

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

An overview

Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system, its functions and processes. It comprises a constellation of methods, techniques and services that contribute to reproductive health and well-being.

It entails having access to information and services, including family planning, that are effective, affordable and acceptable. It means ensuring women can go safely through pregnancy and childbirth.

It means people are able to have a satisfying, pleasurable and safe sex life. To decide if and when to have children. To choose if and when to enter into a relationship, free from violence, discrimination or coercion. To freely express your sexuality. To decide if and when to be sexually active.

Adolescent pregnancy

Every year, 16 million adolescent girls give birth. Maternal mortality is the leading cause of death for this age group in low and middle-income countries.



Gender-based violence

70% As many as 7 in 10 women experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes, and the first sexual experience of up to one third of them is forced.

Family planning

An estimated 222 million women in the global south are not using a modern method of contraception but would like to prevent pregnancy—resulting in 80 million unintended pregnancies and 20 million unsafe abortions.



STIs, including HIV

34 million Despite progress, 34 million people are currently living with HIV with 2,400 young people infected every day.

Maternal health

Every day 800 women die due to preventable pregnancy and childbirth-related complications. These deaths are preventable through adequate nutrition, proper health care, including access to family planning, the presence of a skilled birth attendant during delivery and emergency obstetric care.

Consensual relationships

1 in 3 girls in developing countries will be married without their consent before they are 18 years old.

Sexual violence

Adolescent girls and young women are especially at risk of violence. Up to 50% of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16; and 140 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation.

MDGs

Achieving universal access to reproductive health is one of the Millennium Development Goals.



What ARE sexual and reproductive rights?

- Right to the highest attainable standard of health;
- Right to decide the number and spacing of one's children;
- Right to equality and non-discrimination;
- Right to be free from torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment;
- Right to privacy;
- Right to life;
- Right to information and education;
- Right to enter into marriage with the free and full consent of the intending spouses;
- Right to freedom of expression.

Find out more

- [1994 ICPD Programme of Action](#)
- [Millennium Development Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health](#)
- [UNFPA State of World Population Reports](#)
- [High Level Task Force for ICPD Policy Recommendations for the ICPD Beyond 2014](#)
- [World Health Organization: Sexual and Reproductive Health](#)