

Reviewer's report

Title: Assessing regional differences in contraceptive discontinuation, failure and switching in Brazil

Version: 1 **Date:** 10 March 2006

Reviewer: Jos Guilherme Cecatti

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an important, very good and very well written article on regional differences in contraception dynamics in Brazil based on a very well conducted secondary analysis of the data from the last Brazilian DHS. However, there are two concerns to be considered. The first is that the article is too large and should be shortened. The second one is that the data comes from the DHS performed in 1996, one decade ago, and could be considered relatively old specially taking into account another national DHS is being performed. Both should be seriously addressed in a forthcoming revision.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

In fact I am in doubt in classifying these next points between the label "major compulsory" and "minor essential" revisions. I chose this second one trusting the authors and their capacity of synthesis.

1. The introduction is too long (more than four pages) and must be reduced, conserving only the most important and direct topics related with the core of the article.
2. The introduction uses 17 references. Among them, 10 are from documents or books, which means they are not easily accessible for the readers. At least half of them should be suppressed or substituted, if possible, by articles from regular journals.
3. Figures 1 and 2 should be completely withdrawn. In fact they are useless.
4. The session Data and Methods is also too long (5 pages) and should be reduced.
5. The first phrase of the third paragraph of the session Data and Methods on page 7 ("The calendar records, for each episode....") is meaningless. Perhaps there are some missing words. In addition, for instance, exactly this same paragraph is one of those that could be shortened to reduce the whole text.
6. Another point that perhaps could be reduced is that on page 10 focusing the technical aspects of the model used. It is OK and gives a detailed technical information, but considering the main focus of the article this part could be omitted without any problem for the general understanding of the article.
7. I did not understand why there is an annex table. Do the authors think it should, or should not, be included in the article? If not, why presenting it in an additional file? If yes, why not name it as Table 5? I personally would recommend to include it. It gives some important numbers that could be used for estimations for similar populations.
8. Finally, I think that the Discussion session should include some comments regarding how old the data are and thus, their possible limitations, the possibility they are no longer reflecting the current contraception situation of the Brazilian women, and the need to compare these findings with those coming from the next Brazilian DHS which is currently being performed.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. In the second paragraph of the Results session, it would be nice to refer to exactly what subjects it refers, and the same for the correspondent Table 2. What are the units of analysis? Women or episodes of contraceptive use?
2. Please, add to the Table 3 the information regarding the unit of the numbers presented. They are in percentage, aren't they?
3. Please, use only horizontal lines in tables
4. Please, state what the symbol (*) means in the annex table.
5. Please, check the correctness of the references. They seems not to be according the journal standard.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.