

‘Baby bust’—Why fertility rates are plummeting around the world

There has been a remarkable global decline in the number of children women are having, say researchers. Their report found fertility rate falls meant nearly half of countries were now facing a “baby bust” – meaning there are insufficient children to maintain their population size.

The researchers said the findings were a “huge surprise”.

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The study, [published in the Lancet](#), followed trends in every country from 1950 to 2017. In 1950, women were having an average of 4.7 children in their lifetime. The fertility rate all but halved to 2.4 children per woman by last year.

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The fall in fertility rate is not down to sperm counts or any of the things that normally come to mind when thinking of fertility.

Instead it is being put down to three key factors:

- Fewer deaths in childhood meaning women have fewer babies
- Greater access to contraception
- More women in education and work

In many ways, falling fertility rates are a success story.

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The report, part of the Global Burden of Diseases analysis, says affected countries will need to consider increasing immigration, which can create its own problems, or introducing policies to encourage women to have more children, which often fail.

Read full, original post: [‘Remarkable’ decline in fertility rates](#)