

The need for contraception is assessed by whether or not respondents want another child, their preferred interval between children, and the number of children they consider ideal. Therefore, in the 2004 LDHS, women and men were asked a series of questions to ascertain fertility preferences. These data are used in this chapter to quantify fertility preferences and, in combination with data on contraceptive use, to permit estimation of unmet need for family planning, both to space and limit births.

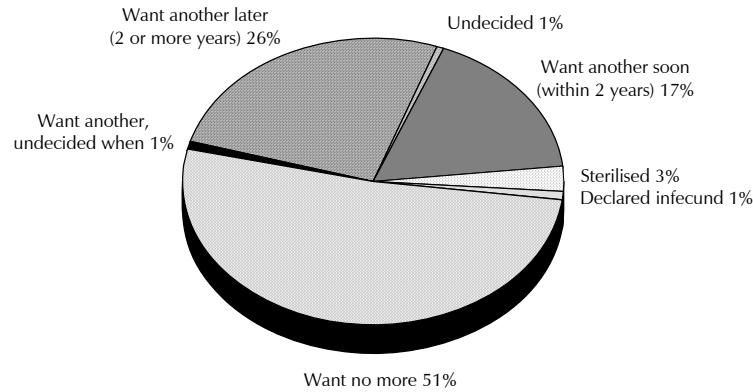
7.1 DESIRE FOR MORE CHILDREN

To obtain information on the desire for more children at the time of the survey, women and men in the 2004 LDHS sample were asked, “Would you like to have (a/another) child or would you prefer not to have any (more) children?” Respondents who mentioned that they would like to have more children were asked, “How long would you like to wait from now before the birth of (a/another) child?” Responses to these questions are presented in Table 7.1 by the number of living children for both married women and men.

Table 7.1 Fertility preferences by number of living children								
Percent distribution of currently married women and currently married men by desire for children, according to number of living children, Lesotho 2004								
Desire for children	Number of living children ¹							Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+	
WOMEN								
Have another soon ²	83.0	22.3	15.5	6.3	3.0	6.3	2.9	17.4
Have another later ³	8.4	50.5	31.0	19.7	8.0	7.2	2.7	25.8
Have another, undecided when	2.2	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.6
Undecided	0.2	1.5	0.9	0.4	1.6	1.0	0.2	0.9
Want no more	5.8	23.9	50.0	67.7	79.1	76.9	86.3	51.4
Sterilised ⁴	0.0	0.4	0.9	4.6	6.4	6.0	5.7	2.7
Declared infecund	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.5	1.3	2.5	1.5	0.9
Missing	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of women	267	980	822	619	393	282	346	3,709
MEN								
Have another soon ²	65.1	23.2	21.7	19.5	11.6	9.8	6.5	22.2
Have another later ³	27.6	51.3	32.2	17.8	14.5	14.3	5.0	27.4
Have another, undecided when	2.0	1.4	1.2	0.4	3.4	1.0	0.6	1.3
Undecided	1.8	4.0	2.2	1.7	3.6	0.0	1.3	2.4
Want no more	3.1	18.9	42.7	57.6	66.8	73.9	85.4	45.8
Declared infecund	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.6
Missing	0.4	1.1	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of men	116	267	267	191	120	81	148	1,191

¹ Includes current pregnancy
² Wants next birth within 2 years
³ Wants to delay next birth for 2 or more years
⁴ Includes both female and male sterilisation

Figure 7.1 Fertility Preferences of Currently Married Women Age 15-49



LDHS 2004

More than half of married women (54 percent) either do not want a/nother child or are sterilised. Almost all of the remaining women want another child, with only 1 percent indicating that they are undecided about whether to have a child (Figure 7.1). Among the women wanting a child, the majority—26 percent of all women—want to wait at least two years before having a child. Fertility preferences among married men show a similar pattern, although the percentage of men who do not want any more children is lower (46 percent) than among women (51 percent), and the proportion who would like to have another child is higher (51 percent for men compared with 44 percent for women).

Surprisingly, 6 percent of childless women and 3 percent of men do not want to have any children. About one-fourth of women and one-fifth of men with one living child say they do not want more children. The proportions desiring to limit childbearing continue to increase with family size, peaking among women and men with six or more children at 86 and 85 percent, respectively.

The desire to limit childbearing is shown by background characteristic in Table 7.2. The variation across residential categories shows that married women living in rural areas are almost as likely as urban women to prefer to limit childbearing, though they prefer to do so at higher family sizes than urban women. Variations in the desire for more children by ecological zone and district are also comparatively small for women. The proportions wanting no more children are near or exceed the national average in all zones except Mountains (47 percent) and in all districts except Qacha's Nek (45 percent), Mokhotlong (44 percent), and Thaba-Tseka (46 percent). There is more residential variation observed in the desire to limit childbearing among men than among women. The proportion wanting no more children is lower among urban men (42 percent) than among rural men (47 percent). The proportion also varies more markedly by ecological zone and district among men than women.

Table 7.2 Desire to limit childbearing

Percentage of currently married women and men who want no more children, by number of living children (women) and background characteristics, Lesotho 2004

Background characteristic	Number of living children ¹							All women	All men
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+		
Residence									
Urban	7.7	28.1	62.4	91.0	90.3	84.2	98.6	54.5	41.9
Rural	5.0	23.0	47.4	67.4	84.8	82.8	91.6	54.0	47.0
Ecological zone									
Lowlands	6.6	27.2	52.9	79.4	89.0	82.8	96.2	56.3	49.3
Foothills	3.4	25.9	50.0	59.0	91.2	96.1	95.7	56.2	43.2
Mountains	6.3	15.7	44.2	59.4	74.9	76.0	82.4	47.1	36.7
Senqu River Valley	0.0	24.8	61.4	72.4	86.7	87.8	100.0	59.7	55.7
District									
Butha-Buthe	8.5	21.0	45.2	69.5	90.8	93.5	100.0	54.0	57.1
Leribe	5.2	21.7	55.2	67.8	76.1	88.6	98.4	53.7	56.2
Berea	0.0	22.9	37.0	81.6	84.5	81.8	96.0	55.0	39.4
Maseru	8.9	30.7	61.0	76.9	94.6	89.0	89.8	57.9	41.0
Mafeteng	5.9	30.0	54.2	80.5	89.6	76.9	94.6	57.8	51.5
Mohale's Hoek	3.3	25.0	50.5	62.8	89.8	83.9	90.7	54.6	51.2
Quthing	7.4	24.9	60.9	69.5	74.8	83.1	91.7	55.2	46.4
Qacha's Nek	2.3	15.4	35.5	68.0	67.3	80.8	80.0	44.6	44.9
Mokhotlong	0.9	12.8	37.5	58.5	68.9	81.0	76.4	43.8	35.0
Thaba-Tseka	6.7	11.0	37.6	65.1	78.6	55.8	89.3	45.5	37.2
Education									
No education	0.0	6.6	58.9	51.3	78.9	60.4	78.0	49.4	40.4
Primary, incomplete	9.9	23.6	39.9	65.7	78.2	79.9	89.6	54.4	53.9
Primary, complete	3.4	21.8	50.4	71.2	87.5	89.1	95.9	55.1	32.8
Secondary+	3.9	27.0	58.8	79.5	91.6	84.3	97.3	53.4	43.6
Wealth quintile									
Lowest	3.4	16.9	45.4	53.7	76.5	81.5	82.4	47.2	37.2
Second	4.5	22.6	47.5	72.3	75.7	73.3	91.5	53.3	46.5
Middle	8.0	21.7	52.8	64.2	89.5	86.3	92.9	53.8	46.5
Fourth	6.7	27.6	42.8	76.0	90.9	84.4	99.8	53.7	43.4
Highest	5.7	27.9	60.5	82.4	90.4	88.0	93.3	59.7	52.3
Total	5.8	24.3	50.9	72.3	85.5	82.9	92.1	54.1	45.8

Note: Women who have been sterilised are considered to want no more children.
¹ Includes current pregnancy

The desire to limit childbearing generally increases with education for women but does not show a clear pattern for men. The differences in the desire to limit childbearing by education are more pronounced among men than among women. For example, the proportion of men who want no more children varies markedly from 33 percent among those who have completed primary education to 54 percent among men who have attended but not completed primary education. A significant difference is observed between women and men who completed primary education (55 percent for women compared with 33 percent for men). The desire to limit childbearing generally increases with increasing wealth index, from 47 percent among women in the lowest wealth quintile to 60 percent among those in the highest quintile.

7.2 NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

Women who are currently married and who say that either they do not want any more children or that they want to wait two or more years before having another child, but are not using contraception, are considered to have an unmet need for family planning. Women who are using family planning methods are said to have a met need for family planning. Women with unmet need and met need constitute the total demand for family planning. Table 7.3 presents information for currently married women on unmet need, met need, and total demand for family planning, according to whether the need is for spacing or limiting births.

Almost one-third of currently married women in Lesotho have an unmet need for family planning, 11 percent for spacing and 20 percent for limiting childbearing. Taking into account the 37 percent of currently married women using contraceptives, the total demand for family planning comprises two-thirds of married women in Lesotho. Thus, if all women who want to space or limit childbearing were to use family planning methods, the contraceptive prevalence rate in Lesotho could increase from the current level of 37 percent (Chapter 5) to about 68 percent. The data in this table, however, show that only 55 percent of this total demand among married women is satisfied.

Unmet need for spacing declines with age from a peak of 24 percent at age 15-19 to a low of 1 percent at age 45-49, while unmet need for limiting increases with age except for women age 45-49. Unmet need for family planning is higher in rural (34 percent) than urban (20 percent) areas. By ecological zone, it ranges from a low of 25 percent in the Lowlands to a high of 41 percent in the Mountains. Mafeteng district (22 percent) has the lowest level of unmet need and Mokhotlong, the highest level (45 percent). The proportion in need of family planning declines with educational level.

Both total demand for family planning and the proportion of total demand that is satisfied are also associated with demographic and socioeconomic indicators. Demand generally increases with age, reaching a peak of 76 percent in the 30-39 age group. It exceeds 70 percent in the Lowlands and Senqu River Valley zones, Leribe, Butha-Buthe, and Mafeteng districts, and among women with secondary education and the highest wealth quintile. The proportion of the total demand that is satisfied is lowest for women age 15-19 (30 percent), women in Mokhotlong (26 percent), and among the small number of women with no education (16 percent).

Table 7.3 Need for family planning among currently married women

Percentage of currently married women with unmet need for family planning, with met need for family planning, and the total demand for family planning, by background characteristics, Lesotho 2004

Background characteristic	Unmet need for family planning ¹			Met need for family planning (currently using) ²			Total demand for family planning ³			Percentage of demand satisfied	Number of women
	For spacing	For limiting	Total	For spacing	For limiting	Total	For spacing	For limiting	Total		
Age											
15-19	23.6	11.5	35.1	10.2	4.5	14.7	33.8	16.0	49.8	29.6	293
20-24	20.3	10.9	31.1	21.0	13.1	34.1	41.3	23.9	65.2	52.2	779
25-29	11.8	17.5	29.3	21.0	21.7	42.7	32.8	39.2	71.9	59.3	700
30-34	9.0	17.6	26.6	19.2	30.3	49.5	28.2	47.9	76.1	65.1	593
35-39	5.6	28.0	33.6	8.1	34.4	42.5	13.7	62.4	76.1	55.9	484
40-44	3.0	32.6	35.5	3.5	33.6	37.1	6.5	66.2	72.7	51.1	478
45-49	0.5	27.5	28.0	0.8	25.3	26.1	1.2	52.8	54.1	48.2	383
Residence											
Urban	5.2	14.3	19.6	17.1	32.8	49.9	22.4	47.2	69.5	71.9	738
Rural	12.4	21.4	33.8	13.0	21.1	34.2	25.4	42.6	67.9	50.3	2,970
Ecological zone											
Lowlands	7.6	17.7	25.3	17.0	28.7	45.7	24.6	46.4	71.0	64.4	2,132
Foothills	11.8	22.4	34.2	11.0	20.6	31.6	22.8	43.0	65.8	48.0	456
Mountains	17.9	23.1	41.0	9.0	12.6	21.5	26.8	35.7	62.5	34.4	929
Senqu River Valley	12.2	25.0	37.2	9.2	24.7	33.9	21.4	49.7	71.1	47.7	191
District											
Butha-Buthe	9.2	15.5	24.8	18.5	26.9	45.4	27.7	42.4	70.1	64.7	250
Leribe	11.3	19.7	31.0	18.5	24.0	42.5	29.8	43.7	73.5	57.8	579
Berea	13.3	20.6	33.9	12.6	21.6	34.2	25.8	42.3	68.1	50.2	419
Maseru	6.3	20.6	27.0	13.4	26.8	40.2	19.7	47.4	67.1	59.9	903
Mafeteng	6.6	15.1	21.7	17.3	32.1	49.4	24.0	47.1	71.1	69.4	414
Mohale's Hoek	9.4	19.5	28.9	15.2	24.3	39.5	24.6	43.8	68.4	57.7	349
Quthing	12.7	26.2	38.9	7.8	21.2	29.0	20.4	47.4	67.8	42.7	215
Qacha's Nek	18.6	19.3	37.8	6.3	17.0	23.2	24.8	36.2	61.0	38.0	119
Mokhotlong	22.0	23.1	45.1	6.7	8.7	15.4	28.7	31.8	60.5	25.5	203
Thaba-Tseka	19.4	22.9	42.4	9.1	12.0	21.1	28.5	34.9	63.5	33.2	257
Education											
No education	17.8	29.5	47.3	3.3	6.0	9.3	21.1	35.5	56.6	16.4	86
Primary, incomplete	12.8	23.3	36.1	9.6	17.2	26.8	22.4	40.5	63.0	42.6	1,154
Primary, complete	11.4	20.1	31.5	13.0	23.3	36.3	24.4	43.4	67.8	53.5	1,150
Secondary+	8.4	16.4	24.8	18.9	30.3	49.2	27.4	46.6	74.0	66.5	1,319
Wealth quintile											
Lowest	18.7	24.7	43.4	7.5	10.1	17.6	26.2	34.8	61.0	28.8	574
Second	15.5	24.1	39.5	10.1	16.1	26.2	25.5	40.2	65.7	39.9	709
Middle	9.6	20.8	30.4	16.7	20.9	37.6	26.2	41.7	68.0	55.3	648
Fourth	10.3	18.0	28.2	14.5	26.4	41.0	24.8	44.4	69.2	59.2	854
Highest	4.2	15.3	19.4	18.0	36.5	54.5	22.2	51.7	73.9	73.7	923
Total	10.9	20.0	30.9	13.8	23.5	37.3	24.8	43.5	68.2	54.7	3,709

¹ Unmet need for spacing includes pregnant women whose pregnancy was mistimed, amenorrhoeic women who are not using family planning and whose last birth was mistimed, and fecund women who are neither pregnant nor amenorrhoeic and who are not using any method of family planning and say they want to wait two or more years for their next birth. Also included in unmet need for spacing are fecund women who are not using any method of family planning and say they are unsure whether they want another child or who want another child but are unsure when to have the birth unless they say it would not be a problem if they discovered they were pregnant in the next few weeks. Unmet need for limiting refers to pregnant women whose pregnancy was unwanted, amenorrhoeic women whose last child was unwanted, and fecund women who are neither pregnant nor amenorrhoeic and who are not using any method of family planning and who want no more children. Excluded from the unmet need category are pregnant and amenorrhoeic women who became pregnant while using a method (these women are in need of a better method of contraception).

² Using for spacing is defined as women who are using some method of family planning and say they want to have another child or are undecided whether to have another. Using for limiting is defined as women who are using and who want no more children. Note that the specific methods used are not taken into account here.

³ Nonusers who are pregnant or amenorrhoeic and women whose pregnancy was the result of a contraceptive failure are not included in the category of unmet need, but are included in total demand for contraception (since they would have been using had their method not failed).

Tables 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 present information for all women and women who are not currently married on unmet need, met need, and total demand for family planning, according to whether the need is for spacing or limiting births.

Eighteen percent of all women in Lesotho have an unmet need for family planning, 6 percent for spacing and 12 percent for limiting childbearing. The data also show 47 percent of all women in Lesotho have a demand for family planning. However, only 61 percent of this total demand is satisfied. The unmet need for spacing declines with age from a peak of 12 percent at age 20-24 to a low of less than 1 percent at age 45-49, while unmet need for limiting generally increases with age. Unmet need for family planning is higher in rural (21 percent) than urban (10 percent) areas. By ecological zone, it ranges from a low of 15 percent in the Lowlands to a high of 26 percent in the Mountains. Mafeteng district (14 percent) has the lowest level of unmet need and Mokhotlong the highest level (29 percent). Unmet need for family planning decreases with increasing educational attainment and wealth index.

Both the total demand for family planning and the proportion of the total demand that is satisfied also are associated with demographic and socioeconomic indicators. Demand generally increases with age, reaching a peak of 68 percent in the 30-34 age group. Demand for family planning does not vary significantly by ecological zone and district. However, it is correlated with education and wealth status: demand increases with education and increasing wealth.

Among women who are not currently married, 4 percent have an unmet need for family planning, 82 percent have a met need for family planning, and the total demand for family planning is 24 percent. Variations by background characteristics show patterns that are similar to those for all women.

Table 7.4.1 Need for family planning among all women

Percentage of all women with unmet need for family planning, with met need for family planning, and the total demand for family planning, by background characteristics, Lesotho 2004

Background characteristic	Unmet need for family planning ¹			Met need for family planning (currently using) ²			Total demand for family planning ³			Percentage of demand satisfied	Number of women
	For spacing	For limiting	Total	For spacing	For limiting	Total	For spacing	For limiting	Total		
Age											
15-19	5.3	2.5	7.8	6.4	2.5	8.9	11.7	5.0	16.7	53.3	1,710
20-24	11.5	6.6	18.1	17.5	12.1	29.5	29.0	18.7	47.6	62.0	1,463
25-29	8.4	12.9	21.3	19.6	22.6	42.2	28.0	35.5	63.5	66.4	1,044
30-34	7.0	14.4	21.4	16.5	29.9	46.4	23.5	44.4	67.9	68.4	816
35-39	4.0	21.0	25.0	7.0	31.5	38.5	11.0	52.5	63.5	60.7	728
40-44	2.1	24.3	26.5	2.6	30.0	32.6	4.7	54.3	59.1	55.2	741
45-49	0.3	20.1	20.4	0.5	21.8	22.3	0.8	41.9	42.7	52.2	592
Residence											
Urban	2.7	7.4	10.1	15.6	23.6	39.2	18.3	31.0	49.3	79.5	1,682
Rural	7.5	13.3	20.8	9.5	16.3	25.8	17.0	29.6	46.6	55.4	5,413
Ecological zone											
Lowlands	4.4	10.2	14.6	12.9	21.3	34.2	17.4	31.5	48.8	70.1	4,299
Foothills	7.2	14.6	21.8	7.6	15.4	23.0	14.8	29.9	44.8	51.3	787
Mountains	11.3	14.9	26.2	7.3	11.0	18.3	18.6	25.9	44.5	41.1	1,572
Senqu River Valley	5.9	13.3	19.2	10.7	16.0	26.8	16.7	29.3	46.0	58.3	437
District											
Butha-Buthe	5.9	9.4	15.3	11.8	19.4	31.1	17.7	28.7	46.4	67.0	458
Leribe	7.0	11.7	18.6	12.8	17.3	30.1	19.8	28.9	48.7	61.8	1,065
Berea	7.5	12.2	19.7	9.4	16.0	25.4	16.8	28.2	45.1	56.3	776
Maseru	3.5	11.8	15.3	12.1	21.0	33.1	15.6	32.8	48.4	68.5	1,868
Mafeteng	4.2	10.2	14.4	12.9	24.5	37.4	17.1	34.6	51.8	72.2	755
Mohale's Hoek	6.0	11.0	17.0	11.4	19.2	30.6	17.4	30.2	47.6	64.3	684
Quthing	6.7	14.2	21.0	9.7	14.5	24.2	16.4	28.7	45.2	53.6	461
Qacha's Nek	10.0	10.7	20.7	9.3	15.0	24.4	19.3	25.8	45.1	54.1	233
Mokhotlong	13.5	15.1	28.6	4.4	7.7	12.1	17.9	22.8	40.7	29.7	360
Thaba-Tseka	11.7	14.9	26.6	7.0	10.4	17.4	18.7	25.3	43.9	39.5	435
Education											
No education	12.0	21.7	33.7	3.6	5.7	9.3	15.6	27.4	42.9	21.6	145
Primary, incomplete	7.8	14.1	21.9	6.9	13.4	20.3	14.7	27.5	42.2	48.1	2,136
Primary, complete	7.1	13.4	20.4	9.8	19.5	29.2	16.8	32.8	49.7	58.9	1,960
Secondary+	4.5	8.7	13.2	15.2	21.2	36.4	19.7	29.9	49.6	73.3	2,854
Wealth quintile											
Lowest	11.3	16.7	28.1	5.9	9.2	15.0	17.2	25.9	43.1	34.9	987
Second	9.4	14.6	24.0	7.2	13.1	20.4	16.6	27.7	44.4	45.9	1,294
Middle	6.1	12.3	18.4	10.8	15.6	26.4	16.9	27.9	44.8	59.0	1,258
Fourth	5.9	10.9	16.8	11.8	20.5	32.3	17.7	31.3	49.1	65.7	1,595
Highest	2.3	8.3	10.6	15.4	25.3	40.7	17.8	33.6	51.3	79.4	1,962
Total	6.3	11.9	18.2	11.0	18.0	29.0	17.3	29.9	47.3	61.4	7,095

¹ Unmet need for spacing includes pregnant women whose pregnancy was mistimed, amenorrhoeic women who are not using family planning and whose last birth was mistimed, and fecund women who are neither pregnant nor amenorrhoeic and who are not using any method of family planning and say they want to wait two or more years for their next birth. Also included in unmet need for spacing are fecund women who are not using any method of family planning and say they are unsure whether they want another child or who want another child but are unsure when to have the birth unless they say it would not be a problem if they discovered they were pregnant in the next few weeks. Unmet need for limiting refers to pregnant women whose pregnancy was unwanted, amenorrhoeic women whose last child was unwanted, and fecund women who are neither pregnant nor amenorrhoeic and who are not using any method of family planning and who want no more children. Excluded from the unmet need category are pregnant and amenorrhoeic women who became pregnant while using a method (these women are in need of a better method of contraception). Also excluded from the unmet need category for the all women panel are unmarried women who did not have sexual intercourse in the four weeks preceding the survey.

² Using for spacing is defined as women who are using some method of family planning and say they want to have another child or are undecided whether to have another. Using for limiting is defined as women who are using and who want no more children. Note that the specific methods used are not taken into account here.

³ Nonusers who are pregnant or amenorrhoeic and women whose pregnancy was the result of a contraceptive failure are not included in the category of unmet need, but are included in total demand for contraception (since they would have been using had their method not failed).

Table 7.4.2 Need for family planning among women who are not currently married

Percentage of women who are not currently married with unmet need for family planning, with met need for family planning, and the total demand for family planning, by background characteristics, Lesotho 2004

Background characteristic	Unmet need for family planning ¹			Met need for family planning (currently using) ²			Total demand for family planning ³			Percentage of demand satisfied	Number of women
	For spacing	For limiting	Total	For spacing	For limiting	Total	For spacing	For limiting	Total		
Age											
15-19	1.6	0.6	2.2	5.6	2.1	7.7	7.2	2.7	9.9	78.0	1,417
20-24	1.5	1.7	3.2	13.5	10.9	24.4	15.0	12.6	27.6	88.2	684
25-29	1.4	3.7	5.1	16.8	24.4	41.1	18.2	28.1	46.2	88.9	344
30-34	1.9	6.0	7.9	9.4	29.0	38.3	11.3	35.0	46.2	82.9	224
35-39	0.7	7.1	7.9	4.9	25.7	30.6	5.7	32.8	38.5	79.6	244
40-44	0.6	9.4	10.0	1.0	23.5	24.5	1.6	32.8	34.4	71.0	264
45-49	0.0	6.6	6.6	0.0	15.4	15.4	0.0	22.0	22.0	70.0	209
Residence											
Urban	0.7	2.0	2.7	14.4	16.4	30.8	15.1	18.3	33.4	92.1	944
Rural	1.6	3.4	5.0	5.3	10.4	15.7	6.9	13.9	20.7	75.8	2,442
Ecological zone											
Lowlands	1.3	2.8	4.1	9.0	14.0	23.0	10.2	16.8	27.1	85.0	2,167
Foothills	0.9	3.8	4.7	2.9	8.2	11.1	3.8	12.0	15.8	70.0	331
Mountains	1.7	3.1	4.9	5.0	8.6	13.6	6.8	11.8	18.5	73.7	643
Senqu River Valley	1.0	4.0	5.1	11.9	9.3	21.2	13.0	13.3	26.3	80.6	245
District											
Butha-Buthe	1.9	2.0	4.0	3.7	10.3	14.0	5.6	12.4	18.0	77.9	208
Leribe	1.8	2.1	3.8	6.1	9.2	15.3	7.9	11.3	19.2	79.9	486
Berea	0.7	2.3	3.0	5.6	9.5	15.1	6.3	11.8	18.1	83.4	357
Maseru	0.8	3.5	4.3	11.0	15.6	26.5	11.8	19.1	30.9	86.0	965
Mafeteng	1.3	4.2	5.5	7.5	15.2	22.7	8.8	19.4	28.2	80.6	340
Mohale's Hoek	2.4	2.1	4.5	7.5	13.9	21.4	9.9	16.0	25.9	82.6	335
Quthing	1.6	3.8	5.4	11.3	8.7	20.0	12.9	12.5	25.4	78.8	246
Qacha's Nek	1.0	1.9	2.8	12.5	13.0	25.6	13.5	14.9	28.4	90.0	114
Mokhotlong	2.3	4.8	7.1	1.4	6.3	7.7	3.8	11.1	14.9	52.0	156
Thaba-Tseka	0.6	3.2	3.8	3.9	8.2	12.0	4.5	11.3	15.8	76.1	178
Education											
No education	3.4	10.4	13.8	4.1	5.1	9.2	7.5	15.6	23.0	39.9	59
Primary, incomplete	1.9	3.3	5.2	3.7	9.0	12.6	5.6	12.3	17.9	70.7	982
Primary, complete	0.9	3.8	4.7	5.2	14.0	19.2	6.1	17.8	24.0	80.3	810
Secondary+	1.1	2.1	3.3	12.0	13.4	25.4	13.1	15.5	28.6	88.6	1,534
Wealth quintile											
Lowest	1.0	5.7	6.7	3.6	7.9	11.5	4.6	13.5	18.2	63.2	412
Second	2.1	3.1	5.2	3.8	9.5	13.3	5.8	12.6	18.4	72.0	585
Middle	2.3	3.3	5.6	4.6	10.0	14.6	7.0	13.3	20.3	72.2	610
Fourth	0.9	2.7	3.6	8.7	13.5	22.2	9.6	16.2	25.8	86.0	741
Highest	0.7	2.0	2.8	13.1	15.4	28.5	13.8	17.4	31.2	91.2	1,038
Total	1.3	3.0	4.4	7.8	12.1	19.9	9.2	15.1	24.3	82.0	3,386

¹ Unmet need for spacing includes pregnant women whose pregnancy was mistimed, amenorrhoeic women who are not using family planning and whose last birth was mistimed, and fecund women who are neither pregnant nor amenorrhoeic and who are not using any method of family planning and say they want to wait two or more years for their next birth. Also included in unmet need for spacing are fecund women who are not using any method of family planning and say they are unsure whether they want another child or who want another child but are unsure when to have the birth unless they say it would not be a problem if they discovered they were pregnant in the next few weeks. Unmet need for limiting refers to pregnant women whose pregnancy was unwanted, amenorrhoeic women whose last child was unwanted, and fecund women who are neither pregnant nor amenorrhoeic and who are not using any method of family planning and who want no more children. Excluded from the unmet need category are pregnant and amenorrhoeic women who became pregnant while using a method (these women are in need of a better method of contraception). Also excluded from the unmet need category for the all women panel are unmarried women who did not have sexual intercourse in the four weeks preceding the survey.

² Using for spacing is defined as women who are using some method of family planning and say they want to have another child or are undecided whether to have another. Using for limiting is defined as women who are using and who want no more children. Note that the specific methods used are not taken into account here.

³ Nonusers who are pregnant or amenorrhoeic and women whose pregnancy was the result of a contraceptive failure are not included in the category of unmet need, but are included in total demand for contraception (since they would have been using had their method not failed).

7.3 IDEAL FAMILY SIZE

Women and men who were interviewed in the 2004 LDHS were asked two questions for determining ideal family size. Respondents who did not have any living children were asked, “If you could choose exactly the number of children to have in your lifetime, how many would that be?” For respondents who had living children, the question was rephrased as follows, “If you could go back to the time you did not have any children and could choose exactly the number of children to have in your lifetime, how many would that be?” The results are presented in Table 7.5 for both women and men.

Table 7.5 Ideal number of children								
Percent distribution of all women and all men by ideal number of children, and mean ideal number of children for all women and all men and for currently married women and currently married men, according to number of living children, Lesotho 2004								
Desire for children	Number of living children ¹							Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+	
WOMEN								
0	7.1	1.4	0.8	0.5	2.1	1.5	2.4	3.1
1	10.8	13.3	5.5	4.3	2.9	1.8	1.5	8.0
2	48.3	36.8	29.1	22.3	24.3	19.7	11.0	33.9
3	20.3	25.9	19.9	18.6	11.6	15.6	15.6	20.0
4	9.1	15.5	33.5	35.4	34.0	31.2	36.1	22.3
5	2.9	3.4	5.3	8.9	7.0	11.4	8.0	5.2
6+	1.4	3.4	5.5	9.7	17.6	18.0	24.4	7.1
Non-numeric responses	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.8	1.1	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of respondents	2,210	1,526	1,147	842	532	392	447	7,095
Mean ideal number children for:²								
All women	2.3	2.7	3.2	3.5	3.8	4.1	4.3	3.0
Number	2,206	1,521	1,142	840	529	389	442	7,069
Currently married women	3.1	2.9	3.4	3.6	3.8	4.2	4.3	3.5
Number	267	980	820	617	392	282	344	3,701
MEN								
0	3.1	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.9
1	4.6	8.1	1.4	2.1	0.0	1.9	1.7	3.9
2	33.3	31.2	25.2	12.5	13.3	11.0	5.3	27.3
3	24.2	25.4	16.4	20.0	6.5	9.1	12.1	21.1
4	19.8	16.3	35.9	33.8	31.4	7.2	19.7	22.5
5	10.0	9.2	12.0	11.7	15.2	17.4	12.6	10.9
6+	4.7	9.0	6.9	18.3	32.5	49.4	46.0	11.6
Non-numeric responses	0.4	0.7	1.6	1.5	0.9	2.3	2.6	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of respondents	1,561	321	313	213	146	86	156	2,797
Mean ideal number children for:²								
All men	3.1	3.3	3.7	4.2	5.0	5.4	5.9	3.6
Number	1,556	319	308	210	144	84	152	2,773
Currently married men	3.3	3.3	3.5	4.2	4.8	5.3	5.9	4.1
Number	116	266	263	189	120	79	144	1,178
¹ Includes current pregnancy								
² Means are calculated excluding those giving non-numeric responses								

Almost all women and men gave a numeric response: and less than 1 percent of women and men failed to give a numeric response. Among women, the mean ideal family size is 3.0 children. The average ideal family size as reported by men (3.6 children) is higher than for women.

The ideal number of children increases with the number of living children. Women with six or more living children have an ideal family size of 4.3, compared with 2.3 for those with no children. Among men, ideal family size ranges from 3.1 for those without a child to 5.9 for men with six or more living children. This pattern could be attributed to either those with smaller family sizes tending to achieve these desired small families or to “adjustments” of ideal number of children as the actual number increased (rationalisation). However, despite the likelihood of rationalisation, considerable proportions of women and men report ideal family sizes that are smaller than their actual family sizes. For example, around three-quarters of women and half of men with six or more living children report ideal family sizes of less than six children.

Table 7.6 presents data on the mean ideal number of children for all women and men, by age (for women) and background characteristics. The ideal family size for women increases with age, from 2.3 children for women age 15-19 to 4.2 children for women age 45-49. Among both men and women, ideal family size is higher in rural areas than urban areas. It is highest in the Mountains zone among both women and men and in Thaba-Tseka district for women and Mokhotlong district for men. Ideal family size decreases with increasing level of education for both women and men. For example, for women it ranges from 4.2 children among those with no education to 2.6 children among women with secondary or higher education. The mean ideal number of children also decreases with an increase in the wealth index for both men and women.

Background characteristic	Age							All women	All men
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49		
Residence									
Urban	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.7	2.7	3.5	3.7	2.5	2.9
Rural	2.3	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.8	4.1	4.4	3.2	3.8
Ecological zone									
Lowlands	2.2	2.4	2.6	3.0	3.3	3.9	4.0	2.9	3.3
Foothills	2.5	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.7	4.4	3.2	3.9
Mountains	2.4	3.1	3.3	3.8	4.0	4.6	4.9	3.4	4.2
Senqu River Valley	2.1	2.5	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.6	4.0	2.8	3.7
District									
Butha-Buthe	2.3	2.7	2.7	3.1	3.7	4.1	3.9	3.0	3.6
Leribe	2.5	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.6	4.0	4.8	3.2	3.7
Berea	2.5	2.7	2.7	3.5	3.4	4.2	4.0	3.1	3.7
Maseru	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.9	3.1	3.5	4.0	2.8	3.2
Mafeteng	2.1	2.5	2.9	3.0	3.4	4.0	4.1	2.9	3.4
Mohale's Hoek	2.1	2.6	3.1	3.2	3.7	4.1	4.1	3.0	3.6
Quthing	2.2	2.4	3.0	3.4	3.3	3.7	4.3	2.9	3.8
Qacha's Nek	2.6	3.0	3.3	3.8	3.8	4.5	4.8	3.4	3.8
Mokhotlong	2.3	3.2	3.1	3.8	4.3	4.5	4.1	3.4	4.3
Thaba-Tseka	2.4	3.3	3.3	3.6	4.1	4.7	5.2	3.5	4.1
Education									
No education	2.4	3.3	3.9	4.1	4.5	4.6	4.8	4.2	4.8
Primary, incomplete	2.3	3.0	3.4	3.7	3.8	4.3	4.6	3.4	3.7
Primary, complete	2.4	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.6	4.0	3.9	3.1	3.1
Secondary+	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.8	3.2	3.5	3.5	2.6	2.9
Wealth quintile									
Lowest	2.5	3.2	3.5	3.7	4.3	4.5	4.9	3.5	4.5
Second	2.3	3.0	3.2	3.5	4.0	4.1	4.7	3.3	3.9
Middle	2.3	2.6	2.9	3.2	3.4	4.3	4.5	3.0	3.6
Fourth	2.3	2.6	2.7	3.3	3.4	4.2	4.1	3.0	3.3
Highest	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.8	3.1	3.3	3.5	2.6	3.0
Total	2.3	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.5	4.0	4.2	3.0	3.6

7.4 WANTED AND UNWANTED FERTILITY

Interviewers asked women a series of questions regarding children born in the five years preceding the survey date and any current pregnancy to determine whether each birth/pregnancy was wanted then, wanted later, or unwanted. These questions provide a powerful indicator of the degree to which couples successfully control fertility. The data can also be used to gauge the effect of the prevention of unwanted births on fertility rates. Table 7.7 shows the percent distribution of births in the five years preceding the survey by whether the birth was wanted by the mother then, wanted later, or not wanted at all.

The data indicate that 38 percent of births in Lesotho are unwanted and 12 percent are mistimed (wanted later). The percentage of births considered to have been unwanted is highest for births of order four and above (51 percent). Similarly, a larger proportion of births to older women are reported as unwanted compared with births to young women. Notably, 41 percent of births to women under age 20 are unwanted.

Birth order and mother's age at birth	Planning status of birth				Total	Number of births
	Wanted then	Wanted later	Wanted no more	Missing		
Birth order						
1	58.8	6.6	34.2	0.4	100.0	1,392
2	53.6	16.7	28.8	0.9	100.0	913
3	47.3	14.9	37.1	0.6	100.0	589
4+	35.5	12.1	51.1	1.4	100.0	1,106
Age at birth						
<20	50.1	8.4	41.0	0.6	100.0	815
20-24	54.2	13.9	31.0	0.8	100.0	1,217
25-29	53.4	12.5	33.3	0.7	100.0	807
30-34	46.7	12.5	40.2	0.5	100.0	550
35-39	38.6	9.6	50.9	0.9	100.0	406
40-44	30.2	10.0	56.7	3.1	100.0	186
45-49	*	*	*	*	*	21
Total	49.5	11.6	38.1	0.8	100.0	4,001

Note: An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

Table 7.8 presents wanted fertility rates. These rates are calculated in the same manner as the total fertility rate, but unwanted births are excluded from the numerator. For this purpose, unwanted births are defined as those that exceed the number considered ideal by the respondent. Women who did not report a numeric ideal family size were assumed to want all of their births. These rates represent the level of fertility that would have prevailed in the three years preceding the survey if all unwanted births had been prevented. A comparison of the total wanted fertility rate and the actual total fertility rate suggests the potential demographic effects of the elimination of unwanted births.

The total wanted fertility rate for Lesotho is 2.5. This rate is one child less than the actual fertility rate (3.5). Considering the variation by socioeconomic characteristics, the gap between the wanted and actual fertility rate is greatest for the Foothills and Senqu River Valley zones and Thaba-Tseka district. The gap is also considerable among women in the two lowest wealth quintiles.

Table 7.8 Wanted fertility rates

Total wanted fertility rates and total fertility rates for the three years preceding the survey, by background characteristics, Lesotho 2004

Background characteristic	Total wanted fertility rate	Total fertility rate
Residence		
Urban	1.4	1.9
Rural	2.9	4.1
Ecological zone		
Lowlands	2.0	2.9
Foothills	2.9	4.3
Mountains	3.6	4.9
Senqu River Valley	2.6	4.0
District		
Butha-Buthe	2.4	3.4
Leribe	2.5	3.6
Berea	2.7	3.9
Maseru	1.8	2.5
Mafeteng	2.3	3.3
Mohale's Hoek	2.9	4.0
Quthing	2.8	4.1
Qacha's Nek	3.5	4.4
Mokhotlong	3.4	4.6
Thaba-Tseka	3.7	5.1
Education		
No education	*	*
Primary, incomplete	2.9	4.2
Primary, complete	2.8	3.9
Secondary+	2.0	2.8
Wealth quintile		
Lowest	3.7	5.2
Second	3.0	4.5
Middle	2.4	3.8
Fourth	2.6	3.4
Highest	1.5	2.0
Total	2.5	3.5

Note: Rates are calculated based on births to women age 15-49 in the period 1-36 months preceding the survey. The total fertility rates are the same as those presented in Table 4.2. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 250 woman-years of exposure and has been suppressed.

7.5 IDEAL FAMILY SIZE AND UNMET NEED BY WOMEN'S STATUS

The ability of women to make household decisions has important implications on their fertility preferences and the practise of family planning. Table 7.9 shows the ideal family size and unmet need for family planning by selected indicators of women's status. The table shows that generally, ideal family size and unmet need are related to a woman's status. For example, mean ideal family size generally declines with both the number of decisions in which the respondent has a final say and the number of reasons with which the respondent agrees that a wife can refuse sex with her husband. Also, women who think that wife beating is not justified for any reason have a mean ideal family size of 3.3, compared with 3.8 for women who gave 5 or 6 reasons why beating a wife is justified.

Unmet need is typically higher for women who score lowest on the status indicators. More than one-third of women who participate in none or only 1-2 household decisions are in need of family planning compared with about one-fourth of women who participate in 5 decisions.

Table 7.9 Ideal number of children and unmet need by women's status						
Mean ideal number of children and unmet need for spacing and limiting, by women's status indicators, Lesotho 2004						
Women's status indicator	Mean ideal number of children	Number	Unmet need for family planning ²			Number of women
			For spacing	For limiting	Total	
Number of decisions in which woman has final say³						
0	3.4	244	17.5	17.5	35.0	244
1-2	3.7	886	13.8	24.0	37.8	888
3-4	3.5	1,553	11.5	19.3	30.8	1,555
5	3.2	1,019	6.1	18.2	24.2	1,022
Number of reasons to refuse sex with husband						
0	3.8	196	6.3	21.3	27.6	196
1-2	3.7	596	13.3	20.1	33.4	596
3-4	3.4	2,908	10.8	19.9	30.6	2,916
Number of reasons wife beating is justified						
0	3.3	1,890	8.6	19.7	28.4	1,894
1-2	3.5	858	13.4	20.8	34.2	859
3-4	3.6	694	12.6	19.6	32.2	696
5-6	3.8	259	14.8	20.6	35.4	259
Total	3.5	3,701	10.9	20.0	30.9	3,709

¹ Totals are calculated excluding the women giving non-numeric responses
² See Table 7.3 for definition of unmet need for family planning
³ Either by herself or jointly with others