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ABSTRACT

This publication reports trends in teen childbearing in the Nation, in each state, and in large cities using data from the 2000 National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Rates of teenage childbearing steadily declined during the 1990s, reaching a record low in 2000. Rates declined for both younger and older teens and for blacks, whites, and Hispanics in all states and in the District of Columbia. Declines in teen birth rates are not due to an increase in abortions but rather resulted from a lower proportion of teens having sex and a greater use of contraception. NCHS data showed that the teen marital birth rate declined by 26% between 1990 and 1999. International Teen Birth Rate data point to the fact that the United States has the highest teen pregnancy rates among developed countries with pregnancy information available. Tables 1, 2, and 3 list statistics for each state for number of births; age of mother; births to whites, blacks, and Hispanics; and existence of coordinated pregnancy prevention policy in public schools. (JDM)

Facts at a Glance.

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AT A GLANCE

August 2001

TEEN BIRTH RATE. Preliminary data for 2000 from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) show that the teen birth rate has declined steadily since 1991. The 2000 rate of 48.7 births per 1,000 females 15-19 is a record low and is 22 percent lower than the 1991 rate of 62.1. However, because the decline in the teen birth rate in the 1990s was preceded by an increase between 1986 and 1991, the 2000 rate is only 3% lower than the 1986 rate of 50.2. Declines have been seen in all adolescent age groups in the 1990s. The rate of 27.5 births per 1,000 females 15-17 in 2000 is also a record low.

Teen Birth Rate (Births per 1,000 Females Aged 15-19, 15-17, and 18-19)

Ages:	1960	1970	1980	1986	1990	1991	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
15-19	89.1	68.3	53.0	50.2	59.9	62.1	56.8	54.4	52.3	51.1	49.6	48.7
15-17	43.9	38.8	32.5	30.5	37.5	38.7	36.0	33.8	32.1	30.4	28.7	27.5
18-19	166.7	114.7	82.1	79.6	88.6	94.4	89.1	86.0	83.6	82.0	80.3	79.5

NUMBER OF BIRTHS TO TEENS. In 2000, there were 479,067 births to teens in the United States according to preliminary data from NCHS. This represents a 10 percent decline in the *number* of teen births since 1991, compared with a 22 percent decline in the *rate* since 1991. The smaller decline in the number compared with the rate is due to an increase in the number of teen females in the 1990s.

Number of Births to Females Under Age 20

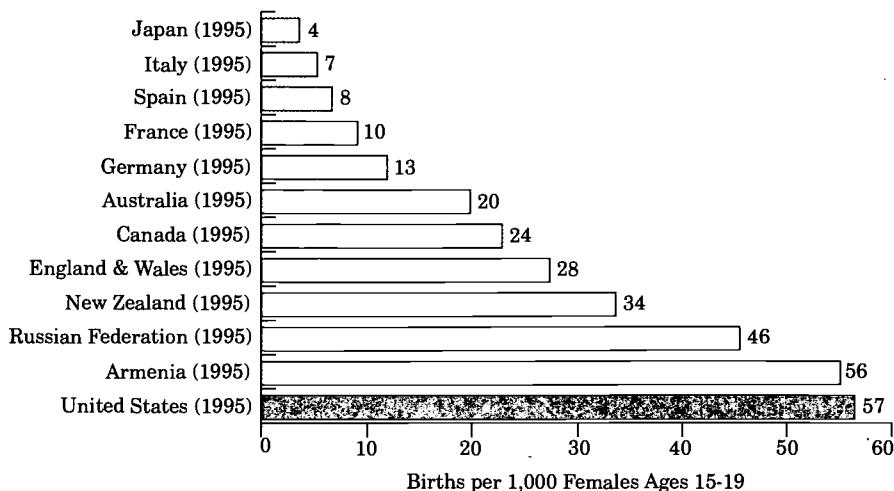
Ages:	1960	1970	1980	1986	1990	1991	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Under 15	6,780	11,752	10,169	10,176	11,657	12,014	12,242	11,148	10,121	9,462	9,054	8,561
15-17	182,408	223,590	198,222	168,572	183,327	188,226	192,508	185,721	180,154	173,231	163,588	157,661
18-19	404,558	421,118	353,939	293,333	338,499	331,351	307,365	305,856	303,066	311,664	312,462	312,845
Under 20	593,746	656,460	562,330	472,081	533,591	531,591	512,115	502,725	493,341	494,357	485,104	479,067

BIRTH RATES BY MARITAL STATUS. NCHS data show that the teen marital birth rate declined 26 percent between 1990 and 1999, from 420 to 311 births per 1,000 married teens. The teen nonmarital birth rate peaked in 1994 and then declined 13 percent by 1999, to 40 births per 1,000 unmarried teens aged 15-19. Although the majority of births to teens occur outside of marriage (79 percent in 1999), women ages 20-24 have the highest nonmarital birth rate. This rate was 73 nonmarital births per 1,000 unmarried women aged 20-24 in 1999, a 12 percent increase since 1990.

Marital and Non-marital Birth Rate (Births per 1,000 Females)

Marital Status and Age:	1960	1970	1980	1986	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
Marital, ages 15-19		531	444	350	352	420	410	398	388	351	362	344	323	322	311
Non-marital, ages 15-19		15	22	28	32	43	45	45	45	46	44	43	42	42	40
Non-marital, ages 20-24		40	38	41	49	65	68	69	69	72	70	71	71	72	73
Non-marital, ages 15-44		22	26	29	34	44	45	45	45	47	45	45	44	44	44

Teen Birth Rates for Selected Developed Countries



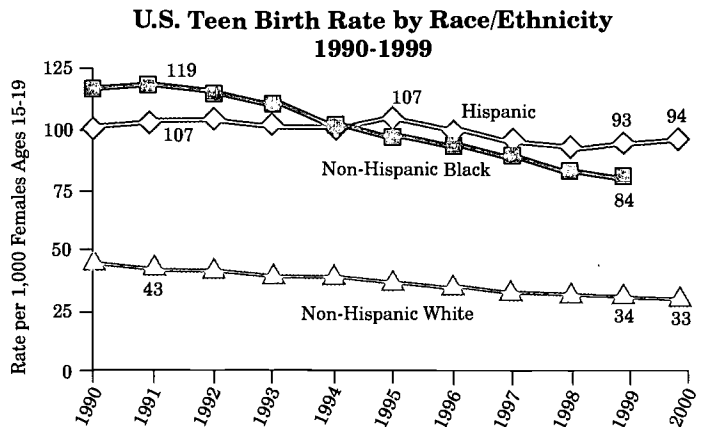
INTERNATIONAL TEEN BIRTH RATES.

Despite declines in the 1990s, the U.S. continues to have a teen birth rate that is among the highest of all developed countries, according to data compiled by the Alan Guttmacher Institute. Throughout the mid-1990s, the U.S. had one of the highest teen birth rates among nations classified by the U.N. as developed for which age-specific data are available. Other countries with teen birth rates above 50 include Armenia (shown in graph), Moldova, Georgia, and the Ukraine. The U.S. also had one of the highest teen pregnancy rates among developed countries with pregnancy information available.

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TEEN BIRTH RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY.

Compared with the early 1990s, teen birth rates have declined in each major race/ethnicity group. The gap in the teen birth rate between non-Hispanic black and non-Hispanic white teens has narrowed, although large racial and ethnic differences remain. The birth rate for non-Hispanic black teens declined 30 percent between 1991 and 1999, and the rate among non-Hispanic white teens declined by 24 percent between 1991 and 2000 according to data from NCHS. Although the birth rate for Hispanic adolescent females was stable between 1991 and 1995 and increased slightly in 2000, the rate declined 12 percent between 1995 and 2000, from 107 to 94. (Comparable data for non-Hispanic black teens are not yet available for 2000.)

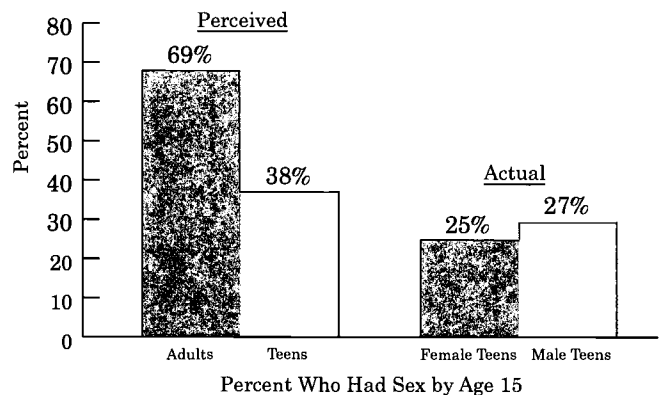


SMOKING AMONG TEENS. Smoking during pregnancy is associated with a higher likelihood of miscarriage and low birthweight among infants. Nevertheless, data from NCHS show that smoking among pregnant teenagers has been rising since the mid-1990s, reflecting increased levels of smoking among all teens in the U.S. In contrast, smoking during pregnancy declined in the 1990s among adult women.

TEEN SEXUAL EXPERIENCE: PERCEPTION VS. REALITY.

The perception that 'everybody is doing it' is widespread. In two Kaiser Family Foundation surveys, both adults and teens overestimated the percent of teens who were sexually experienced. Adults estimated that 69 percent of teens have had sex by age 15, and teens estimated 38 percent. However, National Survey of Family Growth and National Survey of Adolescent Males data show that 25 to 27 percent of teens are actually sexually experienced by that age. Moreover, not all sexually experienced teens are currently sexually active. While 50 percent of students in grades 9-12 reported ever having had sex (Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1999), 36 percent of students had sexual intercourse in the past 3 months.

Perceived vs. Real Age at First Sex Among Parents and Teens in the 1990s



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs) REPORTED TO CDC. Adolescents and young adults are at a high risk of contracting STIs, which are associated with other health risks, including sterility. Compared to other developed countries, the U.S. has much higher rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea. In 1999, among all women, females ages 15-19 had the highest rates of chlamydia (2484) and gonorrhea (738) per 100,000 females. Young adult males (ages 20 to 24) had the highest rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea of all males. Higher rates of chlamydia infection in the 1990s are due, in part, to expanded screening and more sensitive testing. Gonorrhea among male and female adolescents decreased between 1995 and 1999.

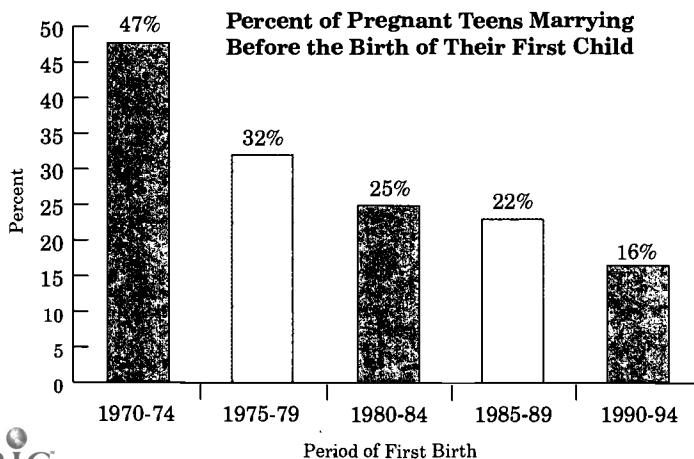
Rates of Sexually Transmitted Infections (per 100,000 population), 1999

Chlamydia Rates

Ages:	Total	Male	Female
10-14	76	9	147
15-19	1383	344	2484
20-24	1329	504	2187

Gonorrhea Rates

Total	Male	Female
31	8	55
534	341	738
615	586	645



MARRIAGE PROBABILITY AMONG UNMARRIED TEENS WHO BECOME PREGNANT.

One factor behind the decline in the marital teen birth rate is the reduced likelihood that teens with a premarital pregnancy will marry before they give birth. Data from Current Population Surveys show that, in the early 1990s, only 16 percent of teens who were premaritally pregnant married before the birth of their first child. This percentage is one third that of the percentage in the early 1970s (47 percent).

TABLE 1: BIRTHS TO MOTHERS UNDER AGE 20 BY AGE AND RACE/ETHNICITY, PERCENT OF BIRTHS TO UNMARRIED MOTHERS UNDER AGE 20, PERCENT OF SEXUALLY ACTIVE TEENS, AND PERCENT OF BIRTHS TO MOTHERS 15-19 THAT ARE REPEAT BIRTHS (SECOND OR HIGHER ORDER BIRTHS), 1999

STATE	Number of Births to Mothers Aged				Number of Births to Mothers Under Age 20			Of All Births to Mothers Under Age 20, Percent Nonmarital	Percent of Teens Who Are Currently Sexually Active*	Percent of Teen Births That Are Repeat Births
	Under 15	15-17	18-19	Total Under 20	White	Black	Hispanic			
ALABAMA	221	3459	6391	10071	5111	4630	270	71%	NA	23%
ALASKA	17	396	727	1140	522	73	66	79%	27%	17%
ARIZONA	236	4243	7546	12025	3856	572	6437	81%	NA	23%
ARKANSAS	109	2098	4336	6543	4019	2117	328	71%	40%	23%
CALIFORNIA	1038	20230	36405	57673	11282	5518	37442	77%	NA	21%
COLORADO	106	2579	4672	7357	3306	508	3333	72%	NA	20%
CONNECTICUT	50	1191	2195	3436	1174	789	1325	89%	NWT	19%
DELAWARE	33	496	888	1417	639	618	143	90%	40%	21%
D.C.	37	438	638	1113	14	975	105	97%	48%	24%
FLORIDA	544	8770	16142	25456	10785	9140	5255	82%	NWT	22%
GEORGIA	418	6236	11791	18445	8051	8539	1608	78%	NA	25%
HAWAII	15	578	1181	1774	145	35	417	83%	29%	17%
IDAHO	30	793	1603	2426	1850	12	469	63%	NA	17%
ILLINOIS	421	7408	14009	21838	7585	8368	5678	86%	NWT	24%
INDIANA	165	3539	7650	11354	8285	2229	721	83%	NA	22%
IOWA	44	1199	2749	3992	3245	273	332	82%	NWT	18%
KANSAS	51	1499	3421	4971	3302	712	798	76%	NA	22%
KENTUCKY	118	2524	5521	8163	6844	1117	151	68%	NWT	21%
LOUISIANA	270	4023	7515	11808	4679	6756	166	85%	NWT	24%
MAINE	10	373	940	1323	1161	15	21	85%	NWT	15%
MARYLAND	165	2608	4630	7403	2652	4151	464	90%	NA	20%
MASSACHUSETTS	73	1861	3663	5597	2751	841	1731	91%	32%	17%
MICHIGAN	270	4755	9792	14817	7534	4769	1145	85%	31%	21%
MINNESOTA	89	1805	3698	5592	3374	763	600	86%	NA	18%
MISSISSIPPI	208	2961	5239	8408	3131	5141	64	81%	45%	25%
MISSOURI	143	3241	6765	10149	7069	2593	363	80%	42%	21%
MONTANA	11	395	854	1260	884	4	54	79%	29%	17%
NEBRASKA	35	791	1679	2505	1597	336	383	82%	NWT	19%
NEVADA	73	1336	2441	3850	1629	468	1504	76%	37%	22%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	6	271	726	1003	885	8	50	87%	NWT	12%
NEW JERSEY	172	2786	5496	8454	2087	3166	3037	90%	NWT	20%
NEW MEXICO	102	1814	2939	4855	1039	97	3113	82%	NWT	21%
NEW YORK	389	7308	14181	21878	6406	6696	7495	88%	30%	18%
NORTH CAROLINA	352	5280	9769	15401	7283	5874	1644	76%	NA	22%
NORTH DAKOTA	7	198	505	710	495	14	21	85%	NA	16%
OHIO	329	5994	12716	19039	13177	4946	646	85%	34%	21%
OKLAHOMA	135	2579	5271	7985	4928	1056	757	70%	NA	21%
OREGON	86	1795	3697	5578	3845	180	1227	77%	NA	19%
PENNSYLVANIA	279	5010	9594	14883	8553	4357	1663	90%	NA	20%
RHODE ISLAND	16	414	808	1238	545	126	314	90%	NA	22%
SOUTH CAROLINA	208	3062	5405	8675	3920	4385	300	82%	40%	21%
SOUTH DAKOTA	17	355	820	1192	732	13	27	86%	32%	18%
TENNESSEE	247	3860	7863	11970	7663	3814	394	73%	40%	24%
TEXAS	1165	20121	34246	55532	15456	8500	30889	68%	NA	25%
UTAH	43	1342	2911	4296	3100	51	923	61%	NA	19%
VERMONT	8	156	393	557	525	6	3	89%	31%	12%
VIRGINIA	207	3109	6826	10142	4899	4326	769	80%	NA	20%
WASHINGTON	138	2701	5740	8579	5191	505	1853	76%	NA	18%
WEST VIRGINIA	25	904	2140	3069	2850	184	23	69%	40%	19%
WISCONSIN	117	2428	4766	7311	4226	1798	778	84%	31%	21%
WYOMING	6	276	569	851	690	11	103	71%	35%	18%
U.S. TOTAL in 1998	9462	173231	311664	494357	221301	128280	124104	79%	NA	22%
U.S. TOTAL in 1999	9054	163588	312462	485104	214971	122175	127402	79%	36%	22%

* Students (in grades 9-12) report of sexual intercourse during the 3 months preceding the 1999 survey.

NWT = Representative state-wide data not available

NA = Not Available

Source/Notes: Birth data are taken from 1999 Natality Data Set CD Series 21, No. 12, National Center for Health Statistics.

Sexual activity data are from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Surveillance Summaries, June 9, 2000. MMWR 2000; 49 (No. SS-5).

U.S. totals for 1998 are from Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., Mathews, T.J. and Park, M.M. (2000). Births: Final Data for 1998. National Vital Statistics Reports, 48(3).

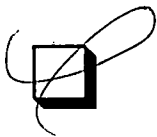


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