

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF

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# NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

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**The Premenstrual Phase**

*Rudolf F. Vollman*

**A Philosophical Analysis of NFP**

*J. N. Santamaria*

**The Sequelae of Sterilization**

*H. P. Dunn*

**The Catholic University Study**

*M. Peter McCusker*

**Adolescent Pregnancy**

*Thomas W. Hilgers*

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# Table of Contents

## Winter 1977

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| iii   | NFP: The State of the Art 1978 <i>Paul Marx</i>  |
| 297   | The Psychology of Sexual Decision-Making, Part 2 <i>George E. Maloof</i>                             |
| 310   | Natural Family Planning: A Philosophical Analysis <i>J. N. Santamaria</i>                            |
| 318   | Unexpected Sequelae of Sterilization <i>H. P. Dunn</i>   |
| 322   | The Premenstrual Phase of the Menstrual Cycle <i>Rudolf F. Vollman</i>                               |
| 331   | NFP and the Marital Relationship: The Catholic University of America Study <i>M. Peter McCusker</i>  |
| 341   | A Summary of the Fairfield Study <i>Frank J. Rice, Claude A. Lanctot, and Consuelo Garcia-Devesa</i> |
| 343   | The Pregnant Adolescent: A Challenge to the Community <i>Thomas W. Hilgers</i>                       |
| 359   | Pro-People Demography <i>Albert T. Kapusinski</i>  |
| 368   | Septenary Sex <i>Frances Day</i>   |
| 380   | Continental Correspondents   |
| 380   | Latin America <i>Pierre Primeau</i>  |
| 384   | South Australia <i>Daniel Ch. Overduin</i>   |
| 387   | Book Reviews   |
| [I-i] | Index  |

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# A Summary of the Fairfield Study

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Frank J. Rice, Claude A. Lanctôt,  
and Consuelo Garcia-Devesa

**T**HE PRIMARY objective of this study was the statistical evaluation of the effectiveness of the sympto-thermal method; therefore, motivated and informed participants were recruited.

Couples living in five countries, Canada, Colombia, France, Mauritius, and the United States, were selected as participants in this study. The eligibility criteria for selection were as follows: (i) the wife had to be between the ages of 19 and 44 years; (ii) the wife had to be of proven fertility as shown by having carried a fetus for at least 28 weeks; (iii) the couple must have submitted one satisfactory temperature graph before being accepted; (iv) the couple must have expressed a willingness to submit temperature graphs for 24 months. There were 1,022 couples who met these criteria and were included in the study.

The age of the wives varied from 19 to 44. The size of the families varied from 1 to 9. Of the 1,022 participants, 826 completed the two years and 196 (19.2%) dropped out of the study. Only 35 couples (3.4%) were lost to follow-up.

The shortest cycle length reported was 9 days, and the longest cycle reported was 98 days. The average cycle length was 28.43 days with a standard deviation of  $\pm 6.82$  days. The individual variation (days between shortest and longest cycles) ranged from 4 to 71 days. There were only 205 women or 32% who had a variation of 8 days or less. A more nearly complete analysis of the menstrual-cycle data is to be reported in another paper.

The 1,022 couples contributed 21,736 cycles (20,573 months) and reported 128 unplanned pregnancies. Using the Pearl formula we obtain a pregnancy rate of 7.47 conceptions per 100 women years of exposure. The life-table

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A report of this international study was presented 23 June 1977 at the scientific congress held in conjunction with the First General Assembly of the International Federation for Family Life Promotion (IFFLP) in Cali, Colombia, June 22-29, 1977. It will be published in full in the IFFLP *Proceedings*. Dr. Rice and Dr. Garcia-Devesa are professors of biology at Fairfield University, Connecticut, and Dr. Lanctôt is executive director of IFFLP.



conception rate for our study is 8.26% for the first year and 14.3% for the entire two years. There were only 16 pregnancies in couples who had been following the instructions. These 16 cases give us a biological or method effectiveness of .93 pregnancies per 100 women years of exposure, using the Pearl formula. Of the 128 pregnancies 24 or 18.75% ended in a miscarriage.

Those wishing to prevent any future pregnancies had a failure rate of 4.13%, while those wishing only to delay a desired pregnancy had a failure rate of 14.83%. The couples who used only sympto-thermal had a failure rate of 6.24%, while those depending on a contraceptive device during a portion of their cycles had a failure rate of 10.33%.

A woman does not always have one fertile period each month, nor do her cycles necessarily average 12 per year. In our sample, the average was 13 cycles per year. Therefore, the only valid comparative figure for NFP must be expressed in pregnancies per 1,300 cycles rather than per 1,200 months. Using our cycle data and multiplying by 1,300 cycles we get a pregnancy rate of 7.66% as compared to 7.47% for 1,200 months.