

YOUNG ADULTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2008 Reproductive Health Survey (RHS) is a continuation of a series of surveys commissioned by the National Family Planning Board (NFPB) with financial support from the United Nations Fund for Population Activity (UNFPA). The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) conducted the survey with technical assistance from the Division of Reproductive Health of the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The survey was designed to provide information on Reproductive Health issues in Jamaica among women aged 15–49 years and men 15–24 years and to update measures of fertility and contraceptive use.

The Young Adults Report covers a wide range of topics which includes background characteristics comprising age structure, educational attainment, socio-economic and employment status, attendance at religious services and union status. In addition topics such as birth history, contraceptive knowledge and usage, attitudes towards reproduction as well as towards the opposite sex and behavioural risks are included.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

□ Over two-thirds of the female respondents received information from their parents/guardians about menstruation (71%) or pregnancy before menarche (69%).

□ The degree of difficulty having discussions concerning pregnancy with parents/guardians was found to be easy by 65 per cent of young adult females and 67 per cent of male respondents. This is very similar to reporting on the degree of difficulty expressed by young adults when discussing methods of contraception and menstruation with parents/guardians.

□ Approximately 72 per cent of female and 73 per cent of male respondents between the ages of 15-24 years attended a class or course on sex education in school. Of all the topics identified by the survey for inclusion in school-based sex education courses, most female respondents (95%) said they received information on pregnancy and how it occurs while most male respondents (95%) said they received information on HIV/AIDS.

□Parents/guardians were identified as the most preferred source of information by 27 per cent of young adult females and 27 per cent males, while teachers were thought to be the most helpful by 67 per cent of female and 66 per cent of male respondents.

□Approximately 92 per cent of women and 86 per cent of men knew where to get information on sexual health issues and 93 per cent of young adult females and 91 percent young adult males knew where to go for the treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

□Just about two thirds of the young adult females (66%) and three quarters of the young adult males (75%) reported that they had ever had sexual intercourse. The mean age at sexual debut was 16.1 years for females and 14.5 years for males.

□More young adult women (80%) than men (57%) used contraceptives at first intercourse. For those who used contraceptives at first intercourse, 95 per cent of the women and 98 per cent of the men used a condom.

□Condoms were regarded as the most popular form of contraception for all types of relationship status. The highest usage (77%) was by women who reported their union as Boyfriend. The pill (33%) and injectable contraceptive (25%) were the next popular form of contraception and were used mainly by married women or women in common-law union.

□There was an increase in the proportion of both male and female in the 15-19 year age group who ever used condoms.

□The majority of women (96%) who were married or in common-law relationship and who had sexual intercourse in the last three (3) months reported that they had one (1) sex partner. Over one half (57%) of the men reported that they had one (1) sex partner.

□The percentage of young women who have ever been pregnant declined from 38 percent in 2002 to 36 per cent in 2008. The percentage of young adult women who reported having a live birth declined from 34 per cent in 2002 to 30 per cent in 2008.

□Fertility among young women 15-19 years (72 births per 1,000 women) was lower than that for women between the ages of 20-24 years (124 births per 1,000 women).

In general, the highest proportion of pregnancies within the five (5) year period prior to the survey were said to be mistimed (52%).