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## RELATIONSHIPS OF DESIRE FOR NO MORE CHILDREN AND SOCIOECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN SRI LANKAN WOMEN

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**Summary.** Data from the 1982 Sri Lanka Contraceptive Prevalence Survey are used to identify women who wish to stop childbearing; they differ in socioeconomic status from their counterparts who want more children. Educated women are more likely to be motivated to cease childbearing than non-educated women; Christian or Sinhalese/Buddhist women are more willing to stop childbearing than Moor/Muslim or Tamil/Hindu women. The relationships between sex composition of existing children and women's fertility desires indicate that although moderate son preference exists it does not affect their contraceptive behaviour. Among those who want no more children, 15% are at risk of unwanted pregnancy because they do not practise contraception. Again better education and being Christian or Sinhalese/Buddhist reduced the risk of unwanted pregnancy. Women whose husbands disapproved of contraception had over four times higher risk of unwanted pregnancy than women whose husbands approved.

### Introduction

Reproductive preferences have been subject recently to widespread demographic scrutiny because of a debate about the reliability of fertility preferences data. In developing societies it may be difficult for a respondent to state desired family size, but it is comparatively straightforward for her to express whether she wants to have additional children or to terminate childbearing (Palmore & Concepcion, 1981; Lightbourne, 1987; Bongaarts, 1990). Information on the proportion of women wanting no more children, derived from the preference for continued childbearing, shows that in many developing countries, including Sri Lanka, there are a considerable number of women of reproductive age who do not want any more children (Westoff, 1978, 1990; United Nations, 1987). A combination of this information with their contraceptive use status could provide estimates of 'unmet need', that is the proportion of women who report that they have all the children they

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