ADDING IT UP
Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health in Middle Africa
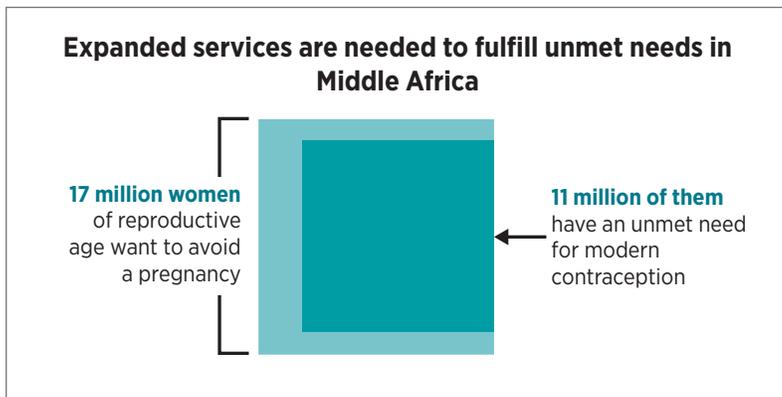
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I N S T I T U T E

The Adding It Up study examines the need for, impact of and cost of fully investing in sexual and reproductive health care—services that together ensure people can decide whether and when to have children, experience safe pregnancy and delivery, have healthy newborns, and have a safe and satisfying sexual life.
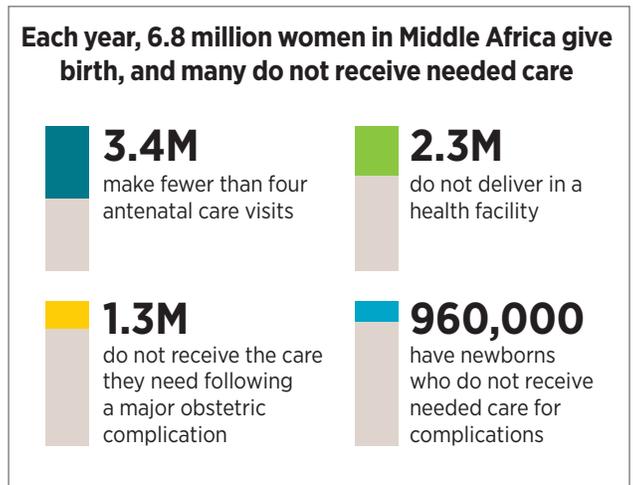
WHO: Women of reproductive age (15–49) in nine low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)* in Middle Africa in 2019

WHAT: Contraceptive services, maternal care, newborn care, abortion services and treatment for the major curable STIs

Unmet needs for services in Middle Africa

Expanded services are needed to fulfill unmet needs in Middle Africa

17 million women of reproductive age want to avoid a pregnancy

11 million of them have an unmet need for modern contraception

Among women who want to avoid a pregnancy, unmet need is slightly lower for adolescents aged 15–19 than for all women aged 15–49 (65% versus 67%).

Each year, 6.8 million women in Middle Africa give birth, and many do not receive needed care

3.4M make fewer than four antenatal care visits

2.3M do not deliver in a health facility

1.3M do not receive the care they need following a major obstetric complication

960,000 have newborns who do not receive needed care for complications

Lack of high-quality sexual and reproductive health care puts women at risk.

- 1.1 million have abortions in unsafe conditions
- 35,000 die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth
- 5.7 million do not receive the treatment they need for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and trichomoniasis

Cost of meeting all service needs in Middle Africa

$25.23 per capita annually—$20.90 more per capita than current costs—would provide all women in need with:

Modern contraception

Maternal and newborn care

Abortion services

STI treatment

Every $1 spent on contraceptive services beyond the current level would save $3.66 in maternal, newborn and abortion care because contraception reduces the number of unintended pregnancies.

* Countries classified by the World Bank as having a 2018 gross national income per capita of $12,375 or less. LMICs in this subregion are Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe.

Impacts of expanding and improving services

Investing in sexual and reproductive health care in Middle Africa would greatly reduce risks for women and newborns

	Annual no. at current levels of care	− Annual no. if all needs are met	= No. averted if all needs are met	% change if all needs are met
Unintended pregnancies	4.1 million	1.0 million	3.1 million	**−76%**
Unplanned births	2.3 million	0.5 million	1.7 million	**−76%**
Unsafe abortions	1.1 million	0.3 million	0.8 million	**−75%**
Maternal deaths	35,000	12,000	22,000	**−65%**
Newborn deaths	196,000	57,000	140,000	**−71%**
HIV infections in babies ≤6 weeks	12,000	1,000	11,000	**−90%**
Cases of infertility caused by untreated STIs	130,000	0	130,000	**−100%**

Notes: Based on 2019 data. Numbers are rounded. Percentage change was calculated from unrounded data.
For additional detail, see appendix to the full report at https://www.guttmacher.org/report/adding-it-up-investing-in-sexual-reproductive-health-2019.

Investing for the future

→ The interventions that make up the recommended care have proven feasible to implement in diverse settings around the world.

→ Investing in them provides national and local governments, the private sector and international development partners with good value for money.

→ By saving lives and improving women's health and well-being, sexual and reproductive health care benefits individuals and families and contributes to countries' social and economic development. Such care would also enable people to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights.

Good reproductive health policy starts with credible research

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Find the full report and appendix tables at https://www.guttmacher.org/report/adding-it-up-investing-in-sexual-reproductive-health-2019.