



HUMAN OVERPOPULATION AS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR GYNECOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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1. Introduction

Human Overpopulation

- *“a condition of being populated with excessively large numbers of people”*
- *“an excessive number of people straining available resources and facilities”*
- Politically incorrect and controversial topic, thus widely ignored
- **BUT we need to talk about overpopulation**

2. Methodology

This presentation is based on the analysis of following documents

- *2019 World Population Prospects* (UN)
- *2016 World Population Data Sheet* (PRB)
- *2017 World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice* (Alliance of World Scientists)

- *2017 Women's Health Challenges* (FIGO)
- *2017 The Global Epidemic of Unintended Pregnancies* (FIGO)
- *2017 Sheet on Family Planning and Contraception* (WHO)

3. Results – Human Numbers

- The world's population
 - is currently **7.7 billion** people (mid-2019)
 - grows by over **80 million** people a year
 - will keep growing, reaching **9.7 billion** (2050) and **11 billion** (2100)
- Population growth will be most dramatic in (sub-Saharan) Africa
 - more than 50% of anticipated growth up to 2050
 - the only contributor to global population growth after 2050
 - Africa's share of global population: 19% (2019) ... 26% (2050) ... 40% (2100)

3. Results of Overpopulation

- **Environmental** (**climate change**, biodiversity loss, **mass species extinction**, deforestation, desertification, resource depletion, environmental pollution, increase in municipal waste)
- **Healthcare** (**lack of fresh water**, starvation and malnutrition, poor hygiene and living conditions, increased chance of **new epidemics and pandemics**, low life expectancy)
- **Political and Economic** (inadequate healthcare, education, and employment, radicalization and extremism, **resource-driven wars**, slowing economic growth, **an obstacle to SDGs**)
- **Social** (**increased poverty**, crime rates, conflicts and wars, **forced migration**)

Intermezzo –
Why should gynecologists be interested
in human overpopulation?

3. Results – Unintended Pregnancies

■ Global epidemic

- 41% of all pregnancies are unintended (**86 million** of 208 million pregnancies a year)
- Major effect on women's and societal health

■ Consequences

- Health (induced abortions, maternal and infant morbidity and mortality)
- Psychological (depression, suicidal behavior)
- Social (abandoning newborns, inadequate upbringing)

3. Results – Family Planning

- Unintended pregnancies and their consequences are largely preventable if
 - Women are well informed about family planning methods and services
 - Women are well educated in sexual and reproductive health
 - Women have access to contraception and family planning services
- Availability of family planning methods does not meet current global needs
 - **214 million** women in developing countries have no access to modern contraception
 - Contraceptive use is deficient in sub-Saharan Africa (global use of **28%** versus 57%)

4. Conclusion

- Human overpopulation represents a grave threat to both humanity and the planet Earth
- The most humane solution lies in support of human rights, girls' and women's education and empowerment, and availability of family planning methods and services
- The solution overlaps with solutions to purely gynecological problems mentioned before
- As such, human overpopulation (and rapid population growth) should become **the greatest challenge for gynecology** of the 21st century
- A **direct, systematic and global involvement of gynecologists** and their organizations will be necessary, with **particular focus on Africa**, where the problems will be most severe

Take-Home Message

- *„All environmental problems become harder – and ultimately impossible – to solve with ever more people.”* – Sir David Attenborough (Population Matters)
- *“Family planning could bring more benefits to more people at less cost, than any other single technology now available to the human race.”* – James P. Grant (UNICEF)
- *“If you educate a man, you educate an individual. However, if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.”* – African proverb

Thank you for your attention