inantly in the active childbearing years; they are relatively young and have small or medium-sized families. Roughly half have never used a contraceptive method, and many encounter another, unwanted pregnancy before they adopt a method.

The recognition that many women who are not classified as having an unmet need still plan to use a method forces attention to yet another refinement of these issues. Women without an unmet need are a complex group: some are already using a method, while others are infecund and have no reason to practice contraception. Some are young and want another child; of these, some intend to use a method and others do not.

The women we are concerned with here have said both that they want a child within the next 24 months and that they intend to use a method. For consistency with the DHS terminology, we refer to them as not having an unmet need, even though their interest in contraception makes this a contradiction in terms. The question is how to reconcile their desire for a birth within 24 months and their intention to use a contraceptive, most of them within the next year.

**Intention and Unmet Need Status**

A key question in estimating the market for family planning services is whether the women classified as having an unmet need who do not intend to use a method are outnumbered by those not considered to have an unmet need who do intend to use. As an example, Figure 1 shows the distribution of respondents in the Bangladesh DHS by contraceptive use, unmet need status and contraceptive intention.

Of the 2,060 women in the sample with an unmet need, 65% intend to use a method; similarly, 68% of the 2,918 women without need intend to use. Moreover, nearly equal numbers in the two groups intend to use within the next 12 months (1,018 and 1,058, respectively). Overall, women with no unmet need who intend to use a method outnumber those with an unmet need who do not intend to use by a ratio of 2.7 to one.

Figure 2 (page 150) shows this ratio for 25 countries and also shows whether women planned to use a method within the next year or later. (All countries are treated individually rather than by region; we detected only minor regional differences in the patterns, partly because some regions have few applicable DHS surveys.) The total ratios are high indeed, exceeding 4.0 for Colombia and Zimbabwe, and ranging between 1.7 and 1.9 for six others. Altogether, 15 countries have ratios exceeding 1.0, meaning that women who were thought to be in need of contraception but do not plan to use a method are outnumbered by those not considered to be in need who nevertheless intend to use one.

If we look only at those women who intend to use a method soon, the ratios are still impressive. Ratios for three countries exceed 1.5 (meaning that there are at least 50% more women who intend to use soon than there are those who do not intend ever to use), and seven others are between 1.0 and 1.5. In another eight countries, more than half of women from the unmet need group who do not intend to use contraceptives are replaced by women with no recognized unmet need who intend to use soon.

The ratios for the residual group—those intending to use later—are smaller. Sixteen countries have a ratio below 0.5 of which 12 are below 0.4. Thus, most women without need who plan to use at all intend to do so soon. In sum, it appears that a large reservoir of interest in contraceptive use exists in addition to the population with an unmet need.

**Women Who Intend to Use**

If the two groups who intend to use a method—i.e., those with and without an unmet need—are similar enough, programs can efficiently seek out both, using similar strategies. We examined six characteristics of women who intend to use a method: two on the stage of family building (age and family size), two on the phase of contraceptive use (never used and plan to use only after one year), two on the phase of contraceptive use (never used and plan to use only after one year). A three-way comparison was required, since women with an unmet need must be separated into those wishing to delay the next birth and those wishing to limit further childbearing. In general, we found that women who desire no more children...