

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Is Family Planning Already Accepted by the Present Generation? Freshmen's View on Family Planning at University of North Sumatera, Medan. ( Third Report )

by

AMIR SYARIFUDDIN, IRWAN THAHIR, BERLIAN HASIBUAN,  
ZAKARIA SIREGAR and HELENA SIREGAR

(Department of Child Health, School of Medicine, University of North Sumatera/  
Dr. Pirngadi Hospital, medan)

### Abstract

A study on views of family planning among freshmen of University of North Sumatera, Medan, was conducted for the third time in 1985.

Questionnaires was distributed to 2245 freshmen of whom 1997 gave the response consisting of 1153 males and 844 females.

The result showed that most of the freshmen (67,59%) planned to have only 2-3 children and get married at the ages of 25-29 years; 31,30% wished to have 2 sons and 1 daughter; 79,75% had the opinion that son or daughter is the same, nearly all of them (97,75%) were planning to have a small family, whereas 34,95% planned to choose IUD for their family-planning method.

We can conclude that family planning is well accepted by the present generation.

Received November 7, 1987

### Introduction

As a developing country, Indonesia has at present several problems, one of them is population (Azrul Azwar, 1984). Increase in population may give social, economical and public crisis which will be an obstacle to the government to provide any facility needed for an appropriate life and prosperity (Achmad Razali et al., 1984; Siregar et al., 1978).

The population of Indonesia, according to the census in 1961, 1971 and 1980 was 97 millions; 119,2 millions and 147,5 millions respectively. The natural population increase is still high, i.e. 2,16% in 1961-1971 period and 2,32% in 1971-1980 (Adhyatma, 1984; Achmad Razali et al., 1984).

According to the National census in 1980 (quoted by Haryono Suyono, 1982), the average number of family size was 4,8. In Indonesia, the average age for marriage is 19-20 years, especially in women (Achmad

Razali et al., 1984; Siregar et al., 1979). To overcome population problem, many programmes have been carried out by the government and community, one of them is the Family Planning Programme, started in 1970 (Adhyatma, 1984; Rohde, 1979).

It is important to stress the benefit of postponement of marriage in males and females, as well as the advantages of a small family. This must be encouraged by educating the population about family planning (Haryono Suyono, 1982; Haryono Suyono, 1984; Suhaimi Harun, 1984).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the view about the age for marriage, expected family size, sexes of children, readiness in doing family planning and the method of family planning to be chosen among the freshmen in the University of North Sumatera.

### Materials and Methods

This study is a third study and was conducted on freshmen of University of North Sumatera, Medan, in 1985. Questionnaires were distributed to 2245 freshmen; 1997 out of them consisting of 1153 males and 844 females, gave the response. They were from 9 faculties and 3 diploma programmes.

The freshmen were asked to fill in the questionnaires, the form of "multiple choice" This was done in front of the investigators, who were staff members of the Department of Child Health. The questionnaires consisted of questions on :

- b. Birth order in the family
- c. Expected age for marriage
- d. Expected family size
- e. Expected sexes of children
- f. Reason for the expected family size
- g. Reason for the expected sexes of children
- h. Agreement and disagreement with family planning programmes
- i. Reason for disagreement
- j. Expected methods of family planning.

The study was conducted from July, 18 to July, 30, 1985 at the time of needed medical check up before entering the University.

- a. Source of knowledge on family planning

### Results and Discussions

#### A. Sources of informations on family planning

The freshmen knew about the family planning from various kinds of mass media, mostly from newspapers (14,52%), followed by TV (11,53%).

Health workers as the source of informations on family planning occupied the third order (4,11%). The role of radio was not significant in transferring informations on family planning (0,50%).

Table 1 : Sources of informations on family planning

Source of informations	Number	%
1. Newspapers	290	14,52
2. TV	230	11,52
3. Health workers	82	4,11
4. Magazines	40	2,00
5. Radio	10	0,50
6. Others (such as teachers)	10	0,50
7. 1 & 2	95	4,76
8. 1, 2 & 4	149	7,46
9. 1, 2, 4, & 5	419	20,98
10. 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5	423	21,18
11. Other combination	225	11,27
12. Blank	24	1,20
	1997	100,00

#### B. Birth order

It was found that most of the freshmen were first and second born namely 21,98% and 20,108% (Table 2). This might be related to the old Indonesian culture proving that the first child is

the center of his or her parents in guiding and taking care of their younger brothers or sisters.

Siregar et al. (1978) and Achmad Razali et al. (1984), in their study found the same results as in this study.

Table 2 : Birth order

Birth order	Siregar et al. (1978)		Achmad Razali et al. (1984)		This study	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	308	24,60	376	22,50	439	21,98
2	200	15,97	278	16,64	401	20,08
3	179	14,29	212	12,69	315	15,77
4	137	10,86	154	9,22	253	12,67
5	136	10,62	118	7,06	204	10,22
6	106	8,46	99	5,92	119	5,96
7	67	5,35	75	4,49	116	5,81
8	54	4,31	49	2,93	74	3,71
9	31	2,47	23	1,38	33	1,65
10	11	0,87	19	1,14	17	0,85
11	9	0,71	12	0,72	14	0,71
12 or more	11	0,87	3	0,18	10	0,50
Unclear	7	0,55	253	15,14	2	0,10

#### C. Expected age for marriage

Most of the freshmen planned to get married at the age of 25-29 years (Table 3). This is consistence with the compaign of the government in the Family Planning Programme (Har-yono Suyono, 1982; Suhaimi Har-un, 1984). Siregar et al. (1979) and Achmad Razali et al. (1984) in their studies, also found that the freshmen of University of North Sumatera for the

years 1977 and 1982 planned to get married when they were 25-29 years old (Table 3). We know that adolescents finish their education in senior high school when they are 17-22 years old and the duration of study in high education learning institution is 4-6 years.

Thus it can be concluded that these students planned to get married after they had graduated.

Table 3 : *Expected age for marriage*

Age (year)	Siregar et al. (1978)		Achmad Razali et al. (1984)		This study	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
19 - 21	—	—	—	—	14	0,70
22 - 24	136	10,86	227	13,58	189	9,47
25 - 29	807	64,45	1137	68,04	1357	67,95
30 - 34	228	18,21	292	17,47	372	18,63
35 -	52	4,15	11	0,66	19	0,95
Blank	29	2,31	3	0,18	16	2,30

D. *Expected family size*

This study showed that the freshmen wanted a small family with an average number of 2,83 children (Table 4). The report on sensus of population in 1980 (quoted by Haryono Suyono, 1981), showed that the average family size was 4,8, thus belonging to the term of "small family". This term refers to a family with 2-3 children, "medium sized family" refers to 4 or 5 children, and a "big family" means more than 5 children (Achmad Razali et al., 1984). In this study the students had a more progressive idea, when compared to

the previous generation who thought that the more children they have the more prosperous their life will be (Siregar et al., 1978). It seems that messages on the advantages of Family Planning have a good sounding in the present generation.

The expected number of children found in this study (2,83) is lower than that of Achmad Razali et al. (3,05), while Siregar et al. (1978) found 3,37 (Table 4). It seems that the younger generation has fully realized the importance of family planning.

Table 4 : *Expected family size*

Number of Children	Siregar et al. (1978)		Achmad Razali et al. (1984)		This study	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	7	0,55	7	0,42	6	0,30
2	95	7,53	322	19,27	660	33,05
3	644	51,43	940	56,23	962	48,17
4	392	31,30	322	19,27	314	15,72
5	64	5,11	62	3,71	23	1,15
6	20	1,59	10	0,60	6	0,30
7-	10	0,79	4	0,24	—	—
Blank	20	1,59	4	0,24	26	1,31
Averages		3,37		3,05		2,83

E. *The expected sexes of children*

When we look at Table 5 there are some interesting points noted from the answers given by these students, namely : (1) 31,30% expected 3 children consisting of 2 males and 1 female, (2) 26,64% expected 2 children consisting of 1 male and 1 female, (3) 12,57% expected 4 children consisting

of 2 males and 2 females, (4) 21,93% gave no comment whether they wish to have male or female children.

Thus one third of the new students (31,30%) still expected to have more boys than girls in their family, while one fifth (21,93%) did not give comment about the sexes of the children they expected.

Table 5 : *Expected sexes of their children*

	Sexes		Number	%
	Male	Female		
1	0		4	0,20
2	0		9	0,45
3	0		8	0,40
0	2		1	0,05
1	1		532	26,64
1	2		93	4,66
1	3		1	0,05
2	1		625	31,30
3	1		9	0,45
2	2		251	12,57
2	3		1	0,05
3	2		20	1,00
3	3		1	0,05
4	2		3	0,15
0	6		1	0,05
No comment			438	21,93

F. *Reasons for the expected family size*  
 Their reason for having a small family (i.e. 2,83) is that they wanted to have good family life (27,24%) (Table 4). This is consistent with the campaign launched by our government in the family planning programmes which is "a small, happy and prosperous family" (Adhyatma, 1984; Haryono Suyono, 1982). It proves that this has been responded well by the younger generation.

Achmad Razali et al. (1984) in 1982 also found the same result namely 82,23% wanted a small family in order to have a good family. The freshmen in this study wanted 3,05 as the average number of their children (Table 4). In this study and in the studies of Achmad Razali (1984) and Siregar (1979), we found that "safety of future" is no longer expected from the children of a family.

In this study it is seen that "health of mother and children" as the reason for participation in family planning programmes was not classified into the main factor.

An interesting point in this study is that "tradition" played no longer an important role in determining the number or sexes of children (See point 6 in (Table 6).

Table 6 : *Reasons for the expected number of children*

Specification	Siregar et al. (1978)		Achmad Razali et al. (1984)		This Study	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1. Family welfare	516	49,20	1374	82,23	544	27,24
2. Child education	142	11,34	142	8,50	83	4,16
3. To overcome population increase	462	37,06	56	3,35	25	1,25
4. Safety of future	—	—	31	1,86	11	0,55
5. Health of mother and children	10	0,70	50	2,99	37	1,85
6. Tradition	—	—	—	—	2	0,10
7. 1,2,3,4 & 5	—	—	—	—	709	35,50
8. 1,2,4 & 5	—	—	—	—	141	7,86
9. 1,2 & 5	—	—	—	—	109	5,46
10. 1,2,3,4,5 & 6	—	—	—	—	93	4,66
11. Other combination	—	—	—	—	113	7,16
12. Unclear	20	1,59	15	0,90	—	—
13. Blank	—	—	3	0,18	16	0,80

G. *Reasons for the expected sexes of children*

The freshmen realized that boys or girls are the same (in 79,52%) (Table 7). It is clear that the campaign of "male or female is the same" by the government is already accepted by the

younger generation.

The opinion that male child is the inheritor of generation and the center of parent's hope is not a popular motto any more to these respondents. And the same with the opinion that a female child is more intimate with her parents.

Table 7 : *Reasons for the expected sexes of children*

Specification	Number	%
1. Male or female is the same	1588	79,52
2. Male child is the inheritor of generation	77	3,86
3. Male child is the center of parent's hope	23	1,15
4. Female child is more intimate with her parents	10	0,50
5. Others	34	1,70
6. 1 & 2	66	3,30
7. 1, 2, 3 & 4	35	1,75
8. 1, 2 & 3	24	1,20
9. 1 & 5	18	0,90
10. 1 & 3	13	0,66
11. Other combination	53	2,66
12. Blank	56	2,80

H. *Participation in the family planning*  
Most of these respondents (97,75%) expressed their readiness to participate in family planning, and only 1% of them refused to do it (Table 8). The result of this study showed that the family planning programmes launched by the government in 1970 has reached its goal. It is clearly shown that a revolution from a nation of pronatalism to a nation of four-member-family

has occurred in Indonesia (Suhaimi Harun, 1984).

If we look at the result of the first study (72,68%) and the result of this study (97,75%), we will see that the majority of respondents agreed with family planning and had increased too. The percentage of disagreement with family planning was very low, only 1,03% and 1,00% respectively in the first and second studies.

Table 8 : *Agreement and disagreement with family planning*

Specification	Siregar et al. (1978)		Achmad Razali et al. (1984)		This study	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agreement	1039	72,68	—	—	1952	97,75
Disagreement	13	1,03	—	—	20	1,00
Still considering	295	23,56	—	—	—	—
Blank	35	2,71	—	—	25	1,25

#### I. *Reason of disagreement*

Of the 20 students who rejected family planning, 70% gave the reason for their disagreements that it was of their own free will (Table 9). Only 1 (5%) expressed that it was prohibited by religion; 4 (20%) coping with the

spouse, and 1 (5%) religious prohibition and his own free will. From this study we could see that religion is not obstacle or handicap in family planning among the respondents, for only 1 of 1153 persons stated that it was prohibited by religion.

Table 9 : *Disagreement with family planning*

Specification	Number	%
Prohibited by religion	1	5
On their own free will	14	70
In consistence with the spouse	4	20
Prohibited by religion and on their own free will	1	5

#### J. *The expected methods of family planning*

Most of the expected methods of family planning chosen by the respondents were IUD (34,95%) (Table 10), followed by pills and periodic abstinence. This is in conformity with the pattern of

choosing the contraceptives by the government, namely, pills and Copper T 35.

Suhaimi Harun (1984), in his study in several districts of North Sumatera, found that the result of birth control by using pills was profound (53,20%) compared with IUD (19%).

Table 10 : *The expected methods of family planning*

Specification	Number	%
1. IUD	698	34,95
2. Pills	226	11,32
3. Periodic abstinence	225	11,27
4. Vasectomy	199	9,97
5. Injections	127	6,36
6. Condom	82	4,11
7. Jamu (traditional ingredients)	75	3,76
8. Traditional methods	67	3,36
9. Tubectomy	46	2,30
10. Massage	16	0,80
11. Others	39	1,95
12. 1 & 4	5	0,25
13. 1 & 5	10	0,50
14. Other combination	80	4,00
15. Blank	102	5,10
	1997	100,00

### Conclusion

From this study we can conclude that : (1) Family planning was well accepted, (2) IUD (34,95%) was preferred, (3) Most of them (79,52%) accepted that son or daughter is the same, (4) Religion was not an obstacle or handicap in family planning.

### REFERENCES

- ADYATMA: Keterpaduan kegiatan kesehatan dan keluarga berencana sebagai pendekatan strategis Repelita IV. Kumpulan Makalah Konika VI, Denpasar, Bagian II, hal : 1-13 (1984).
- ACHMAD RAZALI; RUSDIDJAS; LUBIS, C.P.; SIREGAR, H.: Perubahan pandangan dari keluarga besar menjadi keluarga kecil dari mahasiswa USU tahun 1982 (Laporan Ke-2). M.K.I. 34 : 105-108 (1984).
- AZRUL AZWAR: Program keluarga berencana Ikatan Dokter Indonesia. Kumpulan Makalah Seminar Kontrasepsi Suntikan, 7 Desember 1984, Medan.
- HARYONO SUYONO: Keluarga berencana di Indonesia dan hubungannya dengan kesehatan anak. Kumpulan Makalah Konika VI, Denpasar, Bagian I, hal : 30-34 (1984).
- HARYONO SUYONO: Kontrasepsi suntikan Noristerat cara KB untuk wanita. Buku Pedoman untuk Petugas Medis 1982.
- ROHDE, J.E.: Jarak antar kelahiran dan keluarga berencana. Prioritas Pediatri di Negara Berkembang; YEM Yogyakarta Indonesia, hal : 370-391 (1979).
- SUHAIMI HARUN, T.: Hubungan program keluarga berencana dengan kebijaksanaan kependudukan. Kumpulan Makalah KPPIK VI FK USU Medan, hal : 23-23.0 (1984).
- SIREGAR, Z.; SAING, B.; ADI SUTJIPTO; LUBIS, C.P.; SIREGAR, H.: Pengetahuan dan sikap mahasiswa baru Universitas Sumatera Utara tahun 1977, mengenai kependudukan dan keluarga berencana M.K.I. 9-10-12 : 59 - 63 (1979).
- SIREGAR, Z.; RUSDIDJAS; SIREGAR, A.; DACHRUL ALDY; SIREGAR, H.: Perubahan pandangan dari keluarga besar menjadi keluarga kecil dari Mahasiswa USU tahun 1977. Majalah Obstet. Ginek. Indon. 4 : 225-236 (1978).