

# Factors associated with childbearing among women with unrepaired fistula in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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## Background:

Delivery during fistula can have deleterious consequences for women's health, including fistula aggravation, caesarean delivery and stillbirth. This study aims to determine the prevalence of childbearing among women with unrepaired fistula and its associated factors.

## Methods:

We rely on data from 1,646 women aged 15-49 whose fistulas were repaired between 2013 and 2018 by the mobile team of the Panzi Hospital in seven provinces of the DR Congo. The 2013-2014 DR Congo demographic and health survey was also used to calculate the fertility of the general female population in the same provinces, which we compared to that of women with fistula. The contingency table and Chi-square test were used for univariate and bivariate analysis. Demographic analysis methods were used to calculate fertility indicators. Logistic regression was used to analyze factors associated with childbearing among women with fistula.

## Results:

Of the 1,646 women in the sample, 11.6% had at least one child in five years prior to data collection. Childbearing during fistula is less frequent in women who have had 1-2 surgeries (OR=0.66, 95% CI= [0.46-0.95]), in women aged 40-44 (OR=0.15[0.15-0.44]) and 45-49 (OR=0.038[0.01-0.123]). It increases with parity. Women with three, four, five, six and seven children are respectively 9.7 times (95% CI= [1.83-180.5]), 10.9[1.99-205.2] times, 13.3 [2.4-251.8] times, 19.8[3.48-378.7] times and 13.0[2.55-261.1] times more likely to have children than nulliparous women. Women who live in 'Kasai-Oriental' and 'Province Orientale' are respectively 2[1.33-3.29] times and 3[2.34-6.79] times more likely to give birth than those living in Equateur province. Women with a high school diploma are more likely to give birth than those without a diploma (OR=1.64[1.00-2.66]).

## Conclusion:

Counselling sessions are required among all women with unrepaired fistula and specifically in 'Kasai-Oriental' and 'Province Orientale' regions, among younger women and particularly those under 30 years, among women of high parity, among women with a high school diploma and among women who have never had surgery.

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None

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