

Research-data

B. No. 11

The investigation on the actual state of
the practice of contraception in Japan

- surveyed in 1947 -

by

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Preface.

It goes without saying that one of the most important problems is the so-called over-population in Japan. Accordingly such a population problem as this naturally leads us to the idea of birth control as one solution of this. Institute of population problems made a plan about the investigation on the actual state of the practice of contraception last year and began to investigate in accordance with the plan. This investigation is now continuing.

According to this plan, the main aims of the investigation are as follows:

- 1) How extent will the birth control be practiced in every class of society?
- 2) What sorts of reason have they in using the contraceptive method?
- 3) What effect of birth control does result in their families?
- 4) What sorts of contraceptive method do they use?
- 5) How do they request the birth control?
- 6) How will the birth control spread from a center of city to its suburb or a village?

At first government officers in Tokyo, and clerks, technical experts, labourers of factories in Kawasaki were investigated in January 1947 and secondarily general population in the suburb of Tokyo, (Acume-town and Kasumi-village in Nishitama district) in December 1947. The following summary is the result of 3462 cards of households.

- 1) The percentage of various populations using contraceptive method.

This percentage of the practice of birth control is shown on table 1.

Table I.

The percentage of the practice of birth control

	total	number stating use of contra- ceptives	percentage stating use
government officers	1004	327	32.6
clerks and technical experts	116	32	27.6
labourers	644	101	15.7
people in Aoume-town	731	178	24.4
people in Kasumi-village	967	190	19.6

According to this table government officers that are called to belong to an intelligent class are highest and labourers of low intelligence are lowest. Particularly the officers of the medical department at Tokyo university are highest 43.2%.

To summarize above three classes as the population in city, its average percentage is 26.1%. Generally speaking, people in city more use the contraceptive method than people in the suburb, but observed according to occupations, labourers are lowest 15.7% government officers highest 32.6% in city and farmers are lowest 15.8%, merchants highest 32.0% in Aoume-town while merchants are lowest 15.9% in Kasumi-village and people of occupations such as authors, bonzes, artists and etc. are highest 26.8% in Kasumi-village.

It is obvious that the level of their education, especially of husbands, considerably influences on their practices of birth control.

Next table 2. shows us the percentage of practice of birth control according to their level of education.

Table 2.

Table 2.

Percentage of using contraceptive method in husbands graduated from a school

	college or 'university	middle school	primary school
government officers	32.9%	32.2%	28.1%
clerks and technical experts	38.0	25.0	11.8
labourers	100.0*	25.4	15.0
people in Aoume-town	25.0	23.8	24.1
people in Kasumi-village	28.1	22.1	17.3

* labourer is only one

Namely people graduated from a college or university are higher percentage than other people. But administrative officials, though graduating from a primary school only, are comparatively higher percentage. This percentage, I guess, is reduced to associate with the intelligent superior officers on business.

2) The reasons of using contraceptive method.

Most people answer the economic reason of nursing their children and its percentage is 32.7 in city, 50.4 in Aoume-town and 50.3 in Kasumi-village. A second reason is the mother's health (14.9% in city, 23.5% in Aoume-town, 13.7% in Kasumi-village).

Above two reasons are most general in various populations, but other reasons, that are the trouble of nursing children, the desire to enjoy their lives and etc., are all below 10%.

In accordance with these reasons they have also direct

aims

aims such as the spacing-birth and the planned number of children. Secondly according to the investigation on people not using contraceptive method, the reasons why are as follows; Most of them know nothing about ideas called birth control or don't feel it necessary. This percentage amounts to 37.9 in city, 63.8 in Aoume-town, 64.3 in Kasumi-village.

Next reason is the number of children, especially a proportion of their girls and boys. (26.5% in city 16.8% in Aoume-town, 15.5% in Kasumi-village).

Besides other reasons are the antipathy against such a deed, the impossibility of practice owing to their environment, for example the problem of house, and the difference of opinion between husband and wife.

3) The effect of using contraceptive method on their families.

The effect appears on a birth-space. Namely the practicers lengthen their birth-spaces from the year beginning to practice the birth control as a following table 3.

Table 3.

Average birth-space:

	in city		in Aoume-town		in Kasumi-village	
	years	months	year	months	years	month
unpracticed period	2	5	1	10	2	0
and practiced period of practicers	3	10	3	2	3	2
unpracticers	2	10	2	8	2	7

The

The practicers generally begin to prolong from the 3rd child birth. That is about 4 years or so after marriage. After all it means that they want to have at least two or three children and that, boys are more wanted.

Accordingly the number of their present children are to play a great part in the factors whether parents practice the birth control or not.

How many children have they now and what proportion of their boys and girls are maintained?

Table 4.

Average number of their present children and their proportion.

	practicers			unpracticers		
	in city	in town	in village	in city	in town	in village
boys	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.5
girls	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.1	1.5	1.6
rate of boys to 100 girls	128.3	102.2	108.8	102.2	94.6	96.0

According to this table 4, practicers have more boys than unpracticers in the average. Perhaps unpracticers will not be able to use the contraceptive method owing to the want of boys. This table tells us that it is at least statistically one of the most important reasons why they don't practice the contraceptive method, that unpracticers have not yet their expected number of children and its proportion contrary to already reach it in practicers.

4) The sorts of contraceptive method used by 452 pairs.

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This is shown on table 5.

Table 5.

The methods of contraception used by 452 pairs and its success (%).

	number	in city percent	success (%)
safe period	70	21.3	55.7
condom	115	35.1	58.3
withdrawal	37	11.2	62.2
safe period and condom	27	8.2	66.7
instrument and suppository	11	3.3	47.3
douche	8	2.6	62.5
pessary	5	1.5	58.4
other methods	55	16.8	52.3
total	328	100.0	56.4

	number	in town percent	success (%)
safe period	18	30.0	44.4
condom	14	23.3	71.4
withdrawal	4	6.7	75.0
safe period and condom	4	6.7	50.0
instrument and suppository	9	14.9	42.9
douche	0	0	0
pessary	1	1.7	0
other methods	10	16.7	43.2
total	60	100.0	58.3

	number	in village percent	success (%)
safe period	26	40.6	50.5
condom	15	23.3	66.7
withdrawal	8	12.5	37.5
safe period and condom	2	3.1	50.0
instrument and suppository	5	7.8	58.4
douche	2	3.2	0
pessary	2	3.2	50.0
other methods	4	6.3	33.3
total	64	100.0	50.0

According to table 5, safe period and condom are commonly used, withdrawal, instrument and suppository are next, and douche and pessary are few.

Main pre-clinical methods of contraception reported by Hime^s are withdrawal (30.3%), condom (24.6%) and douche (21.4%), but safe period is only 1.6% in America.

Accordingly, to summarize the result of such a condition as this percentage, it can be said that condom is the most prevalent method, and douche withdrawal safe period are various owing to the circumstances —, for example, the method of douche will be influenced by the construction of their houses and also the technical methods such as withdrawal and safe period will be used according to their likings or tastes.

Above table also shows their success percentage 50% or so as the effect of their practice. It is no doubt that these success-percentage will be rather influenced by their technics than by the method itself. Because they almost are not directed by the clinical adviser in using the contraceptive method. Accordingly it is

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sure that they want to know a better and harmless method of it.

5) The degree of their desires for birth control.

How do they desire to use the contraceptive method in future?

Next table shows us it.

Table 6.

Percentage of degree of their desires for birth control in future.

<u>I. practicers now using the contraceptive method (%)</u>					
	husband and wife together		husband yes but wife no	wife yes but husband no	total
	yes	no			
government officers	84.1	9.4	2.5	4.0	100.0
clerks and technical experts	93.3	6.7	0	0	100.0
labourers	75.6	12.9	3.8	7.7	100.0
people in Acume-town	78.3	12.2	5.2	4.3	100.0
people in Kasumi-village	80.4	14.1	3.3	2.2	100.0
<u>2. unpracticers not yet using the contraceptive method</u>					
	husband and wife together		husband yes but wife no	wife yes but husband no	total
	yes	no			
government officers	53.4	40.2	1.6	4.8	100.0
clerks and technical experts	60.4	32.8	3.4	3.4	100.0
labourers	46.9	45.2	2.8	5.1	100.0

people in Acume-town	51.8	41.4	1.1	5.7	100.0
people in Kasumi-village	56.4	39.4	1.3	2.9	100.0

According to this table 6-^t shows us that people of more than 75% in practicers and more than 46% even in unpracticers will practice the birth control in future. In order to use the contraceptive method, at first they must obtain the knowledge of it, but according to practicers' answer, they almost obtain the contraceptive method from books (over 50%). The percentage of people obtaining from their friends or physicians are only 10% or so. Especially in a village they also are taught by the relatives and midwives. While they desire for birth control, they also desire three or four children too. For that people in a village desire more large farmly than in a city. Relating to these conditions, the investigation on abortion tells us the percentage 10% or so among practicers in a city, but 5% or so among practicers in a town and a village.

6) The difference between a city and its suburb.

As you know by above tables, the fact that the birth control is more prevalent in a city than in the suburb, gives us the various means. Namely obsurving their reasons, we can show as follows — the economic conditions of their families, the planned number of their children, the degree of their knowledge of birth control, the will of erection of the rational life, especially women's will, and etc. —

In short, I think that the difference are reduced to the level of their lives. Accordingly the essential problem consists in not the amount of their incomes but the will of maintaining or improving the level of their lives, in other words, the problems of every man's and woman's responsibilities for everyone's life and society.

Because

Because their economic reasons are not the amount of income, but the amount of necessary expense, inter-relating to their actual incomes, reduced to the expected level of their lives.

It may also be one cause of the difference that they can get many good books of birth control easier in a city than in the suburb. I guess that the birth control is not prevailed in a pure village, but the coming investigation will tell us the actual state.

Summary.

According to the result of the investigation above-mentioned, the birth control is not yet democratized in Japan, but the spread of it is prevailed in a city (26.1%) and less in the suburb (21.7%).

Their reasons of the practice are restricted within the consideration of their private lives rather than the recognition of the actual state concerning to the "so-called" over-population in Japan.

Educated people more practice the birth control than other lower educated people, especially the officers among a group of educated persons, in spite of the low degree of their education, practice in the same manner like their friends. The practicers prolong the birth-space about one year or two and try to have desirable children — one boy and one girl, two boys and one girl, or two boys and two girls — being in accordance with their expectation, but according to their talking, the successful birth control is about 50% or so.

The unpracticers are generally such people that know nothing about birth control or such a modern contraceptive method as safe period, condom, withdrawal, jelly, pessary and etc. But some of them,

especially

especially in a village, may be acquainted with some ideas of primitive contraception as abortion, elimination or some others prevailed in the days of Tokugawa.

And above table shows the percentage (46% - 60%) that in future they, above all women, will be considerably interested in the modern birth control.

I am sure that the problems of birth control in Japan must be researched as one of the coming population problems.