

The Population Council established an office in Mexico City in 1979 as its regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean. Today it functions administratively as a country office, and Council staff continue to work throughout the region.

Programmatic Focus

Mexico has made considerable improvements in reproductive health, and the Council has contributed in important ways to this progress through high-quality research, program evaluation, and technical collaboration with the government and with nongovernmental organizations.

Although maternal mortality has decreased, maternal deaths attributable to unsafe induced abortions remain high in Mexico. Council staff focus on reducing maternal mortality through abortion-related research and technical collaboration. The Council has become the preeminent source of abortion-related social science, epidemiological, and public health research in Mexico. Council staff have undertaken qualitative and quantitative public opinion research on abortion, studies on the acceptability of medical abortion, and studies to quantify the contribution of unsafe abortion to maternal mortality and morbidity.

Since the passage of the watershed abortion reform in Mexico City on April 24, 2007, Council staff have strengthened their collaboration with the Mexico City Ministry of Health (MOH) to help the MOH respond to increased demand for abortion services and to the ongoing need for provider training in this area. Staff have also strengthened their research and evaluation.

The Council is also building capacity in the areas of HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, and the sexual and reproductive health needs of underserved populations, particularly indigenous youth, women, and migrants.

FAST FACTS

Population (millions): 107

Total fertility rate: 2.3

Infant deaths per 1,000 live births: 25

Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births: 63

Girls aged 20–24 married by age 18 (%): 28

HIV/AIDS prevalence (%): 0.3

Living on less than US \$2 per day (%): 20



Recent and Ongoing Work

Research to promote safe and legal abortion

Assessing Mexican public opinion on abortion: The Council has been the forerunner in public opinion research on abortion and emergency contraception since 2000, including:

- A representative opinion poll among Mexico City residents prior to and after the legalization of elective first-trimester abortion (2007/2008). Results from these surveys showed a 25 percentage point increase in favorable public opinion about the new abortion law one year after the reform.
- A representative opinion study among women in the neighboring state of Tlaxcala to assess their understanding of and support for abortion when a woman's health is at risk (2007).

Estimating national abortion incidence: A national abortion incidence study was conducted with a complementary component assessing the impact of medical abortion on national abortion incidence estimates (2008).

Collaborations and capacity building with the Mexico City MOH to strengthen elective abortion services:

- Worked closely with the Mexico City MOH and local partners to train medical personnel, counselors, and social workers on offering high-quality information about abortion options (ongoing).
- Co-hosted with the Mexico City MOH and Gynuity Health Projects an influential international meeting

on medical abortion options and implications for offering services in Mexico. The meeting resulted in a standardized protocol for medical abortion using misoprostol within the Mexico City public health system (2007).

- Developed and disseminated new informational materials on medical abortion services for women and providers (2008).

Evaluating the costs of unsafe abortion: In close collaboration with colleagues at PATH and Ibis Reproductive Health, the Council documented the total costs to the Mexico City health care system of caring for women who undergo unsafe abortion (2008).

Research on HIV/AIDS and STIs

- The Council is conducting a novel study to assess barriers to reproductive health services (including abortion) from the perspectives of women and providers, specifically barriers among women living with HIV and AIDS (ongoing).
- The Council completed a pilot study among Mexican migrant men living in Dallas, Texas to assess sexual norms and HIV risk behaviors (2007).

Complementary research

- In conjunction with the Federal and Mexico City Ministries of Health, the Council is conducting complementary studies with physicians on barriers to the use of magnesium sulfate for the prevention and treatment of severe pre-eclampsia and eclampsia (ongoing).
- The Council is identifying the sexual and reproductive health needs of indigenous youth in Oaxaca and Chiapas (ongoing).
- The Council is a partner in the *Cross-national Initiative on Place, Migration and Health* (CIPMH), a diverse group of researchers committed to understanding the links between migration and the health of Mexican immigrants/migrants, their families, and their sending and receiving communities (ongoing).

Main Collaborators in Mexico

Afluentes
 Balance
 Católicas por El Derecho a Decidir (CDD)
 Centro Nacional de Equidad de Género y Salud (CNEG y SR)
 Centro Nacional para la Prevención y el Control de VIH/SIDA (CENSIDA)
 Colectivo Sol
 El Colegio de México
 El Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO)
 Equidad de Género: Ciudadana, Trabajo, y Familia
 Federación Mexicana de Asociaciones Privadas (FEMAP)
 Fundación Mexicana para la Planificación Familiar (MEXFAM)
 Grupo de Información de Reproducción Elegida (GIRE)
 Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública (INSP)
 Instituto Mexicano de Investigación de Familia y Población (IMIFAP)
 International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW)
 Investigación en Salud y Demografía (INSAD)
 Ipas México
 Ipsos-BIMSA
 Irapuato Vive
 Ministry of Health, Mexico City
 Ministry of Health, Mexico (Federal)
 Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)
 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)