

Pregnant in haste? Evidence of reproductive behaviours in Uganda*

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Abstract

Appropriate birth spacing benefits mothers and children in birth outcomes, human capital accumulation, and career development. Our analysis, using data from Uganda, reveals that miscarriage and stillbirth experience, largely caused by sporadic failure of meiotic division, lengthens the interval for the first, but shortens that for all the subsequent, pregnancies. The first effect is consistent with previous studies while the second is supposedly new and particularly relevant to high-fertility countries. The behavioural change seems to be explained by the reduced use of modern contraceptives but only partly; instead, it may be explained by the updating of statistical belief after actual realisation of miscarriage and stillbirth.

JEL Classification Codes: I12, I15, J13, O15.

Keywords: birth spacing, miscarriage and stillbirth, reproductive behaviour, family planning, Uganda.

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