



World Contraception Day, September 26, 2023

The power of choice

"Are there too many people in the world?" "Are there few people in the world?" "Is the population growing too fast – or too slowly?"

The world is asking the wrong questions. People are not units of procreation designed to fulfill some ideal level of reproduction and should not be coerced into reproducing according to some quota or formula. They are human beings and inherently have a number of rights, including, the right over the reproductive choices they make¹.

In 1984, Law 3/84 was created, which regulates family planning and continues to this day, legislating that all women of childbearing age have free access to family planning consultations in primary health care units and hospitals and also free access to contraceptive methods. Although Portugal is part of the group of countries with the best results in a total of 46 countries, being in the 8th position, with the prevalence of use of modern contraceptive methods of 78%, but still 7% of Portuguese women consider that they do not have their contraceptive needs met and the sources of information on contraception should be improved^{2,3}.

States should ensure the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for all, including the right to sexual and reproductive health, without discrimination, as well as access to contraceptives. The autonomous decision of women must be respected. It is crucial to recognize that access to sexual and reproductive health remains a priority: maintaining access to contraception, preventing an increase in the number of unplanned pregnancies, the use of unsafe abortion, sexually transmitted infections and consequently an increase in maternal and neonatal mortality⁴.

The Portuguese Society of Contraception marks this day and highlights the crucial role that *contraceptive* "free choice" plays in empowering individuals to take control of their reproductive health.

1. State of World Population report 2023. UNFPA

2. Grupo de trabalho "a saúde das mulheres em Portugal" · recomendações.2023

3. European Contraception Policy Atlas. Europe 2023

4. ONU, 22 de setembro 2022