

# **What is behind the unmet need for contraception in developing countries?**

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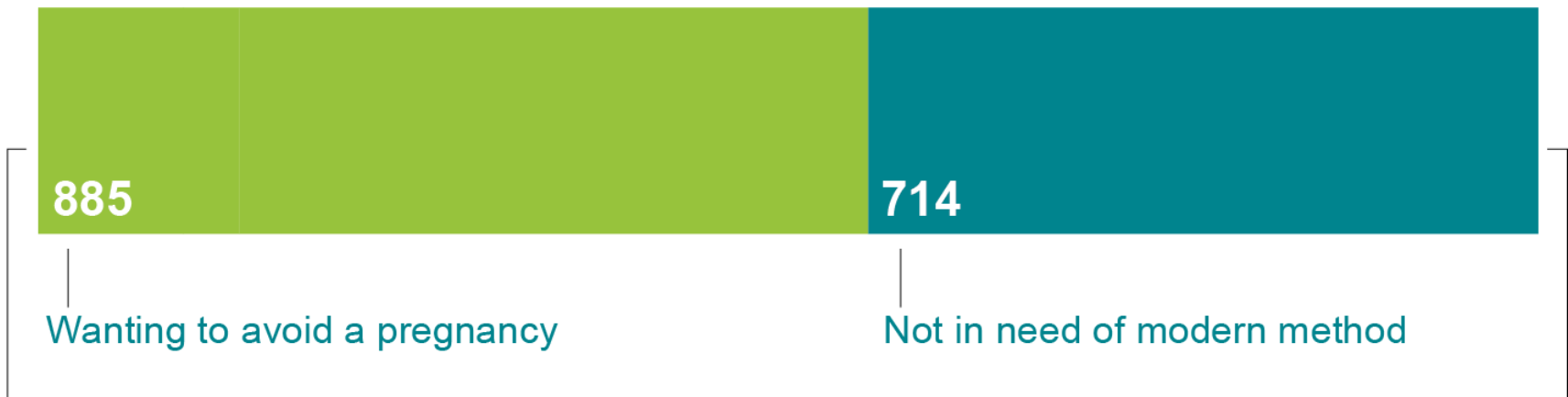
**Guttmacher Institute**

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# **How many women have an unmet need for contraception?**

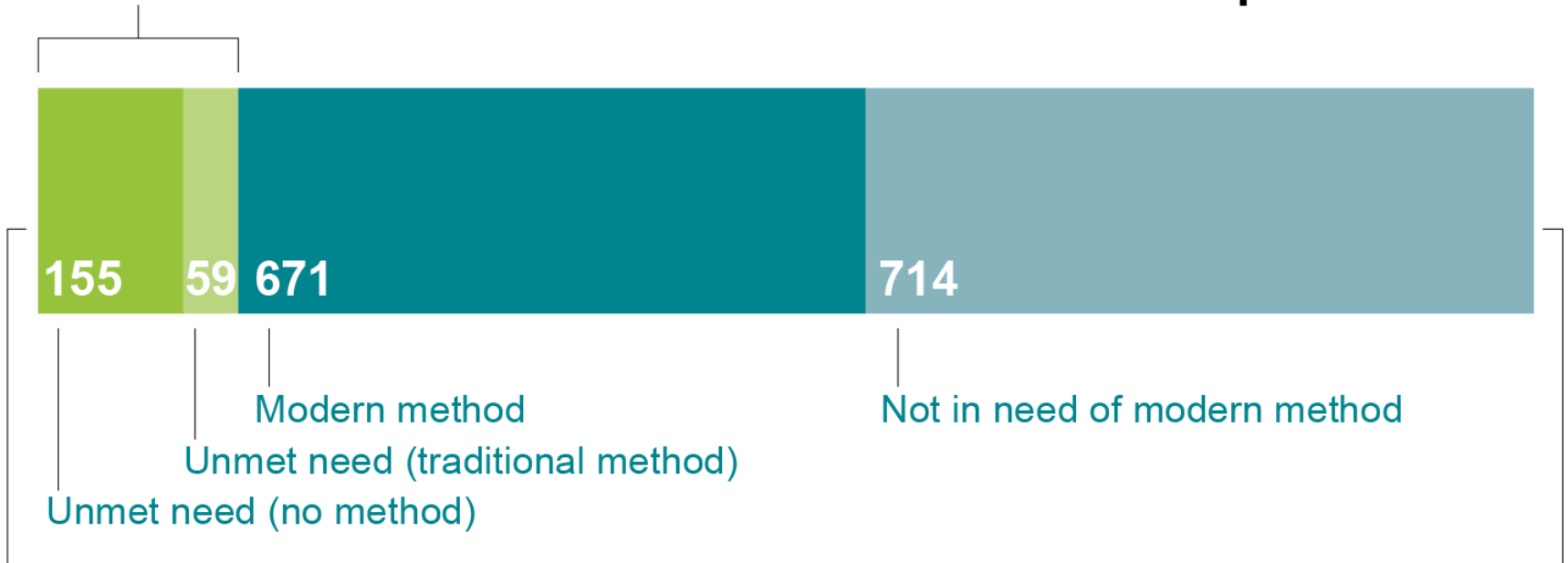
# In developing regions, more than half of women of reproductive age want to avoid a pregnancy



**1,600 million women of reproductive age, 2017**

# But one-fourth of women wanting to avoid a pregnancy are not using modern contraceptives

214 million have an unmet need for modern contraception



1,600 million women of reproductive age, 2017

# Women with unmet need for any method of contraception account for 84% of unintended pregnancies

89 MILLION UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES, 2017



METHODS WOMEN USED WHEN THEY BECAME PREGNANT

# **Why aren't women with unmet need using a method?**

## **Data sources**

### **MARRIED WOMEN:**

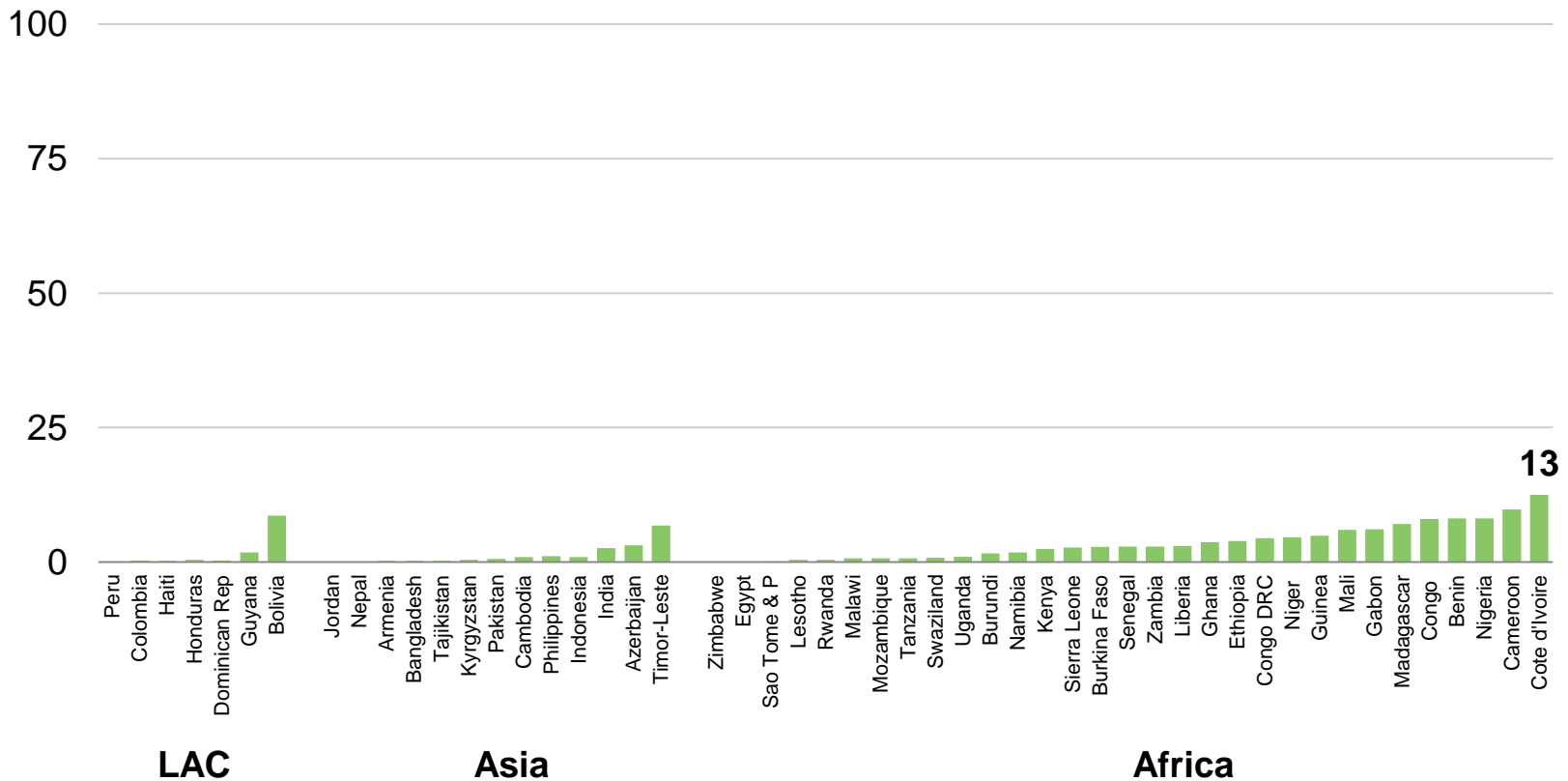
- **Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) conducted in 53 countries in since 2006**
- **42 surveys were done since 2010**

### **NEVER-MARRIED WOMEN:**

- **DHS in 31 countries since 2006**
- **24 were done since 2010**

# Very few married women with unmet need say they are unaware of contraception

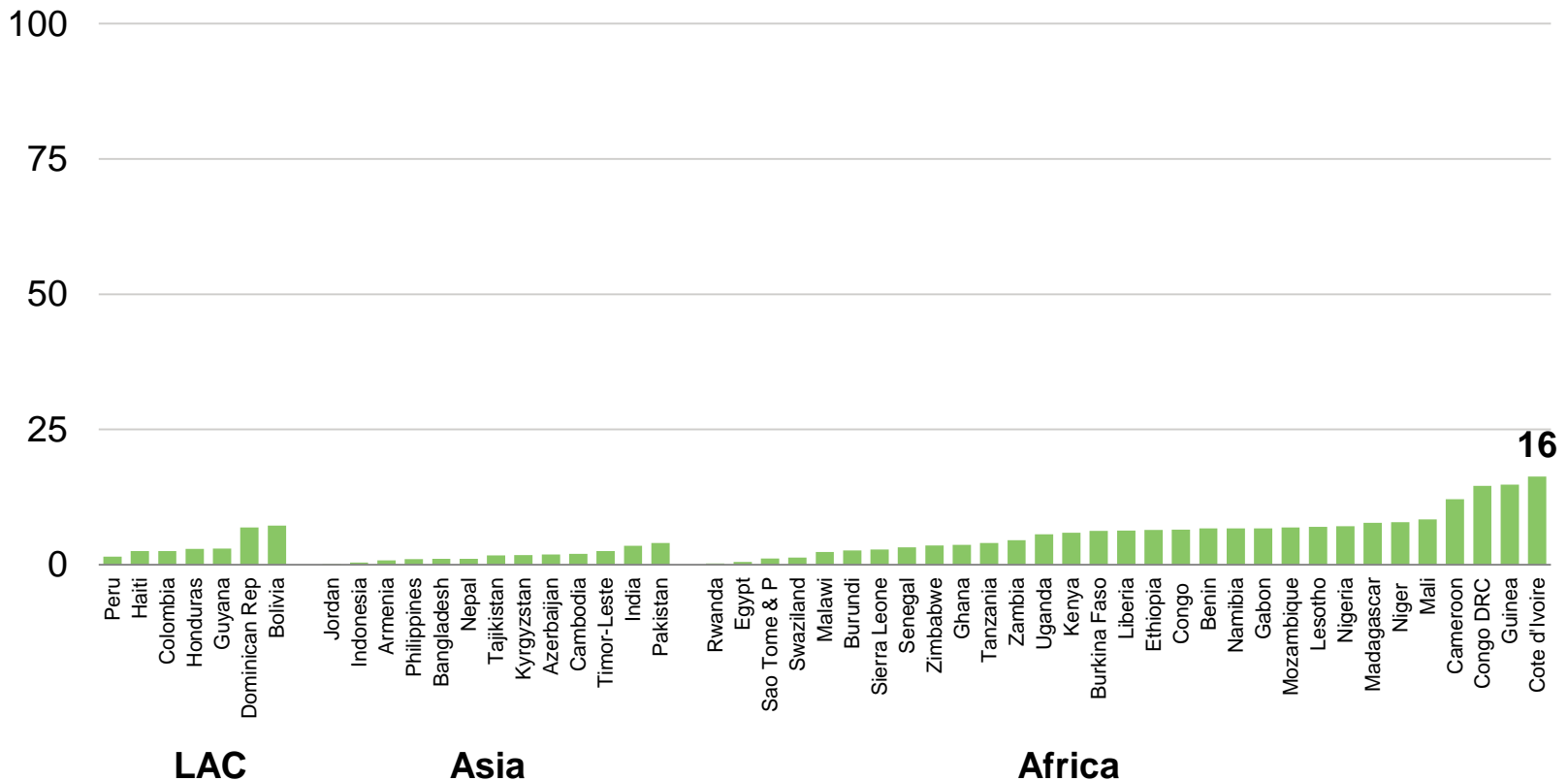
% married women with unmet need who said they were unaware of contraception





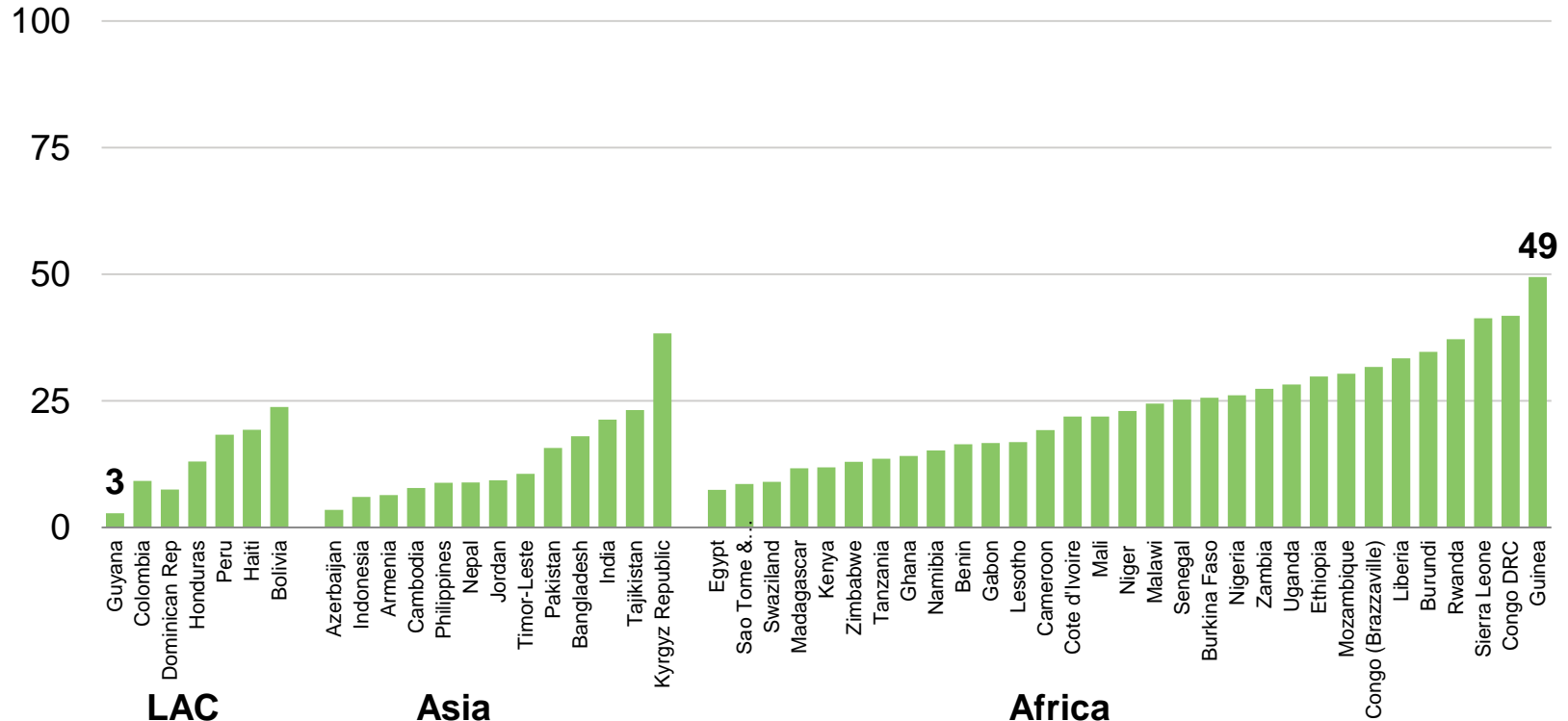
# Also very few married women with unmet need cite lack of access to contraception

% of married women w/ unmet need who cite not knowing a source or source too far

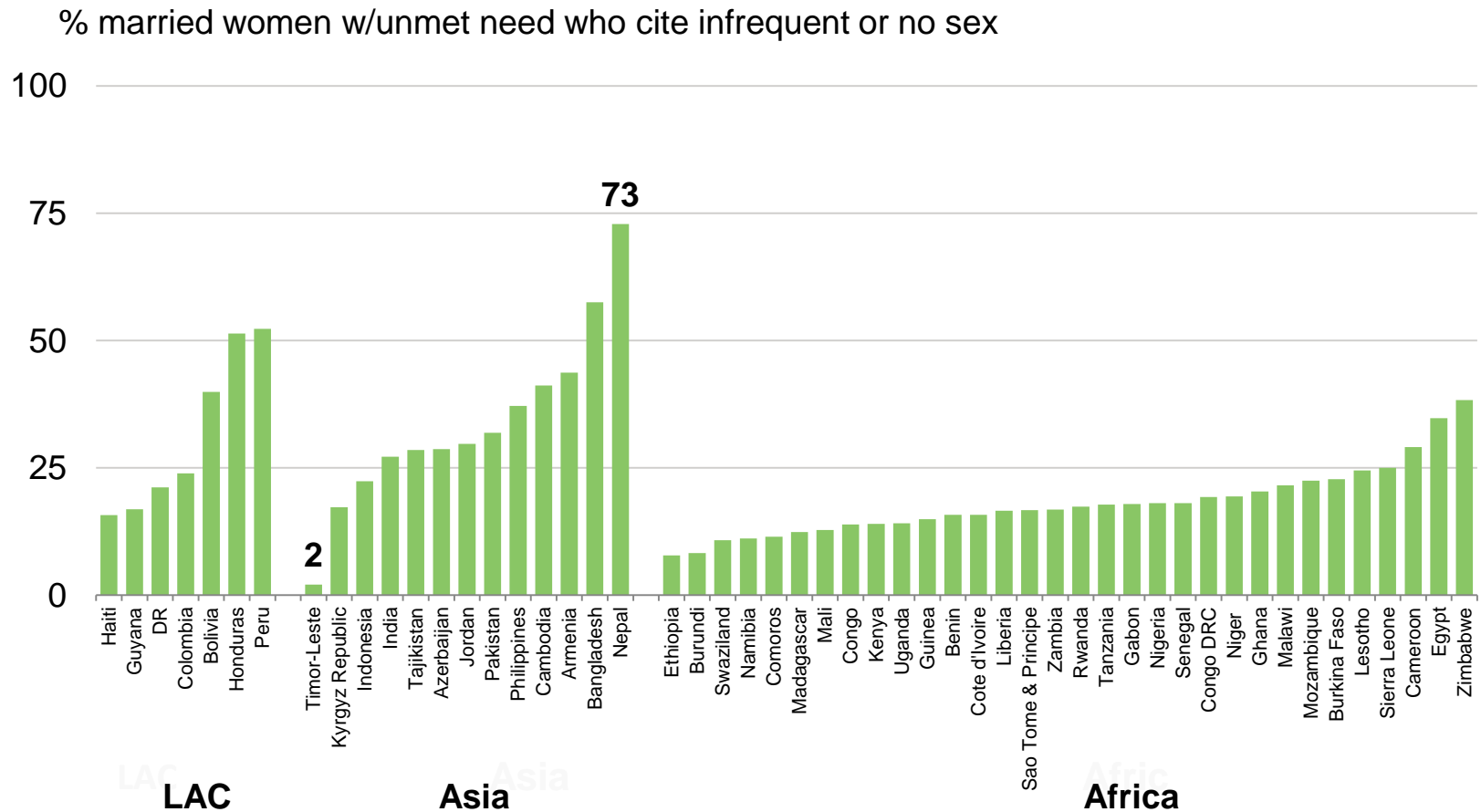


# Postpartum amenorrhea and breastfeeding are moderately common reasons for nonuse

% married women w/ unmet need who cite postpartum amenorrhea or breastfeeding

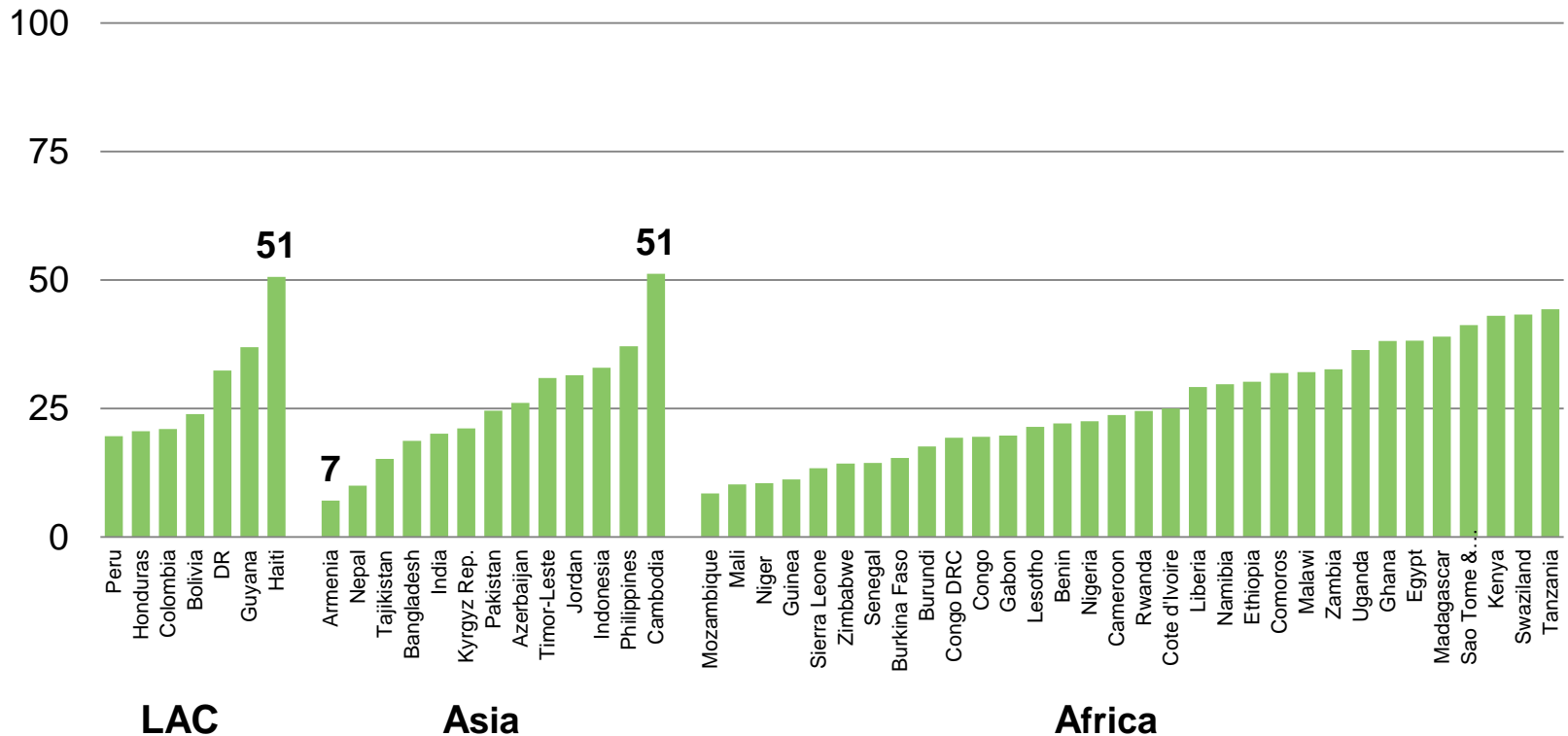


# Many married women with unmet need say that have sex infrequently or not all

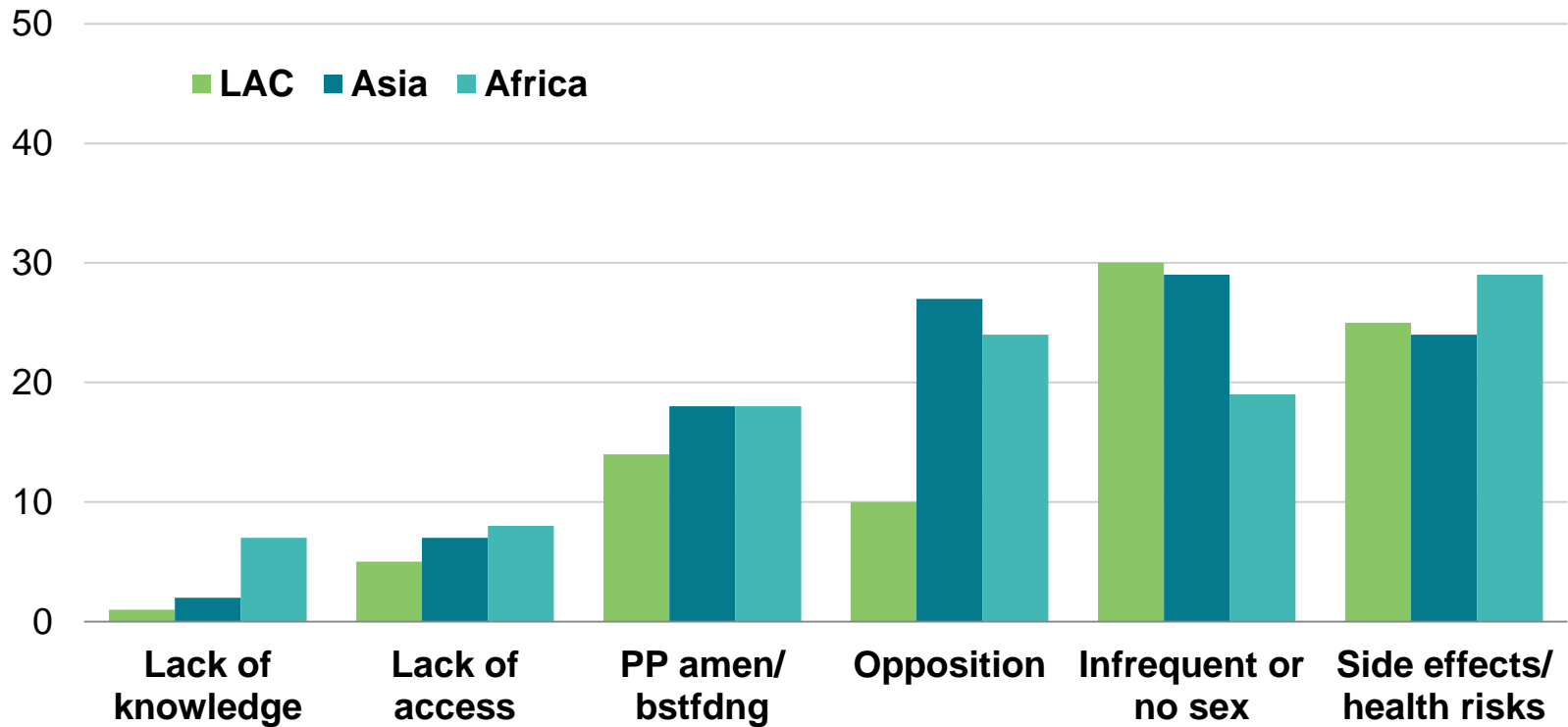


# Many are concerned about health risks or side effects of contraceptive methods

% married women w/ unmet need who cite concern side effects or health risks

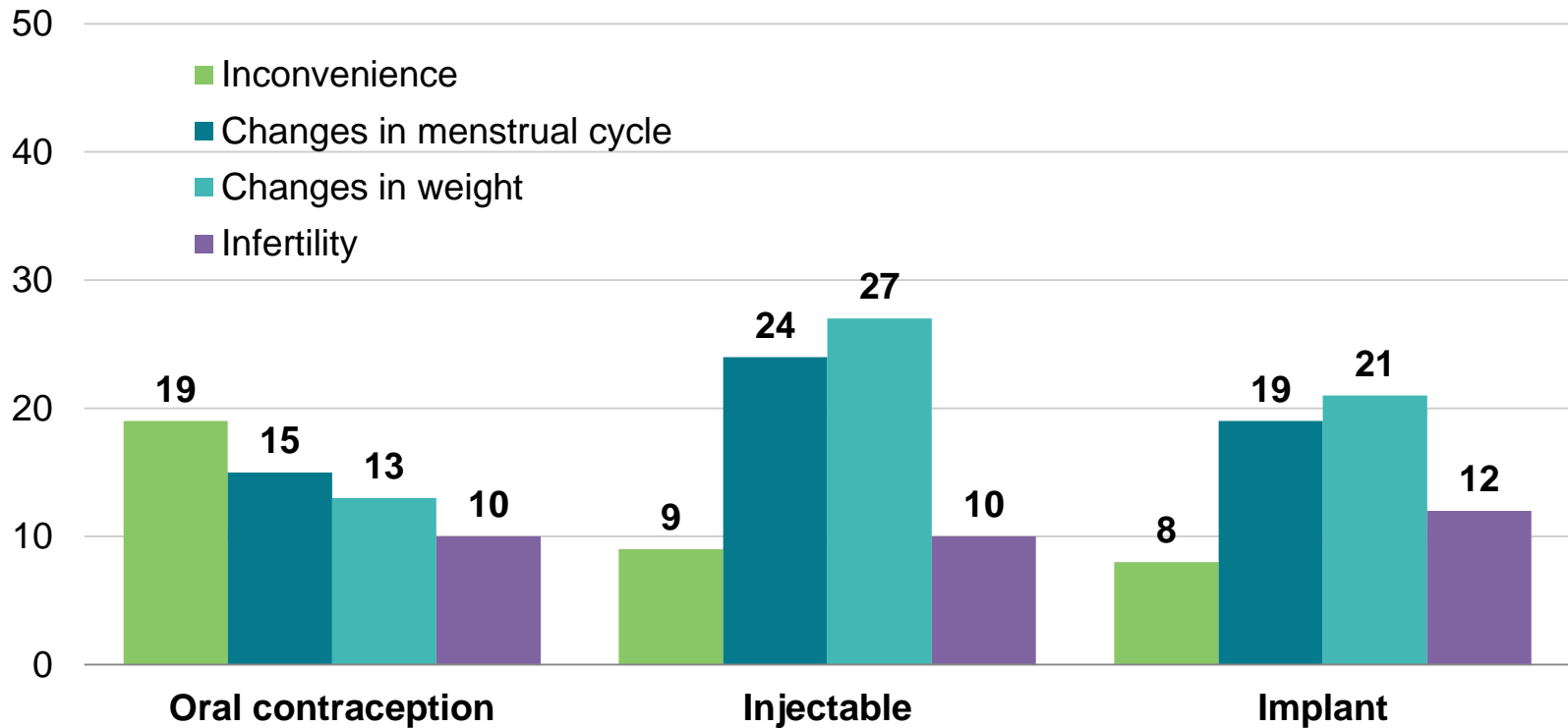


# Prevalence of key reasons for nonuse of contraception, by region



# In Ghana, women have different concerns about different methods

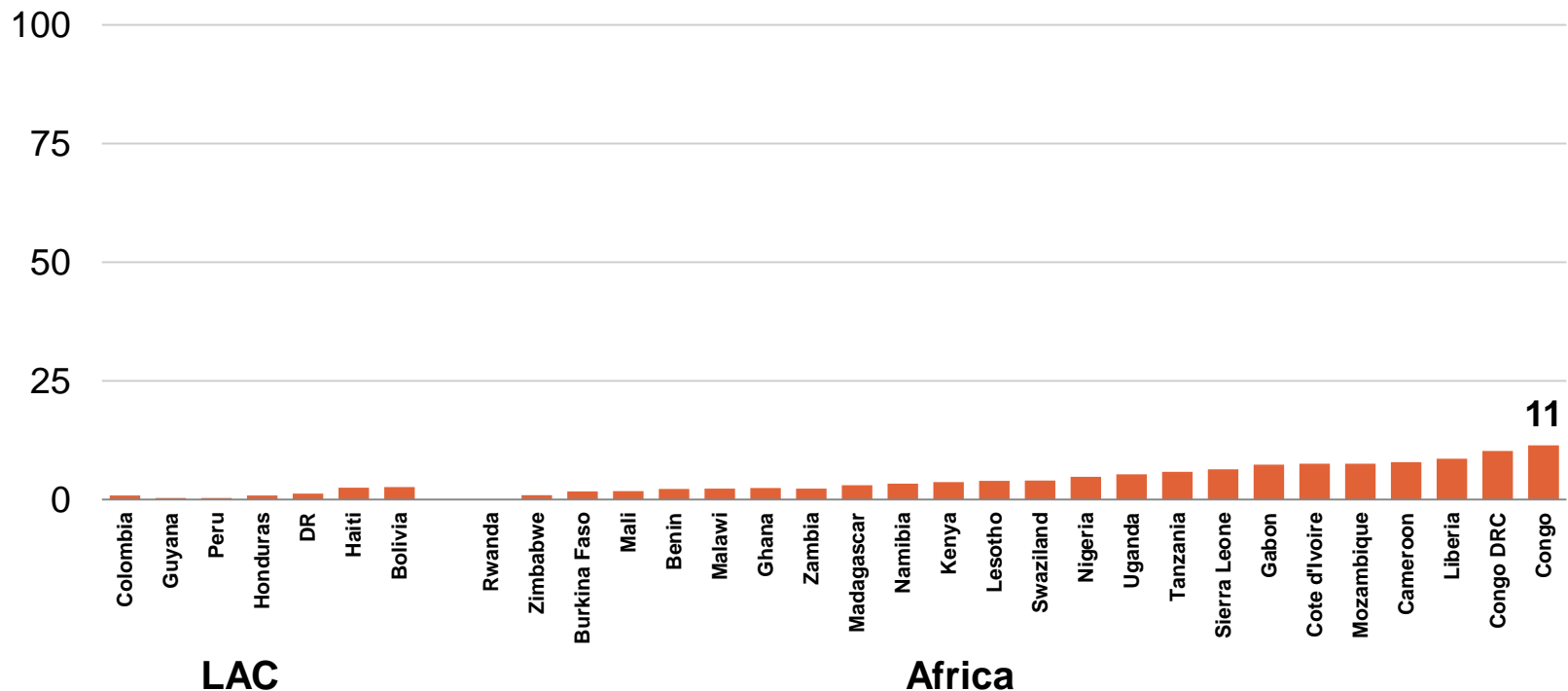
% women w/ unmet who cite each concern, by method – Ghana 2015



# **Why aren't never-married women with unmet need using a method?**

# Even never-married women are unlikely to cite lack of access as a reason for contraceptive nonuse

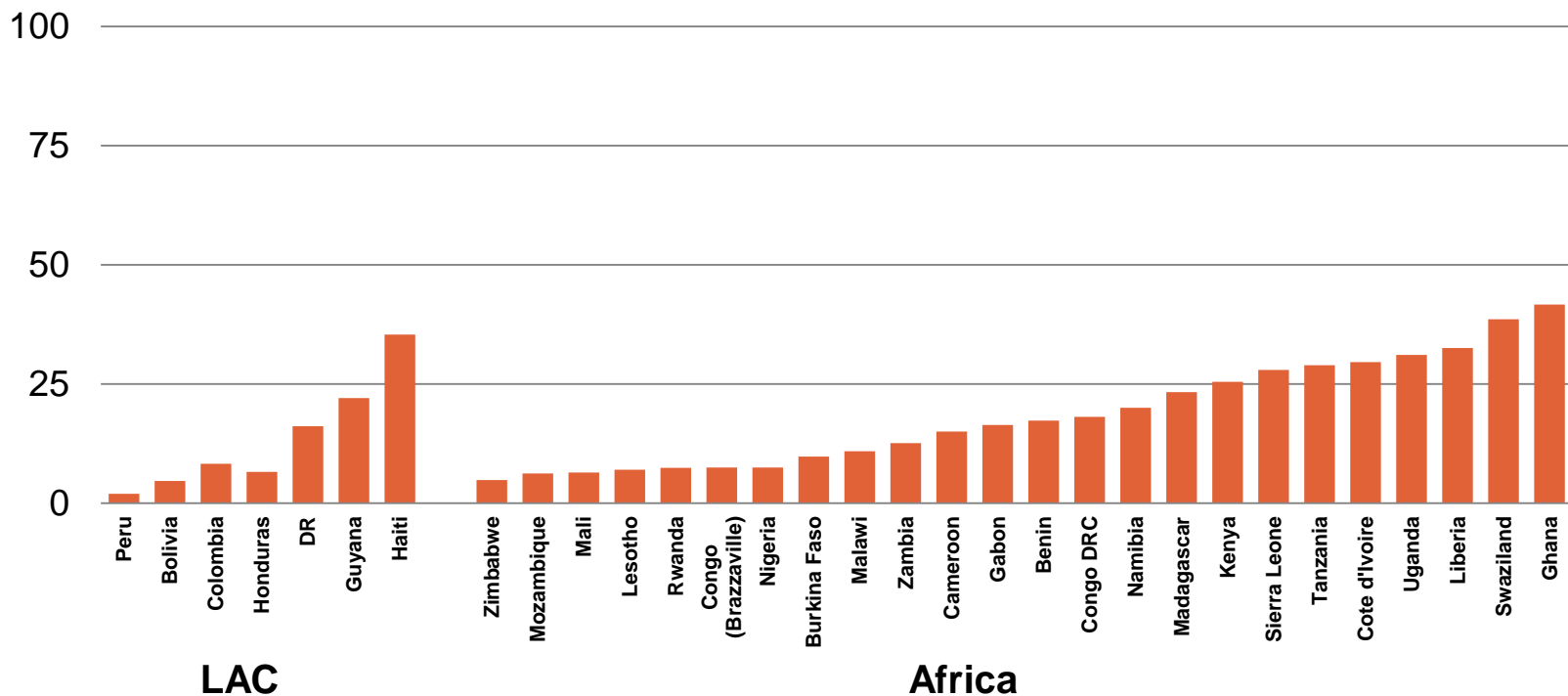
Proportion of never married women with unmet need who cite lack of access as reason for nonuse





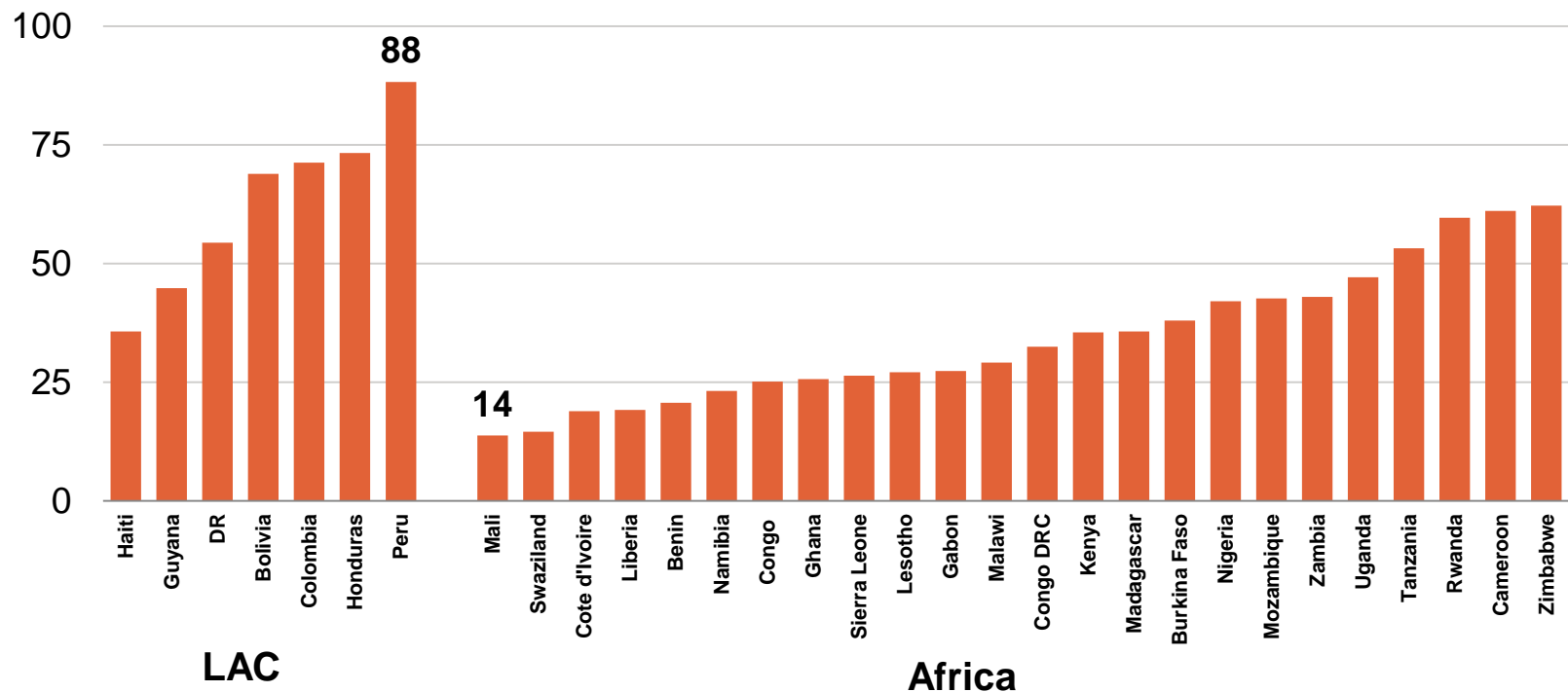
# Some never-married women say they are concerned about the health risks or side effects of methods

Proportion of never-married women with unmet need who cite concerns with health risks or side effects as a reason for nonuse



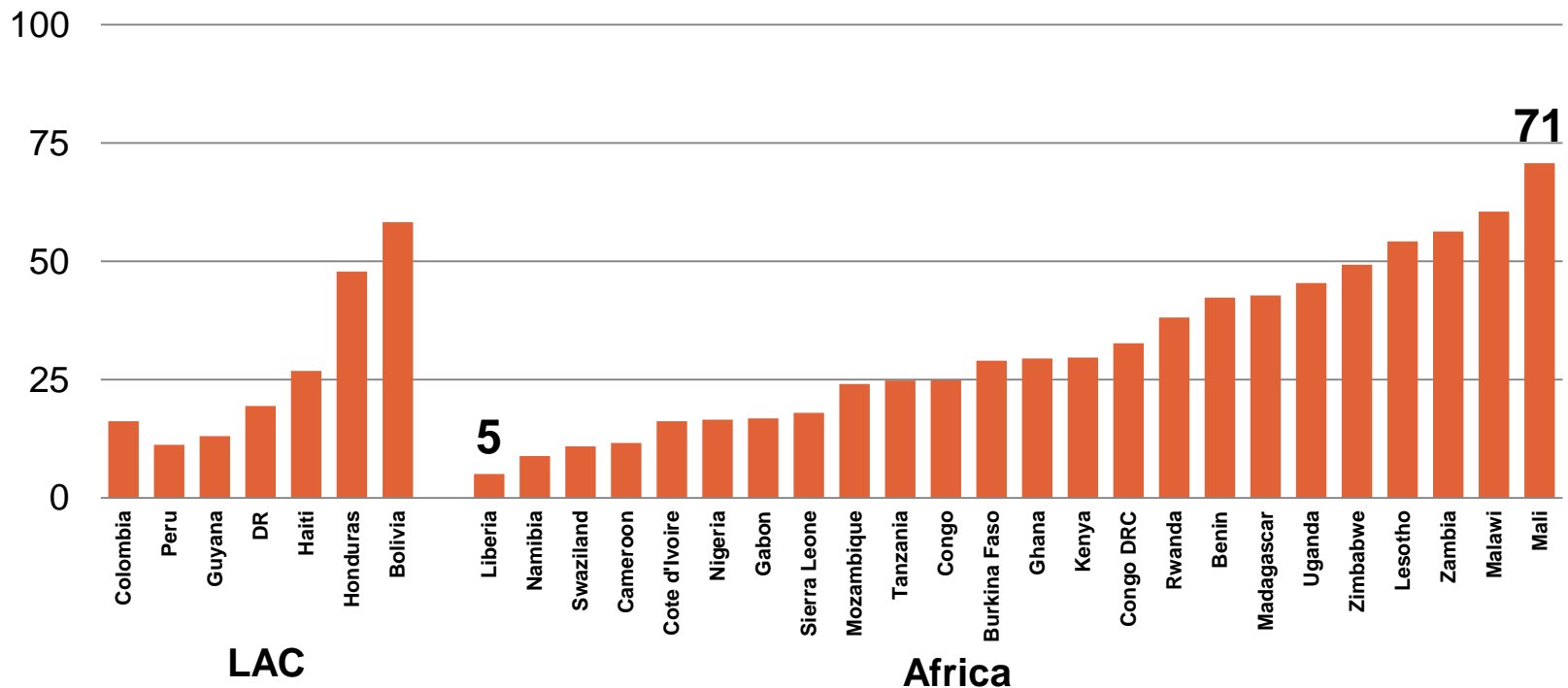
# Many never-married women also say they are not using a method because they have sex infrequently

Proportion of never married women with unmet need who cite infrequent sex as a reason for nonuse



# Many never-married women with unmet need say they are not using a method because they are not married

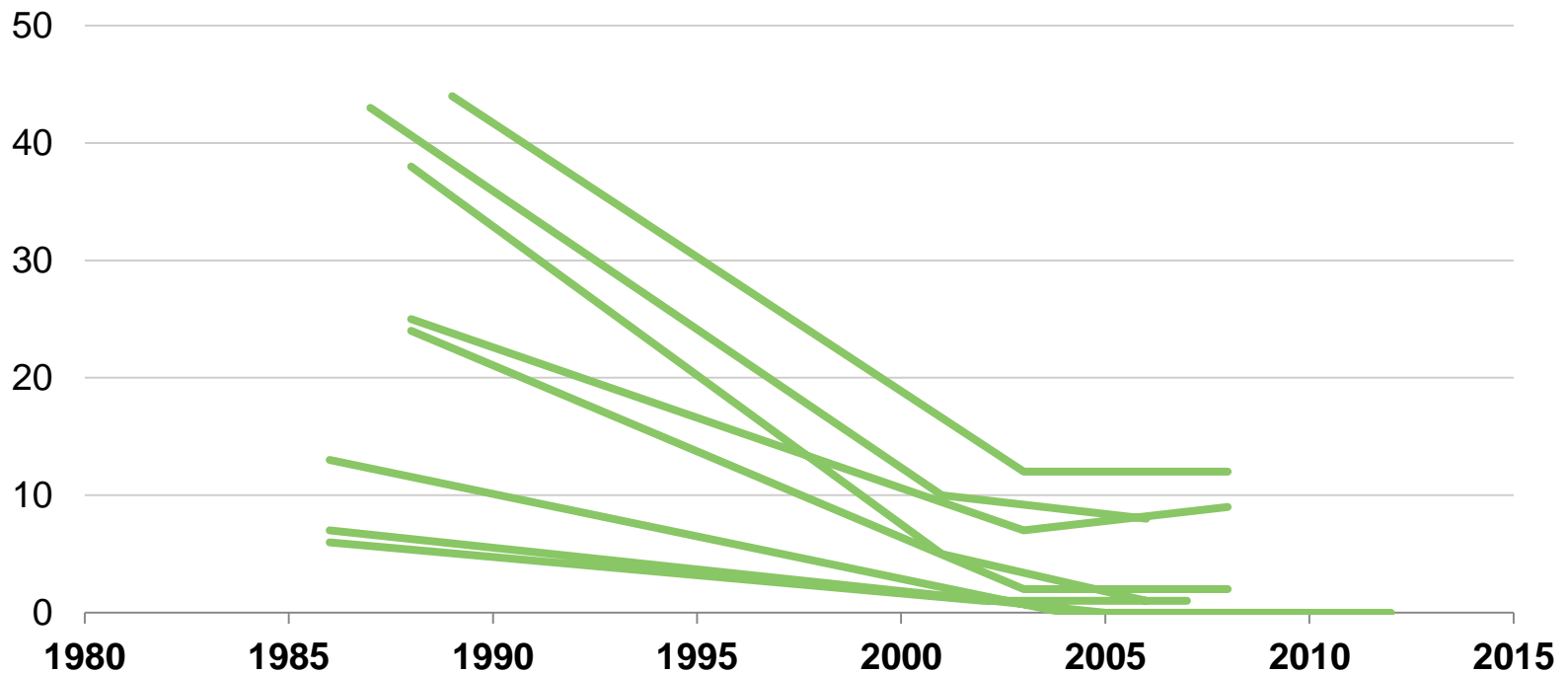
Proportion of never married women with unmet need who cite “not married” as reason for nonuse



# **How have reasons changed over time?**

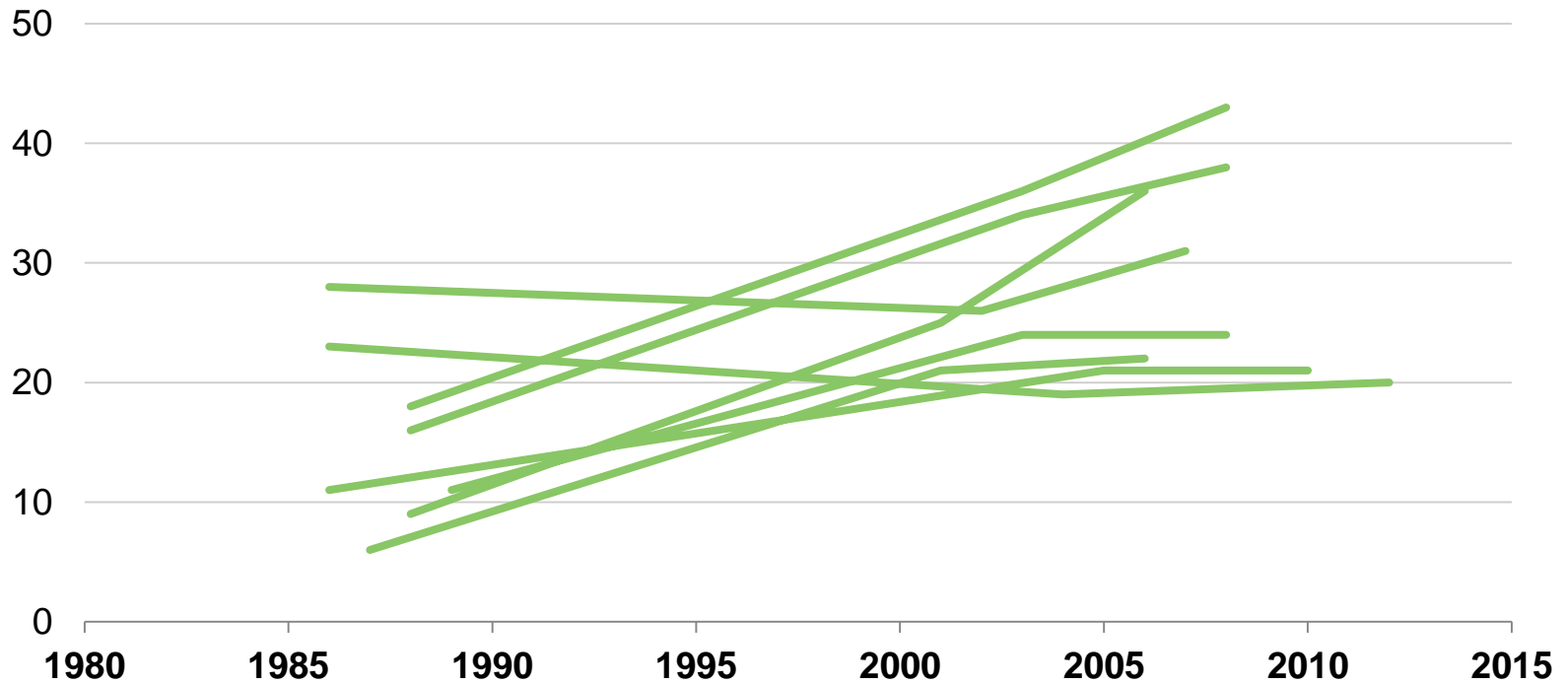
# Lack of knowledge is no longer a primary reason for contraceptive nonuse

Proportion of women who cite lack of knowledge about contraception as a reason for contraceptive nonuse



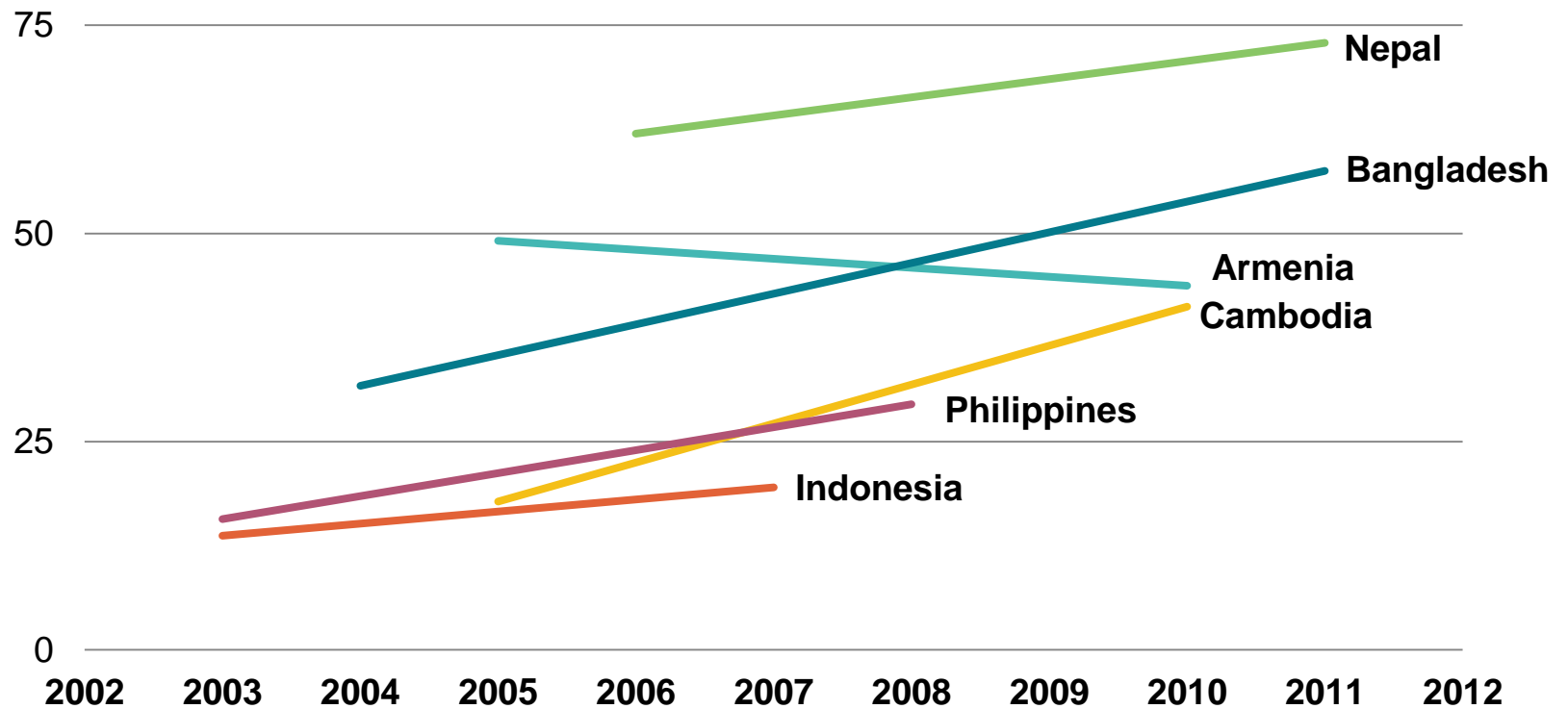
# Concerns about health risks and side effects have become more common

Proportion of women who cite concerns about health risks or side effects as a reasons for nonuse



# In Asia, infrequent or no sex is becoming a more common reason for nonuse

Proportion of women who cite infrequent or no sex as a reason for nonuse



# **Concerns about methods seem to focus on bleeding, fertility, and long term health risks**

**Qualitative studies of women's concerns about methods highlight:**

- Changes in weight
- Changes in bleeding patterns
- Fear of infertility
- Fear of other adverse health events



## **Other considerations and areas of research**

- **How to help contraceptive users who need more effective methods or help using methods effectively**
- **Sources of information and misinformation about methods**
- **The roles of providers in facilitating or obstructing use**
- **Impact of different interventions aimed at addressing women's reasons for contraceptive nonuse**

## Recommendations: Short term

- Improve the **quality** of family planning services:
  - Provide a range of methods and opportunities to switch methods
  - Provide information/counseling about side effects and health risks
  - Provide information about pregnancy risk, especially outside of clinics

## Recommendations: Long term

- Improve the **methods** available to women:
  - Adaptations of current methods could address women's reasons for unmet need
  - New and different types of contraceptives could further alleviate unmet need

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