

**Tuesday, December 05, 2006**

**Reproductive Health in the Caucasus**

According to a 1999 Reproductive Health Survey, Georgia has the highest abortion rates in the former Soviet Union (possibly in the world, though I haven't checked). In Georgia there are 3.7 abortions per woman (per life).

Other 2001 data suggests that Azerbaijan follows closely and has 3.2 abortions per woman (Turkey: 0,7). In data from 2000, Armenia has 2.6 abortions.

As a comparison, the same figures for Russia are 1,5, for the US 0,7.

In the three South Caucasus countries, rates of modern contraception are less wide-spread than in any other comparable country. One consultant working in the field pointed out that in some countries, there is an incentive for the medical community to perform abortions since they are paid for them -- whereas they don't get paid for promoting methods of contraception.

The data could allow comparisons of the impact of incentives, versus culture, versus historical development. (Although it should be pointed out that such data needs to be screened for bias, survey problems.)

New data for Georgia, from a 2005 Reproductive Health Survey, is to be released later in December 2006.