

CHAPTER 5

OTHER PROXIMATE DETERMINANTS OF FERTILITY

This chapter addresses the principal factors, other than contraception, which affect a woman's risk of becoming pregnant: nuptiality and sexual intercourse, postpartum amenorrhoea and abstinence from sexual relations, and secondary infertility.

While it is by no means exact, marriage is an indicator of exposure of women to the risk of pregnancy, and is therefore important for the understanding of fertility. Populations in which age at marriage is low also tend to experience early childbearing and high fertility; hence the motivation to examine trends in age at marriage.

This chapter also includes more direct measures of the beginning of exposure to pregnancy and the level of exposure: age at first sexual intercourse and the frequency of intercourse. Measures of other proximate determinants of fertility are the durations of postpartum amenorrhoea and postpartum abstinence and the level of secondary infertility.

5.1 Marital Status

Data on the marital status of respondents at the time of the survey are shown in Table 5.1. The term "married" refers to legal or formal marriage, while "living together" refers to informal unions. In subsequent tables, these two categories are combined and referred to collectively as "currently married" or "currently in union." Women who are widowed, divorced, and no longer living together (separated) make up the remainder of the "ever-married or "ever in union" category.

Table 5.1 Current marital status

Percent distribution of women by current marital status, according to age, Zambia 1992

Age	Marital status						Total	Number of women
	Never married	Married	Living together	Widowed	Divorced	No longer living together		
15-19	70.4	26.0	0.5	0.2	1.8	1.1	100.0	1984
20-24	21.2	66.5	2.1	1.1	6.2	2.9	100.0	1441
25-29	5.7	76.7	3.2	2.1	8.7	3.6	100.0	1179
30-34	2.0	79.5	3.0	3.8	10.3	1.5	100.0	915
35-39	0.7	79.7	2.2	3.5	11.8	2.2	100.0	656
40-44	0.1	79.3	2.3	5.7	9.8	2.8	100.0	505
45-49	0.0	75.2	2.5	8.5	11.6	2.2	100.0	380
Total	25.4	61.1	2.0	2.3	7.0	2.2	100.0	7060

Most Zambian women of reproductive age are currently in a marital union (63 percent). The 1980 census which also defined marriage to include unions "where no ceremony has been performed but the man and woman are living as husband and wife," reported a slightly higher figure (67 percent of women). Some of the decrease in the proportion married is probably due to a rising age at first marriage (see section 5.3), though some is no doubt due to the relatively larger proportion of teenagers surveyed in the ZDHS, most of whom have not yet married. Consequently, the proportion never married appears to have increased slightly from 24 percent in 1980 to 25 percent in 1992. The proportion who have never married drops precipitously among women in their late 20s. The proportion divorced or separated (no longer living together) rises steeply after age group 15-19 until age 25-29, after which it stays relatively constant at about 12-14 percent of women. The proportion widowed rises more gradually, reaching about 9 percent of women age 45-49.

5.2 Polygyny

Since polygyny is practiced in Zambia, married women were asked in the ZDHS whether their husbands had other wives, and if so, how many. Overall, 18 percent of currently married women are in a polygynous union. The figures presented in Table 5.2 indicate that polygyny exists in all provinces and among all socioeconomic groups, although prevalence varies. Rural women are about three times more likely than urban women to be in such unions. One-third of married women in Southern Province and one-quarter

Table 5.2 Polygyny

Percentage of currently married women in a polygynous union, by age and selected background characteristics, Zambia 1992

Background characteristic	Age of woman							All ages
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
Residence								
Urban	1.7	4.8	9.1	12.2	11.5	13.6	19.6	9.3
Rural	13.4	15.6	25.8	34.9	33.5	29.4	35.6	25.1
Province								
Central	(4.5)	14.6	11.8	17.0	(20.6)	(22.8)	(44.4)	16.6
Copperbelt	3.4	3.3	8.5	11.3	10.4	11.1	13.8	8.2
Eastern	13.4	14.4	19.6	30.4	(27.6)	(31.1)	(36.8)	22.3
Luapula	9.5	10.8	24.0	24.1	(16.2)	(22.5)	*	17.3
Lusaka	3.5	6.6	6.6	12.5	6.6	12.4	(21.3)	8.7
Northern	10.0	15.7	26.8	(36.2)	(37.6)	(34.3)	(39.0)	25.7
North-Western	(0.0)	6.7	12.1	(24.1)	(36.9)	*	*	15.6
Southern	19.0	18.4	35.2	44.7	45.9	35.3	(36.8)	32.8
Western	*	10.6	16.5	32.1	(26.3)	(24.4)	(36.2)	22.1
Education								
No education	12.4	17.9	21.8	33.9	30.3	22.3	32.2	24.8
Primary	8.9	10.9	18.8	22.7	22.5	24.9	29.0	17.7
Secondary	(4.3)	5.2	12.2	14.2	17.5	(19.9)	*	11.3
Total	9.1	10.6	17.2	22.6	22.3	22.6	30.2	17.7

Note: Rates shown in parentheses are based on 25 to 49 women, while an asterisk means the rate is based on fewer than 25 women and has been suppressed.

in the Northern Province are in polygynous unions, compared to 22 percent of women in Eastern and Western Provinces, between 16 and 18 percent in Luapula, North-Western and Central Provinces and between 8 and 9 percent in Copperbelt and Lusaka Provinces. Nearly one-quarter of the women with no formal schooling are in a polygynous union, compared to 11 percent of those with secondary education.

Most women in polygynous unions have only one co-wife, however, one-third of the women (6 percent of all married women) have two or more co-wives (see Table 5.3). In fact, in Southern and North-Western Provinces, though a majority of women are in monogamous unions (67 and 84 percent, respectively), more women have two or more co-wives (20 percent and 11 percent) than have one co-wife (13 percent and 4 percent, respectively).

Table 5.3 Number of co-wives

Percent distribution of currently married women by number of co-wives, according to selected background characteristics, Zambia 1992

Background characteristic	Number of co-wives			Missing	Total	Number of women
	0	1	2+			
Age						
15-19	90.9	6.9	2.2	0.0	100.0	526
20-24	89.4	7.1	3.3	0.1	100.0	989
25-29	82.8	10.8	6.4	0.0	100.0	943
30-34	77.4	13.8	8.7	0.1	100.0	755
35-39	77.7	13.5	8.8	0.1	100.0	537
40-44	77.4	13.7	9.0	0.0	100.0	412
45-49	69.8	19.4	10.8	0.0	100.0	295
Residence						
Urban	90.7	6.6	2.6	0.1	100.0	2091
Rural	74.9	15.3	9.8	0.0	100.0	2366
Province						
Central	83.4	10.3	6.1	0.3	100.0	418
Copperbelt	91.8	6.5	1.6	0.1	100.0	1023
Eastern	77.7	16.5	5.8	0.0	100.0	536
Luapula	82.7	14.8	2.5	0.0	100.0	281
Lusaka	91.3	5.2	3.6	0.0	100.0	738
Northern	74.3	20.5	5.2	0.0	100.0	423
North-Western	84.4	3.9	11.4	0.3	100.0	124
Southern	67.2	12.7	20.1	0.0	100.0	673
Western	77.9	18.5	3.6	0.0	100.0	241
Education						
No education	75.2	17.2	7.6	0.0	100.0	864
Primary	82.3	10.8	6.9	0.1	100.0	2754
Secondary	88.7	7.2	4.1	0.1	100.0	745
Higher	97.7	1.2	1.2	0.0	100.0	93
Total	82.3	11.2	6.4	0.1	100.0	4457

The tendency to have another wife (either one or two or more co-wives) increases with age, a reflection of changes in the marital status as widowed and divorced women are remarried. Whilst a rural woman is twice as likely as an urban woman to have one co-wife, she is four times more likely than her urban counterpart to have two or more co-wives. More educated women are less likely to have a co-wife: 17 percent of women with no education have one co-wife, compared to 11 percent and 7 percent of those who have primary and secondary education, respectively. Women with no education are also nearly twice as likely as those with secondary education to have two or more co-wives.

5.3 Age at First Marriage

ZDHS data show that half the women in Zambia marry before they reach age 18. The reported mean age at first union is 18.5 years; the 1980 census reported a mean age at first marriage of 18.3 years (Central Statistical Office, 1985a). The data presented in Table 5.4 indicate a median age at first marriage of 17.4 for women age 25-49 and 17.7 among the 20-49 year olds; the pattern shows a trend toward later age at marriage for younger women.

Table 5.4 Age at first marriage

Percentage of women who were first married by exact age 15, 18, 20, 22, and 25, and median age at first marriage, according to current age, Zambia 1992

Current age	Percentage of women who were first married by exact age:					Percentage who had never married	Median age at first marriage	Number of women
	15	18	20	22	25			
15-19	4.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	70.4	a	1984
20-24	9.0	43.3	63.6	NA	NA	21.2	18.6	1441
25-29	12.0	50.4	69.5	81.9	91.6	5.7	18.0	1179
30-34	17.7	60.6	78.4	87.8	94.6	2.0	17.2	915
35-39	19.3	63.8	82.7	90.8	96.2	0.7	17.2	656
40-44	22.6	62.9	81.2	91.6	95.8	0.1	17.0	505
45-49	31.1	64.8	79.3	90.0	96.1	0.0	16.6	380
20-49	15.6	54.3	73.0	83.7	89.9	7.8	17.7	5076
25-49	18.2	58.6	76.8	87.2	94.2	2.5	17.4	3635

NA = Not applicable
^aOmitted because less than 50 percent of the women in the age group x to $x+4$ were first married by age x

Cohort trends in age at marriage can also be described by comparing the cumulative distribution for successive age groups, as shown in Table 5.4.¹ The age at marriage appears to have increased over time. The proportion of women married by age 15 has decreased systematically from 31 percent among those age

¹ For each cohort the accumulated percentages stop at the lower age boundary of the cohort to avoid censoring problems. For instance, for the cohort currently aged 20-24, accumulation stops with the percentage married by exact age 20.

45-49 to 4 percent among the 15-19 year-olds. The median age at marriage has increased from 17 years or less among women now in their 30s and 40s to 18 and over among women in their 20s. Thus, the median age at marriage has increased by between one to one and a half years.

The national picture masks large differentials in marriage behaviour patterns; Table 5.5 presents a more detailed picture of the trends in the median age at marriage. It can be seen that the changes observed at the national level have been achieved primarily through changes in the behaviour of women in urban areas, where the median age at marriage has increased by more than 3 years between cohorts of women age 20-24 and 45-49. Increases of 2 years or more have taken place among women in Copperbelt, Central and Luapula Provinces, whilst the median age at marriage among women in North-Western, Eastern and Southern Provinces has risen by over one year. Level of education attended is closely related to age at first marriage. The median age at first marriage for women 25-49 increases steadily with education, from 16.7 among women with no education to 19.9 for women with secondary or higher schooling.

Table 5.5 Median age at first marriage

Median age at first marriage among women age 20-49 years, by current age and selected background characteristics, Zambia 1992

Background characteristic	Current age						Women age 20-49	Women age 25-49
	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49		
Residence								
Urban	19.7	18.4	17.2	17.2	17.1	16.4	18.0	17.5
Rural	17.9	17.6	17.2	17.1	17.0	16.7	17.4	17.2
Province								
Central	18.0	18.0	17.5	(16.6)	(16.4)	(15.8)	17.5	17.2
Copperbelt	18.9	18.3	16.9	16.8	16.8	16.5	17.6	17.2
Eastern	17.6	17.7	17.4	18.0	17.0	(16.3)	17.5	17.4
Luapula	17.6	17.3	16.7	17.0	16.4	(15.6)	17.0	16.8
Lusaka	a	18.5	17.5	17.1	17.5	(18.0)	18.4	17.8
Northern	17.8	17.5	16.6	(17.3)	(18.1)	(17.2)	17.4	17.3
North-Western	17.6	17.8	17.8	(15.7)	(15.6)	*	17.1	17.0
Southern	18.8	18.0	17.0	17.5	16.8	(17.6)	17.8	17.5
Western	a	18.1	18.4	17.4	(17.8)	16.8	18.2	17.8
Education								
No education	17.7	17.4	16.4	16.3	16.6	16.5	16.9	16.7
Primary	17.8	17.3	16.7	16.8	16.8	16.7	17.1	16.9
Secondary+	a	20.8	20.0	18.7	19.6	*	a	19.9
Total	18.6	18.0	17.2	17.2	17.0	16.6	17.7	17.4

Note: Rates shown in parentheses are based on 25 to 49 women, while an asterisk means the rate is based on fewer than 25 women and has been suppressed. Medians are not shown for women 15-19 because less than 50 percent of these women had married by age 15.

^aOmitted because less than 50 percent of the women in the age group were first married by age 20.

5.4 Age at First Sexual Intercourse

While age at first marriage is often used as a proxy for exposure to intercourse, the two events do not necessarily occur at the same time. Women may engage in sexual relations prior to marriage, especially if they are postponing the age at which they marry. The ZDHS asked women the age at which they first had sexual intercourse (see Tables 5.6 and 5.7). (Note that the information on age at first sexual intercourse in Tables 5.6 and 5.7 parallels the information on age at first marriage in Tables 5.4 and 5.5).

In many cases sexual activity precedes marriage (see Table 5.6). For instance, by age 18, 72 percent of the women age 20-49 had had sexual intercourse, whereas only 54 percent had married; similarly, by age 20, 88 percent had had intercourse, while 73 percent had married. Overall, the median age at first sexual intercourse is 16.3 years, which is about 1.4 years earlier than the median age at first marriage of 17.7. Analysis of cohorts indicates that there has been little change in the median age at first sexual intercourse over time.

Current age	Percentage of women who had first intercourse by exact age:					Percentage who never had intercourse	Median age at first intercourse	Number of women
	15	18	20	22	25			
15-19	19.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	39.5	a	1984
20-24	20.2	68.9	86.9	NA	NA	4.3	16.6	1441
25-29	23.3	70.9	87.2	93.8	98.1	0.6	16.4	1179
30-34	28.1	77.1	90.7	96.1	98.4	0.2	16.0	915
35-39	27.5	75.8	90.8	95.7	98.4	0.0	16.2	656
40-44	28.9	72.5	88.8	95.6	97.4	0.0	16.3	505
45-49	36.8	71.4	86.6	92.7	98.1	0.0	16.0	380
20-49	25.4	72.3	88.3	94.6	97.3	1.4	16.3	5076
25-49	27.5	73.6	88.9	94.8	98.1	0.3	16.2	3635

NA = Not applicable
^aOmitted because less than 50 percent of the women in the age group x to $x+4$ had had intercourse by age x

If women do not wait for marriage to become sexually active, has the increasing age at marriage among women in urban areas and in Central, Copperbelt and Luapula Provinces had any effect on delaying exposure to intercourse? Table 5.7 indicates some trend toward later initiation of sexual intercourse among younger urban women; however, it is nowhere near as strong as the trend toward later age at marriage. While age at marriage has been increasing, the age of initiating sexual activity has remained unchanged in Lusaka and Northern Provinces where it has been relatively high.

More educated women tend to delay initiating sexual relations longer than uneducated women (median age at first intercourse for those with secondary or higher education is 2 years more than for those with no education), but they postpone marriage even longer (the median age at first marriage for the most educated women is three years greater than that of women with no education). On the other hand, the differentials between the urban and the rural women in respect of age at marriage and age at first sexual intercourse are virtually the same: urban women have a median age at marriage of 0.6 years later than rural women (20-49 age group); their median age at first intercourse is also 0.6 years later. Even among the younger women (20-24 years), while the median age at marriage in urban areas is about 2 years later than in the rural areas, the median age at first intercourse is less than one year later in urban than in rural areas.

Table 5.7 Median age at first intercourse

Median age at first sexual intercourse among women age 20-49 years, by current age and selected background characteristics, Zambia 1992

Background characteristic	Current age						Women age 20-49	Women age 25-49
	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49		
Residence								
Urban	17.0	16.8	16.2	16.4	16.4	16.1	16.6	16.5
Rural	16.2	16.0	15.8	15.9	16.1	16.0	16.0	16.0
Province								
Central	16.4	16.3	16.0	(15.5)	(15.8)	(15.0)	16.0	15.9
Copperbelt	16.8	16.8	16.1	16.1	15.9	16.3	16.5	16.3
Eastern	16.2	16.6	15.7	17.4	16.6	(15.4)	16.3	16.3
Luapula	16.1	15.8	16.0	16.5	15.6	(15.1)	15.9	15.8
Lusaka	17.2	16.9	16.3	16.6	17.0	(16.8)	16.8	16.7
Northern	16.7	16.6	16.3	(17.0)	(17.3)	(17.2)	16.7	16.7
North-Western	15.5	15.7	15.4	(15.3)	(14.9)	*	15.5	15.5
Southern	16.3	16.0	15.9	15.7	16.0	(16.3)	16.0	15.9
Western	16.4	16.3	16.3	15.8	(16.4)	16.3	16.2	16.2
Education								
No education	16.5	16.1	15.4	15.7	15.9	16.2	15.9	15.8
Primary	16.1	15.9	15.8	15.9	16.1	15.8	16.0	15.9
Secondary+	18.1	18.0	17.6	17.6	17.8	*	17.9	17.8
Total	16.6	16.4	16.0	16.2	16.3	16.0	16.3	16.2

Note: Rates shown in parentheses are based on 25 to 49 women, while an asterisk means the rate is based on fewer than 25 women and has been suppressed. Medians are not shown for women 15-19 because less than 50 percent of these women had had intercourse by age 15.

5.5 Recent Sexual Activity

In the absence of contraception, the probability of pregnancy is related to the frequency of intercourse. Thus, information on sexual activity can be used to refine measures of exposure to pregnancy. Only 12 percent of women interviewed in the ZDHS had never had sexual intercourse. But not all women who have ever had intercourse are currently sexually active. Table 5.8 presents data on levels of sexual activity by background characteristics; the distributions are shown for women who have ever had intercourse.

Table 5.8 Recent sexual activity

Percent distribution of women who have ever had sexual intercourse by sexual activity in the four weeks preceding the survey and the duration of abstinence by whether or not postpartum, according to selected background characteristics, Zambia 1992

Background characteristic	Sexually active in last 4 weeks	Not sexually active in last 4 weeks				Total	Number of women
		Abstaining (postpartum)		Abstaining (not postpartum)			
		0-1 years	2+ years	0-1 years	2+ years		
Age							
15-19	55.7	16.3	1.0	25.0	2.0	100.0	1200
20-24	60.9	16.6	2.2	19.5	0.8	100.0	1378
25-29	65.3	12.3	1.8	18.5	1.8	100.0	1172
30-34	65.5	13.4	1.9	17.3	2.0	100.0	913
35-39	64.8	10.9	2.3	18.6	3.4	100.0	656
40-44	70.2	5.4	1.8	18.3	4.3	100.0	505
45-49	59.4	1.6	1.3	22.5	15.1	100.0	380
Duration of union							
0-4	69.3	15.4	0.7	14.5	0.1	100.0	1308
5-9	66.5	15.1	1.4	15.8	1.3	100.0	1095
10-14	68.4	12.2	2.2	15.4	1.6	100.0	857
15-19	67.5	12.7	1.2	16.6	2.0	100.0	769
20-24	64.7	9.6	2.1	19.9	3.6	100.0	574
25+	64.3	2.6	1.7	21.4	10.1	100.0	664
Never in union	36.2	16.5	3.6	38.9	4.6	100.0	936
Residence							
Urban	62.1	11.7	1.5	21.7	2.9	100.0	3109
Rural	62.9	13.9	2.0	18.3	2.8	100.0	3096
Province							
Central	66.4	11.2	0.4	19.1	2.7	100.0	559
Copperbelt	62.0	10.7	1.8	22.3	3.2	100.0	1471
Eastern	60.1	12.7	2.5	19.8	4.9	100.0	672
Luapula	65.4	11.4	1.8	19.0	2.4	100.0	372
Lusaka	63.0	11.7	1.1	21.8	2.3	100.0	1078
Northern	53.3	19.9	3.2	19.6	4.0	100.0	546
North-Western	59.6	18.3	1.5	18.0	2.6	100.0	165
Southern	70.6	11.5	1.2	15.7	0.9	100.0	945
Western	53.4	18.9	3.8	21.4	2.5	100.0	395
Education							
No education	63.1	13.0	1.9	17.4	4.7	100.0	1083
Primary	64.1	13.6	1.6	18.7	2.0	100.0	3716
Secondary	57.0	11.0	2.3	26.2	3.5	100.0	1281
Higher	65.3	6.2	0.9	21.3	6.2	100.0	123
Current contraceptive method							
No method	60.5	13.8	1.9	20.7	3.0	100.0	5388
Pill	83.8	2.6	0.3	13.3	0.0	100.0	245
IUD	(72.0)	(4.0)	(0.0)	(12.0)	(12.0)	100.0	27
Sterilisation	69.6	5.2	0.4	20.3	4.5	100.0	106
Periodic abstinence	78.8	6.1	0.0	15.1	0.0	100.0	55
Other	72.6	9.2	1.0	16.2	1.0	100.0	375
Total	62.5	12.8	1.8	20.0	2.8	100.0	6205

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25 to 49 women

Women are considered to be sexually active if they had intercourse at least once in the four weeks prior to the survey. Women who are not sexually active may be abstaining in the period following a birth, or may be abstaining for various other reasons. Among women who have had sexual intercourse, 63 percent were sexually active in the month prior to the interview, while 15 percent were abstaining postpartum and 23 percent were abstaining for other reasons. Women who have never been in a union are less likely to be sexually active than those who are in a union. As expected, women who are using a method of family planning are more likely to be sexually active than those who are not.

5.6 Postpartum Amenorrhoea, Abstinence, and Insusceptibility

Postpartum protection from conception can be prolonged by breastfeeding, which can lengthen the duration of amenorrhoea (the period following a birth, but prior to the return of menses). Protection can also be prolonged by delaying the resumption of sexual relations. Table 5.9 presents the percentage of births whose mothers are postpartum amenorrhoeic and abstaining, as well as the percentage of births whose mothers are classified as still postpartum insusceptible to pregnancy for either reason; data are presented by months since the birth.

Months since birth	Amenorrhoeic	Abstaining	Insusceptible	Number of births
< 2	97.5	95.3	99.1	192
2-3	87.1	68.2	91.3	257
4-5	80.0	47.9	86.3	254
6-7	72.4	30.6	77.4	265
8-9	65.2	27.4	73.2	227
10-11	55.5	21.4	62.5	221
12-13	47.0	17.4	54.0	225
14-15	36.6	16.2	45.5	237
16-17	24.8	13.9	32.4	200
18-19	17.5	12.3	24.3	217
20-21	15.1	10.7	22.7	219
22-23	8.0	8.9	13.7	209
24-25	4.9	5.9	9.6	201
26-27	4.3	3.8	7.2	223
28-29	1.7	3.6	5.0	237
30-31	0.3	5.8	5.8	198
32-33	1.1	5.2	6.3	210
34-35	0.9	6.4	7.3	196
Total	36.0	22.8	41.8	3987
Median	11.7	4.4	13.3	-
Mean	12.7	8.3	14.7	-
Prevalence/Incidence mean	12.8	8.1	14.8	-

Nearly three-quarters of Zambian women remain amenorrhoeic for at least six months following a birth; only one-third abstain from sexual intercourse during this period. The proportion remaining amenorrhoeic 18 months after birth drops significantly to 18 percent and those still abstaining to 12 percent. Overall, three-quarters of women become susceptible to pregnancy within 18-19 months of giving birth. The average duration of the postpartum insusceptible period is 15 months.

The median durations of postpartum amenorrhoea, abstinence and insusceptibility are presented in Table 5.10 by background characteristics of the mothers. Postpartum amenorrhoea generally lasts slightly longer among older (age 30 and above) than younger mothers. The duration is also longer among rural (14 months) than urban mothers (9 months), a possible indication of shorter duration of breastfeeding among urban women. Mothers in Northern Province show a particularly long median duration of amenorrhoea, while those in Western and North-Western Province tend to abstain for considerably longer periods (10-12 months) after birth than the 3-5 months that mothers in other provinces report. The long abstinence in the latter two provinces may account in part for their relatively low fertility (see Chapter 3). With regard to educational level, the higher the level of education of the mother, the shorter the median duration of amenorrhoea. The median duration of amenorrhoea decreases from 14 months for women with no education to 12 months for those with primary schooling and to only 8 months for women with secondary education.

Table 5.10 Median duration of postpartum insusceptibility by background characteristics

Median number of months of postpartum amenorrhoea, postpartum abstinence, and postpartum insusceptibility, by selected background characteristics, Zambia 1992

Background characteristic	Postpartum amenorrhoea	Postpartum abstinence	Postpartum insusceptibility	Number of births
Age				
<30	11.0	4.3	12.9	2687
30+	(13.9)	4.5	14.9	1301
Residence				
Urban	9.4	4.6	11.3	1878
Rural	13.5	4.2	14.6	2109
Education				
No education	*	(4.4)	(15.3)	654
Primary	11.7	4.5	13.1	2544
Secondary	(8.3)	*	(11.9)	725
Total	11.7	4.4	13.3	3987

Note: Medians are based on current status. Rates shown in parentheses are based on 25 to 49 women, while an asterisk means the rate is based on fewer than 25 women and has been suppressed.

5.7 Termination of Exposure to Pregnancy

Later in life, the risk of pregnancy begins to decline with age, typically beginning around age 30. While the onset of infecundity is difficult to determine for any individual woman, there are ways of estimating it for a population. Table 5.11 presents indicators of decreasing exposure to the risk of pregnancy for women age 30 and above.

The first, an indicator of menopause, includes women who are neither pregnant nor postpartum amenorrhoeic, but have not had a menstrual period in the six months preceding the survey. Forty-two percent of the oldest women interviewed are menopausal according to this indicator. The other indicator is long-term abstinence which is the percentage of currently married women who did not have intercourse in the last three years. This percentage is very low even among the oldest women.

Table 5.11 Termination of exposure to the risk of pregnancy

Indicators of menopause and long-term abstinence among currently married women age 30-49, by age, Zambia 1992

Age	Menopause ¹		Long-term abstinence ²	
	Percent	N	Percent	N
30-34	3.8	388	0.1	755
35-39	2.6	334	0.7	537
40-41	6.6	87	0.8	134
42-43	11.7	161	1.1	193
44-45	25.6	138	2.8	157
46-47	28.1	104	1.8	109
48-49	41.7	109	1.9	114
Total	12.0	1321	0.8	1999

¹Percentage of non-pregnant, non-amenorrhoeic currently married women whose last menstrual period occurred six or more months preceding the survey or who report that they are menopausal.

²Percentage of currently married women who did not have intercourse in the three years preceding the survey.

