

PATRYCJA MISZTAŁ-OKOŃSKA¹, ARTUR WDOVIK², WOJCIECH KRAWCZYK¹,
MAGDALENA MŁYNARSKA¹

Young women's opinion on the preferred family model

Abstract

Introduction. Currently in Poland second demographic transition takes place, main features of it being the drop of the birth rate, postponing the decision of starting a family and having children. Moreover, more people decide to live alone and do not have offspring. These processes lead to great change of the demographic structure of the country, for example low birth rate do not allow for the generational replacement. In addition, with extending the life expectancy, we observe society aging. In the future perspective we can expect prolonging drop of the birth rate, and as a consequence, drop in the number of fertile population and growth in the percentage of after fertile age.

Aim. The aim of the paper was to collect opinions of young women on the preferred family model and eliciting reasons that in their opinion determine decision of resigning from having more children.

Material and methods. The method used was diagnosing survey and the technique was authors' questionnaire. The number of 538 women aged 19 to 42 were questioned.

Results. The majority of the questioned women would prefer to have a family with two children (M-51.91) and three children (M-34.4). At the same time, the majority of the questioned mothers (62.13%) had one child, 31.49% – two children and only 5.10% – had three children. In the opinion of the questioned women, two main reasons for decision about having less children are the unemployment and low salaries. Large percentage of women (every second one) is afraid of the negative attitude of the employer towards maternity leaves.

Conclusions. One of the reason of giving up or postponing decisions about motherhood and having small number of children by those who decide to be mothers in Poland may be concerns about professional and economic situation.

Keywords: women, motherhood, postponed parenthood, population decline.

DOI: 10.2478/pjph-2018-0032

INTRODUCTION

Since 1989, the European countries undergoing socio-economic transformations have been experiencing significant fluctuations in the demographic behavior of their population [1,2]. In Poland those population processes, called the second demographic transition, lead to significant changes in the demographic structure of the country. Main features of the transition are: decline in the rate of births, low number of marriages and postponement of long-term relationships and parenthood [3]. Nowadays, women in the first place decide to gain education, satisfying work, reach stable material status, which causes postponement of the motherhood.

Since the mid-80s, the number of children and adolescents has been steadily decreasing. Basic components used to determine the rate of natural increase are the rate of births and the rate of deaths. The rate is influenced by changes in the number and structure of the population in different age and gender groups [4]. According to the estimates of the Central Statistical Office (GUS), at the end of 2017, the population

of Poland was 38.434.000 people. It had decreased by 62.000 people comparing to 2013 (38.496.000). In 2008-2011, there was a slight increase in the number of births, while the years 2012-2015 brought a decline of the Polish population. Over the last two years, however, a slight increase in the birth rates can be observed. In 2016 the number of live births amounted to 382,000 which was higher by 13.000 than in the previous year. In 2017, about 402 000 children were born which indicates an increase by 20,000 in comparison with the previous year. In 2017, the birth rate was 10.5 ‰, while in 2012 it was 10 ‰, for comparison in 1983 it was 19.7 ‰. The growth rate of the Polish population in 2014 was 0.03%, which means that for every 10,000 people, there was 3 people insufficiently, while in 2017 the rate equaled 0.00%.

Decrease in birth rates, occurring in Poland in the last 20 years, does not ensure generational replacement [5,6]. In comparison to other European countries, Poland has one of the lowest fertility rates [4]. In 2011, among the 27 countries of the European Union, Poland was on the third to last place in terms of the fertility rate (1.3). In Ireland the fertility rate

¹ Department of Emergency Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Medical University of Lublin, Poland

² Diagnostic Techniques Unit, Faculty of Health Sciences, Medical University of Lublin, Poland

ORCID: ¹ 0000-0001-8485-2355, ² 0000-0002-7011-2345, ³ 0000-0002-4901-6367, ⁴ 0000-0002-4045-6913

was 2.05, France 2.01, Great Britain 1.96 [7]. The fertility rate is the average number of births in a population per woman in childbearing age (15-49 years) [8]. In 2017, this ratio was 1.45. This means that for every 100 women there were about 145 children born [6], while it is assumed that the fertility rate between 2.10-2.15 is the level ensuring replacement of generations [8]. After 1990, the fertility rate has remained below 2.0. Since the 1990s, as a result of demographic changes, the highest fertility of women shifted from the age group 20-24 to the age 25-29 and women's fertility increased in the age group 30-34. The median age of women giving birth in the year 2000 was 26.1 years, while in 2013 it was already 29.2 years, and in 2016 it was 29.9 years. The average age of birth of the first child shifted from 23.7 years in 2000 to 27.2 years in 2013, and further up to 27.8 years in 2016 [6]. In 2008, a slight increase in the fertility rate was observed. The increase is due to the motherhood of those women born during last baby boom (1979-1983, 1984-1988) and those who postponed maternity [5,9]. Therefore, it can be concluded that the recorded increase in the fertility rate in 2008 is not the result of the increase in the number of births per woman but the natural result of demographic processes. The increase in the birth rate in 2017 in turn, is mainly the result of an increase in the number of children born as second, third and subsequent more than an increase in the number of children born as first.

In 2010, first births accounted for half of all live births. In 2017, both the number and the percentage of first births declined in comparison to 2016. First births accounted for only approx. 43% of all live births. Women who give birth now are aged 25-29 and 30-34. The fertility of women in older age groups also increased which can be the evidence of the realization of postponed procreation plans [6]. The reason behind the increase in the birth rate that started in 2016 can be found in the "Family 500 plus" program introduced by the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy, for which the state allocates PLN 23 billion a year. The program is an untaxed PLN 500 per month for each second and subsequent child, without any additional conditions. Families with low incomes also receive support for the first or only child [10]. With the implementation of the program, the fertility rate in Poland began to increase, unfortunately, it is not a significant increase.

In the long term, because of a decline in the total number of births in the Polish population, and hence fluctuations in the number of productive age population, a significant increase in the percentage of post reproductive age group in the population can be expected. Over the years, this process will intensify, and the differences in the number of young people (reproductive age) and children in relation to the number of older people (post reproductive age), will be more and more significant [11]. In combination with the significant extension of the average life expectancy in Poland (in 2016 Male -73.9 years, Female-81.9 years) [6], we experience the phenomenon of an aging population. According to the demographic project of the European Commission, forecasts for half of the current member states, including Poland, are unfavorable until 2060. The population of Poland is likely to decline by 5.2 million from 38.2 million in 2010 to 32.6 million in 2060, which is a decrease by as much as 14.6%. It is also estimated that in Poland in 2060 there will be 11.3 million people over the age of 65 (compared to 5.2 million in 2010). However, the number of people aged over 80 will increase from 1.3 million (2010) to 4.1 million (2060), which means that in the future it will

be over three times as many people over 80 as in the 2010. According to forecasts, Poland being one of the youngest European Union societies, until 2060 will become one of the oldest [12].

AIM

The aim of the paper was to collect opinions of young women on the preferred family model and finding reasons that in their opinion determine decision of resigning from having more children.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The number of 538 questionnaires were statistically analyzed. The questionnaires were completed by women in reproductive age between 19 and 42 years, the age mean was 28. From the surveyed group, 235 women were mothers, 121 respondents were pregnant and 182 women did not have children. The research was conducted between September 2013 and May 2014 in Lubelskie Voivodship in the various public facilities such as clinics, hospitals, birth schools, nursery schools etc. The research method used in the work was the diagnostic survey and the research technique – the author's questionnaire allowing to get to know women's opinion on the reasons for having children and on the family model they prefer.

The database was created using Excel XP for Windows. Results of the study were subjected to statistical analysis. The values of the measurable parameters were presented using the mean value and the standard deviation, and the non-measurable parameters by means of the cardinality and the percentage. For qualitative features, the Chi2 test was used to detect differences between the compared groups. Verification of the normality of the distribution of variables in the studied groups was performed using the Shapiro-Wilk normality test. To examine the differences between the two groups, the Mann-Whitney U-nonparametric test was used, and for more than two groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used.

A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was assumed indicating the existence of statistically significant differences or dependencies. The database and statistical surveys were based on the Statistica 9.1 computer software (StatSoft, Poland).

RESULTS

Characteristics of the studied group

The study involved 538 women aged from 19 to 42, and the mean age of women surveyed oscillated around 28 years in every subgroup. The largest group of all the surveyed women were mothers 43.68% (235 women), then childless women 33.83% (182 women), while pregnant women were the least numerous group 22.49% (121 women). In terms of place of residence, the largest group – 64.87% were residents of large cities (over 20,000 inhabitants). The analysis of the education of the studied group is as follows: the highest number of respondents were women with higher education – 61.52%, then secondary education – 19.52%, followed by incomplete higher – 15.24%, basic vocational – 3.35%, and primary education – 0.37%. The largest group of the surveyed women were office workers 54.83% while 20.07% of the group were laborers.

Less numerous groups were unemployed women 11.90%, students 8.18% and the least numerous group of women working as office workers with elements of manual labor 5.02%. The largest group among the respondents were women in relationships (marriages/partner) 73.98%, while 21.93% of the respondents were unmarried/not in a relationship, then 3.90% were divorced and one respondent (0.19%) was a widow. The analysis of the financial situation of the surveyed women showed that the respondents mostly assess their financial situation as average (45.17%) and good (43.12%), while 6.69% of women assessed their financial situation as very good, and 5.02% as bad. In the surveyed group, none of the women assessed their financial situation as very bad. The largest group among the surveyed women – 29.74% owned small apartment/house, 28.81% of the respondents lived with parents/parents in law, 18.96% of the respondents rented a flat, and 16.91% of the respondents owned large apartment/house (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Characteristics of the study group.

		I. Mothers		II. Pregnant		III. Childless	
		%	n	%	n	%	n
Age	Up to 26 years	69	29.36	34	28.10	62	34.07
	27-30 years	76	32.34	54	44.63	60	32.97
	31 years or over	90	38.30	33	27.27	60	32.97
	Average	28.9±4.3		28.7±3.7		28.3±4.5	
Place of residence	Large city	139	59.15	94	77.69	116	63.74
	Small city	47	20.00	10	8.26	33	18.13
	Rural area	49	20.85	17	14.05	33	18.13
Level of education	Primary	0	0.00	1	0.83	1	0.55
	Vocational	16	6.81	1	0.83	1	0.55
	Secondary	63	26.81	8	6.61	34	18.68
	Higher Incomplete	37	15.74	10	8.26	35	19.23
	Higher	119	50.64	101	83.47	111	60.99
Employment	Office work	111	47.23	90	74.38	78	42.86
	Labor work	47	20.00	17	14.05	40	21.98
	Unemployed	49	20.85	4	3.31	8	4.40
	Student	19	8.09	3	2.48	53	29.12
	Mixed Labor and Office work	9	3.83	7	5.79	3	1.65
Marital status	Unmarried	13	5.53	7	5.79	98	53.85
	Married/partner relationship	207	88.09	114	94.21	77	42.31
	Divorced	15	6.38	0	0.00	6	3.30
	Widow	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.55
Financial status	Very good	17	7.23	8	6.61	11	6.04
	Good	96	40.85	60	49.59	76	41.76
	Average	100	42.55	51	42.15	92	50.55
	Bad	22	9.36	2	1.65	3	1.65
	Very bad	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Accommodation	Owned large apartment/house	41	17.45	28	23.14	22	12.09
	Owned small apartment/house	63	26.81	54	44.63	43	23.63
	With parents/parents in law	65	27.66	25	20.66	65	35.71
	Rented	42	17.87	14	11.57	46	25.27
	Other	24	10.21	0	0.00	6	3.30
In total		235	43.68	121	22.49	182	33.83

Opinions of women on the consequences of having children
 Asked about the attitude towards young mothers and pregnant women at their workplace, the majority of the group answer was “positive” (M-78.86%, P-69.44%, ChL-84.62%). However, statistically significant ($\chi^2=15.431$, $p=0.004$) differences can be observed in responses between particular groups of women. Most often the “favorable” attitude of employers was chosen by childless women (84.62%) and mothers (78.86%). Only 69.44% of pregnant women assessed the attitude towards pregnant women as “favorable” and as much as 21.30% stated that in their workplace pregnant women and young mothers are unwelcome. Respondents choosing other answer than provided in the questionnaire added their own observations. According to the majority of answers employers have more positive attitude towards employees with small number of children (one, maximum two children), while women planning larger number of offsprings are not well perceived and may be afraid of losing their job (Table 2).

TABLE 2. Opinions on the attitudes towards young mothers and pregnant women in their workplace in particular groups of respondents.

ANSWERS	Mothers		Pregnant		Childless	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes, the attitude towards young mothers and pregnant women in my workplace is favorable	138	78.86	75	69.44	121	84.62
No, the attitude towards young mothers and pregnant women in my workplace is unfavorable	28	16.00	23	21.30	22	15.38
Other	9	5.14	10	9.26	0	0.00
In total	175	100.00	108	100.00	143	100.00
$\chi^2=15.431$, $p=0.004$						

* Answers of the employed group of respondents.

Respondents were asked about the reasons for forgoing having a large family. In all the surveyed groups the reason given most often was lack of employment and low income (M-85.53%, P-88.43%; ChL-85.16%). High percentage of the group especially in the groups of mothers (44.26%) and pregnant women (45.45%) saw the reason in employers’ negative attitude towards absence in workplace caused by maternity leaves and pregnancy sick leaves. The answer “hardships of child’s upbringing and education” was significantly more often chosen by mothers ($\chi^2=14.753$, $p=0.001$) than other groups (M-32.34%, P-16.53%, ChL-19.23%). In other cases, no statistically significant differences were noted in the distribution of responses (Table 3).

In all three groups, the majority of respondents (M-51.91%, P-59.50%, ChL-53.30%) prefer the family model of up to 2 children. The second most frequent response is a family with three children (M-34.04%, P-29.75%, ChL-21.43%). One of the least popular models is the one with one child (M-7.66%, P-7.44%, ChL-13.19%). Only 6.38% of mothers surveyed would prefer having 4 children- 3.31% of pregnant women and 1.10% of childless women. None of the surveyed mothers and pregnant women wanted a childless family while 6.59% of childless respondents answered that they want to have a childless family and 4.40% do not plan to set up a family at all. To this question, some women added their own answers which were mainly external reasons why they give up having

TABLE 3. The reasons why women give up having a large family according to respondents.

Answers	Mothers		Pregnant		Childless		Chi ² , p
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Unemployment, low income	201	85.53	107	88.43	155	85.16	Chi ² =0.743 p=0.690
Inefficient social assistance	112	47.66	44	36.36	74	40.66	Chi ² =4.656 p=0.098
Negative attitude towards maternity leaves and pregnancy sick leaves.	104	44.26	55	45.45	78	42.86	Chi ² =0.206 p=0.902
Popularity of family model types with up to two children	38	16.17	15	12.40	27	14.84	Chi ² =0.899 p=0.638
Hardships of child's upbringing and education	76	32.34	20	16.53	35	19.23	Chi ² =14.753 p=0.001
Fear of pregnancy complications and labor	35	14.89	10	8.26	29	15.93	Chi ² =4.060 p=0.131
Other	12	5.11	4	3.31	9	4.95	Chi ² =0.640 p=0.726
In Total	235	100.00	121	100.00	182	100.00	

* option to choose more than one answer

children/more children. Some of the respondents stated that they would like to have more children, but they do not have a proper, responsible partner with whom they could start a larger family. Other respondents explained that it was a financial situation, the lack of appropriate housing conditions that did not allow them to have the number of children they preferred.

The number of children in the group of the surveyed mothers was as follows: the highest number of mothers, 62.13%, had 1 child, then 31.49% of women had 2 children, 5.10% – 3 children and 0.43% (1 respondent) – 4 children, 0.43% – 5 children and 0.43% – 7 children. Nobody of the mothers surveyed had 6 children or more than 7 children. The surveyed mothers who had more than one child, were asked about the reasons determining their decision about subsequent children. For 47.41% of mothers it was willingness to have a large family, regardless of the child's sex; for 21.55% it was willingness to have a child of a different sex than the one they already had. For the same number of respondents – 21.55% it was an unplanned pregnancy, 1.72% of women decided to give birth to second child under the influence of partner and family, 7.76% of the respondents stated a reason other than provided in the questionnaire, unfortunately, the majority did not explain it further.

DISCUSSION

A few decades ago, the role of a woman in a society was mainly based on taking care of home and raising children. This family model resulted in women being dependent on their husbands, who provided for the whole family. With the progress of civilization, the society has changed [13]. The new approach to life prioritizes education, professional career and achieving a sufficiently high financial status. In this new approach starting a family becomes the next step after reaching priority goals [11]. Currently, women are no longer under such a strong pressure to have children as they

used to be. The great interest of women in expanding their education and achieving a good, stable financial level results in postponing decision about motherhood [14-17]. In addition to the described changes in family models resulting from the development of society and women's need for education and personal development, we wanted to investigate whether there are other important reasons for postponing or forgoing having children among women. The results of our own research indicate that primarily unemployment and low salary (M-85.53%, P-88.43%, ChL-85.16%) are the reasons for giving up plans for a large family. Next reason is insufficient social support (M-47.66%, P-36.36%, ChL-40.66%). Another problem mentioned by the respondents is the negative attitude of employers to absences caused by pregnancy and childcare (M-44.26%, P-45.45%, ChL-42.86%). Less important, on the other hand, were supposedly more significant factors like the difficulties of child's upbringing and education (M-32.34%, P-16.53%, ChL-19.23%) or fear of complications in pregnancy or fear of labor (M-14.89%, P-8.26%, ChL-15.93%). Presented research was conducted in 2013 and 2014 before the introduction of the 500 Plus program of the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy. According to GUS data, the increase in the number of births in 2017 was mainly due to increase in the number of children born as second, third and subsequent, rather than the number of first births [18]. This fact can be explained by the implementation of the 2016 Family 500 Plus Program, which is based on receiving tax-free PLN 500 per month for each second and subsequent child, regardless of the parents' income and no obligation to meet any additional conditions. Low-income families also receive support for the first or only child. Therefore, it can be concluded that financial social support is an important factor influencing the decision to have children.

Currently in Poland, as well as in the majority of developed countries, there is the phenomenon of narrowed replacement of generations. Replacement of generations occurs when the number of births, under given mortality conditions, is sufficient to ensure that the size of population remains unchanged in the long run. In highly developed countries, where practically all new-born children live to adulthood, the average number of offspring necessary to replace a generation of their parents is around – 2.1. However, taking into account the fact that in a modern society of developed countries high percentage of women (around 15-25%) remain childless, this level would be possible when about one third of women had at least three children [19-20]. One of the reasons of low birth rate is giving up or postponing decisions about motherhood by some women and decision to have small number of children by those who decide to be mothers. It is mainly due to women's concerns about professional and economic situation. Steć et al. examined 122 women in the perinatal period, researching the impact of motherhood on their professional and economic situation. According to their research, 67% of respondents thought that pregnancy may cause a negative change in their employment conditions, only 8% definitely ruled out any negative impact of the child's birth on work. In addition, 35% of respondents were concerned that giving birth can cause downgrade in working conditions and lower wages. Only 18% of women did not express any fear of a possible change in their professional and financial situation caused with the fact of becoming a mother [21]. As Kurowska notes, compared to the OECD countries (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), Poland has one of the lowest employment rates

in women with small children (0-5 years) [22]. There are many studies proving that mothers have lower wages and are perceived less positively by employers than childless women or men [23-27]. Presented research shows that among all the surveyed groups of women, the highest number of unemployed respondents can be found in the group of mothers (as much as 20.85%), while in the group of pregnant women only 3.31% were unemployed, and in the childless women 5.49%. Such a low percentage of unemployed pregnant women may result from the fact that the research was conducted, among others, in maternity schools. It can be concluded that women who have better financial situation take part in such courses. The majority of respondents (among working persons) in every studied group experience positive attitude towards pregnant women and young mothers in their workplace. However, statistically significant differences between individual groups of women were noticed. This answer was chosen mostly by childless women (84.62%), then mothers (78.86%). In the group of women who were pregnant, 69.44% considered that in their workplace they were treated favorably, and as much as 21.30% of this group said that pregnant women and young mothers are not welcome in workplace. Significantly less frequently this answer was chosen by mothers and childless women (16.00% and 15.35% respectively). Similar results are presented by CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center) in its research on the attitudes of women towards procreation: "Half of the woman (51%) aged 18-33, who plans to stay childless, the financial situation is an obstacle for procreation plans, and for about one third (31%) – expected conflict between job and family roles is the main problem. One third of the mothers (33%) aged 18-45 had to give up their job due to difficulties in providing care for their children, and one tenth (10%) lost their job after maternity leave. The respondents aged 18-45 who could count on their parents' help in their daily care of the child, are planning to have offspring in the future more often than those who cannot expect such help (49% against 11%) [28].

The results of presented research show that in all three research groups, the majority of respondents (M-51.91%, P-59.50%, ChL-53.30%) prefer the family model with 2 children. The second most frequent response is a family with three children (M-34.04%, P-29.75%, ChL-21.43%). The number of children in the group of mothers surveyed was as follows: the highest number of mothers, 62.13%, had one child, then 31.49% of women had two children, and 5.10% – three children. However, the average age of the respondents oscillated in the area of 28 years, therefore it can be concluded that the surveyed women could successfully carry out their procreation plans in the future.

In 2010 the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions conducted a research among the citizens of 31 European States which shows that people who have a family with children are definitely more satisfied with life than singles. People in relationships are about twice as satisfied with life than those living alone, and the level of life satisfaction is particularly high in the case of having children. In addition, the level of joy in life increases with the number of children in the family [29]. Motherhood brings a lot of joy, it is the meaning and purpose of life for many women. According to studies conducted by Ziemska among women adopting children, the possibility to give birth to their own child is extremely important for good mental health of women. Women who could not become biological mothers, despite the

child's adoption, had significantly reduced self-esteem. They had lowered opinion about themselves, feeling worse and less valuable [30]. Kuryłowicz et al. note that a woman who gave up motherhood is generally regarded as an unfulfilled and experiencing emotional pain [31]. As Makara-Studzińska et al. states: "the severity of anxiety and depression occurring in women with infertility is found to be comparable to this experienced by women suffering from cancer or coronary disease" [32]. Numerous studies prove that infertility treatment affects all aspects of human life, and consequently, causes a variety of psychological and emotional disorders, such as: frustration, depression, anxiety, helplessness, guilt and lack of value in life [33-35]. The results of our own research show that all of the mothers and pregnant women surveyed declared a desire to have a family with children, and only 6.59% of childless women planned to have a family without offspring, while 4.40% of childless respondents did not plan to set up a family at all. As Lesińska-Sawicka points out, motherhood is an important period in woman's life that requires proper preparation, which, among others, requires choosing the optimum time to get pregnant and the mental preparation to procreation, and reconciliation with the thought about future motherhood [36]. Pregnancy changes the woman's life, way of thinking, hierarchy of values and is a great emotional event. [37] The decision of becoming a mother is very important for most women. Motherhood allows not only to satisfy the biological need to reproduce and ensure the continuity of line or fulfill the assigned social role, but it is also an important factor contributing to women's mental health.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Most of the women surveyed would like to have a family with two children (Mothers -51.91%), then three children (Mothers - 34.04%), while the majority of mothers surveyed (62.13%) had one child, then 31.49% – 2 children, only 5.10% – 3 children.
2. In the opinion of the surveyed women, lack of employment and low income are the main reasons for limiting their procreation plans.
3. A significant percentage of women (almost every second respondent) is afraid of the negative attitude of employers to absences caused by pregnancy and childcare, and as a result, fear to lose their work.

REFERENCES

1. Sojka E. Urodzenia i płodność kobiet w wybranych krajach Unii Europejskiej. *Wiad Statyst.* 2011;6:49-66.
2. Maniecka-Bryła I, Bryła M. Levelling out health inequalities in Poland during a systemic transition. *Zdr Publ.* 2009;119(2):132-8.
3. GUS. Prognoza ludności Polski na lata 2008-2035, http://stat.gov.pl/cps/de/xber/gus/L_prognoza_ludnosci_PL_2008-2035.pdf
4. Wolicki M. Wartość prokreacji w procesie przemian społeczno-gospodarczych. In: M.E. Ruszel (ed). *Rodzina Wartość Przemiany*. Stalowa Wola: Fundacja Uniwersytecka w Stalowej Woli; 2010. p.49.
5. GUS. Rocznik demograficzny 2017 <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/rocznik-demograficzny-2017,3,11.html>
6. GUS. Sytuacja demograficzna Polski do 2017 roku <http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/ludnosc/sytuacja-demograficzna-polski-do-2017-roku-urodzenia-i-dzietnosc,33,1.html>

7. Eurostat Statistics Explained. Population statistics at regional level. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/Population_statistics_at_regional_level
8. Brodziak A, Wolińska A, Ziółko E. Attempt to verify the interdisciplinary hypothesis explaining the decline of birthrates and low fertility. *Environ Med.* 2012;15(4):105-6.
9. GUS. 2009. Dzieci w Polsce w 2008 roku. Charakterystyka demograficzna, <http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/ludnosc/dzieci-w-polsce-w-2008-roku-charakterystyka-demograficzna,11,1.html>
10. Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej. Program Rodzina 500 plus, <https://www.mpips.gov.pl/wsparcie-dla-rodzin-z-dzieci/rodzina-500-plus/>
11. Pawlik J, Zając A. Zagrożenia demograficzne. In: A. Kwiatkowska, K. Krasoń, W. Dąbrós, et al. (ed). *Studencki zeszyt naukowy „Myśl społeczno-ekonomiczna”*. Kielce-Tarnobrzeg: Wydawnictwo Stowarzyszenia Współpracy Polska-Wschód; 2013, p. 105-8.
12. Okólski M. Demographic challenges of Europe and Poland. *Sociol Stud.* 2010;4(199):37.
13. Łepecka-Klusek C, Karauda M, Bucholc M. Macierzyństwo współczesnych kobiet. *Zdr Publ.* 2003;113(3/4):277-9.
14. Major K, Byś M, Baumert M, et al. Cięża po 30. roku życia – normą XXI wieku. *Perinatol Neonatol Ginekol.* 2013;6(2):88-92.
15. Kulma B. Późne macierzyństwo – norma we współczesnym położnictwie. *Advocem.* 2012;104:13-4.
16. Salem Yaniv S, Levy A, Wiznitzer A, et al. A significantly near association exists between advanced maternal age and adverse perinatal outcome. *Arch Gynecol Obstet.* 2011;283:755-9.
17. Mills M, Rindfuss RR, McDonald P, te Velde E. Why do people postpone parenthood? Reasons and social policy incentives. *Hum Reprod Update.* 2011;17(6):848-60.
18. GUS. Urodzenia i dzietność, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/ludnosc/urodzenia-i-dzietnosc,34,1.html>
19. Szukalski P. Czy w Polsce nastąpi powrót do prostej zastępowalności pokoleń? *Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Oeconomica.* 2009;231:59.
20. Szukalski P. Wielodzietność we współczesnej Polsce. *Demografia i Gerontologia Społ.* 2012;4:1-5.
21. Steć A, Bojar I, Wdowiak L. Problemy macierzyństwa w opiniach kobiet. *Med Og.* 2007;13(3):180-90.
22. Kurowska A. Bariery i uwarunkowania aktywności zawodowej młodych matek w Polsce. *Polityka Społ.* 2010;11-12:11-8.
23. Aranda B, Glick P. Signaling devotion to work over family undermines the motherhood penalty. *Group Process Interg.* 2014;17(1):91-9.
24. Benard S, Correll Sh. Normative descrimination and the motherhood penalty. *Gender Soc.* 2010;24(5):616-46.
25. Cadsby B, Servátka M, Song F. How competitive are female professionals? A tale of identity conflict. *JEBQ.* 2013;92:284-303.
26. Gangl M, Ziefle A. Motherhood, labor force behavior, and women's careers: An empirical assessment of the wage penalty for motherhood in Britain, Germany, and the United States. *Demography.* 2009;46(2):341-69.
27. Molina JA, Montuenga VM. The motherhood wage penalty in Spain. *J Gambi Stud.* 2009;25(3):237-51.
28. CBOS. Komunikat z badań postaw prokreacyjnych kobiet http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2013/K_029_13.PDF
29. Kotowska IE, Matysiak A, Styrc M. Drugie europejskie badanie jakości życia. Europejska Fundacja na rzecz poprawy warunków życia. Instytut Statystyki i Demografii, Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie. *Życie rodzinne i praca* 2010. www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2010/02/pl/1/EF1002PL.pdf (access: 01.05.2014 r.)
30. Ziemska M. *Postawy rodzicielskie*. Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna; 1973. p. 164-5.
31. Kuryłowicz M, Kulesza-Brończyk B, Dobrzycka B, et al. Planned motherhood of the modern woman. *Prog Health Sci.* 2011;1(1):105.
32. Makara-Studzińska M, Moryłowska-Topolska J, Wdowiak A, Urbańska A. Health behaviours in women treated for infertility and their influence on the incidence of depression. *Zdr Publ.* 2012;120(2):10-5.
33. Hämmerli K, Hansjörg Z, Barth J. The efficacy of psychological interventions for infertile patients: A meta-analysis examining mental health and pregnancy rate. *Hum Reprod Update.* 2009;15:279-95.
34. Hasanpoor-Azghdy SB, Simbar M, Vedadhir A. The emotional-psychological consequences of infertility among infertile women seeking treatment: Results of a qualitative study. *Iran J Reprod Med.* 2014;12 (2):131-8.
35. Neelofar S, Tazeen SA. Perceptions and experiences of women in Karachi, Pakistan regarding secondary infertility: results from a community-based qualitative study. *Obstet Gynecol Int.* 2012; Article ID 108756:1-7.
36. Lesińska-Sawicka M. Planowanie ciąży a stosowanie używek w czasie ciąży przez kobiety z wybranych krajów europejskich. *Probl Hig Epidemiol.* 2011;92(1):127
37. Bączyk G, Cebulska V, Koźlak V, et al. Poziom lęku przedporodowego u kobiet w ciąży. *Probl Hig Epidemiol.* 2011;92(4):774.

Corresponding author

Dr Patrycja Misztal-Okońska
 Department of Emergency Medicine, Medical University of Lublin
 4/6 Staszica St., 20-081 Lublin, Poland
 E-mail: patrycja.okonska@umlub.pl
 tel.: +48 81 448 6830
 fax: +48 81 448 6831