

Ghana pushes towards late fertility

By Augustina Tawiah

MAJORITY of women in Ghana are now giving birth from ages 25 to 29, the 2022 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) Report has revealed.

This is said to improve maternal health and reduce the rate of maternal mortality.

The report identified the current situation as being in sharp contrast to the previous case when Ghanaian women gave birth between 15 and 19 years — the range referred to as early fertility — with the current situation representing a push towards late fertility, the survey conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) further revealed.

The Deputy Government Statistician of the GSS, Dr Faustina Frempong-Ainguah, disclosed this at the dissemination of the 2022 GDHS Report on household water and sanitation, fertility and family planning in

Accra, explaining that the latest trend of late fertility or delayed childbirth was good because women were usually not well developed to deliver at 15 to 19 years.

She said that could lead to high maternal mortality rates or health complications for those in that age group.

On the contrary, she said, those between 25 and 29 years were well developed physically, and if they were married, they had support.

Besides that, she said, women aged 25 to 29 were well positioned for childbirth considering the fact that it was not too late an age range to give birth where there could be complications.

2022 GDHS Report

The 2022 GDHS data was obtained from a nationally representative sample of 18,540 households distributed across all 16 administrative regions and 261 districts of the country.

The survey involved interviews with 17,933 households; 15,014 women aged 15 to 49 years, and 7,044 men aged 15 to 59 years.

Fieldwork for the report was conducted from October 17, 2022, to January 14, 2023.

Pregnancies

Providing further details about the report, Dr Frempong-Ainguah said 82 per cent of pregnancies that occurred in women 15 to 49 years surveyed for the report resulted in live births, 11 per cent were miscarriages, induced abortion recorded seven per cent, while one per cent ended in stillbirths.

For teenage pregnancy

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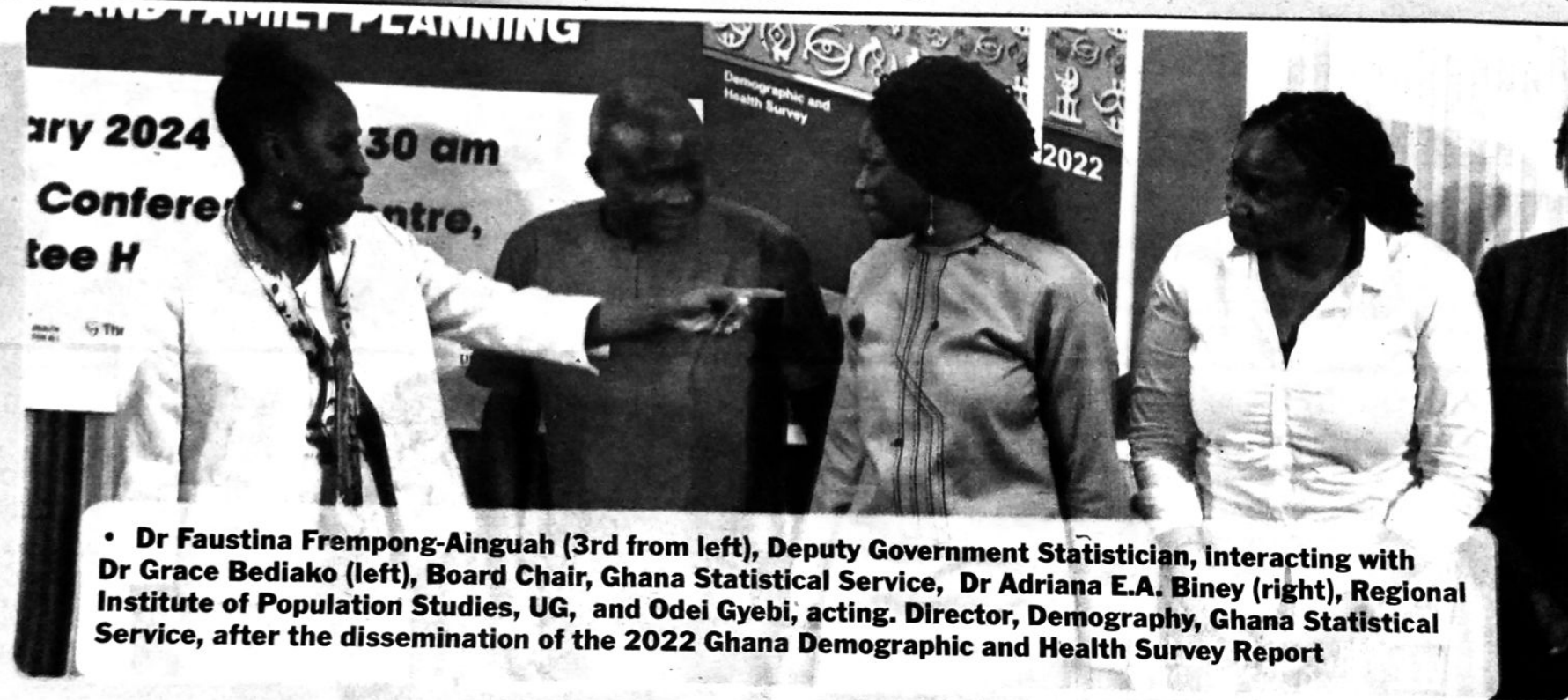
■ Ghana is said to be pushing towards late fertility as majority of women are now giving birth between the ages of 25 and 29 instead of the previous situation when women gave birth more often at ages 15 to 19.

occurring among 15 to 19-year-olds, she said the report showed that 15 per cent of girls in that age group had ever been pregnant; two per cent were currently pregnant; live births recorded among them was 11 per cent, while pregnancy loss among the group was four per cent.

On total fertility rate, Dr Frempong-Ainguah said it had declined from 6.4 births per woman in 1998 to 3.9 in 2022/2023.

She said the survey showed that 10 per cent of women aged 15 to 19 had sexual intercourse before age 15 as against nine reported for men; two per cent of women aged 15 to 19 married before age 15 as

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• **Dr Faustina Frempong-Ainguah (3rd from left), Deputy Government Statistician, interacting with Dr Grace Bediako (left), Board Chair, Ghana Statistical Service, Dr Adriana E.A. Biney (right), Regional Institute of Population Studies, UG, and Odei Gyebi, acting. Director, Demography, Ghana Statistical Service, after the dissemination of the 2022 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey Report**

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against one per cent for men, while women who gave birth before age 15 formed one per cent just as one per cent recorded for men.

Other areas the report touched on were marriage and sexual activity; fertility levels and trends; birth

intervals and fertility preferences.

The UNFPA Country Representative to Ghana, Dr Wilfred Ochan, said from a family planning perspective, understanding the desire to limit childbearing among married men provided an opportunity to include men in the conversation about family, given the patriarchal nature of most

communities.

Present at the programme were the Board Chairperson of the GSS, Dr Grace Bediako; the Director, Clinical Care of the Ghana Health Service, Dr Lawrence Ofori-Boadu, and the Chief of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene of UNICEF Ghana, Ramesh Bhusah, who all delivered statements.