



Healthy Birth Spacing Has Increased in Many sub-Saharan African Countries

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Many sub-Saharan Africa countries are seeing more births spaced at least two or three years apart. The graphics presented on the next page show births in years 2008-2014, and if they were followed by another birth in the next two or three years. For children born in 2008, on average, 83% did not have a younger sibling after two years and 56% did not have one after three years. Overtime, the percent open at least two years grew by 1.5 percentage points a year, on average, and for three years by 1.6 percentage points. The trends are statistically significant.

Four countries experienced noticeable increases: Benin, Ethiopia, and Uganda. In Benin, the percent of children who did not have a younger sibling two years after their birth increased from 80% for children born in 2008 to 88% among children born in 2014. For three-year intervals, the percent increased from 47% to 55%. Ethiopia experienced even more growth, from 69% to 85% for the two-year interval, and from 46% to 55% from 2008 to 2013 (the Ethiopia survey was conducted before the full three-year window for children born in 2014). Uganda also increased the percent of births spaced at least two or three years by over 10 percentage points, from 73% to 84% between 2008 and 2014 for two-year gaps, and 42% to 53% between 2008 and 2013 for three-year gaps.

Postpartum family planning is increasing in use across sub-Saharan Africa and can increase birth intervals. Many countries are seeing increases in the percent of women using family planning and 6 months postpartum across multiple surveys. Postpartum family planning programs should be proud that their work is translating to healthier birth spacing for mothers and children.

Sub-Saharan Africa has seen an increase in healthy birth spacing

