

*Kang Tsui,*<sup>a</sup> MS  
*Ching-Wen Chang,*<sup>b</sup> MD  
*Henk-kien Au,*<sup>b</sup> MD  
*Yi-Yi Chien,*<sup>b</sup> MD  
*Li-Wei Chien,*<sup>b</sup> MD  
*Chii-Ruey Tzeng,*<sup>b\*</sup> MD

<sup>a</sup> Department of General Education,

<sup>b</sup> Center for Reproductive Medicine,  
Department of Obstetrics and  
Gynecology, Taipei Medical  
University

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**Key Words**

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## Fertility Trends in Mainland China, 1970~2000

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**ABSTRACT**

Underlying problems of the Chinese population have been greatly emphasized internationally. For the past 5 decades, philosophers and scientists have carefully observed and analyzed China's fertility policies and trends. The fertility rate began to decline in the 1970s, but it began a steady rise in the 1980s. In the 1990's the birth rate and population once again declined. Nevertheless, the decline was relatively slow. Although the Chinese population was carefully studied in the past, the unknown connection between Chinese population trends and their effect on government policies will only be revealed and evaluated in the coming years through further investigations. (N. Taipei J. Med. 2001;3:149-160)

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### INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the formulation of fertility policy in the PRC and academic studies in the area have mostly been based on the country's targeted fertility situation in the year 2000. Therefore, a systematic review of the PRC's fertility changes in the past 3 decades is very important. The fertility rate began to decline in the 1970s, but the fertility trends over the past 3 decades have distinct respective features. This paper gives a general description of fertility changes in the past 3 decades and makes a forecast regarding the population status in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Reintroducing the Policy to Control the Population Growth Rate

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the

central government continued promoting birth control. However, economic stagnation and retrogression caused by the turbulent events of that period destroyed the conditions for implementing family planning. The population began to grow out of control. As the population and economic development became seriously disproportional, Beijing had to reemphasize population growth control. In June of 1970, Premier Zhou En-lai ( 周恩來 ) defined family planning as a part of state planning, pointing out that if population growth was not kept under control, state planning would be in trouble.<sup>1</sup> Since then, population control was formally included in the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1971-1975), and urban and rural areas were given natural population growth rate targets, respectively. The movement to promote the control of population growth was named the family planning campaign ( 計劃生育 ) to

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Correspondence: Dr. Chii-Ruey Tzeng  
Center for Reproductive Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Taipei Medical University, No. 252, Wu-Hsing Street, Taipei 110, Taiwan, R.O.C. Tel: 886-2-2737-2181 ext. 1996; Fax: 886-2-2735-8406; E-mail: tzengcr@tmu.edu.tw