



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS N° 16

CONTRACEPTIVE USE IN HUNGARY

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Theories link the start and acceleration of a new wave of fertility decline to contraceptive revolution, and especially to the widespread use of oral contraception. The association however might be different in the case of Hungary.

Like in other communist countries, abortion was legalized in Hungary in the mid-1950's and it became the dominant method of birth regulation. Between 1959 and 1973 the number of abortions was higher than the number of life-births. Modern contraceptive methods began to spread in the 1970's after the appearance of the first Hungarian birth control pill in 1967. In 1974 36% of married woman below 35 were already taking it. The pill became the main method of contraception among Hungarians by the early 1990's: More than half of

women of reproductive age, who lived with their partners and did not want to become pregnant, used this method in 1993 (Table 1). This proportion is high compared to other European countries. However, contrary to the expectations of the theories, a significant decrease in the popularity of the oral method was measured. More couples were using condom in order to prevent an unwanted pregnancy than the pill in 2009 according to data from the Hungarian GGS (Generations and Gender Survey). The proportion of women not using any method of contraception was relatively stable during this period. Among women of reproductive age who lived in a stable partnership less than 10% practiced no contraception in both 1993 and 2009.

Table 1. Different types of contraceptives used among women in Hungary in 1993 and 2009 (%)

Note: Women of reproductive age using contraceptives and living with a partner.

Sources: Family and Fertility Survey (1993); Generations and Gender Survey (2009).

	1993	2009
Condom	11,6	37,1
Pill	53,4	35,5
Natural method	22,4	13,9
Other modern method	12,6	13,5

The distribution of women using different contraceptive methods according to age shows that the majority of young women use either condom or pill and the pill is moderately

more popular among them (Figure 1). Other methods become more important with age mainly using intra uterine device and natural methods.

Figure 1. Contraceptive methods used among women by age groups in 2009 (%)

Note: Women of reproductive age using contraceptives and living with a partner.

Source: Generations and Gender Survey.

