

AGE AT MENARCHE IN FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Objective The purpose of this study was to determine median age at menarche in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and to estimate the distribution of age at menarche for FBiH girls.

Subjects and methods A cross-sectional study was conducted from September 2002 to May 2003 in all Cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). The random stratified sample included 19,803 girls aged 9.0 to 17.5 years. Data were collected using the status quo method. Probit analysis was used to estimate median age at menarche and 95% confidence intervals.

Results The median age at menarche for all FBiH girls is 13.02 years (12.99-13.05, 95% CI). Three percent of all girls start to menstruate before 11.04 years of age (10.98-11.09, 95% CI), and 97% of all girls are menstruating by 15.37 years of age (15.29-15.44, 95% CI). This distribution of ages indicated that ~95% of FBiH girls start to menstruate between 11.04 and 15.37 years of age. The median age at menarche throughout FBiH varied in a range of only six months, from 12.85 in Canton Sarajevo to 13.34 in Canton West Herzegovina. Girls from three Cantons - Canton Sarajevo, Posavina and Una Sana reached menarche significantly earlier than those from other Cantons.

Conclusion This study enabled the FBiH and each Canton to have standards of age at menarche expressed in percentiles. As no previous information was available about the age at menarche in FBiH, the present results will afford a basis for future studies which should aim at analysing the trend and tempo of secular changes in age at menarche.

Key words: Age at menarche ▪ Girls ▪ Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina