

Teen Abortions

Teen Abortions

The abortion rate among teens ages 15 to 19 declined by 56 percent between 1990 and 2008. Among both older and younger teens, abortion rates have been declining since the late 1980s.

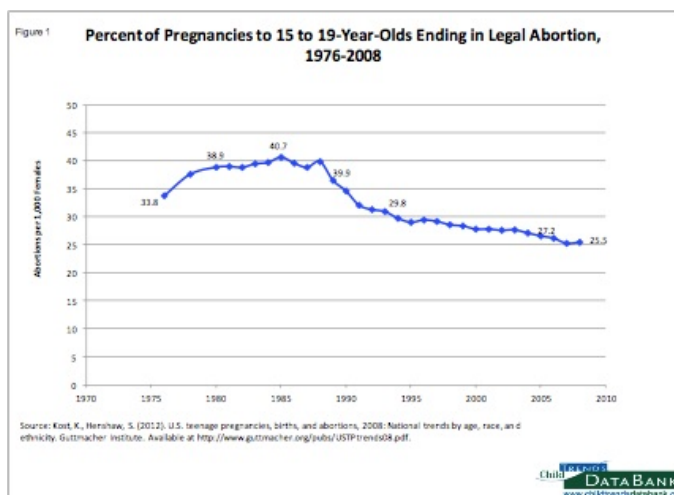
Importance

About a quarter of all teenage pregnancies in the U.S. end in abortion.[1] Four in five (82 percent) teenage pregnancies are unintended, and two out of every five (37 percent) unintended teen pregnancies in 2006 ended in abortion.[2] Teens may choose to have an abortion because they have concerns about how having a baby would derail important goals (for example, completing their education); they worry about the financial responsibilities associated with parenthood; or they feel that they are not mature enough to become a parent.[3] Teen abortion rates are sensitive to a number of factors, including whether pregnancies are intended, personal choice, and policies that expand or restrict access to abortion.

Trends

Government estimates indicate that teen abortion rates increased during the 1970s, stabilized during the 1980s at around 43 per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19, then decreased steadily to about 18 per 1,000 by 2008. Declines have been greatest for older teens, but all age groups have followed similar patterns. (Figure 2)

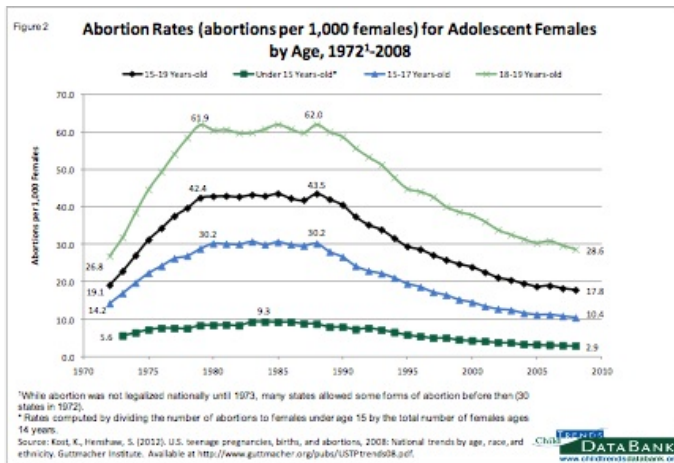
Rates for white, black, and Hispanic females have all fallen substantially since the early 1990s, although declines started a bit later for Hispanic females, in 1993. Abortion rates have decreased by 68 percent among white teens, by 52 percent among Hispanic teens, and by 49 percent among black teens since their peaks. (Figure 3)



Much of the decrease in the teen abortion rate is related to a decline in the rate of teen pregnancy (which includes abortions, as well as births and fetal deaths). However, the proportion of teen pregnancies that end in abortion peaked in 1985, at 41 percent, and has been decreasing since then. In 2008, 26 percent of teen

pregnancies ended in abortion. (Figure 1) [4]

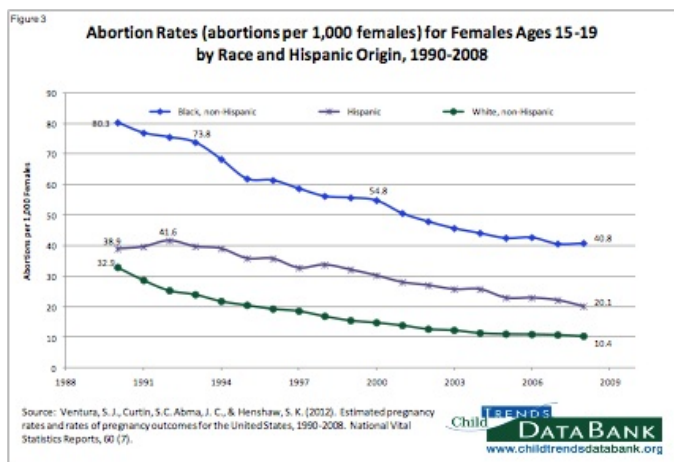
Differences by Age



Abortion rates are lower for younger teens than for older teens. In 2008, the rate for teens under age 15[5] was 0.6 per 1,000, compared with 10.4 per 1,000 for teens ages 15 to 17, and 28.6 per 1,000 among teens ages 18 to 19. (Figure 1) Although the abortion rate is higher among older teens, the proportion of pregnancies

that end in abortion is twice as high among those younger than 15 as it is among their older peers.[6]

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin[7]



Abortion rates are much higher for black teens than for white and Hispanic teens. In 2008, there were 40.8 abortions per 1,000 black females ages 15-19, compared with 10.4 per 1,000 white adolescent females, and 20.1 per 1,000 Hispanic adolescent females. However, abortion rates among black adolescents

have fallen more than have rates for the other groups, so the gap has narrowed over time. (Figure 2)

State and Local Estimates

State estimates are available from the following:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011, November 25). Abortion Surveillance -- United States, 2008. Available at:

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss6015a1.htm?s_cid=ss6015a1_w#Tab3

(See Tables 3 and 5)

Guttmacher Institute. (2010). U.S. teenage pregnancies, births and abortions: National and state trends and trends by race and ethnicity. Available at:

<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPtrends.pdf> .

International Estimates

• International estimates for select countries are available from the following sources:
Singh, S., & Darroch, J. E. (2000). Adolescent pregnancy and childbearing: Levels and trends in developed countries [Electronic Version]. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 32, 14-23. Retrieved September 3, 2009 from <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3201400.pdf>

And for regions from: <http://www.guttmacher.org/media/presskits/abortion-WW/index.html>

• International estimates also are available from UNICEF's research center at the following website:

UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. (2009). Publications. Retrieved September 3, 2009, from <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/publications/index.html>

National Goals

Healthy People 2020 includes several national goals related to teen abortion, including reductions in pregnancy, increases in rates of abstinence, and, among sexually active teens, increases in condom and hormonal birth control use.

More information is available at:

<http://healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/objectiveslist.aspx?topicid=13>

What Works to Make Progress on This Indicator

• See: Ball, V, and Moore, K. A. What works for adolescent reproductive health: Lessons from experimental evaluations of programs and interventions. http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Child_Trends-2008_05_20_FS_WhatWorksRepro.pdf.

• Also, see the U.S. Office of Adolescent Health's list of interventions meeting its criteria for effectiveness in pregnancy prevention: <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/tpp/tpp-database.html>

Related Indicators

• Teen Pregnancy: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=teen-pregnancy>

• Teen Births: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=teen-births>

• Fertility and Birth Rates: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=fertility-and-birth-rates>

• Birth Control Pill Use: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=birth-control-pill-use>

• Condom Use: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=condom-use>

• Sexually Active Teens: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=sexually-active-teens/a>>

• Sexually Experienced Teens: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=sexually-experienced-teens>

• "Statutory Rape" (Sex between Young Teens and Older Individuals):

<http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=statutory-rape-sex-between-young-teens-and-older-individuals>

Definition

Abortion rates are calculated by dividing the number of reported abortions by the female population (in thousands). For example, among adolescent females ages 15 to 19, the rate is calculated by dividing the number of abortions to females ages 15 to 19 by the number of females ages 15 to 19 in the population (in thousands). For adolescent females under age 15, the rate is calculated by dividing the number of abortions by the total population of females ages 10-14. Data on abortions are collected from surveys administered to abortion providers.

Data Sources

•Data for 1990-2008: Ventura, S. J., Curtin, S.C. Abma, J. C., & Henshaw, S. K. (2012). Estimated pregnancy rates and rates of pregnancy outcomes for the United States, 1990-2008. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 60* (7).

•All other data: Kost, K., Henshaw, S. (2012). *U.S. teenage pregnancies, births, and abortions, 2008: National trends by age, race, and ethnicity*. Guttmacher Institute. Available at <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPtrends08.pdf>.

Raw Data Source

Guttmacher Abortion Provider Surveys from the Guttmacher Institute

<http://www.guttmacher.org/about/index.html>

Appendix 1: Abortion Rates (abortions per 1,000 females) for Adolescents by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin, Selected Years, 1976-2008

	1976	1980	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
15-19 Years-old	34.3	42.8	43.5	40.5	29.4	28.6	27.1	25.8	24.7	23.9	22.5	21.1	20.4	19.5	18.7	18.9	18.2	17.8
Race/Ethnicity																		
White, non-Hispanic	-	-	-	32.9	20.5	19.3	18.6	16.9	15.5	14.8	13.9	12.7	12.3	11.4	11.1	11.0	10.8	10.4
Black, non-Hispanic	-	-	-	80.3	61.9	61.4	58.7	56.2	55.7	54.8	50.6	47.9	45.7	44.1	42.5	42.7	40.6	40.8
Hispanic ¹	-	-	-	38.9	35.8	35.7	32.7	33.7	32.1	30.2	28.0	27.0	25.7	25.7	22.9	22.9	22.1	20.1
Under 15 Years-old ²	-	-	-	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6
Race/Ethnicity																		
White, non-Hispanic	-	-	-	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Black, non-Hispanic	-	-	-	5.4	3.9	3.8	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.0

Hispanic ¹	-	-	-	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6
15-17 Years-old	24.2	30.2	30.6	26.6	19.5	18.6	17.2	16.4	15.2	14.5	13.4	12.7	12.4	11.6	11.2	11.2	10.8	10.4
Race/Ethnicity																		
White, non-Hispanic	-	-	-	21.1	13.4	12.6	11.8	10.7	9.4	8.5	8.0	7.3	7.2	6.3	6.1	6.2	6.0	5.7
Black, non-Hispanic	-	-	-	57.7	44.6	42.4	39.5	38.0	36.7	37.3	33.3	32.2	31.2	29.6	28.3	28.3	26.8	26.7
Hispanic ¹	-	-	-	24.3	23.5	22.9	20.3	21.5	20.2	18.4	16.6	16.0	15.1	15.1	13.6	13.4	13.0	11.7
18-19 Years-old	49.3	60.5	62.0	58.7	44.8	44.0	42.6	40.0	38.6	37.7	36.0	33.8	32.5	31.3	30.3	30.8	29.6	28.6
Race/Ethnicity																		
White, non-Hispanic	-	-	-	46.8	31.6	29.8	29.1	26.3	24.6	24.1	22.7	21.0	20.1	19.0	18.7	18.4	18.0	17.0
Black, non-Hispanic	-	-	-	117.4	96.0	97.9	95.0	89.0	89.4	86.8	82.7	78.1	74.4	72.6	71.5	72.5	68.8	68.2
Hispanic ¹	-	-	-	59.5	54.0	54.9	51.4	51.6	49.1	47.3	44.4	43.3	41.6	41.7	37.4	38.1	36.7	33.2

¹Includes all persons of Hispanic origin regardless of race.²Rates computed by dividing the number of abortions to females under age 15 years by the total number of females aged 10-14 years.

Sources: Data for 1990-2008: Ventura, S. J., Curtin, S.C. Abma, J. C., & Henshaw, S. K. (2012). Estimated pregnancy rates and rates of pregnancy outcomes for the United States, 1990-2008. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 60* (7). All other data: Kost, K., Henshaw, S. (2012). *U.S. teenage pregnancies, births, and abortions, 2008: National trends by age, race, and ethnicity*. Guttmacher Institute. Available at <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPtrends08.pdf>.

Endnotes

[1]Ventura, S. J., Curtin, S. C., Abma, J. C., & Henshaw, S. K. (2012). Estimated pregnancy rates and rates of pregnancy outcomes for the United States, 1990-2008. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 60* (7). Available at:http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr60/nvsr60_07.pdf.

[2]Finer, L. B., & Zolna, M. R. (2011). Unintended pregnancy in the United States: Incidence and disparities, 2006. *Contraception, 84*(5), 478-485. Available at:<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/j.contraception.2011.07.13.pdf>

[3]Guttmacher Institute. (1999). *Facts in brief: Teen sex and pregnancy* [Electronic Version]. Retrieved September 3, 2009 fromhttp://www.agi-usa.org/pubs/fb_teen_sex.html

[4]Ventura, S. J., Curtin, S.C. Abma, J. C., & Henshaw, S. K. (2012). Estimated pregnancy rates and rates of pregnancy outcomes for the United States, 1990-2008. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 60* (7).

[5]Rates computed by dividing the number of abortions to females under age 15 years by the total number of females aged 10-14 years.

[6]Ventura, S. J., Curtin, S. C., Abma, J. C., & Henshaw, S. K. (2012). Op. cit.

[7]Hispanics may be any race. Estimates for blacks and whites do not include Hispanics of that race.