

# Fertility Research at HDSS Sites: Exploiting the Opportunities of Longitudinal Platforms

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# Key Elements of HDSS

- Health
- Demographic:
  - Fertility (Births, Pregnancy Outcomes, Others)
  - Mortality (Deaths, Verbal Autopsies, others)
  - Migration (in-migration, out-migration, change of residence)
  - Others (Many different nested studies)
- Socio-economic
- Others



# Status of Fertility Research at INDEPTH Sites

- Of 13 African sites reviewed, only 3 have published anything related to fertility, RH, FP, Contraception, etc in the last 3 years (2008-2010)
- Of the total 360+ articles published by the 13 sites, only 16 focused on fertility related topics (APHRC 12, Agincourt 2, Africa Center 2).
- Of the 16, only a handful used longitudinal HDSS data
- INDEPTH Fertility Monograph has been in preparation for the last 4-5 years!



# Why So Little Fertility & RH-Related Research at INDEPTH Sites?

- Historical – Many sites started as Clinical Trial Sites
- Research agenda largely biomedical or clinical
- Limited funding opportunities for core demographic research, especially in the past decade
- Limited research projects focused on demographic issues
- Demographers' roles often confined to data management
- Weak technical demographic competence at INDEPTH sites
- Availability of high-quality nationally-representative (DHS) data sets



# Leveraging HDSS Sites' Capabilities to Strengthen Fertility-related Research


- Low hanging fruits:
  - Characterizations of Births at INDEPTH sites
    - Changes in timing of age at first
    - Changes in adolescent childbearing patterns
    - Levels and changes in planning status of births
    - Pregnancy outcomes and planning status
  - Strength of fertility preferences
  - Patterns of contraceptive use
  - Initiation of contraceptive use
  - Access to RH services



# Leveraging HDSS Sites' Capabilities to Strengthen Fertility-related Research

- Leveraging the power of the longitudinal platform:
  - Fertility and poverty transitions
    - Fertility and household poverty dynamics and transitions
  - Fertility and women's health
  - Fertility and child health
  - Adolescent transitions and wellbeing
  - Strength of fertility preferences
  - Access to family planning and RH services





An example from the Nairobi HDSS:  
Number of Children and HH Poverty Transitions



# Fig 1. Transitions in and out of Poverty (2006-2009)

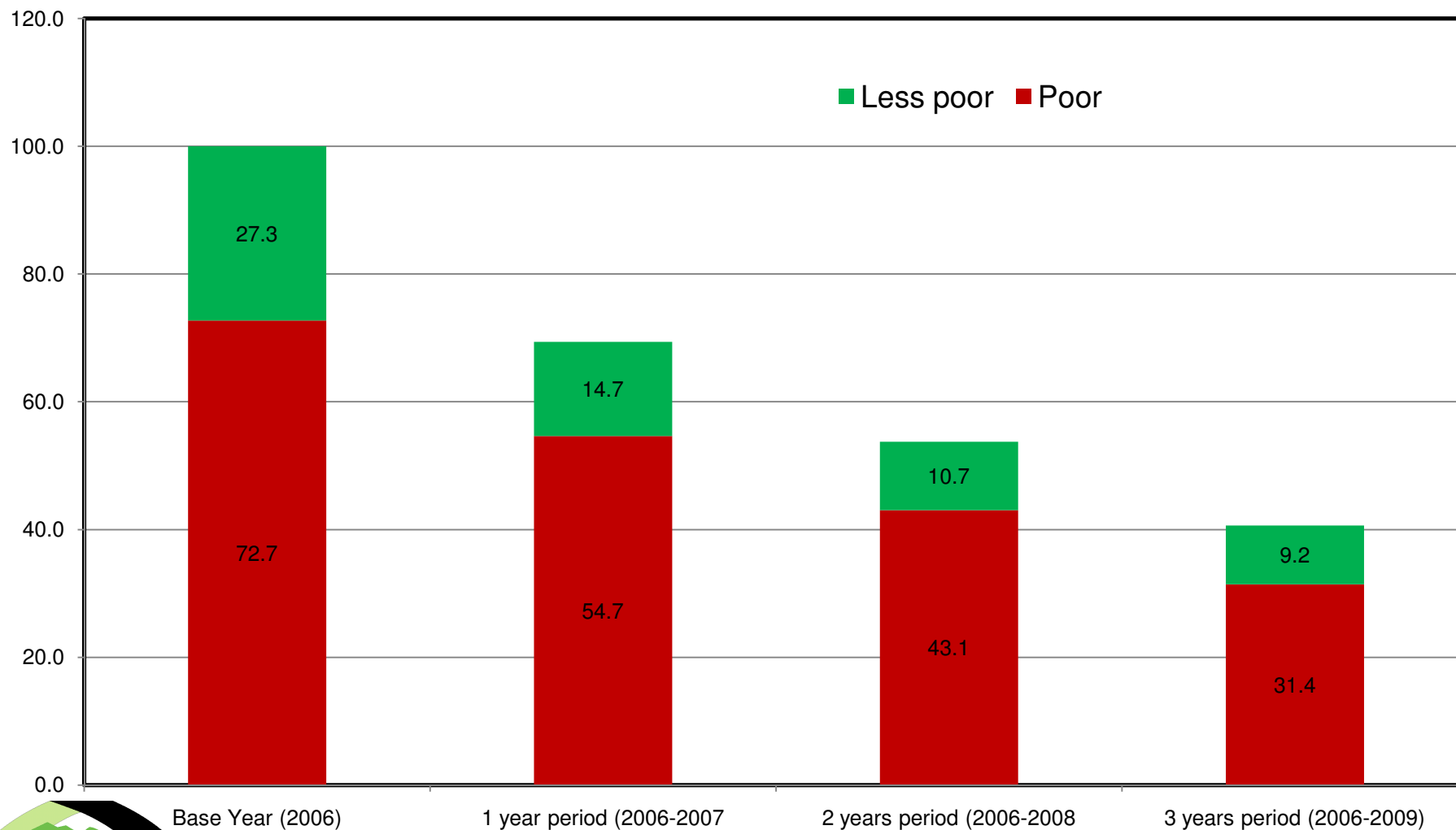




Fig 2. Proportion of HHs that remain poor by number of children under 15 in the household

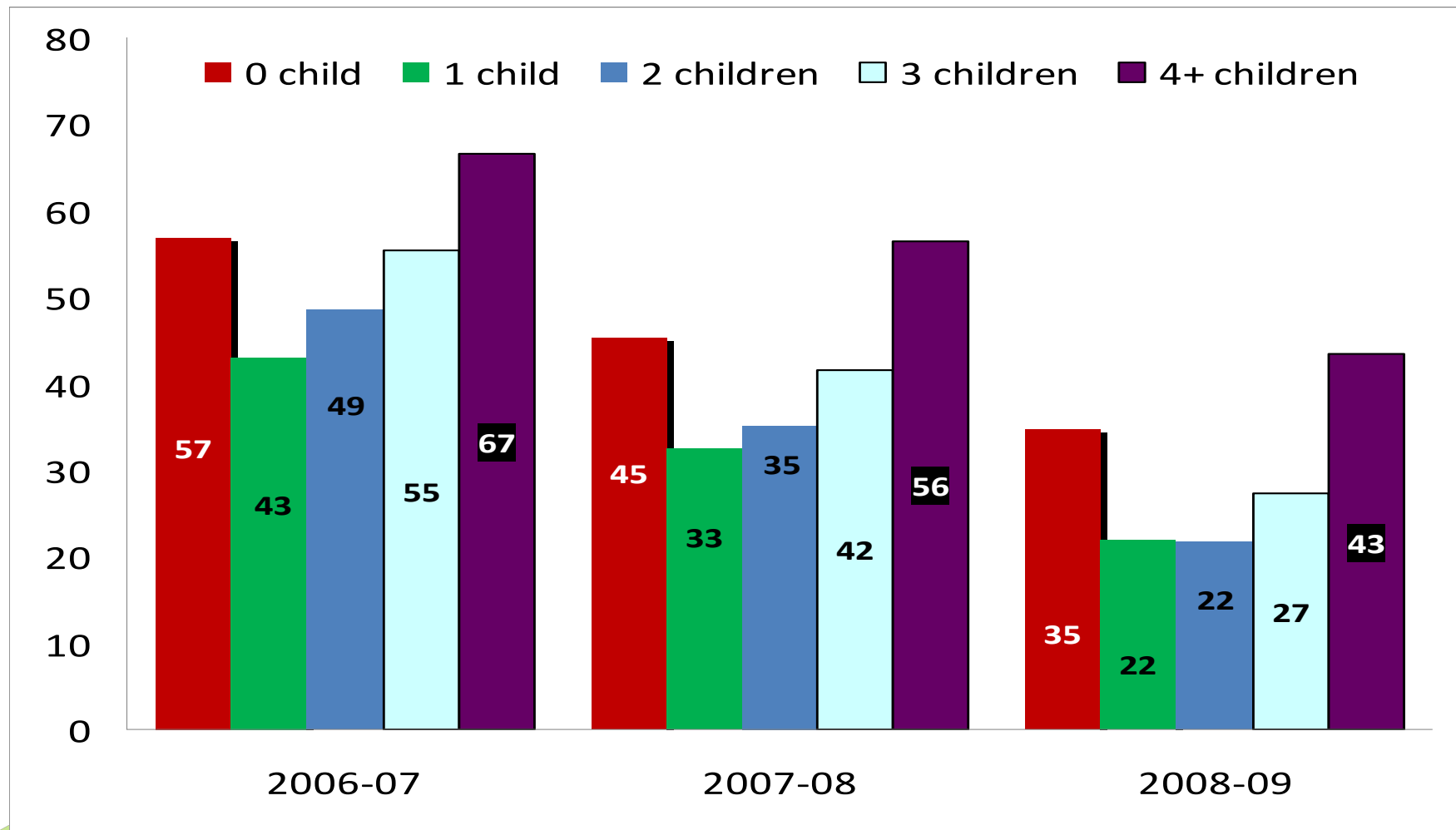
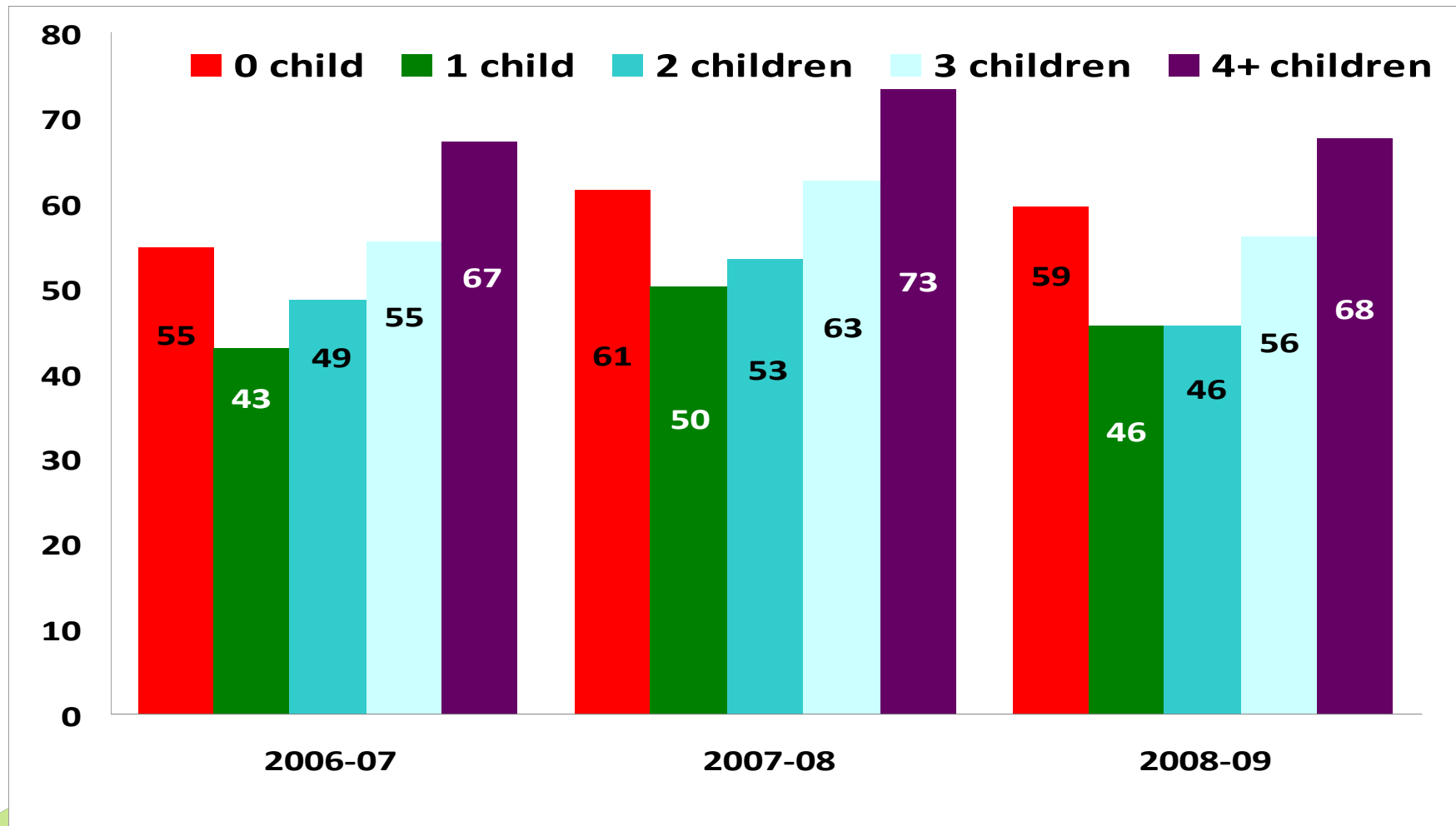


Fig 2. Proportion of HHs that remain poor by number of children under 15 (Households with women 15-49)



# Strengthening Fertility-related Research at HDSS Sites

- Strengthen demographic research capacity
- Strengthen capacity for longitudinal data analysis
- Institute mentorship programs for young researchers
- Develop specific research projects to address fertility, family planning and RH issues at HDSS sites
- Setup fertility, FP and RH working groups
- Finalize fertility monograph and initiate new ones on FP and RH
- Audit existing data and develop standardized instruments for monitoring births and RH issues





Thank you

