

Adolescent Health

FACT SHEET

D P R K O R E A

The population of Democratic People's Republic of Korea is estimated at 22.7 million with a growth rate of 0.54%¹. More than 60% of the total population is urban. The total fertility rate which was

above the replacement level of fertility in 1990 had reduced to 2.0 in 1999. The crude birth rate of the country is 16.7 and crude death rate 9.9. DPR Korea has 100% literacy rate for both men and women.

Maternal mortality ratio has increased from 54 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 1993 to 105 in 2000² and infant mortality rate from 14.1 per thousand live births in 1996 to 21.8 in 2002¹.

POPULATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Table 1: Number and percentage of young people by age and sex in DPR Korea, 2004

Age (years)	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
10-14	1022,000	4.5	981,000	4.4	2003,000	8.9
15-19	950,000	4.2	911,000	4.0	1861,000	8.2
20-24	889,000	4.0	855,000	3.8	1744,000	7.8
Total	2861,000	12.7	2,747,000	12.2	5,608,000	24.9

Source: World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects: The 2004 Revision. Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. <http://esa.un.org/unpp>

Adolescent population (aged 10-19 years) in DPR Korea is approximately 3.8 million while the population of young people is about 5.6 million (Table-1). About one-sixth of the total

population consists of adolescents and one-fourth is of young people (10-24 years), indicating a high proportion of young people in the country. The distribution of the adolescent female

and male population to the total is almost equal. It is projected that in 2025 the proportion of young people will reduce and they will number 4.8 million or 20% of the total population.

STATUS OF EDUCATION

Education, knowledge, skills and information are essential for a successful transition to adulthood and for success in a rapidly changing

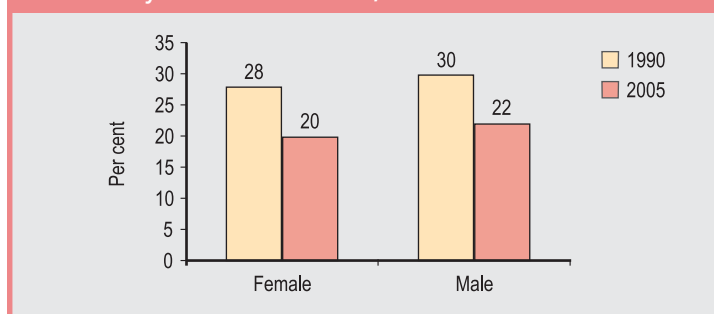
economy. The universal free 11 year compulsory education was implemented since 1975³. The age disaggregated data on status

of education is not available. However, the literacy rate reported for both men and women is 100%.

EMPLOYMENT

With its system of free and compulsory education, most of the adolescents in DPR Korea are in school and participation in the labour force is declining (Figure-1). There is no major gender difference in the present adolescent labour force in DPR Korea.

Figure 1: Percentage of adolescent (Aged 15-19) population economically active in DPR Korea, 1990 & 2005



Source: The World Youth 2006 data sheet, Population Reference Bureau, Washington DC.



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AGE AT MARRIAGE

The mean age at first marriage reported for women is 24.8 years (Table-2) and 27 years for men. It is marginally higher in urban areas as compared to rural. Since the mean age at first marriage is high, only 1% girls marry before the age of 19 years⁴.

Table 2: Mean age at first marriage of women by residence

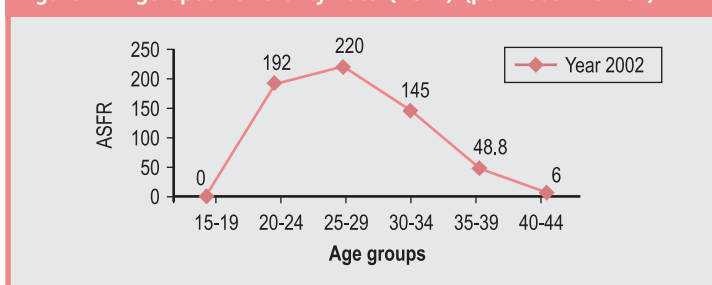
Settings	Mean age at first marriage (years)
Urban	24.9
Rural	24.7
Total	24.8

Source: Reproductive Health Survey, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 2002

PREGNANCY AND CHILDBEARING

No data for adolescent pregnancy and childbearing is available. The mean age at first birth of married women reported by 2002 Reproductive Health Survey is 25.9 years. Less than 0.5% of women aged 15-19 years give birth in a year⁵. The fertility rate of women aged 25-29 is highest and declines thereafter in subsequent age groups (Figure-2).

Figure 2: Age specific fertility rate (ASFR) (per 1000 women)



Source: 2002 Reproductive Health Survey, DPR Korea, UNFPA

CURRENT USE OF CONTRACEPTION

Contraceptive prevalence rate is low for women aged 20-24 and doubles in the next age group (Table-3). This may be attributed to increased

demand for family planning by women aged 25-29 (84.7%) as compared to women aged 20-24 (35%). The demand for spacing is also lower

among women aged 20-24 as compared to the older women (Table-4). The unmet need for spacing and limiting is also lower among young women.

Table 3: Current use of contraception

Age (years)	Any method	Modern method						Any traditional method
		Any modern method	Female sterilization	Male sterilization	Pill	IUD	Condom	
20-24	17.0	8.5	0	0	1.6	2.7	3.2	8.5
25-29	39.2	28.2	0.2	0.1	3.5	17.0	6.3	11.0

Source: 2002 Reproductive Health Survey, DPR Korea, UNFPA

* All figures in per cent

Table 4: Need for family planning

Age (years)	Unmet need for FP			Total demand for FP		
	Spacing	Limiting	Total	Spacing	Limiting	Total
20-24	15.4	2.6	17.9	32.4	2.6	35
25-29	34.9	10.7	45.6	50.3	34.4	84.7

Source: 2002 Reproductive Health Survey, DPR Korea, UNFPA

* All figures in per cent



STIs AND HIV/AIDS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

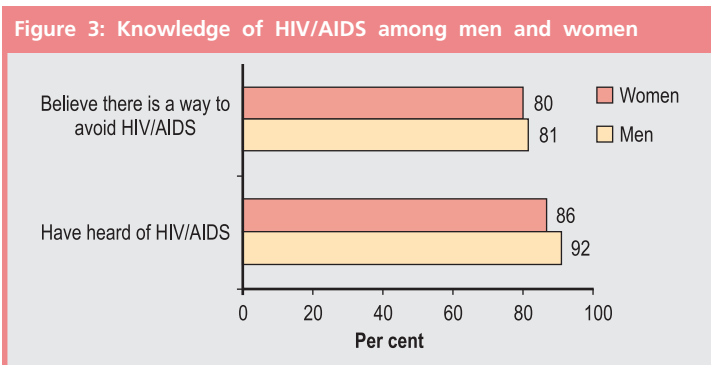
It is estimated that there are fewer than 100 people living with HIV/AIDS in the country^{6,7}. According to UNAIDS estimates the adult HIV prevalence rate in the country is less

than 0.2%⁸. The 2002 Reproductive Health Survey (RHS) reported that more than 5% of 20-24-year-old women complained of any RTI symptoms in the past 3 months and

out of those 90% were treated in the hospital. There is no data available on sexual behavioural patterns and the prevalence of HIV and other STIs among young people.

KNOWLEDGE OF HIV/AIDS

The 2002 Reproductive Health Survey (RHS) reported that knowledge of HIV/AIDS is reasonably high among men and women (Figure-3). More than two-thirds of the population knows about the ways to avoid HIV/AIDS and misconceptions are few (Table-5). The same survey showed no gaps in knowledge between married women and men.



Source: 2002 Reproductive Health Survey, DPR Korea, UNFPA

Table 5: Knowledge on the ways to avoid HIV/AIDS

Per cent distribution of women and men who believe in the specific ways to avoid HIV/AIDS			
Specific ways	Men	Women	Total
Limit number of sexual partner	72.5	69.1	69.7
Use condoms	65.4	60.7	61.5
Avoid blood transfusions	28.2	21.3	22.4
Avoid injections	22.3	14.5	15.8
Avoid mosquito bites	3.7	1.9	2.2
Sharing goods	9.8	7.9	8.2
Seek protection from doctor	18.8	11.0	12.3
Other	1.6	1.2	1.2
Don't know	20.3	21.2	21.0

Source: 2002 Reproductive Health Survey, DPR Korea, UNFPA

*All figures in per cent

NUTRITIONAL STATUS

The 2004 DPR Korea National Nutritional Assessment reported that young mothers aged 20-24 years were more likely to be affected by

malnutrition. More than 26% of them were weighing less than 45 kilos. About 36% of mothers were suffering from moderate anaemia.

The survey also reported that the incidence of malnutrition had increased during the last two years among young mothers.



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DPR KOREA

There is no data/information available on status of adolescent health or different behaviours of adolescents that affect their health in DPR Korea. Nevertheless, the protection of people's health is a key government policy. The entire country has a network of

healthcare services. The fundamental principles of the national health policy include universal and free medical care services, and maintaining preventive and curative services. The national reproductive health strategy addresses primarily

the three reproductive health priority areas of safe motherhood, family planning, and maternal nutrition during the next five years [2005-2010]². Ministry of public health makes sure that health education is a component of all programs.

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