

### Key Findings

- **Marriage:** The median age at first marriage among women age 25-49 is 23.7 years.
- **Age at first marriage:** Median age at first marriage among women has increased slightly since 2012, from 23.4 years to 23.7 years
- **Marriage differentials:** Ever-married women in the poorest wealth quintiles and those with less education have lower median ages at first marriage than those with higher education and those belonging to households in higher wealth quintiles.
- **Age at first sexual intercourse:** The median age at first sexual intercourse for women ages 25-49 at 23.7 years, equal to the age at first marriage.
- **Amenorrhea, Abstinence and Insusceptibility:** The median duration of postpartum amenorrhea, abstinence and insusceptibility among ever-married women who gave birth in the three years preceding the survey are 3.4, 3.2 and 5.1 months respectively.
- **Menopause:** Eleven percent of women age 30-49 are menopausal. Menopause increases with age, from 5.2 percent among women age 30-34 to 35 percent among women age 45-49.

This chapter presents findings related to some key factors that affect a woman's risk of becoming pregnant such as marriage and sexual activity. Marriage signals the regular exposure of women to the risk of becoming pregnant. In societies where age at first marriage is low, childbearing typically also starts early which results in higher fertility. Specifically, this chapter explores age at first marriage and age at first sexual intercourse among Sri Lankan ever-married women. Finally, measures of several other proximate determinants of fertility which, influence exposures to the risk of pregnancy are presented: durations of postpartum amenorrhea, postpartum abstinence insusceptibility, and menopause. Marriage is a primary indication of the exposure of women to the risk of pregnancy and, therefore, is important for the understanding of fertility. Populations in which age at marriage is low tend to be populations with early childbearing and high fertility. For this reason, there is an interest in trends in age at marriage. Marriage, divorce, separation, and widowhood are demographic events that influence exposure to pregnancy and thereby affect fertility. The definition of marriage is not universal for all countries and religions in the world. In Sri Lanka, marriage is very regulated by customs and laws that vary widely among ethnic groups. Although polygamy is illegal in Sri Lanka but is permitted among Muslims, its practice is not very common among them.

### 6.1 CURRENT MARITAL STATUS

Table 6.1 shows the current marital status of women age 15-49 according to age. In this table, the term "married" is intended to mean legal, traditional, or formal marriage, while "living together" describes couples who live together in an informal union as husband and wife. In later tables that do not list 'living together' as a separate category, these women are included in the 'currently married' group. Respondents who are currently married, widowed, divorced, or separated are referred to as 'ever-married women'.



**Table 6.1 Current marital status**

Percent distribution of women age 15-49 by current marital status, according to age, Sri Lanka 2016

| Age         | Marital status |         |                 |                            | Total | Percentage of respondents currently in union | Number of respondents |
|-------------|----------------|---------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------|--|-----------------------|
|             | Never married  | Married | Living together | Widowed/divorced/separated |       |  |                       |
| 15-19       | 93.9           | 5.4     | 0.6             | 0.1                        | 100.0 | 6.0  | 3,744                 |
| 20-24       | 60.4           | 37.0    | 1.5             | 1.0                        | 100.0 | 38.5   | 3,563                 |
| 25-29       | 25.3           | 70.2    | 2.7             | 1.8                        | 100.0 | 72.9   | 3,510                 |
| 30-34       | 8.4            | 85.4    | 2.8             | 3.4                        | 100.0 | 88.2   | 3,946                 |
| 35-39       | 3.8            | 86.8    | 4.2             | 5.1                        | 100.0 | 91.0   | 4,103                 |
| 40-44       | 4.4            | 84.8    | 3.8             | 6.9                        | 100.0 | 88.7   | 3,420                 |
| 45-49       | 4.6            | 80.9    | 3.7             | 10.8                       | 100.0 | 84.6   | 3,371                 |
| Total 15-49 | 28.7           | 64.5    | 2.8             | 4.1                        | 100.0 | 67.3   | 25,656                |

The proportion of never married women age 15-49 is 29 percent. This proportion, as expected, falls sharply with increasing age. It declines from 94 percent for women age 15-19 to less than 5 percent among women age 35 or older. The opposite distribution is observed among married women, with its smallest percentage at age 15-19 (5 percent), growing to 70 percent at age 25-29 and stabilizing at 80 percent or higher for ages 30-49. The high proportion of married women age for ages 30 and above indicates that marriage is almost universal in Sri Lanka. Overall 65 percent of all women 15-49 years of age are currently married and only four percent of women are widowed, divorced, and separated. The proportion of women who are widowed, divorced or separated increases sharply with age, 7 percent of women age 40-44 and 11 percent of women age 45-49 are widowed, divorced or separated. As expected all the proportions of currently married, divorced, widowed and separated increase with age.

Table 6.2 and figure 6.1 show the trend in the percentage of women who have never married by age group for the 1963-2016 periods using different data sources. The proportion of women who have never married affects fertility levels in a population. The singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) is the average length of single life expressed in years among those who marry before age 50. The SMAM in Sri Lanka has been fluctuating around 22-25 years and is reported at 23.7 years in 2016. By age groups, the percentage of ever-married adolescents (15-19) declined from 11 percent in year 2012 to 6 percent in year 2016. Among 20-24, the percentage of ever-married women decreased from 43 percent in 2012 to 40 percent in 2016 (see Figure 6.1 included below). Some caution is advised in interpreting trends since some of the data sources reflect the entire country, while most of the surveys omit the Eastern Northern districts. To be comparable to the 2006-07 SLDHS, data from the 2016 SLDHS were re-tabulated to omit the Northern districts of Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi.

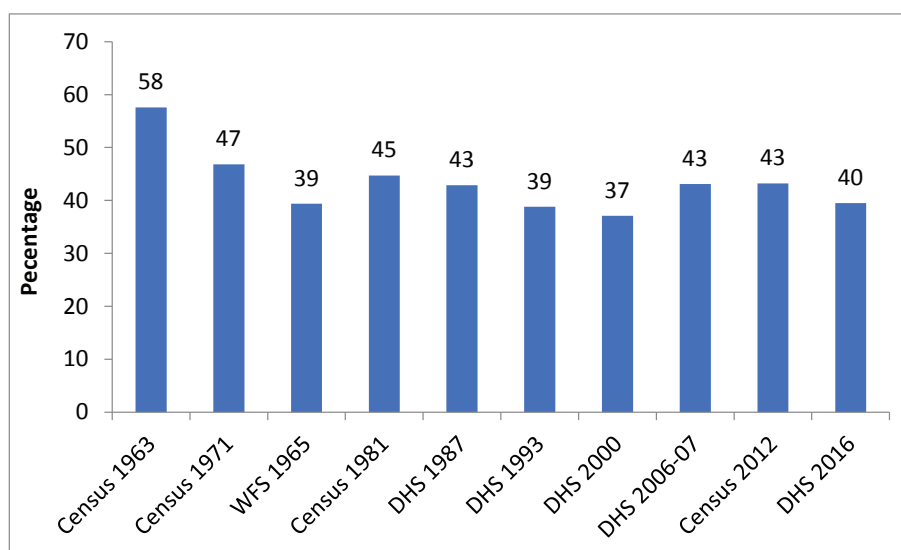
**Table 6.2 Proportion of ever- married women**

Percentage of all women who have ever married according to age and singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) from various sources, 1963 to 2016

| Current age | Census 1963 | Census 1971 | WFS 1965    | Census 1981 | DHS 1987 <sup>1</sup> | DHS 1993 <sup>1</sup> | DHS 2000 <sup>1</sup> | DHS 2006-07 <sup>1</sup> | Census 2012 | DHS 2016    |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 15-19       | 14.8        | 10.6        | 6.8         | 9.9         | 7.3                   | 7.1                   | 8.6                   | 9.6                      | 10.6        | 6.1         |
| 20-24       | 57.6        | 46.8        | 39.4        | 44.7        | 42.9                  | 38.8                  | 37.1                  | 43.1                     | 43.2        | 39.6        |
| 25-29       | 81          | 75.4        | 68.1        | 69.6        | 70                    | 66.3                  | 66.7                  | 74.1                     | 75.6        | 74.7        |
| 30-34       | 88.6        | 89.1        | 86.3        | 84.2        | 85.8                  | 82.3                  | 84.2                  | 89.2                     | 89.8        | 91.6        |
| 35-39       | 89.8        | 94.2        | 94.2        | 91.1        | 90.9                  | 88.9                  | 89.3                  | 93.6                     | 93.3        | 96.1        |
| 40-44       | 86.1        | 95.3        | 95.4        | 94.1        | 93.8                  | 90.8                  | 94.2                  | 93.8                     | 94.3        | 95.5        |
| 45-49       | 81.6        | 95.9        | 97.9        | 95.5        | 96.5                  | 94.8                  | 93.5                  | 94.3                     | 94.6        | 95.4        |
| <b>SMAM</b> | <b>22.1</b> | <b>23.5</b> | <b>25.1</b> | <b>24.4</b> | <b>24.8</b>           | <b>25.5</b>           | <b>24.6</b>           | <b>23.5</b>              | <b>23.4</b> | <b>23.7</b> |

WFS = World Fertility Survey; SMAM = Singulate mean age at marriage Sources: DCS, 1978 Table 4.1 ; DCS, 2002, Table 6.3; special tabulation for 2006-07, <sup>1</sup> Excluding Northern and Eastern Provinces

**Figure 6.1 Trends in proportion of women age 20-24 who were ever-married**



## 6.2 AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE

### Median age at first marriage

Age by which half of respondents have been married

The start of marriage is an important social and demographic indicator and, in most societies, represents the point in a person's life when childbearing first becomes acceptable. Thus, trends in age at first marriage can help in understanding the levels and trends in fertility for Sri Lanka. The duration of exposure to pregnancy depends primarily on the age at which women first marry. Women who marry early will, on average, have longer exposure to pregnancy and a greater number of lifetime births. Information on age at first marriage was obtained by asking all ever-married women the month and year at which they married or started living together with their first husband.

Table 6.3 shows the percentage of women age 15-49 who were first married by specific exact ages and median age at first marriage, according to current age. The results show no important differences in the ages at first marriage among age cohorts. Overall, twelve percent of ever-married women 25-49 are already married exact age at 18 and almost one fourth of them married by the time they were 20 years. The median age at first marriage is 23.7. Age at first marriage has been fluctuating around 23 years among ever-married women in Sri Lanka. The median age at first marriage has remained constant during the recent past: 23.4 according to the 2012 Population census and 23.7 years in the 2016 SLDHS. The proportions of women already married exact ages 15 and 18 have declined further over time, as shown by comparing women in the youngest (20-24) and oldest (45-49) cohorts.

**Table 6.3 Age at first marriage**

Percentage of women age 15-49 who were first married by specific exact ages and median age at first marriage, according to current age, Sri Lanka 2016

| Current age | Percentage first married by exact age: |      |      |      |      | Percentage never married | Number of respondents | Median age at first marriage |
|-------------|--|------|------|------|------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|             | 15                                     | 18   | 20   | 22   | 25   |                          |                       |                              |
| <b>Age</b>  |  |      |      |      |      |                          |                       |                              |
| 15-19       | 0.3                                    | na   | na   | na   | na   | 93.9                     | 3,744                 | a                            |
| 20-24       | 0.9                                    | 9.8  | 24.6 | na   | na   | 60.4                     | 3,563                 | a                            |
| 25-29       | 1.2                                    | 11.2 | 25.9 | 39.2 | 59.0 | 25.3                     | 3,510                 | 23.5                         |
| 30-34       | 1.0                                    | 12.5 | 25.6 | 39.5 | 60.1 | 8.4                      | 3,946                 | 23.5                         |
| 35-39       | 1.3                                    | 11.7 | 25.4 | 38.9 | 60.4 | 3.8                      | 4,103                 | 23.5                         |
| 40-44       | 1.4                                    | 12.0 | 24.4 | 36.9 | 57.5 | 4.4                      | 3,420                 | 24.0                         |
| 45-49       | 1.8                                    | 12.5 | 25.7 | 39.4 | 57.3 | 4.6                      | 3,371                 | 23.8                         |
| 20-49       | 1.3                                    | 11.6 | 25.3 | na   | na   | 17.5                     | 21,912                | a                            |
| 25-49       | 1.3                                    | 12.0 | 25.4 | 38.8 | 59.0 | 9.2                      | 18,349                | 23.7                         |

Note: The age at first marriage is defined as the age at which the respondent began living with her/his first spouse/partner

na = Not applicable due to censoring

a = Omitted because less than 50 percent of the women or men began living with their spouse or partner for the first time before reaching the beginning of the age group

Table 6.4 presents differentials in the median age at first marriage among women age 25-49 by selected background characteristics. As expected, rural women tend to marry at a younger age (23.5) than urban women. The median age at first marriage among urban women (24.4 years), is over one year higher than the median age at first marriage among estate women (23.3 years). There are marked differentials in the age of first marriage by district of residence. Colombo, has the highest median at marriage with 24.9 years. This is about three years later than women from the Batticaloa, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Moneragala and Puttalam districts. The median age at first marriage for the age group 30-49, increases with education levels. The median age at first marriage among women with thirteen years of education is 26.2 years, more than five and half years higher than the median age among women who have no education (20.7 years) or primary (20.4 years) and about 3 years higher than among women who had "Passed G.C.E.(O/L) or equivalent education" (23.6 years). Also, women from the highest wealth quintile marry more than four years later than those from the lowest quintile (25.5 vs 21.7 respectively, see Table 6.4).

**Table 6.4 Median age at first marriage by background characteristics**

Median age at first marriage among women age 25-49 and age 30-49, according to background characteristics, Sri Lanka 2016

| Background characteristic        | Women age   |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                  | 25-49       | 30-49       |
| <b>Residence</b>                 |             |             |
| Urban                            | 24.4        | 24.5        |
| Rural                            | 23.5        | 23.6        |
| Estate                           | 23.3        | 23.0        |
| <b>District</b>                  |             |             |
| Colombo                          | 24.9        | 24.9        |
| Gampaha                          | 24.9        | 24.9        |
| Kalutara                         | 24.4        | 24.4        |
| Kandy                            | 24.6        | 24.9        |
| Matale                           | 22.8        | 22.9        |
| Nuwara-Eliya                     | 23.0        | 23.0        |
| Galle                            | 24.5        | 24.7        |
| Matara                           | 24.5        | 24.7        |
| Hambantota                       | 24.3        | 24.2        |
| Jaffna                           | 25.0        | 24.5        |
| Mannar                           | 23.0        | 22.7        |
| Vavuniya                         | 23.0        | 23.0        |
| Mullaitivu                       | 21.7        | 22.2        |
| Kilinochchi                      | 22.5        | 22.5        |
| Batticaloa                       | 21.6        | 21.8        |
| Ampara                           | 22.2        | 22.6        |
| Trincomalee                      | 21.7        | 21.4        |
| Kurunegala                       | 23.5        | 23.3        |
| Puttalam                         | 21.9        | 21.6        |
| Anuradhapura                     | 21.7        | 21.7        |
| Polonnaruwa                      | 21.7        | 21.8        |
| Badulla                          | 22.8        | 23.0        |
| Moneragala                       | 21.8        | 21.9        |
| Ratnapura                        | 23.4        | 23.3        |
| Kegalle                          | 24.1        | 24.3        |
| <b>Education</b>                 |             |             |
| No education                     | 20.8        | 20.7        |
| Passed Grade 1-5                 | 20.3        | 20.4        |
| Passed Grade 6-10                | 21.7        | 22.0        |
| Passed G.C.E.(O/L) or equivalent | 23.4        | 23.6        |
| Passed G.C.E.(A/L) or equivalent | a           | 26.2        |
| Degree and above                 | a           | 28.7        |
| <b>Wealth quintile</b>           |             |             |
| Lowest                           | 21.6        | 21.7        |
| Second                           | 22.7        | 22.8        |
| Middle                           | 23.3        | 23.2        |
| Fourth                           | 24.6        | 24.2        |
| Highest                          | a           | 25.5        |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>23.7</b> | <b>23.7</b> |

Note: The age at first marriage is defined as the age at which the respondent began living with her/his first spouse/partner

a = Omitted because less than 50 percent of the women or men began living with their spouse or partner for the first time before reaching the beginning of the age group



### 6.3 AGE AT FIRST SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

#### Median age at sexual intercourse

Age by which half of respondents have had sexual intercourse.

Age at first marriage can be used as a proxy for the beginning of exposure to the risk of pregnancy. However, age at first sexual intercourse and age at first marriage may not necessarily occur at the same time, because some women are sexually active before marriage, or sometimes it could be at a later date than the actual recorded date of marriage. The age at which women initiate sexual intercourse more precisely marks the beginning of their exposure to reproductive risks.

Table 6.5 shows the percentage of women age 15-49, who had first sexual intercourse by specific ages, the percentage who never had sexual intercourse, and the median age of first sexual intercourse. The table was generated using the information on the age at first sex from the ever-married women interviewed in the 2016 SDHS and assuming that never-married women have not had intercourse. Given the conservative nature of the Sri Lanka society, that assumption is likely correct for many never-married women.

Table 6.5 includes the median age at first sexual intercourse for women ages 25-49 at 23.7 years. Compared with the median age at first marriage shown same age (23.7 years), these two figures indicate that first sexual intercourse and first marriage occurs same time of the women life. Table 6.5 also shows that among women ages 25-49, the percentage having their first sexual intercourse increases from 1 percent by age 15 to 12 percent by age 18. In fact, the percentage who had their first sexual intercourse by age 20 (25.4%) reaches almost the double percentage found at age 18. This pattern persists across all current age groups. However, the proportions of women having their first sexual intercourse by exact ages 15 has declined further over time, as shown by comparing women in the youngest (15-19) and the oldest (45-49) cohorts; 0.3 percent to 1.9 percent, respectively.

**Table 6.5 Age at first sexual intercourse**

Percentage of women 15-49 who had first sexual intercourse by specific exact ages, percentage who never had sexual intercourse, and median age at first sexual intercourse, according to current age, Sri Lanka 2016

| Current age | Percentage who had first sexual intercourse by exact age: |      |      |      |      | Percentage who never had intercourse | Number | Median age at first intercourse |
|-------------|---|------|------|------|------|--------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|
|             | 15  | 18   | 20   | 22   | 25   |                                      |        |                                 |
| <b>Age</b>  |   |      |      |      |      |                                      |        |                                 |
| 15-19       | 0.3   | na   | na   | na   | na   | 94.0                                 | 3,744  | a                               |
| 20-24       | 1.0   | 10.1 | 24.5 | na   | na   | 60.8                                 | 3,563  | a                               |
| 25-29       | 1.3   | 11.5 | 25.8 | 38.7 | 58.4 | 26.0                                 | 3,510  | 23.6                            |
| 30-34       | 1.2   | 12.7 | 25.7 | 39.3 | 59.8 | 8.6                                  | 3,946  | 23.5                            |
| 35-39       | 1.4   | 11.9 | 25.4 | 39.0 | 60.2 | 4.0                                  | 4,103  | 23.5                            |
| 40-44       | 1.5   | 12.3 | 24.5 | 36.9 | 57.0 | 4.6                                  | 3,420  | 24.1                            |
| 45-49       | 1.9   | 12.8 | 25.7 | 39.4 | 57.4 | 4.9                                  | 3,371  | 23.8                            |
| 20-49       | 1.4   | 11.9 | 25.3 | na   | na   | 17.8                                 | 21,912 | a                               |
| 25-49       | 1.4   | 12.3 | 25.4 | 38.7 | 58.7 | 9.5                                  | 18,349 | 23.7                            |
| 15-24       | 0.7   | na   | na   | na   | na   | 77.8                                 | 7,307  | a                               |

na = Not applicable due to censoring  
a = Omitted because less than 50 percent of the respondents had sexual intercourse for the first time before reaching the beginning of the age group

Table 6.6 examines the median age at first sexual intercourse among women age 25-49 and 30-49 by background characteristics. Women living in rural and estate areas tend to initiate sexual intercourse earlier than their urban counterparts. The patterns are almost similar to median age at marriage: women in urban areas, those with higher education and women from the richest households had their first sexual experience at

later ages than rural and estate, less educated, and poorer counterparts. The differences are as marked as those found in median age at first marriage. For example, median age at first sexual intercourse between urban and rural areas differs by one year; very similar to the one year observed in age at first marriage between the two areas is approximately.

**Table 6.6 Median age at first sexual intercourse by background characteristics**

Median age at first sexual intercourse among women age 25-49 and age 30-49, according to background characteristics, Sri Lanka 2016

|                                  | Women age   |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                  | 25-49       | 30-49       |
| <b>Residence</b>                 |             |             |
| Urban                            | 24.4        | 24.5        |
| Rural                            | 23.5        | 23.6        |
| Estate                           | 23.7        | 23.3        |
| <b>District</b>                  |             |             |
| Colombo                          | 24.9        | 24.9        |
| Gampaha                          | 24.9        | 24.9        |
| Kalutara                         | 24.4        | 24.4        |
| Kandy                            | 24.5        | 24.8        |
| Matale                           | 22.8        | 22.9        |
| Nuwara-Eliya                     | 23.4        | 23.5        |
| Galle                            | 24.5        | 24.7        |
| Matara                           | 24.5        | 24.7        |
| Hambantota                       | 24.4        | 24.4        |
| Jaffna                           | 25.0        | 24.4        |
| Mannar                           | 22.9        | 22.6        |
| Vavuniya                         | 23.4        | 23.6        |
| Mullaitivu                       | 21.6        | 22.1        |
| Kilinochchi                      | 22.5        | 22.5        |
| Batticaloa                       | 21.6        | 21.8        |
| Ampara                           | 22.3        | 22.6        |
| Trincomalee                      | 21.8        | 21.3        |
| Kurunegala                       | 23.5        | 23.4        |
| Puttalam                         | 22.0        | 21.6        |
| Anuradhapura                     | 21.7        | 21.6        |
| Polonnaruwa                      | 21.7        | 21.6        |
| Badulla                          | 22.8        | 23.0        |
| Moneragala                       | 21.9        | 22.0        |
| Ratnapura                        | 23.5        | 23.4        |
| Kegalle                          | 24.1        | 24.3        |
| <b>Education</b>                 |             |             |
| No education                     | 20.8        | 20.7        |
| Passed Grade 1-5                 | 20.3        | 20.4        |
| Passed Grade 6-10                | 21.8        | 22.0        |
| Passed G.C.E.(O/L) or equivalent | 23.4        | 23.6        |
| Passed G.C.E.(A/L) or equivalent | a           | 26.2        |
| Degree and above                 | a           | 28.7        |
| <b>Wealth quintile</b>           |             |             |
| Lowest                           | 21.6        | 21.7        |
| Second                           | 22.7        | 22.8        |
| Middle                           | 23.3        | 23.2        |
| Fourth                           | 24.6        | 24.2        |
| Highest                          | a           | 25.5        |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>23.7</b> | <b>23.7</b> |

a = Omitted because less than 50 percent of the respondents had intercourse for the first time before reaching the beginning of the age group



## 6.4 POSTPARTUM AMENORRHOEA, ABSTINENCE AND INSUSCEPTIBILITY

### Median duration of postpartum amenorrhoea

Number of months after childbirth by which time half of women have begun menstruating

**sample :** women who gave birth in the 3 years before the survey

### Median duration of postpartum insusceptibility

Number of months after childbirth by which time half of women are no longer protected against pregnancy either by postpartum amenorrhoea or abstinence from sex.

**sample :** women who gave birth in the 3 years before the survey

Postpartum amenorrhea refers to the interval between childbirth and the return of menstruation. During this period, the risk of pregnancy is greatly reduced. The duration of this protection from conception after childbirth depends on the duration and intensity of breastfeeding and the length of time before the resumption of sexual intercourse. Postpartum abstinence refers to the period between child birth and the time when a woman resumes sexual activity. Women who gave child birth during the three years prior to the survey were asked about the duration of amenorrhea, and their sexual abstinence. Women are considered insusceptible if they abstain from intercourse following childbirth and/or are amenorrheic. The duration of amenorrhea and sexual abstinence following birth jointly determine the length of insusceptibility.

Table 6.7 and figure 6.2 show the percentage of births in the three years preceding the survey for which mothers are postpartum amenorrheic, abstaining, and insusceptible by the number of months since birth. The results are grouped in two-month intervals to minimize fluctuations in the estimates.

The median duration of amenorrhoea among women who gave birth in the three years preceding the survey is 3.4 months and the median duration of postpartum abstinence is 3.2 months. The two factors, postpartum amenorrhoea and abstinence, taken together indicate that the median duration of postpartum insusceptibility to pregnancy is 5.1 months. The median duration of amenorrhea went down from 3.8 to 3.4 months from year 2006 to 2016 year. Women who gave child birth during the three years prior to the survey were insusceptible to pregnancy (74 percent) after the first two months following childbirth. The majority of women (59percent) are still abstaining in the first two months following birth. The contribution of abstinence is greatly reduced after the third month. At 8-9 months, 22 percent of women are still amenorrheic, but only 13 percent are still abstaining. At 22-23 months after birth, insusceptibility drops to 13 percent or less.



**Table 6.7 Postpartum amenorrhea, abstinence and insusceptibility**

Percentage of births in the three years preceding the survey for which mothers are postpartum amenorrheic, abstaining, and insusceptible, by number of months since birth, and median and mean durations, Sri Lanka 2016

| Months since birth | Percentage of births for which the mother is: |            |                            | Number of births |
|--------------------|---|------------|----------------------------|------------------|
|                    | Amenorrheic                                   | Abstaining | Insusceptible <sup>1</sup> |                  |
| < 2                | 84.0  | 94.9       | 98.7                       | 288              |
| 2-3                | 49.7  | 58.9       | 73.5                       | 228              |
| 4-5                | 37.8  | 21.5       | 50.3                       | 245              |
| 6-7                | 31.8  | 17.6       | 41.5                       | 277              |
| 8-9                | 21.7  | 13.3       | 30.7                       | 254              |
| 10-11              | 14.3  | 12.3       | 23.0                       | 257              |
| 12-13              | 11.7  | 7.4        | 17.1                       | 235              |
| 14-15              | 10.3  | 9.3        | 18.1                       | 252              |
| 16-17              | 7.9   | 6.9        | 14.2                       | 292              |
| 18-19              | 7.5   | 8.9        | 15.3                       | 245              |
| 20-21              | 8.7   | 9.5        | 17.4                       | 253              |
| 22-23              | 7.0   | 6.3        | 13.0                       | 283              |
| 24-25              | 6.3   | 6.8        | 12.2                       | 261              |
| 26-27              | 4.0   | 7.0        | 10.5                       | 294              |
| 28-29              | 5.7   | 4.7        | 10.3                       | 265              |
| 30-31              | 4.7   | 5.2        | 9.1                        | 241              |
| 32-33              | 4.7   | 8.1        | 12.8                       | 317              |
| 34-35              | 4.7   | 4.6        | 9.3                        | 307              |
| Total              | 17.7  | 16.7       | 26.2                       | 4,795            |
| Median             | 3.4   | 3.2        | 5.1                        | na               |
| Mean               | 6.8   | 6.3        | 9.8                        | na               |

Note: Estimates are based on status at the time of the survey.

na = Not applicable

<sup>1</sup> Includes births for which mothers are either still amenorrheic or still abstaining (or both) following birth

**Figure 6.2 Percentage of births for which mothers are postpartum amenorrheic, abstaining and insusceptible to pregnancy**

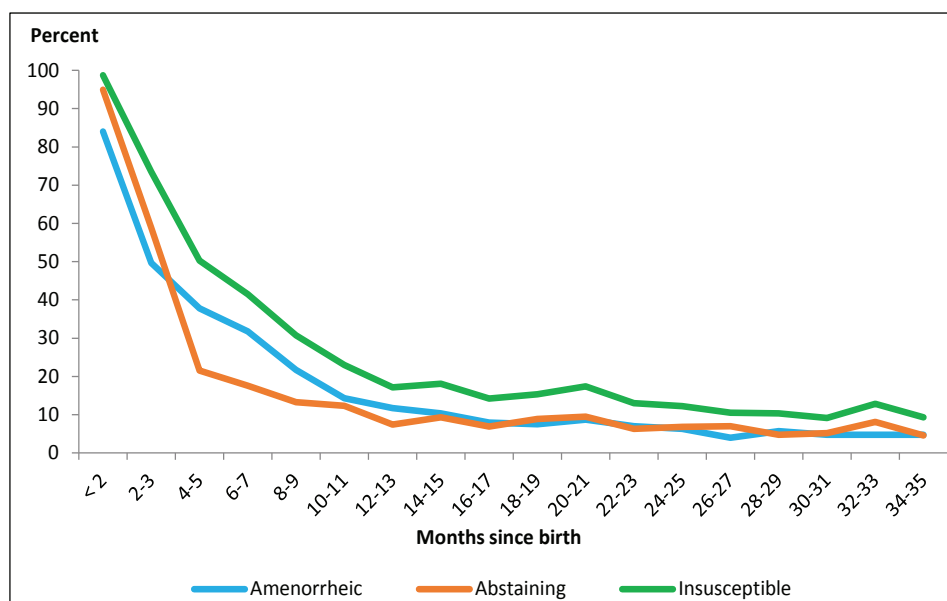


Table 6.8 shows differences in the median duration of postpartum amenorrhea, abstinence and insusceptibility according to background characteristics. In general, the differences in the median duration of postpartum insusceptibility are small. Although the median duration of postpartum amenorrhea among women age 30-49 is higher than among women age 15-29 (4.2 months and 2.7 months respectively), the median duration of postpartum abstinence is nearly the same among these two groups (3.0 and 3.4 months for amenorrhea and abstinence respectively, resulting in over 1-month difference in the median duration of postpartum insusceptibility between younger women (4.4) and older women (5.6). Women in estate areas have a longer median duration of amenorrhea than women in rural and urban areas. (4.1 Versus 3.5, and 2.7 months respectively), and they differ from women in urban and rural areas in median duration of postpartum abstinence (3.3, 3.1 and 5.6 months respectively). Median duration of postpartum insusceptibility is substantially longer among women in estate areas (8.2 months) than women in urban and rural areas (4.7, 5.0 months respectively). The median duration of postpartum insusceptibility among women in the poorest households is one month higher than the one observed among women in the richest households.

| <b>Table 6.8 Median duration of amenorrhea, postpartum abstinence and postpartum insusceptibility</b>  |   |                       |  |
|--|---|-----------------------|--|
| Median number of months of postpartum amenorrhea, postpartum abstinence, and postpartum insusceptibility following births in the three years preceding the survey, by background characteristics, Sri Lanka 2016 |   |                       |  |
| Background characteristic  | Percentage of births for which the mother is: |                       |  |
|  | Postpartum amenorrhea                         | Postpartum abstinence | Postpartum insusceptibility <sup>1</sup> |
| <b>Mother's age</b>  |   |                       |  |
| 15-29  | 2.7   | 3.0                   | 4.4                                      |
| 30-49  | 4.2   | 3.4                   | 5.6                                      |
| <b>Residence</b>   |   |                       |  |
| Urban  | 2.7   | 3.3                   | 4.7                                      |
| Rural  | 3.5   | 3.1                   | 5.0                                      |
| Estate   | 4.1   | 5.6                   | 8.2                                      |
| <b>Education</b>   |   |                       |  |
| Passed Grade 1-5   | (2.9)   | (3.4)                 | (4.6)                                    |
| Passed Grade 6-10  | 3.1   | 3.4                   | 5.8                                      |
| Passed G.C.E.(O/L) or equivalent   | 3.4   | 3.4                   | 4.4                                      |
| Passed G.C.E.(A/L) or equivalent   | 3.5   | 3.1                   | 5.1                                      |
| Degree and above   | (4.2)   | *                     | (4.9)                                    |
| <b>Wealth quintile</b>   |   |                       |  |
| Lowest   | 2.7   | 3.8                   | 5.8                                      |
| Second   | 2.8   | 3.2                   | 4.4                                      |
| Middle   | 3.7   | 3.2                   | 5.4                                      |
| Fourth   | 3.7   | 3.2                   | 4.9                                      |
| Highest  | 3.7   | 3.0                   | 4.8                                      |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>3.4</b>                                    | <b>3.2</b>            | <b>5.1</b>                               |
| Note: Medians are based on the status at the time of the survey (current status)   |   |                       |  |
| <sup>1</sup> Includes births for which mothers are either still amenorrheic or still abstaining (or both) following birth  |   |                       |  |

## 6.5 MENOPAUSE

### Menopause

Women are considered to have reached menopause if they are neither pregnant nor postpartum amenorrheic and have not had a menstrual period in the 6 months before the survey, or if they report being menopausal.

**sample :** women age 30-49

The risk of pregnancy declines with age as increasing proportions of women become infecund. The term infecundity denotes a process rather than a well-defined event. Although the onset of infecundity is difficult to determine for an individual woman, one indicator of infecundity is menopause.

Menopause is the culmination of a gradual decline in fecundity with increasing age. Women were considered menopausal if they were neither pregnant nor postpartum amenorrheic at the time of the survey and had not had a menstrual period for at least six months prior to the survey. Women who report that they have had a hysterectomy are also defined as menopausal. Table 6.9 presents data on menopause for women age 30 and older. Eleven percent of women age 30-49 are estimated to be menopausal. As expected, the proportion of women who are menopausal increases with age, from 5.2 percent among women age 30-34 to 35 percent among women age 45-49.

**Table 6.9 Menopause**

Percentage of women age 30-49 who are menopausal, by age, Sri Lanka 2016

| Women Age | Percentage menopausal <sup>1</sup> | Number of women |
|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Age       |                                    |                 |
| 30-34     | 5.2                                | 3,615           |
| 35-39     | 6.5                                | 3,945           |
| 40-41     | 8.8                                | 1,350           |
| 42-43     | 8.0                                | 1,272           |
| 44-45     | 14.0                               | 1,281           |
| 46-47     | 19.4                               | 1,348           |
| 48-49     | 35.0                               | 1,232           |
| Total     | 11.0                               | 14,043          |

<sup>1</sup>Percentage of all women who are not pregnant and not postpartum amenorrheic whose last menstrual period occurred six or more months preceding the survey



