



HUMAN OVERPOPULATION AS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR GYNECOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Jan Greguš

Center for Outpatient Gynecology and Primary Care, Brno, Czech Republic
Center for Prenatal Diagnosis, Brno, Czech republic
Department of Philosophy, the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University, Brno

1. Introduction

Human Overpopulation

- *“a condition of being populated with excessively large numbers of people”*
- *“an excessive number of people straining available resources and facilities”*
- Politically incorrect and controversial topic, thus widely ignored
- **BUT we need to talk about overpopulation**

2. Methodology

This presentation is based on the analysis of following documents

- *2019 World Population Prospects* (UN)
- *2016 World Population Data Sheet* (PRB)
- *2017 World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice* (Alliance of World Scientists)

- *2017 Women's Health Challenges* (FIGO)
- *2017 The Global Epidemic of Unintended Pregnancies* (FIGO)
- *2017 Sheet on Family Planning and Contraception* (WHO)

3. Results – Human Numbers

- The world's population
 - is currently **7.7 billion** people (mid-2019)
 - grows by over **80 million** people a year
 - will keep growing, reaching **9.7 billion** (2050) and **11 billion** (2100)
- Population growth will be most dramatic in (sub-Saharan) Africa
 - more than 50% of anticipated growth up to 2050
 - the only contributor to global population growth after 2050
 - Africa's share of global population: 19% (2019) ... 26% (2050) ... 40% (2100)

3. Results of Overpopulation

- **Environmental** (**climate change**, biodiversity loss, **mass species extinction**, deforestation, desertification, resource depletion, environmental pollution, increase in municipal waste)
- **Healthcare** (**lack of fresh water**, starvation and malnutrition, poor hygiene and living conditions, increased chance of **new epidemics and pandemics**, low life expectancy)
- **Political and Economic** (inadequate healthcare, education, and employment, radicalization and extremism, **resource-driven wars**, slowing economic growth, **an obstacle to SDGs**)
- **Social** (**increased poverty**, crime rates, conflicts and wars, **forced migration**)

Intermezzo –

Why should gynecologists be interested
in human overpopulation?

3. Results – Unintended Pregnancies

■ Global epidemic

- 41% of all pregnancies are unintended (**86 million** of 208 million pregnancies a year)
- Major effect on women's and societal health

■ Consequences

- Health (induced abortions, maternal and infant morbidity and mortality)
- Psychological (depression, suicidal behavior)
- Social (abandoning newborns, inadequate upbringing)

3. Results – Family Planning

- **Unintended pregnancies and their consequences are largely preventable if**
 - Women are well informed about family planning methods and services
 - Women are well educated in sexual and reproductive health
 - Women have access to contraception and family planning services
- **Availability of family planning methods does not meet current global needs**
 - **214 million** women in developing countries have no access to modern contraception
 - Contraceptive use is deficient in sub-Saharan Africa (global use of **28%** versus 57%)

4. Conclusion

- Human overpopulation represents a grave threat to both humanity and the planet Earth
- The most humane solution lies in support of human rights, girls' and women's education and empowerment, and availability of family planning methods and services
- The solution overlaps with solutions to purely gynecological problems mentioned before
- As such, human overpopulation (and rapid population growth) should become **the greatest challenge for gynecology** of the 21st century
- A **direct, systematic and global involvement of gynecologists** and their organizations will be necessary, with **particular focus on Africa**, where the problems will be most severe

Take-Home Message

- *„All environmental problems become harder – and ultimately impossible – to solve with ever more people.”* – Sir David Attenborough (Population Matters)
- *“Family planning could bring more benefits to more people at less cost, than any other single technology now available to the human race.”* – James P. Grant (UNICEF)
- *“If you educate a man, you educate an individual. However, if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.”* – African proverb

Thank you for your attention