Patterns of Men’s Reproductive and Sexual Behaviour in South Africa
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Preface

South Africa conducted Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) in 1988 where it collected nationally representative data from households and women to provide policy and programme managers with information necessary to plan, monitor and evaluate programmes, however men’s component was excluded. Alongside the increase of men’s data on reproduction outside DHS, there is a demand for empirical research on men involvement in reproductive health and fertility. The South African Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS) 2016 included a module on men for the first time which provided an opportunity to have an insight on men’s reproductive and sexual patterns.

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

The results of this report are based on South African Demographic Health Survey 2016 (SADHS) data. It provides the patterns of men’s reproductive and sexual behaviour.

Across all provinces, Western Cape, followed by Gauteng and North West had the highest proportion of men who were married. The proportion of cohabiting men started to be evident at age group 25–29 and peaked from men aged 30–34. Married men surpassed cohabiting men from the ages of 40 to 44 to elderly men aged 55-59. Men who were married were more likely to attain higher education and be employed. Cohabiting men appeared to be childless and fathered 1–2 children.

Married and cohabiting men engaged in first sex from the ages of 15 to 19. Men did not use a condom during last sex with the most recent partner. Relative to cohabiting men, married men fathered a child with one woman. Almost all married and cohabiting men did not pay anyone for sex in the last 12 months before the survey and never paid anyone in exchange for sex.

Approximately three in five married men wanted no more children and most cohabiting men wanted to have another child. A notable proportion of married and cohabiting men reported the ideal number of 3–4 children. Cohabiting and married men never discussed family planning matters with a health worker. Both cohabiting and married men do not know if a woman can get pregnant after the birth of a child before her period returns. Almost all men disagreed that contraception is a woman’s thing, man should not worry and that women who use contraception are promiscuous.

A high proportion of never been married men had secondary education and were not employed. Never been married men seemed to be childless and reported the ideal number of 3–4 children. About half of teenagers aged 15–19 had not had sex at the time of the survey. Never been married men aged 24 to 35+ appeared to engage in first sexual intercourse from the ages of 15 to 19.

Condom use of never been married men with the most recent partner decreases with age of men. Less than 6% of never been married men aged 24–29 and 30–34 paid for sex in the last 12 months from the time of the survey.
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Chapter 1: Overview and methodology

1.1 Introduction

Men are excluded in fertility studies because the characteristics of females such as puberty, menopause and duration of pregnancy are viewed as the reasons to focus on women when researching about fertility (Hertrich, 1998). Besides that, practical and methodological issues are only concentrating on women fertility. For example, classical demographic models are constructed as one sex model and leave males out. Data from women are considered to be more accurate than men because women are the ones involved in reproduction events such as pregnancies and births (Shryock H. S. & Siegel J.S.1976).

Peter McDonald 2000, argued that fertility transition from high to low levels has been associated with improving gender equity within family orientated social institutions and the family itself. The fall in fertility is related with women acquiring rights that enable them to reduce the number of their births to their desirable levels (ibid).

While global investments in family planning generally succeeded in developing regions where the average number of births per woman has fallen from 6 to 2,5 children per woman since the 1960’s, the programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa have not yielded similar results. Women in this part of the world continue to bear, on average more than five children. This, according to Frost and Dodoo, 2009, African men generally don’t have positive attitudes about contraception, partly because it threatens their culturally supported right to control women’s reproduction.

The increasing literature on the male roles in reproduction shows dissatisfactions with women’s inability to change their reproductive goals into reality. Recent investigations in some developing countries suggested that male role contributes to a gap in women’s fertility behaviour with regard to their fertility preferences (Bongaarts and Bruce, 1995).

The study on men and contraception by MacQuarrie et al., 2015 indicated that the percentage of men in the most recent survey who disagreed with the statement, “women who use contraception may become promiscuous” is increasing. The disagreement with the statement is interpreted as reflecting more positive attitudes towards contraception. The highest level of disagreement was in Rwanda (84%), while the lowest level of disagreement was in Namibia (34%). In four countries (Tanzania, Ghana, Nepal, and Namibia), less than 50% of men disagree with the statement.

The South African Demographic Health Survey, 2016 (SADHS) indicated that once the couple begin childbearing, in-union men are more likely than women to want another child soon at every parity level. For example, 19% of men with four children wanted to have another child soon, compared with only 6% of women with four children. A high of 85,5% in-union women who reported to have a parity of 6+ children wanted no more children, whereas 68,1% of in-union men with the same parity wanted no more children.
There is empirical evidence on the outcomes of fertility and health indicators. National and international agendas such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) goal 3 (Stats SA, 2017), Agenda 2063, aspiration 1, goal 1 (UN, 2015) and National Development plan (NDP) 2030 (The Presidency, 2012) are advocating to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, a high standard of living, quality of life and reducing maternal, infant and child mortality. Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) conducted across countries provided an insight on the perspective of men towards family sizes they prefer and desire, however, the results combined cohabiting and married men together. Patterns of marriage and family formation changed dramatically in South Africa in recent years (Posel, et al., 2011). Many of the trends such as the declining rates of marriage of women (Amoateng, 2004) or the increase in cohabitation (Hosegood et al., 2009) have been much more acute for black South Africans than white South Africans.

The paper therefore, examines men’s reproductive behaviour and sexuality in South Africa. It will focus on shedding light in understanding whether or not there are differences amongst married and cohabiting men. Never been married men will further be explored to examine the extent at which their behaviour varies from cohabiting and married men. The study will contribute to the scarce literature on men reproductive and sexual behaviour in South Africa and emphasises the importance of men’s programmes in reproduction.

1.2 Methodology

The survey followed a stratified two-stage sample design with probability proportional to primary sampling units size (PSUs) at the first stage and systematic sampling of (dwelling units) DUs at the second stage. The Census 2011 DUs count was used as the PSU measure of size. A total of 750 PSUs were selected from the 26 sampling strata, yielding 468 selected PSUs in urban areas, 224 PSUs in traditional areas and 58 PSUs in farm areas. For further details of the sample design, refer to NDoH, 2019 (pg. 377-417).

The study used SADHS, 2016 men’s module data. The module includes 3 618 eligible men aged 15–59. Eligible men are defined as men aged 15–59 who slept in the household the previous night, irrespective of whether they usually reside in the household or are visiting the household. Main variables for the study are currently married, never been married and cohabiting men. For the purpose of the study 869 males who were married and 405 who were cohabiting were used for analysis. A total of 2 143 of never been married men were also explored to establish their behaviour with regard to their reproduction and sexuality. The results of the report are mainly based only on descriptive analysis to show the patterns.

1.3 Data quality

Data quality is one of the core of Statistics South Africa’s obligations of providing data to inform decision-making. It is against this context that data quality assessment that culminated in South African Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS) 2016 was conducted.
Table 1 indicates that a total of 15 292 households were selected for a sample of which 13 288 were occupied. Of all occupied households 11 083 were interviewed, resulting in a response rate of 83%. With regards to the sub-sample selected for the male survey, 4 952 eligible men aged 15–59 were identified and 3 618 were successfully interviewed. This yielded a response rate of 73% (NDoH, 2019).

Table 1: Number of households, interviews and response rate by residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Non-urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household selected</td>
<td>9 547</td>
<td>5 745</td>
<td>15 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households occupied</td>
<td>8 397</td>
<td>4 891</td>
<td>13 288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households interviewed</td>
<td>6 556</td>
<td>4 527</td>
<td>11 083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household response rate</td>
<td>78,1</td>
<td>92,6</td>
<td>83,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with men age 15–59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of eligible men</td>
<td>2 996</td>
<td>1 956</td>
<td>4 952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of eligible men interviewed</td>
<td>2 021</td>
<td>1 597</td>
<td>3 618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible men response rate</td>
<td>67,5</td>
<td>81,6</td>
<td>73,1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NDoH, 2019

Statistics South Africa selected content specialists from various sections to appraise the quality of data. Amongst other methods used, estimates from SADHS 2016 data were compared with other sources. Data was analysed to compare totals of indicators with preliminary findings from SADHS 2016 data. It was established that SADHS 2016 data is reasonable to be employed to compute demographic and health indicators hence, a quality report was compiled and published.

1.4 Limitations

It is important to note that disaggregation of other variables by age of men was not feasible due to few cases. Except for never been married men, data does not provide information on whether the men were married or cohabiting before the time of the survey. The other issue to note is that education variable (completed level of education) had categories that were erroneously grouped. However, this is addressed by using broad education groups namely, no education, primary, secondary, and more than secondary education (NDoH, 2019).
Chapter 2: Sexual behaviour and attitude amongst married and cohabiting men

2.1 Introduction

Sexual activity assists in establishing the magnitude at which men are at risk of impregnating women. These are critical to determine levels of fertility in a society, however the timing of sexual activities have negative outcome for men’s lives. This chapter presents patterns of marital status and some background characteristics of cohabiting and married men at the time of the survey.

2.2 Patterns of marital status

Figure 1 presents patterns of marriage by age of men. It is apparent that the proportion of never been married men decreases with age of men from 99.8% at age group 15–19 to 16.8% at men aged 50–59. A notable proportion of married men was at age group 30–34 (28.7%) and the proportions increased to 59% at elderly men aged 50–59. About 5.6% of men cohabited from the ages of 20 to 24. The proportion of cohabiting men began to peak at age group 30–34 (19.8%) and gradually decreased to 10.1% at age group 50–59.

Figure 1: Patterns of marital status by age of men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Never in union</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Cohabiting</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>No longer living together/ separated</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NDoH, 2019
2.3 Background characteristics

2.3.1 Province

Across all the provinces, Western Cape (37.1%), followed by Gauteng (28.6%) and North West (26.2%) had the highest proportion of men who were married. On average 20.3% of men in Eastern Cape and Free State were married. Men in Mpumalanga (20.2%) were more likely to cohabit compared to other provinces. This province was followed by Gauteng and North West with an average of 15.1% of cohabiting men. Eastern Cape and Limpopo had the least proportion of cohabiting men with an average of 4.7% (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by province](image)

2.3.2 Age

The age pattern in Figure 3 indicates that the proportion of cohabiting men started to be apparent at age group 25–29 (17.9%) and peaked from men aged 30–34 (21.8%). The proportion of these men began to decline from men aged 35–39 (17.6%) to those in the age group of 50–54 (4.9%). Married men surpassed cohabiting men from the ages of 40 to 44 (18%) to elderly men aged 55-59 (14.3%).
2.3.3 Level of education and employment in the past 12 months

Figure 4 indicates that cohabiting and married men had secondary education at a level of 64.4% and 61.6% respectively. Married men with higher education (18%) were two times higher than cohabiting men (8.9%). Nearly three in four (75.4%) married men were 1 currently working in the last 7 days before the survey whilst 62.1% of cohabiting men were employed during the same period. One third (33.3%) of cohabiting men reported to have not been working relative to 20.5% of married men.

1 Currently working refers to men who were employed in the past seven days before the survey
2.4 Number of children

2.4.1 Total number of children fathered by men
The presentation in Figure 5 indicates that almost half (49,6%) of cohabiting men had 1–2 children. The proportion of married men started to exceed that of cohabiting men from parity 3–4 and 5+. Thirty five percent of married men had 3–4 children compared to 22,4% of their counterparts. Similarly, married men were more likely to have 5+ children (18,5%) compared to cohabiting men (11,3%).

Figure 5: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by number of children fathered

2.4.2 Number of living children
Figure 6 shows that amongst men with zero living children, the proportion of cohabiting men (18,4%) was almost three times higher than married men (6,3%). Cohabiting and married men had the majority of 1–2 living children, however cohabiting surpassed married men by 10,5 percentage point. The proportion of married men with 3–4 and 5+ living children was higher than cohabiting men with 35,2% and 16,6% correspondingly.

Figure 6: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by number of living children

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2 Children fathered by men refer to all children that are biologically theirs even if they do not have their last name
2.5 Sexual behaviour and condom use

2.5.1 Age at first sex

Results in Figure 7 reveal that married and cohabiting men were more likely to engage in first sexual activity from the age group of 15–19 with high proportions of 65.0% and 63.1% respectively. The proportion of cohabiting men (13.6%) who started to have their first sexual encounter when they were 10–14 years old was almost double the one of married (7.7%). There was a slight difference between married (21.9%) and cohabiting (18.8%) men of 3.1 percentage point of men who engaged in first sex at 20–24 age group. Less than 6% of all men had their first sex at ages 25 years and above (5.4% married men and 4.5% cohabiting men).

Figure 7: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by age at first sex
2.5.2 Condom use

Men were asked if they used a condom during last sexual activity with the most recent partners and if yes, was a condom used every time they had sex in the last 12 months. Nearly four in five (78.2%) married men were more likely not to use a condom during last sex with the most recent partner (Figure 8). About two in three cohabiting men (67.6%) did not use a condom during last sex with the most recent partner. Nearly one in three men (33.7%) who were married revealed that they did not use a condom every time they had sex with the most recent partner in the last 12 months whilst 66.3% agreed to have used a condom during the same period. Similarly, the majority of cohabiting men (60.9%) reported to have used a condom every time they had sex with the most recent partner in the last 12 months and 39.1% of the men did not use a condom over the same period.

Figure 8: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by condom use

![Bar chart showing condom use percentages](chart.png)

2.5.3 Number of women the men fathered a child with

The findings in Figure 9 exhibit that almost three in five married men (62.5%) reported that they fathered a child with one woman. About half (49.5%) of cohabiting men fathered a child with one woman. On average 32.8% of married and cohabiting men fathered a child with more than one woman. The percentage of married men (5.6%) who did not father a child with any woman ³(category 0) is three times less than cohabiting men (16.7%).

³ 0 category in the presentation means that the men were childless
Figure 9: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by number of women men fathered a child with

![Figure 9: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by number of women men fathered a child with](image)

2.5.4 Paid for sex

Figure 10 indicates that almost all married (99%) and cohabiting men (96%) did not pay for sex in the last 12 months whilst only 4% of cohabiting men did pay for sex over the same period. At the other end, nearly all married men (98.4%) who reported they did not pay for sex in the last 12 months revealed that they did not pay anyone in exchange for sex. Equally, 97.4% of cohabiting men did never pay for sex whilst only 2.6% of the men paid for sex.

Figure 10: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by whether they paid for sex

![Figure 10: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by whether they paid for sex](image)
3. Conclusion

The proportion of cohabiting men was evident at age group 30–34 (21.8%). Married men aged 30–34 was at 14.9% and peaked at those men aged 40–44 (18%). Across all provinces, Western Cape (37.1%), followed by Gauteng (28.6%) and North West (26.2%) had the highest proportion of men who were married. Men in Mpumalanga (20.2%) were more likely to cohabit compared to other provinces. Married men seemed to be currently working at the time of the survey than cohabiting men. Majority of married and cohabiting men engaged in first sex from the ages of 15 to 19. At the most, cohabiting men had 1–2 living children whilst married men had 3–5 living children. Nearly four in five (78.2%) married men were more likely not to use a condom during last sex with the most recent partner. The majority (62.5%) of married men appeared to father a child with one woman. Almost all married and cohabiting men never paid anyone in exchange for sex.
Chapter 3: Fertility preference and knowledge of contraception

3.1 Introduction

Information on fertility preference can assist policies and programmes to evaluate the desire to have children and the timing of having the next birth. Thus, the information will indicate the demand for contraception. This chapter presents information on fertility preference, family size and desire to have more children amongst men who were married and cohabiting. It also explores men’s knowledge of contraception and women’s ovulatory cycle.

3.2 Fertility preference

The findings in Figure 11 resulted from the question that was directed to men who fathered children with spouses or partners that were not pregnant. It was constructed as follows: Would you like to have another child or would you prefer not to have any more children? About three in five married men (63,1%) wanted no more children and 29,3% wanted to have another child. The largest percentage of cohabiting men (49,2%) wanted to have another child whilst 41,4% wanted no more children.

Figure 11: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men who have fathered children by fertility preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>No more</th>
<th>Have another</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B: Other refers to sterilized (respondent or partner) and declared infecund (respondent or partner)

3.3 Desire for more children

*Men who were not sure if their partners were pregnant or not were excluded
Men were asked whether they wanted more children, and if so, how long they would prefer to wait before the birth of the next child. The results in Figure 12 refer to men who indicated that they wanted to have another child. About three in five married men (59.1%) wanted to have another child within 2 years, whilst 54.8% of cohabiting men wanted to have another child within the same period. There was no significant difference between married (22.2%) and cohabiting (24.5%) men who would want to have another birth after 2 years and above. Cohabiting men (20.6%) who wanted to have another child but unsure of the timing were slightly higher than married men (18.7%).

Figure 12: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men who have fathered children by desire for more children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wants within 2 years</th>
<th>Wants after 2+ years</th>
<th>Wants, unsure timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Ideal number of children

The question was asked to men with living children that if they could go back to the time they did not have any children and could choose exactly the number of children to have in their whole lives, how many would that be? Figure 13 exhibits that a notable proportion of married (42.8%) and cohabiting (41.9%) men reported the ideal number of 3–4 children. There was a slight variation amongst married and cohabiting men at the ideal number of children of 1–2 with proportions of 26.7% and 22.6% respectively. At ideal number \(^5\) zero, cohabiting men exceeds married men by only 2%.

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\(^5\) Ideal number of zero(0) implies that men would not have wanted children
4. Knowledge of contraception and ovulatory cycle

4.1 Knowledge of contraception from media

The findings in Figure 14 show that only 6.4% and 12.5% of cohabiting and married men discussed family planning with a health worker. The proportion of married (45.9%) and cohabiting (44.6%) men saw family planning information on TV. At least 46.1% of cohabiting men heard information about contraception from the radio.
4.2 Current contraceptive method

The question on contraceptive method used was asked to men but referred to both married and cohabiting couples. The majority of married (54.5%) and cohabiting (57.1%) couples did not use contraceptive methods. Amongst those who used contraceptive methods, a condom was more prevalent with married men at 24.1% and cohabiting men at 28.3%. This was followed by cohabiting and married couples who used an injection with 9.3% and 7.9% respectively (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by contraceptive methods

4.3 Knowledge of pregnancy

The question that yielded results in Figure 16 (a) and (b) wanted to establish if men know whether a woman can get pregnant after birth of a child before her menstrual period returns. In Figure 15(a) and 15(b) almost half of married (52.4%) and 45.1% of cohabiting men agreed that a woman can get pregnant after the birth of a child before her menstrual period returns. The proportion of cohabiting men (36.7%) who reported that they do not know was higher than married men (26.9%). There was a marginal difference of 2.5 percentage point between married and cohabiting men who indicated that women cannot get pregnant after birth of a child before her period returns (20.7% and 18.2%) correspondingly.
4.4 Knowledge ovulatory cycle

Men where asked if there are certain days when a woman is more likely to become pregnant from one menstrual period to the other if she engages in sexual relations and if so, when can it be? The results in Figure 17 reveal that on average, 25.1% of married and cohabiting men did not know the likelihood of a woman to become pregnant. This was followed by an average of 23.2% of all men who reported that a woman is more likely to become pregnant after the period ended. Less than 5% of all men reported that a woman can get pregnant during her period. Twelve percent of all men indicated that a woman is likely to get pregnant at any time. Married (21.4%) and cohabiting (16.2%) men reported that a woman is at risk of becoming pregnant before her period begins.
### 4.5 Attitudes towards contraception

Nearly three in four men who cohabited (75.9%) and married (74.1%) disagreed that contraception is a woman’s thing and man should not worry. Only 16.6% of married men and 13.3% of cohabiting men agreed that contraception is a woman's thing. In the same way, the majority of married and cohabiting men (63.7%) and (69.8%) disagreed that women who use contraception are promiscuous. About 20.8% of married men agreed that women who use contraception are promiscuous (Figure 18).

**Figure 18: Percentage distribution of married and cohabiting men by attitudes towards contraception**

![Percentage distribution chart showing attitudes towards contraception among married and cohabiting men.](chart)

### 5. Conclusion

Approximately three in five married men (63.1%) wanted no more children. A notable proportion of married (42.8%) and cohabiting (41.9%) men reported the ideal number of 3–4 children. Only 6.4% and 12.5% of cohabiting and married men discussed family planning with a health worker. Almost half of married men (52.4%) and 45.1% of cohabiting men agreed that a woman can get pregnant after the birth of a child and before her menstrual period returns. Nearly three in four men who cohabited (75.9%) and married (74.1%) disagreed that contraception is a woman's thing, man should not worry.
Chapter 4: Never been married men

4.1 Introduction

As the share of never been married adults has risen, their characteristics have diverged increasingly from those of married adults. Research has shown that Southern African countries and South Africa in particular, are characterised by late marriages, low marriage rates and a marked proportion of persons who were never married. Statistics South Africa indicated that the number of never been married men increased from 47.7% in 1996 to 56.5% in 2016 (Stats SA, 2018). This chapter provides an insight of reproductive and sexual behaviour of never been married men.

4.2 Some background characteristics of men who have never been married

4.2.1 Age

The proportion of men who have never been married decreases as age increases. It declined from 30.1% at age group 15–19 to a low of 1.1% amongst men aged 55–59. The steepest gap 8.7 percentage point of the proportion of men was evident amongst never been married men aged 20–24 (25.4%) and 25–29 (16.7%) (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Percentage distribution of never been married men by age

4.2.2 Level of education and employment in the past 12 months

More than three in four (77.3%) of never been married men had secondary education (Figure 20a). Only 1.7% of the men had no education whilst 12% had primary education. In figure 20b, about three in five never
been married men (61.9%) were not employed. Nearly one in three of the men (31.4%) were currently working and 6.7% were working in a year preceding the survey.

Figure 20: (a) and (b): Percentage distribution of never been married men by level of education and employment in the past 12 months

4.2.3 The number of children of never been married men fathered and ideal number of children

Figure 21 (a) and (b) present the proportion of never been married men by number of children fathered and ideal number of children. The majority of never been married men (71.3%) seemed to have no children. Except for parity 5, the proportion of never been married men decreases as parity increases. The gap was more steeper between parity zero and one with a percentage point of 57.6. Almost half of never been married men (52.2%) indicated the ideal number of 3–4 children. The proportion of never been married men who wanted 1–2 children was almost half (22.7%) of those who wanted 3–4 children.

Figure 21 (a) and (b): Percentage distribution of never been married men by number of children fathered and ideal number of children
4.3 Sexual activity and fertility preference

4.3.1 Age at first sex

A notable proportion of never been married men aged 20–24 (74%) and 25–29 (72.7%) started to have first sexual encounter at age group 15–19. On average, 66.2% of men aged 30–34 and 35+ began to engage in first sexual intercourse at age group of 15–19. About half (49.3%) of never been married teenagers who were 15–19 years had had no sexual intercourse at the time of the survey (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Percentage distribution of never been married men by age at first sex and current age

4.3.2 Time since last sexual intercourse in days

The question was asked to establish the last time the never been married men had sexual intercourse before the survey. Figure 23 reveals that teenagers aged 15–19 (63.0%) and young men aged 20–24 (44.5%) were more likely to have had sex in 31+ days before the survey. Most men who were in the age groups of 25–29 (46.7%) and 30–34 (50.5%) had sex within 7 days before the survey.
4.3.3 Condom use with most recent partner

The question on sexual activity sought to find out whether a condom was used with the recent partner, and if yes, was it used every time in the last 12 months. Condom use with the most recent partners decreases with the age of men who have never been married. It declined from a high of 81.1% from age group 15–19 to 57.1% at men aged 35 and above. In contrast, the proportion of never been married men who reported to have not used a condom with their most recent partners increases with the age of men surveyed. The proportion of never been married men at the ages of 15–19 (18.9%) almost doubled (42.9%) the one of never been married men aged 35 and above (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Percentage distribution of never been married men by condom use and current age during last sex with the most recent partner
4.3.4 Condom use with the most recent partner every time men had sex in the last 12 months

It is evident that young never been married men used a condom more often compared to older men (Figure 25). Eighty three percent and 84.4% of men aged 15–19 and 20–24 used a condom every time they had sex with the most recent partner in the last 12 months. On average, 72.7% of men aged 25–29 and 30–34 used a condom over the same period. The highest proportion of men who did not use a condom every time they had sex with the most recent partner in the last 12 months was noticeable at elderly never been married men (31.1%) aged 35 and above.

Figure 25: Percentage distribution of never been married men by condom use every time they had sex with the most recent partner in the last 12 months

4.3.5 Relationship with the most recent sexual partner for men who reported they have never used a condom

Of all the men who did not use a condom with the most recent partners, 86% reported that their partners were girlfriends or fiancés. Fourteen percent of the partners were casual acquaintances (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Percentage distribution of never been married men by relationship with the most recent partner
4.3.6 Paid anyone in exchange for sex

Never been married men were asked if they paid for sex in the last 12 months before the survey, and if yes, was a condom used. About 100% (99.7%) and 98% of never been married men aged 15–19 and 20–24 did not pay anyone for sex in the last 12 months. On average 94.5% of men aged 25–34 and above did not pay for sex to anyone over the same period (Figure 27a). Of all the men who reported to have paid for sex, 91.7% used a condom and 8.3% did not use a condom (Figure 27b).

Figure 27: (a) and (b): Percentage distribution of never been married men by whether they have paid anyone for sex in the past 12 months

![Figure 27](image)

4.3.7 Contraceptive information from media

Except for never been married men aged 35 and above, most of the men have seen information about contraception on TV (Figure 28). Their proportion increased from men aged 15–19 (32,4%) to those aged 30–34 (42,4%). These were followed by proportion of never been married men who have heard information about contraception from a radio. The proportion increased from 22,0% to 41% within the same age groups. Across all age groups, less than 8% of never been married men discussed contraception matters with a health worker.
4.3.8 Attitude towards contraception

In Figure 29, about two in three men (66%) of never been married men disagreed that contraception is a woman’s business and a man should not worry. Nearly one in five men (19.8%) agreed that contraception is a woman’s thing. More than half of the never been married men (55.1%) also disagreed that women who use contraception become promiscuous whilst 28% agreed that it leads to promiscuity.

4.3.9 Knowledge of ovulatory cycle

Figure 30 shows that the highest proportion of never been married men who did know when a women is more likely become pregnant when she experiences one menstrual period to the next was almost double (36.4%) that of the men who indicated that women can become pregnant at any time of the month (18%). Only 15.4% of the men reported that women can become pregnant after her menstrual period has ended.
Figure 30: Percentage distribution of never been married men by knowledge of ovulatory cycle of women

4.4 Conclusion

About three in four men (77.3%) of never been married men had secondary education and three in five (61.9%) were not employed in the past 12 months. The majority of never been married men (71.3%) seemed to have no children. Almost half of never been married men (52.2%) indicated that the ideal number of children they would like to have is 3–4.

A notable proportion of never been married men aged 20–24 (74%) and 25–29 (72.5%) started to have their first sexual intercourse at age group 15–19. Condom use with the most recent partner decreases with the age of men who have never been married. It declined from a high of 81.1% from age group 15–19 to 57.1% at men aged 35 and above.
Chapter 5: Summary of findings and discussions

The proportion of cohabiting men started to be evident at age group 25-29 (17.9%) and peaked from men aged 30-34 (21.8%). The results resonate with the ones from Community Survey 2016 where, in the period of 1996–2011, over 19% of the population aged 25–29 were cohabiting; however, the highest proportions of cohabiting persons shifted to the age group of 30–34 in 2016. (Stats SA, 2018). In addition, the findings concur with Palamuleni, 2010, in his study on Recent Marriage Patterns in South Africa he indicated that cohabitation is a phenomenon of 20–40 years age group and it has grown by about 50% between 1996 and 2007.

Across all the provinces, Western Cape, followed by Gauteng and North West had the highest proportion of men who were married. In South Africa registered marriages and divorces data are based on the continuous recording of the events as they take place. The three types of marriages that are recognised by law are civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions (The Department of Home Affairs (DHA). Although SADHS, 2016 did not categorize marriage according to this type, the results corroborate with the ones from DHA. Western Cape was amongst the provinces with the highest registered civil marriages (Stats SA, 2019a). The high proportion of married men in Gauteng and North West might be attested to the high influx of migrants to the provinces.

Nearly three in four married men were currently working in the last 7 days before the survey and were more likely to have attained higher education. Kalmijn, 2011, looked at the Influence of men’s income and employment on marriage and cohabitation and revealed that the odds of entering a union were 58% higher for employed men than for men who were not employed and not in school. The study by Reeves and Eleanor 2017, that was comparing cohabiting parents with married ones indicated that marriage is more prevalent and more durable among better educated, higher income American population. Married mothers and fathers are over four times more likely to hold a Bachelor’s or advanced degree than cohabiting parents (ibid).

With regards to never been married men, the majority had only secondary education and were not employed at the time of the survey. South Africa experienced the highest unemployment rate in the third quarter of 2019 (29.1). For men, the rate increased from 22.0 in quarter four of 2011 to 27.7 in quarter three of 2019 (Stats SA, 2019b). The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) have shrunk by 1.4% point in the last quarter of 2019(Stats SA, 2019c). The unemployment figures of men who have never been married might be attested to the current unemployment and GDP indicators in South Africa

Married men surpassed cohabiting men from parity 3–4 and 5 and above. It is well established that cohabiting couples have fewer children and are more likely to remain childless than married couples...
In the study of complex patterns of fatherhood, evidence from the national survey of family growth, Nock, 2007 established that most American fathers had children only while they were legally married to the mothers. This pattern in South Africa might be due to fertility postponement of cohabiters because they are not certain of the future status of the relationship arrangements. In addition, the relationships seemed to dissolve more quickly than married men.

The highest proportion of married and cohabiting men was evident at 3–4 ideal number of children. The pattern is also apparent amongst never been married men. Although the number of children desired by married men tend to decline over time, the difference in the number of children that women and men consider ideal varies greatly across region. For instance, Bodigelo and Maluleke, 2019, in their study of appraising fertility data in South Africa from CS 2016 data estimated fertility rate of 2.3 however, men ideal number of children is 3–4. In sub-Saharan countries except Rwanda, men wanted more children on average than women. This is particularly the case in some Western and Middle African countries such as Chad, Mali, Niger, and Senegal (Charles, et al., 2018).

The majority of all men (married, cohabiting and never been married) began to have first sexual intercourse from ages of 15 to 19. The results are consistent with the study of Nugent and Daugherty, 2018 on cohabitation. They established that cohabiters and married men were more likely to engage in first sexual intercourse before the age of 18. The explanation to this might be that married men may have cohabited or been in a relationship before they were legally married. Similarly, the study of McGrath et al., 2009 which identified factors associated with sexual debut and early age at first sex amongst young men and women (12–25 years) in a population with a high prevalence and incidence of human immunodeficiency viruses (HIV) in rural South Africa established that the median age at first sex for young women and men was 18.5 years and 19.2 years respectively.

A notable proportion of married and cohabiting men reported to have not used a condom with their most recent partners. In some way these findings are consistent with those of many other studies conducted in Eastern and Southern Africa. For instance, in the study of risk perception and condom use among married and cohabiting couples in KwaZulu-Natal by Maharaj and Cleland 2005, it was found out that condom use within marriage is uncommon and attitudes toward condom use remain rather negative, particularly amongst men. However, a recent study that modelled the role of condom use in South Africa estimated that 23–37% of the reduction in HIV incidence from 2000–2008 was due to condom use (Johnson et al., 2012).

Married men wanted no more children whilst cohabiting men wanted to have another child. Marriage and cohabitation are inherently distinct unions and therefore, married and cohabiting couples could behave differently even if they have identical characteristics. Married couples tend to be older and older age is usually associated with a higher number of children (Zhang and Sang X, 2007).
Only 6.4% and 12.5% of cohabiting and married men discussed family planning with a health worker. On average 45% of married and cohabiting men have at least saw family planning information on TV. Male respondents who had discussed family planning with a health worker were more likely to use modern contraceptives than those who had not. Findings from the study on Modern Contraceptive Use among sexually active men in Uganda indicated that region, education, wealth index, surviving children and fertility preference were significantly associated with modern contraceptive use among men (Kabagenyi et al., 2014). Further, research studies relating to men’s contraceptive use must be conducted in South Africa.

About three in four men who cohabited and were married disagreed that contraception is a woman’s thing and a man should not worry. Similarly, higher proportion of never been married men disagreed with the statement. The results resonate with the study conducted in 11 countries. In six of the eleven countries (Nigeria, Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Zimbabwe), over 70% of men disagreed, indicating strong support for the idea that contraception is a shared responsibility for both men and women (MacQuarrie et al., 2017).
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