

Contraceptive methods used by younger women : Arab World



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Table 1: Use of modern methods of contraception in Middle East and North African countries
Percentage using contraception among women aged 15-49 who are married or in a union

Country	Data source	Any modern method	Most commonly used modern method (as % of all users of contraception)	Total Fertility Rate 2005-10 (UN estimates)
Tunisia	MICS 2011-2012	50.0	IUD (51)	2.05
Morocco	DHS 2003-4	54.8	Pill (73)	2.4
Algeria	MICS 2006	52	Pill (88)	2.7
Egypt	DHS 2008	57.6	IUD (63)	3.0
Syria	MICS 2006	42.6	IUD (60)	3.2
Jordan	DHS 2012	42.3	IUD (50)	3.6
Djibouti	MICS 2007	17.1	Pill (80)	3.8
Palestine	MICS 2010	41.4	IUD (64)	4.4
Iraq	MICS 2011	33.6	Pill (47)	4.4
Yemen	MICS 2006	19.2	Pill (47)	4.9

Age-disaggregated data are available from the Multiple Impact Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) for ten Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Tunisia is the only one of these countries which has a total fertility rate around replacement level (see Table 1). In Yemen, Iraq and Palestine the TFR is well above four children per women. Palestine, oddly, has a much higher prevalence of contraceptive use than Djibouti, as well as higher fertility.

Use of modern methods of contraception by teenage married women (there are no data on sexually active unmarried women in any of these surveys) is fairly low across most of the region, with Morocco being something of an outlier¹. Levels of use are higher in the older 20-24 age – more than doubling over the younger age group in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria. Only in Morocco and Egypt, however, do levels exceed 40%. Yemen has the lowest levels of contraceptive use among younger married women in both age groups.

With the exception of Egypt, the pill is most widely used modern method of contraception in the younger age group in all these countries (Fig.1). Algeria and Morocco appear to stand out from the rest, not only because use of the pill is so much higher than elsewhere, but also because there is very limited use of other modern methods, i.e. the pill dominates contraceptive choice. In Egypt IUDs rather than the pill are the most widely used modern method, and they are also used by significant (>2%) numbers of younger women in Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Iraq. There is only one country, Djibouti, where more than 2% of younger women rely on the male condom.

Injectables are not widely used at all, and rates of use exceed 1% only in Jordan and Djibouti. Reliance on traditional methods of contraception (usually lactational amenorrhoea) is relatively high in Syria, Iraq and Palestine, where it exceeds the levels of use of the most widely used modern method.

¹ The 2012 MICS report for Tunisia does not report percentages for 15-19 years olds.

Although the pill is more widely used among 20-24 year olds than in the younger age (with the exception of Jordan), it no longer dominates quite so emphatically the choice of a modern method of contraception (Fig.2). In this older age group, IUDs are the most widely used modern method in Syria, Palestine and Jordan, as well as in Egypt; and in Tunisia, levels of IUD use (15.3%) are only slightly lower than use of the pill (16.7%). In other words, the prevalence of

medium-term methods increases relative to the prevalence of reversible methods. Permanent methods of contraception appear not to be used in this age group (nor in the younger group). Reliance on traditional methods remains high in several countries, and exceeds the levels of use for the most widely used modern method in Iraq, Jordan, and Syria.

Fig. 1: Methods of contraception: percentage of women aged 15-19 who are currently married or in a union.

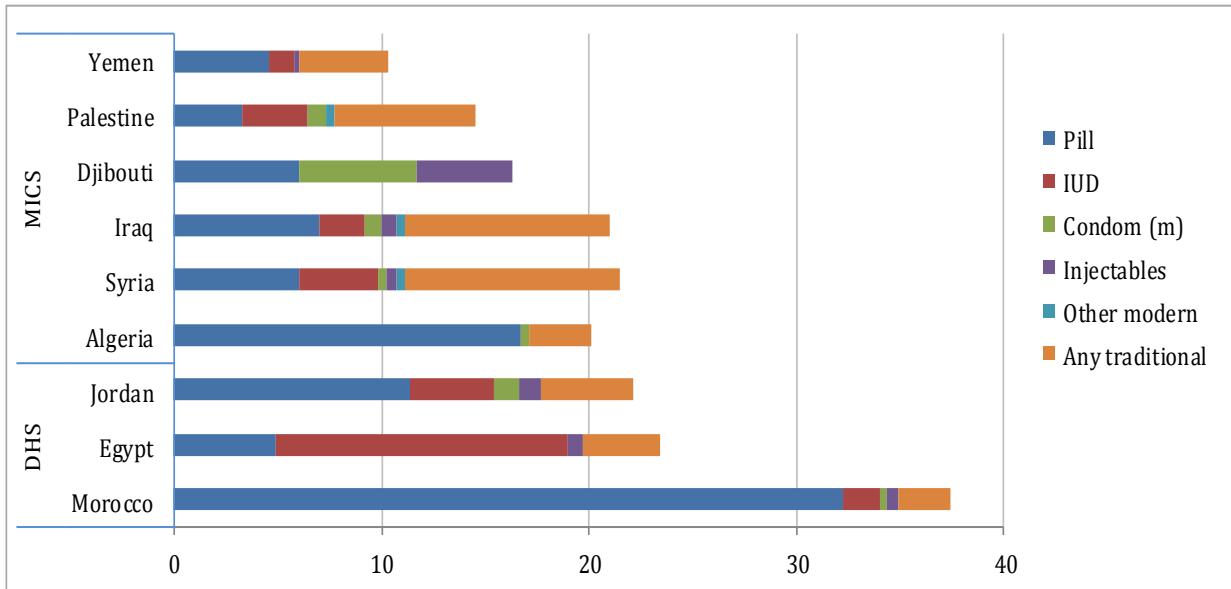


Fig. 2: Methods of contraception: percentage of women aged 20-24 who are currently married or in a union.

