

MALAYSIA — Country Profile

Overview

Malaysia, a middle-income country is a federation of 13 states and three federal territories. The country is one of the vibrant Southeast Asian economies with a diverse, multiethnic, multicultural society. The Malays are the major ethnic group (67.4%), followed by the Chinese (24.6%), Indian (7.3%), and others (0.7%). Malaysia's population stands at 29.3 million in 2012. The average annual population growth rate has declined from 2.7% to 2.1%. It is projected that population will increase to 32.4 million in 2020.

In 2012, the female population comprised 14.2 million (48.5%) and the male population comprised 15.1 million (51.5%). Life expectancy at birth for men and women is measured at 72.3 and 77.2 years respectively. In 2012, the young population constituted about 26.4% of the total population. This is expected to decline to 24% by 2020. For the aging population, it will increase from 5.3% to 6.8%. In terms of health financing, government expenditure in health as a percentage of overall health expenditure has been in the 54-59% range.

Source: *extracted from Malaysia Country Profile*

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Key findings from the *Malaysia Country Profile* on the situation of SRHR in Malaysia are as follows:

Maternal Health:

- Non-citizen undocumented women made up 10% of maternal death, mostly occurring in the state of Sabah.
- 98.6% of births were attended by skilled birth attendants.
- Antenatal visits increased to 94.0%.

Contraception:

- The total fertility rate in Malaysia is 2.1 since 2010.
- The total fertility rate is 2.7 for Malays, 1.5 for Chinese, and 1.6 for Indians.
- The decline in the total fertility rate is inversely proportional to the increasing number of female participation in the labor force, increasing from 46.1% to 49.5% in 2012.
- The contraceptive prevalence rate has been stagnant at 52% since 1984.
- Common modern methods in Peninsular Malaysia are oral pills, followed by female sterilization and the condom.
- The unmet need for contraception shows an increase from 25% to 36% in 2004.
- There is also a reported increase in the percentage of women reporting husband's objection to using contraception, from 8.0% to 12.6%.

Abortion:

- Based on statistical calculations, about 90,000 abortions (0.01% of the entire female population) are conducted annually.
- Death by abortion comprised of 0.5%.
- Irrespective of marital status, pregnancy termination services are offered at government health facilities.
- However, most adolescents are unaware of the availability of this service.
- According to the UN Abortion Policies and Reproductive Health around the World (2014), abortion is permitted to save a women's life, preserve a woman's physical health, and to preserve a woman's mental health.

HIV & AIDS:

- The HIV prevalence amongst the general population is less than 1%.
- However, the HIV prevalence amongst the most-at-risk population is 30%, consisting of injecting drug users, sex workers, men who have sex with men, transgender persons, and their intimate partners.
- The percentage of reported young people between 13-29 living with HIV is 26%.
- 89.4% of HIV positive pregnant women received antiretroviral treatment to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission.
- In 2011, 228 infants borne by HIV positive women were given antiretroviral treatment, thus resulting in the prevention of 225 mother-to-child transmissions of HIV infections.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Child Early & Forced Marriage (CEFM):

- Sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 16 years old is considered statutory rape, whether with her consent or not.
- However, child marriage is legally permissible under Syariah Law and Civil Law.
- 1,200 child marriages were approved by the Syariah Court in 2012.

Violence Against Women (VAW):

- A double-fold increase in sexual violence (rape) occurred over the span of 10 years, from 2000 to 2010.
- Domestic violence cases reported to the police indicate an average of 3,000 cases reported each year, although fear of social stigma suggests that this remains an underreported statistic.

Current initiatives in Malaysia

- ARROW and Federation of Reproductive Health Associations, Malaysia (FRHAM) continue to work towards **ICPD+25: Revitalising and implementing the Sexual and Reproductive Rights Agenda in the Asia Pacific Region**. This ICPD+25 monitoring and advocacy initiative aims to show the progress gaps and challenges towards ICPD implementation in Malaysia. In-depth monitoring is currently underway on the state of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in Malaysia.