

6 Summary and Conclusions

This report shows large regional variations in the reproductive preferences and behavior of currently married men. With few exceptions, countries in the same region have similar levels for most of the variables examined. Thus, West African men consistently express higher fertility desires and are less likely to approve of or use contraception than men in other regions. The 1993 survey in Ghana is the one exception to this West African model. Tanzania and Pakistan are also exceptions to regional patterns. Located in East Africa and Asia, respectively, the reproductive preferences and behavior of Tanzania are closer to West African levels while Pakistan behavior is closer to East African levels when compared to prevailing levels in their own regions.

Within countries, urban residence and education are associated with lower fertility desires and higher contraceptive use among currently married men. Differences by age, type of union, and number of children are generally small. Men are more likely than currently married women in the same country to report knowledge and use of contraception, but women are more likely to intend to use contraception and to approve of family planning. Differences between men and women are more pronounced in West Africa than in other regions. In West Africa, for example, men, on average, want

four children more than women. Elsewhere, men and women expressed similar family size preferences. In every region, women are more likely than men to express a definite desire to stop childbearing. Gender differences in the desire for another child widen as parity increases.

The surveys analyzed in this report cover three phases of the DHS project and span more than six years. While the differences in demographic indicators across countries are meaningful, care should be exercised in attributing them to underlying differences among men in various societies. As the results of successive surveys in Ghana and Kenya demonstrate, these demographic indicators can and do change over time, presumably due in large part to changing reproductive patterns. A second round of male surveys is needed in each of the other countries to determine whether the changes observed in Ghana and Kenya are taking place elsewhere. New surveys of men in these countries would also show the extent to which differences found between countries are due to the timing of the surveys. The differences between Bangladesh and Pakistan, for example, or between Ghana and the rest of West Africa (especially Cameroon, Mali, and Niger) may be explained wholly or in part by differences in the dates of the surveys.