

FAMILY PLANNING IN ANDALUCIA

Andalucia is a region situated in the south of the Iberian peninsular; it is the most extensive part of Spanish territory and is subdivided into 8 provinces.

Applying the Spanish constitution of 1978 which divides the State into different territories with autonomy of government in each one, Andalucia is constituted as an Autonomous Community, it elects its own parliament and has its central body situated in Seville. At the present time the majority of its duties have been transferred to it from Central Government, and among these is everything relating to Health, including therefore the budgets.

In 1983 the Ministry of Health in Madrid made a Plan for Family Orientation to offer this service through consultations of the public assistance network; in February 1984 all the budgets relating to health, including the budget destined for Family Planning, were transferred to Andalucia. Thus, the Health Council of the Autonomous Government of Andalucia reelaborated the Plan of the Central Ministry, making it suitable for the particular characteristics of this region.

Andalucia is an economically depressed area, with higher unemployment rates than the rest of the country, with mainly agricultural economic resources and low industrial development.

Population growth is as follows: In 1960 there were 5,893,396 inhabitants, and according to the last census in 1981, the population had increased to 6,441,755.

Women of fertile age (15-49 years) are 1,476,752, i.e. 16.95% of the female population of Spain of this age group.

Birth and fertility rates are higher than in the rest of the country.

	1960	1970	1980
Andalucia	23.6	21.8	17.1
Spain	20.9	19.2	14.1

(Birth rate = n° born alive per 1000 Mb/year)

The modest growth in population observed despite the high birth rate is due to the fact that this region, because of its poverty, is the one which provided the rest of the country and Europe with emigrants in the Sixties and Seventies.

Women's Situation in Andalucia

The low industrial development and the eminently rural character of Andalucia give rise to a society where the values of modern urban culture are not present. Furthermore the rural cultural influence imprints its specific characteristics on the urban areas. This influence is the framework in which the situation of the Andalucian woman should be contemplated.

There still exist today ancient customs which have lasted over the centuries and which doubtless contain vestiges of other civilisations such as the Arab civilisation, which left a great many features in the Andalucian culture. One example of this is the phenomenon of abduction which is practised in Almeria and some regions of Granada; the fiancé 'abducts' the young girl during the night from her parents' house, with her consent, and after spending some days together the engagement is established.

The revenge of the husband deceived by his wife is to "wash his honour with the blood of ~~he~~ ^{the man} who deceived him" and it is not infrequent to find in the pages of newspapers news relating to crimes of passion; just recently the ^{press} has published the case of the bullfighter Rafael de Paula, arrested on the charge of attempted murder of his wife's lover.

These examples illustrate the situation which keeps the Andalucian woman in a traditional status, suffering more deeply than in other parts of Spain the marginalisation and the oppression of a society with strong patriarchal influence. Furthermore, these customs still prevail because they receive wide popular consensus, reflecting the prevailing concept of the woman inside and outside of the family.

Paradoxically there exists at the same time a certain contempt for the institutions which legitimize sexuality (marriage) and this shows itself in very precocious sexual relations before marriage and a frequency of relations in the men of the family which implies cunning polygamy.

The Andalucian woman gets married very young; the average age on entering matrimony is 20 years, three years earlier than in the rest of the country; moreover the number of children per family is greater in a rural society; children are considered as wealth: they

are arms which will help the father at work and they are also a guarantee for a comfortable old age, without hardship. The Andalusian men want children also because they are the social proof of their virility. In Granada 25% of non-single women of fertile age have four or more children; in this way their social rôle is hallowed as that of mother and wife.

On the other hand, the economic crisis, whose consequences regarding unemployment are more pronounced in the poor Andalusian economy, prevents the woman from joining the work-force; unemployment is an important obstacle in the emancipation of women.

In this context, the demand for Family Planning services is not excessively great and is markedly less than in other Spanish regions.

Existence and Creation of New Services

Until 1983 the Family Planning Assistance cover in Andalusia was less than 4% of all the women of child-bearing age. The method used most was coitus interruptus (INE, Fertility Enquiry 1977) and probably continues so at the present time.

In 1984 the Health Council of the Autonomous Andalusian Government (Andalusian Council) put into progress a Programme of Family Planning, with the aim to create a network of consultancies in the whole region which would allow ease of access from any geographical point.

This network of consultancies is situated in the clinics of the Andalusian Social Security (RASSSA).

At the present time 84 first level Family Planning Consultancies have been newly created, attended by a general practitioner and nurse, and 27 second level, attended by a gynaecologist.

There were already in existence 15 hospital Family Planning centres, which are now defined as third level, acting especially for male and female sterilisation, high risk family planning, sterility problems and related diagnostic tests.

There were also already in existence 13 municipal Family Planning Centres, 12 relating to the Provincial Committees and 6 to the Provincial Health Delegations.

Thus at this time the total of first and second level Family Planning Centres has risen to 142, together with 15 third level centres.

In the first phase this new network will cover 25% of the demand of women of fertile age.

This new arrangement includes a common parameter for all the services and a single and centralised system of registration and codification. The coordination of these services, which did not exist before, is now governed from each one of the Provincial Delegations of Health.

Abortion Situation

The number of procured abortions is unknown as abortion is illegal and because the practise of therapeutic abortion has still not been legalized, and is now pending verdict of the Constitutional Tribunal.

We have the impression that the number of voluntary endings of pregnancy is definitely increasing, as is pregnancies in adolescent women (up to 18 years).

According to approximate figures provided by the Women's Institute, the number of voluntary endings of pregnancy in Spain is as many as 100,000 per year, which would suppose about 20,000 cases corresponding to Andalucia.

Change of Attitudes and Access to Contraceptives

When we touch upon the theme of change of attitudes, we must above all refer to unemployment, the incidence of which is greater in this region.

Unemployment has a negative effect on possibilities for change, threatening a great number of families with very precarious living conditions.

On the other hand there are evident changes of attitudes in specific sectors of the population, such as adolescents and young people, particularly in urban areas.

The great decline in the fertility rate observed in recent years, is without doubt related to both factors.

As for access to contraceptives, which used to be almost exclusively restricted to certain pharmacies (not all) and some

Family Planning centres, there has been an important improvement.

Nowadays in all pharmacies there can be found almost all kinds of contraceptives; only the IUD presents major difficulties as not all pharmacies sell it. (?)

In some bars in Seville there are machines where contraceptives can be bought, curiously in the Ladies' Toilets; they can also be found in some supermarkets; this is due to the fact that for the first time in Spain a publicity campaign has begun on TV and radio for the sale of this method. This campaign has aroused protests from the more reactionary sectors, including in the Pharmaceutical Colleges.

Nevertheless general opinion in Andalucia is favourable towards the use of contraceptives, but there still exist certain fears about the consequences they might have for health, because of the misinformation still predominating; this phenomenon is most marked regarding vasectomy and Orals. In the press this theme is welcomed and each day there are more and more articles and programmes referring to it.

Summing up, there is a notable improvement in Andalucia regarding Family Planning.

There exist some non-governmental organisations for Family Planning and Sexual Education and some feminist organisations, which for now have limited influence. There is an intention to extend and to create a movement which will include workers and patients of Family Planning Clinics and which will participate in the sharing of governmental plans in this subject. This is a task which until now has not found a satisfactory way of developing.

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