

**Part III.A  
Global  
Reproductive  
Health  
Indicators**

- WHO's Short List of Reproductive Health Indicators for Global Monitoring
- PAI's Reproductive Risk Index

**WHO'S SHORT LIST OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INDICATORS  
FOR GLOBAL MONITORING****Definition**

These 17 largely population-based indicators provide an overview of the reproductive health situation at the global and national level, endorsed by the WHO and the United Nations Interagency Working Group. (See Box III.A.1 for the listing of the 17 indicators and definitions of each.)

**Data Requirements**

Information on each of the 17 indicators (Note: Most of the indicators in Box III.A.1 are described in full elsewhere in this *Compendium*)

**Data Source(s)**

The DHS or other representative surveys of the intended population can provide certain indicators (1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 17 in Box III.A.1). Other indicators (6, 7, 10, 12 and 16) require program-level data: service statistics, facility-based services, or laboratory results on clients. Whereas data are generally available for indicators based on the DHS or RHS, data may be difficult to obtain for certain measures (e.g., percentage of OB-GYN admissions owing to abortion).

**Purpose and Issues**

During the 1990s, the official representatives of countries worldwide attended international conferences (ICPD in Cairo, the Fourth Women's Conference in

Beijing) and endorsed a number of global goals and targets in the broad area of sexual and reproductive health. This endorsement led to a proliferation of reproductive health indicators on which countries were asked to report. Subsequently, the United Nations asked the WHO to take the lead in organizing an interagency technical process to examine the issue of reproductive health indicators and to reach consensus on a short list of indicators for global monitoring.

The resulting set of 17 indicators covers the main areas of reproductive health and represents the consensus among international agencies of the key indicators for international comparison, global monitoring, and follow-up to the international conferences.

The purpose of this set of indicators is to provide an overview of the reproductive health situation at global and national levels. The objective is not to present a comprehensive set of indicators for program monitoring and evaluation. However, the data collected for reporting the indicators should be useful at the program management level.

The WHO has started to compile estimates for all 17 indicators. This set of indicators is not meant to serve as an index; rather, it draws attention to the key measurable areas of reproductive health.

**Box III.A.1 Definitions of WHO's Short List of Reproductive Health Indicators  
for Global Monitoring (WHO, 2000a, 2001a)**

- 1. Total Fertility Rate (TFR)**  
Total number of children a woman would have by the end of her reproductive period if she experienced the currently prevailing age-specific fertility rates throughout her childbearing life
- 2. Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR)<sup>1</sup>**  
Percent of women of reproductive age (15-49) who are using (or whose partner is using) a contraceptive method at a particular point in time
- 3. Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)**  
Annual number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births
- 4. Antenatal Care Coverage**  
Percent of women attended at least once during pregnancy, by skilled health personnel (excluding trained or untrained traditional birth attendants), for reasons relating to pregnancy
- 5. Percent of Births Attended by Skilled Health Personnel**  
Percent of births attended by skilled health personnel (excluding trained or untrained traditional birth attendants)
- 6. Availability of Basic Essential Obstetric Care**  
Number of facilities with functioning basic essential obstetric care per 500,000 population
- 7. Availability of Comprehensive Essential Obstetric Care**  
Number of facilities with functioning comprehensive essential obstetric care per 500,000 population
- 8. Perinatal Mortality Rate (PMR)**  
Number of perinatal deaths per 1,000 total births
- 9. Low Birth Weight Prevalence**  
Percent of live births that weigh less than 2,500g
- 10. Positive Syphilis Serology Prevalence in Pregnant Women**  
Percent of pregnant women (15-24) attending antenatal clinics, whose blood has been screened for syphilis, with positive serology for syphilis
- 11. Prevalence of Anemia in Women**  
Percent of women of reproductive age (15-49) screened for hemoglobin levels with levels 110g/l for pregnant women, and 120g/l for non-pregnant women

<sup>1</sup> The expert group working with WHO on this set of indicators recommends basing the calculation of contraceptive prevalence on all women of reproductive age, in contrast to the convention used by the DHS and RHS to report it for married women only (or married and unmarried women separately).

**12. Percent of Obstetric and Gynecological Admissions Owing to Abortion**

Percent of all cases admitted to service delivery points providing in-patient obstetric and gynecological services, which are due to abortion (spontaneous and induced, but excluding planned termination of pregnancy)

**13. Reported Prevalence of Women with FGC**

Percent of women interviewed in a community survey reporting having undergone FGC

**14. Prevalence of Infertility in Women**

Percent of women of reproductive age (15-49) at risk of pregnancy (not pregnant, sexually active, non-contracepting, and non-lactating) who report trying for a pregnancy for two years or more

**15. Reported Incidence of Urethritis in Men**

Percent of men aged (15-49) interviewed in a community survey reporting episodes of urethritis in the last 12 months

**16. HIV Prevalence among Pregnant Women**

Percent of pregnant women (15-24) attending antenatal clinics, whose blood has been screened for HIV and who are sero-positive for HIV

**17. Knowledge of HIV-related Prevention Practices**

Percent of all respondents who correctly identify all three major ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and who reject three major misconceptions about HIV transmission or prevention

## PAI'S REPRODUCTIVE RISK INDEX

### Definition

Population Action International's (PAI) "report card" of nations composed of 10 key indicators of reproductive health. (See Box III.A.2 of key indicators.) Indicators used for the Reproductive Risk Index are each scored on a 100-point scale, and the scores are averaged to yield a total country score on the index. Based on their overall scores, countries are classified by their risk level: very high, high, moderate, low, and very low.

### Data Requirements

Information on the ten key indicators

### Data Source(s)

The data for each of the indicators come from diverse sources (DHS, WHO-estimates of MMR, and others)

### Purpose and Issues

PAI's Reproductive Risk Index measures the progress of nations toward achieving the goals set at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994. This tool is useful for advocacy purposes to document the poor state of sexual and reproductive health in much of the developing world. A total of 133 countries were ranked, representing 95 percent of the world's population.

PAI's Reproductive Risk Index includes many of the same indicators as the WHO's short list of reproductive health indicators for global monitoring. In fact, the two have seven indicators in common. In contrast to the WHO set which are not "combined" into an index, PAI has used scores on individual indicators to produce a summary score. This approach is open to methodological criticism that it implicitly gives equal weight to all ten indicators and "combines apples and oranges." However, the summary score allows for a classification of countries by level of risk, which is useful for advocacy purposes. The five risk categories are as follows:

**Very high risk (60 points or more):** The 19 countries in this category are characterized by early and high fertility, together with limited care during pregnancy and childbirth, all of which contribute to extremely high levels of maternal mortality. Safe and legal abortion is all but unavailable and, with few exceptions, levels of HIV infection are significant. All of the countries in this category have low average incomes; all but three are in sub-Saharan Africa.

**High risk (45 – 59 points):** The 26 countries in this category generally have low levels of contraceptive use, restrictive abortion policies, high birth rates, and high maternal mortality. HIV prevalence varies widely. Seventeen high risk countries are in sub-Saharan Africa, while the remaining nine are among the poorest nations in their respective regions.

**Moderate risk (30 – 44 points):** Women from these 28 countries have, on average, fewer than five children. Obtaining a safe and legal abortion is difficult or impossible in most countries in this category. The 28 countries in this category represent all the developing regions.

**Low risk (15 – 29 points):** In most of these 35 countries, fewer than one in twenty teenage girls gives birth annually and women have, on average, fewer than three children. Abortion is available on request in many of these countries. HIV prevalence is below one percent of adults in all but one of the countries in this category.

**Very low risk (less than 15 points):** Women in these 25 countries bear, on average, two or fewer children. Contraceptive use is high while anemia among pregnant women, HIV prevalence, and deaths from pregnancy and childbirth are low. Abortion is available on request in nearly all countries in this category. Fully 21 of the 25 countries in this category are wealthy, industrialized countries.

<b>Box III.A.2 The Ten Indicators Used in PAI's Reproductive Risk Index:</b>	<b>Corresponding Section in this <i>Compendium</i></b>
1. Annual Births per 100 Women Aged 15-19	Part III.B <sup>2</sup>
2. Percent of Women Using Contraception	Part III.B
3. Abortion Policies	Part III.I
4. Prevalence of Anemia among Pregnant Women	Part III.F
5. Percent of Women Receiving Prenatal Care	Part III.D
6. Percent of Births Attended by Skilled Personnel	Part III.D
7. Percent of HIV/AIDS in Men	Part III.C
8. Percent of HIV/AIDS in Women	Part III.C <sup>3</sup>
9. Total Fertility Rate (TFR)	Part III.B
10. Maternal Deaths per 100,000 live births	Part III.D

<sup>2</sup> Indicator in Part III.B reads **Age Specific Fertility Rates (ASFR)**

<sup>3</sup> Indicator in Part III.C reads **HIV Prevalence Among Pregnant Women 15-24 years old**

