

# Measurement of FP/Fertility with a Couple Perspective

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IUSSP Panel on Rethinking FP Measurement with a Reproductive Rights and Justice Lens

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# Overview

- Introduction
- It takes two to tango
- Context matters
- Measures obtained from mixed methods will improve our understanding
- Challenges in obtaining couple measures
- Conclusion



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# Introduction

- Traditionally: FP/fertility measures have been derived from women
- ICPD 1994 put the spotlight on the importance of male involvement
- Most frequently referenced measures – used to track progress & assess impact of policies & programs

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## Family planning

- Contraceptive prevalence
- Unmet need
- Demand satisfied

## Fertility

- Total fertility rate
- Crude birth rate
- Child woman ratio
- General fertility rate
- Age-specific fertility rates
- Parity progression rates

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# Reminders from the first panel

- We need to clearly articulate what we are measuring, who we are obtaining data from, our audience, and what the data will be used for
- Measures of FP and fertility demand differ
- We need to use a reproductive justice and rights lens
- A holistic human-rights based voluntary FP program framework is very useful but not perfect
- While existing measures are still useful, the only thing that is constant is change!

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# It takes two to tango

## Couple studies:

- Disagreement between responses
  - Differences in report of desired fertility; contraceptive use
    - Need for both perspectives (See Becker, 1996; Bankole & Singh, 1998; Manea & Fučík, 2011)
- Unmet need for couples should be measured
  - When based on women's fertility intentions, we overestimate couples' concordant unmet need for FP (See Bankole & Ezeh, 1999; Becker, 1999; Pearson & Becker, 2014)
- Couple-focused interventions more effective than focus on women/men alone



# Context matters

Patriarchy

Union type

Religion

Community norms

Region

Policy

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# Measures obtained from mixed methods will improve our understanding



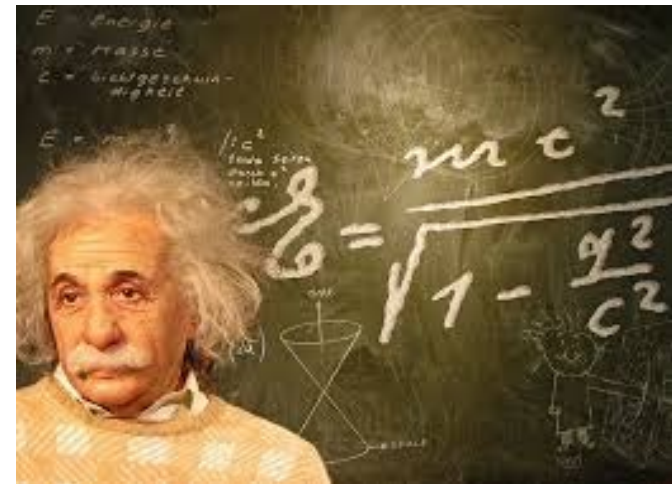
Quantitative studies often lack depth



Qualitative studies add depth

“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.”

- Albert Einstein



# Challenges in obtaining couple measures



- Clinic-based research: RH services are generally oriented toward women
  - Opportunities: Encourage men to accompany wives & seek services
- Community-based research: Men are often difficult to pin down for surveys
  - Opportunities: Flexibility in timing of visits; gender-matched interviewers; proper community entry
- Methodological challenges
  - Some surveys ask different questions from men and women, making comparisons of couple responses challenging
    - Opportunities
      - Ensure same questions are asked of men and women in surveys
      - More research to test measurement of couple unmet need for monogamous and polygynous couples (build on Bankole & Ezeh, 1999; Pearson & Becker, 2014)



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# To sum up...

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- Existing measures are still very useful but additional new measures are needed that reflect a better understanding of what is missing from the existing measures
  - contraceptive autonomy
  - person-centered
  - **couple-centered**
  - **contextual - community perspectives**
  - reproductive justice and rights
  - learnings from mixed methods research