birth or practicing contraception to avoid first pregnancy by 1995, while recent sign of delaying first birth is accompanied by higher rates of contraceptive use prior first pregnancy. Further analysis also indicates a precise association between contraceptive use and socio-demographic factors.

There is an emerging trend to delay the first birth following marriage, a longer term trend towards wide spacing between the first and the second birth, and cessation of childbearing after the second birth. Contraceptive use associated with the observed changes in parity progression among users and nonusers of contraception between the first and the second birth and the following parity give rise to interpretation of the family planning as a cornerstone reason for fertility decline in Iran. Controlling women for their level of education indicates little difference in delay of the third child among users and non-users. Though, women with higher levels of education even in the absence of using any contraception delayed the birth of a third child. This gives rise to the idea of back-ups to contraceptive use including intentional miscarriage or induced abortion.

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