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Women's Health. Different aspects of Women's Health Problems in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is a small country in Eastern Europe, with GDP of 470\$ per capita. Until 1991 it was part of former USSR. When Azerbaijan gained its independence, the economy, social sphere and health care all collapsed. Due to lack of capital the state can not provide an adequate health care as it used to do before. As a result health conditions and illness rates became significantly worse.

My survey was made in different areas of Women's Health.

Since 1991 the birth rate dropped by 50% and abortion rate doubled. Women feel unsecured and do not want to have children. There is an increase of infant and maternal mortality. According to this survey the majority of Azerbaijan women do not use contraceptives because of contraceptive's high cost and poor knowledge in this area. The most common birth control method is abortion. In average, a woman has 3-5 abortions per her life-time, but in some cases as many as 20-30.

Life expectancy for women remains low, but death rate is higher than in other European countries.

The majority suffers of poverty, having a salary of 20\$. According to the same survey, Azerbaijan women have low milk and meat consumption, which are the main sources of protein. Under-nutrition causes a number of negative health consequences : as unwanted weight loss, fatigue, irritability and inability to concentrate, frequent colds, etc. Pregnant women who are undernourished have low-birth weight babies and the babies delay in their development. The majority of women do not consume even 2/3 of the nutrients they need to stay healthy. In addition, poor hygienic and sub-standard food conditions exist. Cattle are bred and their meat is sold without adequate control.

Women's Health gets highly effected by unavailability of proper medical aid, modern diagnostic technology and medicine due to cost.

The rates of such diseases as cardiovascular, respiratory, oncological and gynecological are very high, much higher than during the USSR period. Financial and social insecurities cause a high percentage of mental illnesses, especially among refugee women.

Unprotected sex leads to a high number of sexually transmitted diseases (venereal and AIDS), despite high abortion rates.

Exposure to environmental risk factors such as: biological pathogens, poor housing, unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and biomass fuel pollution all significantly impact Women's Health. This effect is especially high in refugee camps, next to industrial areas and main roads.

This survey contains detail information of all issues outlined here.

Conclusions: The problem of Women's Health in Azerbaijan can be solved only by improving the Health care standards, increasing living standards and overcoming poverty. Fortunately Az. has rich natural resources and great potential to become a country with a strong economy, high life standards and proper health care.