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First Marriages in the United States: Data From the 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth

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Abstract

Objectives—This report shows trends and group differences in current marital status, with a focus on first marriages among women and men aged 15–44 years in the United States. Trends and group differences in the timing and duration of first marriages are also discussed. These data are based on the 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). National estimates of probabilities of first marriage by age and probabilities of separation and divorce for women and men's first marriages are presented by a variety of demographic characteristics. Data are compared with similar measures for 1982, 1995, and 2002.

Methods—The analyses presented in this report are based on a nationally representative sample of 12,279 women and 10,403 men aged 15–44 years in the household population of the United States. The overall response rate for the 2006–2010 NSFG was 77%—78% for women and 75% for men.

Results—The percentage of women who were currently cohabiting (living with a man in a sexual relationship) rose from 3.0% in 1982 to 11% in 2006–2010; it was higher in some groups, including Hispanic groups, and the less educated. In 2006–2010, women and men married for the first time at older ages than in previous years. The median age at first marriage was 25.8 for women and 28.3 for men. Premarital cohabitation contributed to the delay in first marriage for both women and men.

Keywords: union formation • divorce • cohabitation

Introduction

The timing and duration of first marriages in the United States changed dramatically during the second half of the twentieth century, continuing into the twenty-first century. People are marrying for the first time at older ages, and many adults cohabit with a partner before ever marrying (1,2). Current estimates of divorce indicate that about half of first marriages end in divorce (2,3). Since 1973, the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) has collected data on factors affecting family formation, growth, and dissolution—including histories of marriage, divorce, and cohabitation; contraception, sterilization, and infertility; pregnancy outcomes; and births. This information is gathered from women and men aged 15–44—the age range in which 99.7% of all births occur (4). The NSFG is jointly planned and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and several other programs of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (see "Acknowledgments").

The NSFG contains a full marriage history for both women and men; however, the focus of the current report is on first marriages. First, this report presents the current marital status of women and men in 2006–2010 by selected demographic characteristics, with comparisons to prior NSFG surveys in 1982, 1995, and 2002 (2,5,6). Second, this report shows trends and group differences in the timing of first marriage and the outcomes of these marriages in the United States in 2006–2010 and compares these estimates with the same NSFG surveys, noted above. Tables that show the cohabitation experiences of women and men are also presented; however, more detail on cohabitation will be covered in a forthcoming report. Several specific

questions are addressed for women and men (aged 15–44 except where noted):

- What are the current marital and cohabiting statuses of women and men (Tables 1 and 2)?
- How old are women and men aged 18–44 when they marry for the first time (Tables 3 and 4)?
- How long do first marriages last (Tables 5–7)?
- How are prior experiences with cohabitation, marriage, and births associated with how long first marriages last (Tables 5–7)?
- How long are women and men separated from their first marriage before divorce (Table 8)?

Background

Premarital cohabitation and first marriage

Marriage is one of the primary events during the transition to adulthood. Despite high expectations that they will eventually marry, many young adults in the United States are postponing first marriage (7). While deferring marriage, many young adults may choose to cohabit with a partner. Cohabitation has increasingly become the first coresidential union formed among young adults in the United States (8). Among women, 68% of unions formed in 1997–2001 began as a cohabitation rather than as a marriage (8). If entry into any type of union, marriage or cohabitation, is taken into account, then the timing of a first union occurs at roughly the same point in the life course as marriage did in the past (9). Given the place of cohabitation in contemporary union formation, descriptions of marital behavior, particularly those concerning trends over time, are more complete when cohabitation is also measured. Accordingly, this report contains data on premarital cohabitation to measure its association with the stability of first marriage.

Divorce from first marriage

Demographers use a variety of approaches to describe trends and group differences in marital dissolution. One such measure, the crude divorce rate, is defined as the number of divorces per 1,000 people in the population. In 2009, the national rate of divorce was 9.7 per 1,000 for women aged 15 and over and 9.2 per 1,000 for men aged 15 and over (10). Although useful for describing changes in divorce over time, the crude divorce rate does not provide information on the percentage of first marriages that end in divorce. Another method used to describe the rate of divorce is to calculate how many first marriages end within a given year, or set of adjacent years. In the 1995 NSFG, this type of measure was used to show that 50% of all women's first marriages end in separation or divorce after 20 years (6). Similarly, the 2002 NSFG showed about one-third of men's first marriages ended in divorce after 10 years (2). There are many factors that influence the likelihood of divorce from a first marriage, including educational attainment, employment status, and premarital cohabitation (11).

The link between premarital cohabitation and divorce from first marriage

One of the factors related to the likelihood of divorce from a first marriage is whether or not a person lives with a partner before marrying. It has been well documented that women and men who cohabit with their future spouse before first marriage are more likely to divorce than those who do not cohabit with their spouse before first marriage (12–14). However, recent research suggests that the association between premarital cohabitation and marital instability for first marriages may have weakened over time because it is less apparent for more recent birth cohorts (15,16). There are several explanations posited for these findings. First, cohabitation has been practiced among individuals at both low and high risk of marital disruption, thus may be less predictive of a marital dissolution than in the past (17). Second, the decision to marry from cohabitation is conditioned by the attitudes and expectations of cohabitors toward marriage, which vary by sex, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (18–20).

The inclusion of cohabitation in this report is intended to show the relationship between premarital cohabitation and the stability of first marriages. However, the multivariate models needed to disentangle the complex relationship between premarital cohabitation and the stability of first marriages are beyond the scope of this report.

Methods

Data source

The NSFG has been conducted seven times by CDC's NCHS: in 1973 and 1976 with samples of married and formerly married women; in 1982, 1988, and 1995 with samples of women of all marital status categories; and in 2002 and 2006–2010 with national samples of both women and men aged 15–44.

The 2006–2010 NSFG was based on 22,682 face-to-face interviews—12,279 with women and 10,403 with men, aged 15–44 years in the household population of the United States. The sample design of the NSFG is based on independent samples of women and men, not on couples. Men and women living on military bases or in institutions were not included in the survey. The sample did include persons temporarily living away from the household in a college dormitory, sorority, or fraternity (21). The interviews were administered in person by trained female interviewers primarily in the respondents' homes. The 2006–2010 sample is a nationally representative multistage area probability sample drawn from 110 areas, or "Primary Sampling Units" (PSUs) across the country. To protect the respondent's privacy, only one person was interviewed in each selected household. In 2006–2010, persons aged 15–19 and black and Hispanic adults were sampled at higher rates than

others. The sample is designed to produce national, not state, estimates.

All respondents were given written and oral information about the survey and were informed that participation was voluntary. The response rate for the 2006–2010 NSFG was 77% overall and 78% for women and 75% for men. The interviews lasted an average of about 80 minutes for women and 60 minutes for men. More detailed information about the methods and procedures of NSFG and its sample design, weighting, imputation, and variance estimation has been published (21,22).

Demographic variables used in this report

Demographic characteristics of respondents in this report include: age, education, whether the respondent lived with both parents at age 14, the religion in which the respondent was raised, parity (number of children the woman has had), number of biological children (men), timing of first birth (before or after first marriage), race and Hispanic origin, and for Hispanics, whether they were born in the United States or a foreign country.

Using marital and cohabitation histories, this report also shows statistics on the transition to first marriage and how long these marriages last. Statistics are shown on first marriages and premarital cohabitation involving opposite-sex partners because the NSFG does not have a large enough sample to study same-sex relationships. The variables included in this report from these marital and cohabitation histories are:

- Dates when the first marriage began, and if applicable, dates of separation or divorce.
- Premarital cohabitation experiences: whether the respondent had ever cohabited before first marriage, whether they had cohabited with their first spouse, and whether they were engaged to their first spouse when they began living together.
- First spouse characteristics: Whether they had previously married, whether they had children from prior relationships.

In this report, cohabitation histories are included in some tables to provide a more complete picture of the union status experiences of U.S. women and men. However, this report focuses on cohabitation principally as a factor affecting first marriages. A forthcoming report using the 2006–2010 NSFG data will focus specifically on cohabitation as a dependent variable, or outcome of interest.

The definition of Hispanic origin and race used in this report takes into account the reporting of more than one race, in accordance with the 1997 guidelines from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (23). For most tables in this report, separate estimates are presented for single race and for non-Hispanic respondents who are black, white, or Asian. Hispanic respondents, regardless of their racial identification, are shown separately, and where sample sizes permit, are categorized by whether they were born in the United States. For convenience in writing, the term ''black'' or ''non-Hispanic black'' will be used instead of the full phrase, ''non-Hispanic black or African American, single race.'' Similarly, the term ''white'' or ''non-Hispanic white'' will be used instead of the full phrase ''non-Hispanic white, single race.'' Further technical details on the demographic variables in this report can be found in ''Technical Notes'' and in earlier NSFG reports (2,5,6).

Statistical analysis

Life table methodology—One of the principal goals of the NSFG is to collect histories of the cohabitation, marriage, and divorce experiences of women and men aged 15–44. The probabilities on first marriages shown in this report were estimated using life table or survival techniques. There have been numerous studies using life table techniques to study marriage and divorce, many using the NSFG (2,5,6,15,24–26). Because the NSFG is limited to women and men aged 15–44 years, the lifetime marriage and cohabitation histories are incomplete. For respondents whose union has not yet ended as of the date of interview, the end date of the union is unknown, and it is not known how long the union will last. The duration of such unions with unknown (or unmeasured) ending dates is referred to in statistical literature as ''censored.''

Life table analysis can handle censored cases by keeping such cases in the analysis as long as they are at risk of experiencing the event and then dropping them out once the risk is unknown (27). For example, when calculating the proportion of first marriages that disrupt in each duration interval, a marriage that has existed for 24 months and remains intact at interview would remain in the denominator for each duration interval until 24 months of duration is reached; after that, the case would no longer be used in the calculations. A detailed explanation of life table methodology can be found in the 1995 and 2002 NSFG reports on cohabitation, marriage, and divorce (2,5,6). In the description of the results, probabilities are presented as percentages, such as the percentage of first marriages lasting 20 years.

The NSFG is primarily a survey about childbearing and reproductive health, so it is limited to women and men aged 15–44. The data in this report show the probability that a first marriage will last up to 20 years, not the probability that a first marriage will last a lifetime. Because the NSFG samples of women and men are limited to age 44, the women and men whose first marriage survived to 20 years had to marry for the first time by age 24. Women and men who had longer marriages were younger when they first married. In turn, estimates of first marriage toward longer durations are biased toward the experiences of women and men who married at younger ages. Readers of this report should keep this limitation in mind when interpreting estimates of first marriage at longer durations.

The life table analyses in this report estimate the probabilities for women and men that:

Table A. Sample sizes for first marriages among women aged 15–44 years, by race and ethnicity: United States, 2006–2010

Sample	Total	Hispanic, U.S. born	Hispanic, foreign born	Non-Hispanic white	Non-Hispanic black	Non-Hispanic other
All women	12,279	1,446	1,277	6,156	2,412	988
Marriages						
First marriages	5,534	501	778	3,145	699	411
First marriages that ended in	2,047	196	248	1,140	332	131
Separation	405	49	84	132	114	26
Divorce	1,574	144	151	980	201	98
Death	68	3	13	28	17	7

NOTE: The numbers of non-Hispanic Asian women was sufficient to produce reliable estimates separately for the analysis of the interval until first marriage and the analysis of first marriage disruption. There were N=448 non-Hispanic Asian women and N=217 first marriages to Asian women in the 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG).

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, NSFG, 2006–2010.

Table B. Sample sizes for first marriages among men aged 15–44 years, by race and ethnicity: United States, 2006–2010

Sample	Total[1]	Hispanic, U.S. born	Hispanic, foreign born	Non-Hispanic white	Non-Hispanic black	Non-Hispanic other
All men	10,403	1,268	1,138	5,275	1,752	967
Marriages						
First marriages	3,734	317	542	2,045	491	339
First marriages that ended in	1,236	112	121	714	199	90
Separation	214	20	37	93	50	14
Divorce	1,004	90	81	616	144	73
Death	18	2	3	5	5	3

[1] There were N=3 cases who were Hispanic and were missing on nativity status, not show separately.

NOTE: The numbers of non-Hispanic Asian men was sufficient to produce reliable estimates separately for the analysis of the interval until first marriage, but not for the analysis of first marriage disruption. There were N=447 non-Hispanic Asian men and N=156 first marriages to Asian men in the 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG).

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, NSFG, 2006–2010.

- A first marriage will occur, by age at first marriage (Tables 3 and 4).
- A first marriage remains intact (without separation or divorce) (Tables 5–7).
- A separation from first marriage will result in divorce (Table 8).

Tables A and B present the sample sizes for first marriages among women and men by Hispanic origin and race used in estimating the probability tables in this report. The probability that a first marriage would remain intact was based on a sample of N=5,534 women and N=3,734 men who had ever been married. Sample sizes for the cohabitation statuses of women and men are shown in Table C.

Statistics for this report were produced using SAS software, version 9.2 (http://www.sas.com). Probabilities in this report were calculated using the Kaplan-Meier procedure in the software program SUDAAN 10 (http://www.rti.org/sudaan). The Kaplan-Meier procedure fits the Kaplan-Meier model, or product-limit estimator, to estimate the survival function for a given population (28). This method takes censored data and the NSFG's complex survey design into account. Significant differences between probabilities were tested using the PROC SURVIVAL procedure in SUDAAN. Each table in this report includes standard errors as a measure of the precision of each point estimate.

For frequency tables, the PROC SURVEYFREQ procedure in SAS produced the percentages that took into account the complex sample design of the NSFG. Significance of differences among subgroups was determined by standard two-tailed *t*-tests using percentages and their standard errors. No adjustments were made for multiple comparisons. The difference between any two estimates is mentioned in the text only if it is statistically significant. However, if a comparison is not made, it may or may not be significant. When statistics are described as "similar" or "no significant differences," this indicates that the estimates being compared were not significantly different. A weighted least squares regression method was used to test the significance of trends that involved more than two time points.

In the following description, when the percentage being cited is below 10%, the text will cite the exact percentage to 1 decimal point. To make reading easier and to remind the reader that the results are based on samples and subject to sampling error, percentages above 10% will generally be shown rounded to the nearest whole percent. In this report, percentages are not shown if the sample denominator is less than 100 cases, or the numerator is less than 5 cases. Effective sample sizes of less than 100 cases are not shown for

Table C. Sample sizes for cohabitation among ever-married women and men aged 15–44 years: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Women	Men
First marriages	5,534	3,734
Ever cohabited before first marriage	3,212	2,346
Cohabited premaritally with first spouse	3,076	2,155
Yes, cohabited and engaged	1,678	1,169
Yes, cohabited but not engaged	1,389	970

NOTE: Total includes women and men with inconsistent data on dates of cohabitation and marriage, not shown separately.
SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

life table analyses. The ''effective sample size'' is not an actual measure of sample size, but rather is an estimate of the population size at the midpoint of a particular interval in a life table (5). When a percentage or other statistic is not shown for these reasons, the table contains an asterisk (*) signifying that the ''statistic does not meet standards of reliability or precision.'' The numerators and denominators are much larger for most statistics presented in this report (Tables A–C).

Results

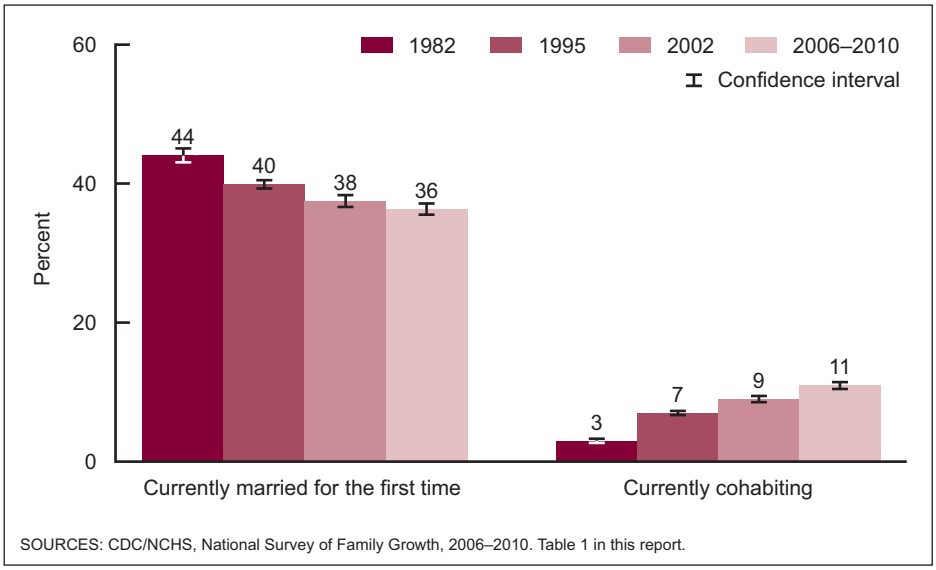
Current marital and cohabiting status

Trends in the current marital statuses of women using the 1982, 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010 NSFG indicate that the percentage of women who were currently in a first marriage decreased over the past several decades, from 44% in 1982 to 36% in 2006–2010 (Table 1 and Figure 1). At the same time, the percentage of women who were currently cohabiting increased steadily from 3.0% in 1982 to 11% in 2006–2010. In addition, the proportion of women aged 15–44 who were never married at the time of interview increased from 34% in 1982 to 38% in 2006–2010.

In 2006–2010, black women had the highest percentage never married (55%) followed by U.S-born Hispanic (49%), Asian (39%), and white women (34%). Asian (49%) and foreign-born Hispanic women (46%) had the highest proportions who were currently married for the first time. Foreign-born Hispanic women also showed the highest percentage cohabiting (16%) compared with 11% white women and 9.3% black women.

The proportion of women who were currently married for the first time increased with greater educational attainment from 37% among those without a high school diploma or General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma (GED) to 58% among those with a bachelor's degree and 63% of those with a master's degree or higher. The proportion of women who were currently cohabiting decreased as educational attainment increased. One in five (20%) women without a high school diploma or GED were currently cohabiting, while roughly 1 in 14 women (6.8%) with a bachelor's degree were currently cohabiting.

Similar trends are shown for men in the 2002 and 2006–2010 NSFG. U.S.-born Hispanic (56%) and black (55%) men had the highest proportion never-married, followed by Asian (49%) and white (44%) men (Table 2). Asian (45%) and foreign-born Hispanic (42%) men had the highest proportion currently in their first marriage of all racial groups. Cohabiting unions were most prevalent for foreign-born Hispanic men (20%), followed by U.S.-born Hispanic (15%), black (13%), and white men (10%). Men with a bachelor's degree were more likely to be currently married for the first time (49%), and less likely to be currently cohabiting (9.6%) than men with less than a high school education (38% currently married for the first time and 27% were currently cohabiting). Men with a bachelor's degree (49%) were also more likely to be currently married for the first time than men with a high school diploma or GED (41%), but there was no difference by current cohabiting status between the two groups (9.6% and 13%, respectively). Sixty-six percent of men with a master's degree or higher were currently married for the first time.

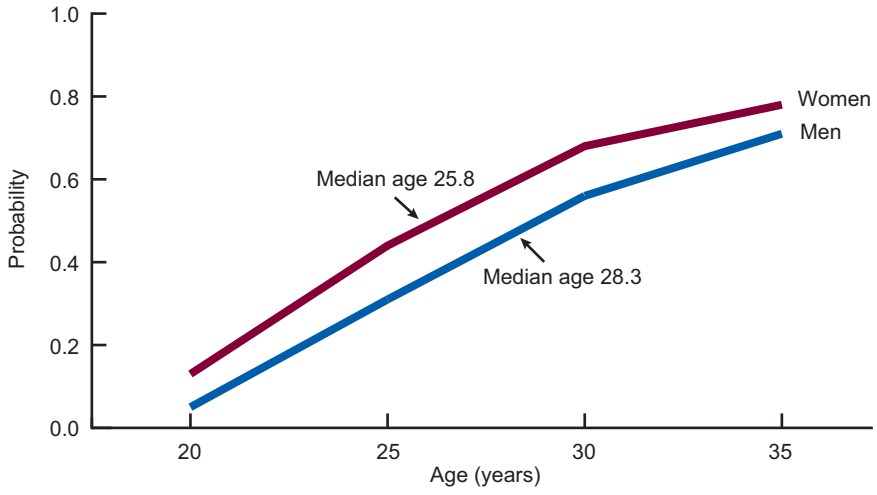


SOURCES: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010. Table 1 in this report.

Figure 1. Current marital and cohabiting status among women 15–44 years of age, United States: 1982, 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010

Age at first marriage

Next, this report presents the median age at first marriage, and the probability of first marriage for women and men by ages 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40 years (Tables 3 and 4). The median age at first marriage was 25.8 for women and 28.3 for men in 2006–2010 (Figure 2). Because relatively few women and men were married before



SOURCES: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010. Tables 3 and 4 in this report.

Figure 2. Probability of first marriage by specified age among women and men 18–44 years of age: United States, 2006–2010

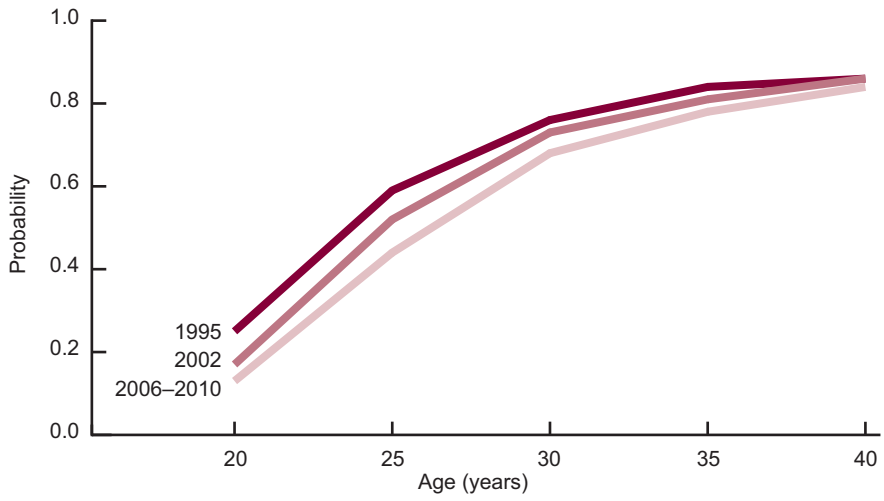
age 18 in 2006–2010 (4% of women and 1% of men), the samples for Tables 3 and 4 are limited to those aged 18 and over.

The first rows of data show trends in the probability of first marriage for women from 1995 to 2006–2010 (Table 3). The probabilities show a postponement of first marriage, but not an abandonment of marriage, by these ages. In 2006–2010, the probability of first marriage by age 25 was 44% for women compared with 59% in 1995, a decrease of 25%. By age 35, the probability of first marriage was 84% in 1995 compared with 78% in 2006–2010, a significant decrease of 7%. By age 40, the difference in the probability of age at first marriage for women was not significant between 1995 (86%) and 2006–2010 (84%). These findings suggest that between 1995 and 2006–2010, women married for the first time at older ages; however, this delay was not apparent by age 40. As shown in Figure 3, the probability of first marriage by age 40 was virtually the same for women in 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010.

The probability of first marriage by age 25 for women varies across subgroups. Looking at Hispanic origin and race, foreign-born Hispanic (56%) and white (48%) women had the highest probabilities of first marriage by age 25, while black (24%) women had the lowest. Foreign-born Hispanic women had a higher probability of marrying for the first time by age 25 (56%) than U.S.-born Hispanic women (43%). Women with a high school diploma had a higher probability of first marriage by age 25 (53%) compared with women who had a bachelor's degree (37%). Women who grew up in "Other religions" had a higher probability of first marriage by age 25 (51%) than women who reported growing up with no religious affiliation (37%). Women with a premarital first birth had a lower probability of first marriage by age 25 (31%) compared with women who had a birth after first marriage (50%). Women who had ever cohabited before their first marriage had a lower probability of marrying by age 25 (38%) than women who did not cohabit before their first marriage (53%).

Compared with age 25, there were some notable differences in the probability of first marriage for women by age 35. Asian (85%), white (84%), and foreign-born Hispanic (80%) women had virtually the same probability of first marriage by age 35, followed by U.S.-born Hispanics (68%) women; however, black women were still the least likely to marry by this age compared with all other race groups (58%). By age 35, women with a bachelor's degree (84%) had a higher probability of marriage than women with a high school diploma (78%). The probability of first marriage by age 35 was not significantly different for women who had or had not ever cohabited (77% and 80%, respectively).

Men marry for the first time at older ages than women; thus, the probability of first marriage for men by age 35 is discussed next (Table 4). Similar to women, the delay in first marriage until older ages was seen by age 35, but not by age 40. Looking at the probability of first marriage by Hispanic origin and race, Asian (80%) and white (74%) men had the highest probabilities of first marriage by age 35,



SOURCES: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010. Table 3 in this report.

Figure 3. Probability of first marriage, by specified age among women 18–44 years of age: United States, 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010

while black (61%) and U.S.-born Hispanic (60%) men had the lowest. The probability of first marriage by age 35 was not significantly different between U.S.-born Hispanic (60%) and foreign-born Hispanic (68%) men. There was also no difference in the probability of first marriage by age 35 between men with a bachelor's degree (73%) and men with a high school diploma (71%). Men who grew up in "Other religions" had a higher probability of first marriage by age 35 (84%) compared with men who reported growing up with no religious affiliation (62%). Men who fathered a premarital birth had a lower probability of first marriage by age 35 (58%) compared with men who did not father a premarital birth (75%). Similar to the trend seen for women, men who had or had not ever cohabited before first marriage had the same probability of first marriage by age 35 (70% and 71%, respectively).

Duration of first marriage

The next two tables present statistics on the duration of first marriages for women and men (Tables 5 and 6). Similar to the 1995 NSFG, the sample sizes of women and men in 2006–2010 were large enough to provide marriage duration estimates up to 20 years (6). These statistics do not describe the probability that a first marriage will last a lifetime. Also, the estimates of first marriage at longer durations represent women and men who married at younger ages. For example, women and men whose marriages lasted at least 20 years were married at age 24 or younger.

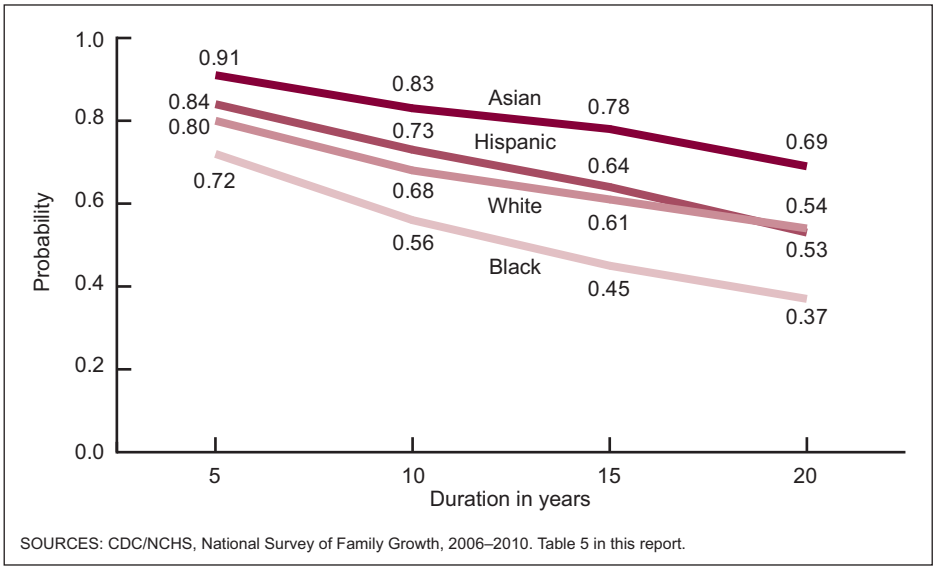
In 2006–2010, the probability of a first marriage lasting at least 10 years was 68% for women and 70% for men. Looking at 20 years, the probability that the first marriages of women and men will survive was 52% for women and 56% for men in 2006–2010. These levels are virtually identical to estimates based on vital statistics from the early 1970s (24). For women, there was no significant change in the probability of a first marriage lasting 20 years between the 1995 NSFG (50%) and the 2006–2010 NSFG (52%) (Table 5). The remainder of first marriages that ended within a 20-year period were dissolved by divorce, separation, or rarely, by death.

Looking at Hispanic origin and race, Asian women (69%) and foreign-born Hispanic men (70%) had the highest probability of first marriages lasting 20 years (Figure 4; Tables 5 and 6). Black women (37%) had the lowest chances of first marriages lasting 20 years, significantly lower than for white women (54%). There was no significant difference in the probability of first marriage lasting 20 years between white (54%) and black (53%) men. Foreign-born Hispanic women and men (56% and 70%, respectively) had higher of probabilities of their marriage lasting 20 years compared with U.S.-born Hispanic women and men (47% and 48%, respectively).

Looking at other background characteristics, women and men who married in the teen years (i.e., before age 20) had a lower probability of a first marriage reaching the 20th anniversary than those who married at age 20 or over. Women and men who lived with both biological parents at age 14 had a higher probability of a first marriage lasting 20 years compared with those who lived in other family living arrangements. The probability of their first marriage lasting at least 20 years was highest among women who reported they were raised in "Other religions" (65%), followed by women who reported being raised Catholic (53%), Protestant (50%), and "None" (43%).

Figure 5 shows the probability of a first marriage remaining intact up to 20 years among women and men aged 22–44 by educational attainment. Higher education increased the probability of survival of first marriage, particularly for women. Women with at least a bachelor's degree had a higher probability of a first marriage lasting 20 years (78%), compared with 49% among women with some college, and 41% among women with a high school diploma. Men with at least a bachelor's degree had a higher probability of their first marriage lasting 20 years (65%), compared with 54% among men with some college, and 47% among men with a high school diploma.

Women who had no births when they married for the first time had a higher probability of their marriage surviving 20 years (56%) compared with women who had one or more births at the time of first marriage (33%). Similarly, men with no biological children at the time of first marriage (59%) had a higher probability of their



SOURCES: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010. Table 5 in this report.

Figure 4. Probability that a first marriage will remain intact (without disruption) for up to 20 years among women 15–44 years of age by Hispanic origin and race: United States, 2006–1010

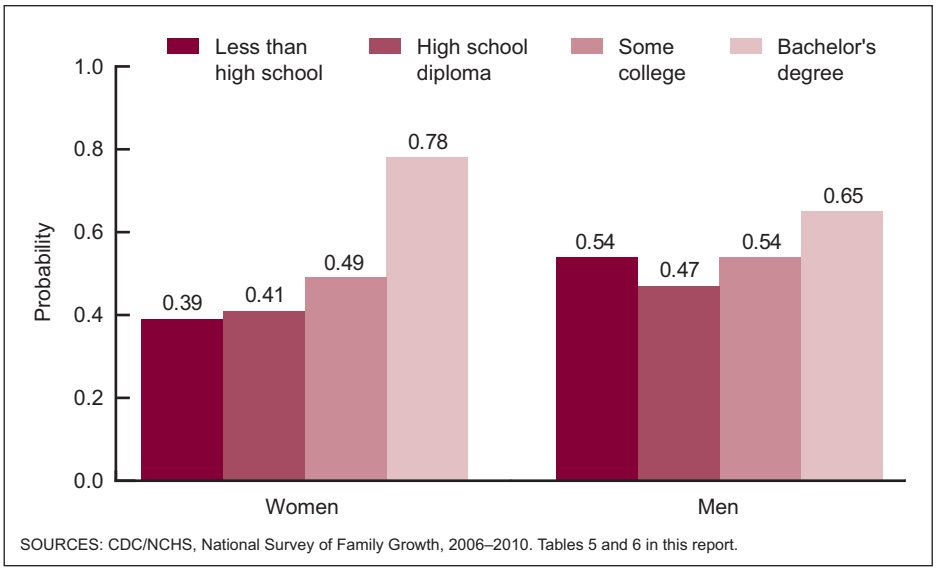


Figure 5. Probability that a first marriage will remain intact (without disruption) for 20 years among women and men 22–44 years of age by education: United States, 2006–2010

first marriage lasting 20 years compared with men who had one or more biological children at the time of first marriage (43%).

The timing of the first birth also influenced the duration of first marriage for women and men. Due to sample size limitations, these estimates are discussed at 15 years duration. Women who gave birth to their first child 8 months or more after they began their first marriage had a higher probability (77%) of their marriages reaching 15 years, compared with 50% for women who had no first birth during their first marriage, 48% for women who had a premarital conception (i.e., first birth 0–7 months after marriage) and 44% for women who had a premarital first birth. In a similar pattern, men whose first child was born 8 months or more after their first marriage had a higher probability of their marriage lasting 15 years (78%), compared with men whose first child was born 0–7 months after marriage (55%), men who had no children before marriage (52%), and men whose first child was born before first marriage (48%).

Premarital cohabitation and characteristics of first spouse

Next, premarital cohabitation experiences and the characteristics of first husbands and wives are shown in relation to the duration of first marriages up to 20 years (Table 7). Table C and "Technical Notes" provide information on the sample sizes and question wording associated with this table. About 57% of ever-married women and 60% of ever-married men cohabited prior to their first marriage and most cohabitors lived with their first spouse—96% of women and 93% of men.

Table 7 distinguishes women and men who had cohabited with their first spouse prior to marriage and those who had not cohabited premaritally with their first spouse. This table also shows the probability of first marriage survival among women and men by engagement status with their first spouse. The question in the NSFG asks about engagement status with first spouse when they began living together, not at other times during the cohabitation. Fifty-five percent of women and 54% of men were engaged or had definite plans to marry their first spouse when the cohabitation began.

There were no significant differences in the probability of a marriage's survival by whether women and men were engaged to their first spouse when they began cohabiting. Looking at 20 years duration, women who had never cohabited with their first husband before marriage had a higher probability of marriage survival (57%), compared with women who had cohabited with their first spouse before marriage, regardless of whether they were engaged when they began living together (46% and 45%, respectively). In contrast, men who had never cohabited with their first wife before marriage (60%) and men who had cohabited with their first wife before marriage and were engaged when they began living together (57%) had virtually the same probability that their first marriage would last 20 years, followed by men who had cohabited with their first wife but were not engaged (49%).

Looking at spousal characteristics, women whose first husbands had been previously married (38%) had a lower probability of their first marriage lasting 20 years compared with women whose first husband had never been married before (54%). Women whose first husband had children from previous relationships had a lower probability that their first marriage would last 20 years (37%) compared with first husbands who had no other children (54%).

For men, probabilities of first marriage survival by whether his first wife had been previously married or had children from other relationships could not be shown for all groups at 20 years duration. However, patterns of first marriage survival for men by these characteristics are similar to those shown for women for marriages that survived up to 15 years.

The transition from separation to divorce from first marriage

One method to obtain information about the length of time between separation and divorce from first marriage is to calculate the median duration between these two events. For women, the median time from separation to divorce from first marriage was 9 months for white women, 15 months for Hispanic women, and 18.5 months for black women (data not shown). For men, the median time from separation to divorce from first marriage was 7 months for white men, 11 months

for Hispanic men, and 18 months for black men (data not shown).

Another method used to measure the duration between separation and divorce from first marriage is to calculate the probabilities that a separation makes the transition to divorce. As shown in Table 8, most separated women and men made the transition to divorce from first marriage within 5 years. Among women, about one-half were divorced from a first marriage within 1 year of separation, 79% within 3 years, and 86% of women within 5 years. Among men, 65% were divorced within 1 year, 81% within 3 years, and 87% within 5 years.

There were significant differences in the probability of transitioning from separation to divorce from first marriage within 1 year by selected demographic characteristics. Within 1 year, the probability of making the transition from separation to divorce was 59% for white women, compared with 44% for U.S.-born Hispanic women, 40% for foreign-born Hispanic women, and 30% for black women. Sixty-nine percent of white men had made the transition from separation to divorce within 1 year, compared with 51% of foreign-born Hispanic men, 44% of U.S.-born Hispanic men, and 36% of black men. Women (58%) and men (66%) with more than a high school diploma were more likely to make the transition to divorce within 1 year compared with 37% of women and 54% of men without a high school diploma. Finally, women with no births at the time of separation were more likely to divorce from their first marriage within 1 year (68%) compared with women who had one or more births at the time of separation (45%). There was no significant difference in the probability of divorce within 1 year among men with no biological children (64%) and men with 1 or more children (61%) at the time of separation.

Conclusion

The data in this report from the 2006–2010 NSFG provide an update on patterns of first marriage among women and men aged 15–44 in the United States. These data show trends that are consistent with broad demographic changes in the American family that have occurred in the United States over the last several decades. One such trend is an increase in the time spent unmarried among women and men. For women, there was a continued decrease in the percentage currently married for the first time—and an increase in the percent currently cohabiting—in 2006–2010 compared with earlier years. For men, there was also an increase in the percentage unmarried and in the percentage currently cohabiting between 2002 and 2006–2010. Another trend is an increase in the age at first marriage for women and men, with men continuing to marry for the first time at older ages than women. For women and men, the probabilities of first marriage by ages 20, 25, 30, and 35 were lower in 2006–2010 than in previous NSFG years, but this decline was no longer apparent by age 40. Premarital cohabitation contributed to the delay in first marriage for both women and men.

Other trends are evinced by the detailed marriage histories in the NSFG, which provide information on how long first marriages last. The probability of a first marriage reaching its 20th anniversary was 52% for women and 56% for men in 2006–2010. These levels are consistent with those reported in the NSFG in previous years, and in vital statistics data three decades ago (2,5,6,24).

Women and men who cohabited with their first spouse and were engaged when they began living together had about the same probability of marriage survival at 20 years as women and men who had cohabited with their first spouse, but were not engaged when they began living together. However, women who cohabited with their first husband—regardless of whether they were engaged when they began living together—had lower probabilities of marriage survival at 20 years than women who did not cohabit before marriage with their first husband. In contrast, men who were engaged with their first wife when they began cohabiting had about the same probability of marriage survival at 20 years as men who did not cohabit before marriage with their first wife. These sex distinctions may exist because of differences in the meaning of cohabitation for women and men (18). Also, the plans for marriage may have shifted during the course of cohabitation (29). However, the NSFG only asks about engagement status or definite plans to marry when the cohabitation began.

An important contribution of the NSFG to the study of first marriage is the collection of a wide range of demographic characteristics, such as Hispanic origin and race, education, and fertility. The large sample sizes of the 2006–2010 NSFG for women and men compared with previous years provide more reliable data on the patterns of marriage and divorce by race and ethnicity, including the Hispanic population by whether they were born in the United States. Foreign-born Hispanic women had a higher probability of marrying for the first time by age 25 than U.S.-born Hispanic women. Similarly, foreign-born Hispanic women and men had higher probabilities of their first marriage lasting up to 20 years duration compared with U.S.-born Hispanic women and men. Black women had a lower probability of their first marriage lasting 20 years compared with white women. In contrast, there was no significant difference between black and white men in the probability of a first marriage lasting 20 years. The differences in stability of first marriage across racial, ethnic, and nativity groups can be attributed to a host of demographic factors, such as age at first marriage, region of residence, and educational attainment (30–33).

Previous research suggests that women with more education and better economic prospects are more likely to delay first marriage to older ages, but are ultimately more likely to become married and to stay married (19,20,33). Data from the 2006–2010 NSFG support these findings: women with a bachelor's degree or higher had a lower probability of first marriage by age 25 than women with less education. However, women with a bachelor's degree or higher were less likely to be currently cohabiting and were more likely to be currently married for the first time compared with women

with less education. Women with a bachelor's degree also had a higher probability of their first marriage lasting 20 years compared with women who had some college or women with a high school diploma.

Finally, differences in the timing and duration of first marriages in the context of births were evident. Women who had a premarital birth and men who fathered a birth before their first marriage had lower probabilities of marrying by age 25 compared with women and men who had a first birth after first marriage. Similarly, women who had a first birth before first marriage and men who fathered a premarital first birth had a lower probability of their first marriage lasting 20 years than women and men whose first birth came after their first marriage. These findings support other research that show the rise in premarital births is associated with the decoupling of marriage and fertility over the past several decades (34).

This report is intended to provide benchmark statistics on first marriage by a wide variety of demographic characteristics and to encourage researchers to consider these factors when studying marital outcomes. The NSFG is a rich source of data for the study of marriage and cohabitation, and it is hoped the findings presented here will prompt studies that will yield new insights into marriage and cohabitation and their effect on adults and children in the United States.

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Table 1. Current marital status among women aged 15–44 years, by selected characteristics: United States, 1982, 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number in thousands	Total	In a Union			Nonunion	
			First marriage	Second or higher marriage	Cohabiting	Never married	Formerly married
All women[1]			Percent distribution (standard error)				
1982	54,099	100.0	44.1 (0.9)	8.1 (0.5)	3.0 (0.3)	33.5 (0.9)	11.3 (0.6)
1995	60,201	100.0	39.9 (0.6)	9.3 (0.3)	7.0 (0.3)	33.4 (0.6)	10.3 (0.3)
2002	61,561	100.0	37.5 (0.9)	8.5 (0.6)	9.0 (0.4)	35.0 (0.8)	9.9 (0.5)
2006–2010	61,755	100.0	36.4 (0.8)	5.1 (0.4)	11.2 (0.5)	38.2 (0.9)	9.2 (0.4)
Total 2006–2010							
Age at interview:							
15–19 years	10,478	100.0	1.1 (0.3)	– –	4.8 (0.6)	94.1 (0.7)	– –
15–17 years	5,837	100.0	0.3 (0.2)	– –	0.8 (0.3)	99.0 (0.4)	– –
18–19 years	4,641	100.0	2.1 (0.5)	– –	9.8 (1.4)	88.1 (1.5)	– –
20–24 years	10,365	100.0	17.3 (1.7)	*	18.7 (1.5)	60.8 (2.0)	2.9 (0.6)
25–44 years	40,912	100.0	50.3 (1.0)	7.6 (0.5)	10.9 (0.6)	18.1 (0.7)	13.1 (0.6)
25–29 years	10,535	100.0	42.3 (1.8)	2.2 (0.4)	16.8 (1.3)	31.3 (1.7)	7.4 (0.9)
30–34 years	9,188	100.0	53.7 (1.7)	5.6 (0.8)	12.1 (1.1)	18.1 (1.2)	10.5 (1.1)
35–39 years	10,538	100.0	55.9 (1.7)	8.7 (1.1)	7.8 (0.8)	13.0 (1.1)	14.6 (1.1)
40–44 years	10,652	100.0	49.6 (1.9)	13.6 (1.3)	7.2 (0.8)	10.2 (1.0)	19.4 (1.4)
Hispanic origin and race							
Hispanic or Latina	10,474	100.0	35.9 (1.2)	4.2 (0.8)	15.1 (1.0)	35.5 (1.1)	9.3 (0.8)
U.S. born	5,369	100.0	26.2 (2.0)	3.2 (0.7)	14.0 (1.3)	49.3 (1.9)	7.4 (0.8)
Foreign born	5,104	100.0	46.0 (1.7)	5.4 (1.3)	16.3 (1.5)	20.9 (1.6)	11.4 (1.2)
Not Hispanic or Latina:							
White, single race	37,384	100.0	40.2 (1.0)	5.9 (0.5)	10.7 (0.7)	34.3 (1.2)	8.9 (0.6)
Black or African American, single race	8,451	100.0	21.3 (1.7)	2.7 (0.6)	9.3 (0.9)	55.1 (1.5)	11.6 (0.9)
Asian, single race	2,456	100.0	48.5 (3.5)	4.2 (1.5)	3.5 (1.3)	38.7 (3.3)	5.2 (1.7)
Education[2]							
No high school diploma or GED	6,844	100.0	36.6 (1.8)	7.7 (1.4)	20.2 (1.4)	19.1 (1.7)	16.5 (1.4)
High school diploma or GED	11,578	100.0	39.5 (1.6)	9.2 (1.1)	15.5 (1.0)	20.3 (1.3)	15.6 (1.2)
Some college, no bachelor's degree	13,702	100.0	42.1 (1.6)	7.4 (0.7)	11.6 (1.0)	26.4 (1.4)	12.6 (1.0)
Bachelor's degree	11,024	100.0	58.3 (1.6)	3.3 (0.6)	6.8 (0.9)	25.5 (1.4)	6.1 (0.7)
Master's degree or higher	4,059	100.0	63.0 (2.4)	4.4 (1.1)	5.5 (1.2)	20.1 (1.9)	7.0 (1.6)
Parental living arrangements at age 14							
Two biological or adoptive parents	40,463	100.0	40.6 (1.0)	5.2 (0.5)	9.5 (0.6)	36.7 (1.1)	8.0 (0.5)
Other[3]	21,291	100.0	28.3 (1.2)	5.0 (0.6)	14.4 (0.8)	41.0 (1.3)	11.3 (0.7)
Parity							
No births	27,401	100.0	17.0 (1.0)	1.3 (0.3)	9.3 (0.7)	69.1 (1.1)	3.2 (0.4)
One or more births	34,353	100.0	51.8 (1.1)	8.1 (0.6)	12.7 (0.7)	13.5 (0.8)	13.9 (0.6)

– Quantity zero.

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

[1]Includes women of other or multiple race and origin groups and those with missing information on nativity, not shown seperately.

[2]Limited to women aged 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

[3]Refers to anything other than two biological or adoptive parents, including single parent, stepparent, and no parents.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth (1982, 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010).

Table 2. Current marital status among men aged 15–44 years, by selected characteristics: United States, 2002 and 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number in thousands	In a Union			Nonunion		
		Total	First marriage	Second or higher marriage	Cohabiting	Never married	Formerly married
All men[1]		Percent distribution (standard error)					
2002	61,147	100.0	35.0 (1.1)	7.2 (0.6)	9.2 (0.6)	41.6 (1.2)	7.0 (0.5)
2006–2010	62,128	100.0	32.8 (0.8)	4.8 (0.5)	12.2 (0.6)	45.0 (0.9)	5.2 (0.4)
Total 2006–2010							
Age at interview:							
15–19 years	10,816	100.0	0.3 (0.2)	– –	2.3 (0.4)	97.3 (0.5)	*
15–17 years	6,623	100.0	– –	– –	0.3 (0.2)	99.7 (0.2)	– –
18–19 years	4,193	100.0	0.7 (0.5)	– –	5.5 (1.0)	93.5 (1.1)	*
20–24 years	10,394	100.0	11.3 (1.8)	*	15.0 (1.7)	72.6 (2.0)	0.8 (0.2)
25–44 years	40,917	100.0	46.8 (1.1)	7.3 (0.7)	14.0 (0.7)	24.2 (1.0)	7.7 (0.6)
25–29 years	10,758	100.0	32.8 (1.8)	1.4 (0.5)	19.5 (1.5)	43.1 (1.8)	3.1 (0.5)
30–34 years	9,228	100.0	50.9 (2.3)	5.2 (1.0)	15.0 (1.4)	22.0 (1.7)	7.0 (0.8)
35–39 years	10,405	100.0	54.1 (1.9)	7.9 (1.1)	12.3 (1.3)	16.0 (1.3)	9.7 (1.2)
40–44 years	10,526	100.0	50.2 (2.4)	14.6 (1.8)	9.4 (1.1)	14.8 (1.4)	11.1 (1.2)
Hispanic origin and race							
Hispanic or Latino	11,847	100.0	31.7 (1.3)	3.2 (0.6)	17.6 (1.4)	42.0 (1.5)	5.4 (0.7)
U.S. born	5,741	100.0	20.5 (1.7)	3.1 (0.9)	14.8 (1.9)	55.8 (2.2)	5.8 (1.0)
Foreign born	6,100	100.0	42.3 (2.1)	3.3 (0.8)	20.3 (1.9)	29.1 (2.2)	5.0 (1.0)
Not Hispanic or Latino:							
White, single race	37,283	100.0	34.3 (1.1)	5.9 (0.7)	10.3 (0.7)	44.0 (1.3)	5.6 (0.6)
Black or African American, single race	7,341	100.0	24.2 (1.4)	2.7 (0.6)	12.8 (1.4)	55.1 (2.1)	5.2 (0.6)
Asian, single race	2,406	100.0	44.7 (3.6)	1.9 (1.1)	3.4 (0.9)	49.4 (3.2)	0.7 (0.3)
Education[2]							
No high school diploma or GED	9,004	100.0	37.7 (2.2)	5.8 (1.2)	26.6 (1.9)	23.3 (1.9)	6.7 (0.8)
High school diploma or GED	12,068	100.0	40.6 (1.7)	8.3 (1.0)	12.6 (1.1)	28.6 (1.5)	9.9 (1.1)
Some college, no bachelor's degree	13,206	100.0	37.8 (1.8)	7.2 (1.1)	14.1 (1.3)	34.7 (1.8)	6.3 (0.8)
Bachelor's degree	8,924	100.0	48.6 (2.3)	4.1 (1.0)	9.6 (1.1)	32.9 (2.4)	4.7 (0.8)
Master's degree or higher	3,857	100.0	65.7 (2.8)	4.2 (1.6)	5.0 (1.3)	20.7 (2.5)	4.3 (1.2)
Parental living arrangements at age 14							
Two biological or adoptive parents	43,070	100.0	35.5 (0.9)	4.6 (0.5)	11.0 (0.6)	44.2 (1.1)	4.7 (0.4)
Other[3]	19,058	100.0	26.4 (1.1)	5.4 (0.9)	14.9 (1.0)	46.8 (1.4)	6.5 (0.6)
Number of biological children							
No children	34,307	100.0	13.3 (1.0)	0.8 (0.2)	9.4 (0.7)	74.1 (1.1)	2.4 (0.3)
One or more children	27,821	100.0	56.7 (1.3)	9.8 (0.9)	15.6 (1.0)	9.1 (0.6)	8.7 (0.6)

– Quantity zero.

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

[1]Includes men of other or multiple race and origin groups and those with missing information on nativity, not shown separately.

[2]Limited to men aged 22–44 years at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

[3]Refers to anything other than two biological or adoptive parents, including single parent, stepparent, and no parents.

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth (2002 and 2006–2010).

Table 3. Probability of first marriage among women aged 18–44 years, by specified age and selected characteristics: United States, 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number in thousands	Probability of first marriage by age									
		20	SE	25	SE	30	SE	35	SE	40	SE
All women[1]											
1995	54,705	0.25	0.006	0.59	0.007	0.76	0.006	0.84	0.005	0.86	0.006
2002	55,742	0.17	0.007	0.52	0.011	0.73	0.010	0.81	0.009	0.86	0.010
2006–2010	55,918	0.13	0.007	0.44	0.012	0.68	0.011	0.78	0.010	0.84	0.009
Total 2006–2010											
Age at interview:											
18–24 years	15,006	0.07	0.009	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
25–44 years	40,912	0.15	0.008	0.46	0.01	0.69	0.011	0.79	0.010	0.84	0.009
25–29 years	10,535	0.12	0.012	0.40	0.019	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
30–34 years	9,188	0.12	0.012	0.43	0.020	0.68	0.016	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
35–39 years	10,538	0.17	0.013	0.50	0.018	0.71	0.014	0.81	0.012	. . .	. . .
40–44 years	10,652	0.19	0.016	0.51	0.021	0.72	0.018	0.80	0.015	0.86	0.012
Hispanic origin and race											
Hispanic or Latina	9,302	0.20	0.012	0.50	0.019	0.66	0.017	0.75	0.019	0.81	0.021
U.S. born	4,386	0.15	0.016	0.43	0.032	0.57	0.031	0.68	0.037	0.76	0.041
Foreign born	4,916	0.25	0.018	0.56	0.018	0.72	0.018	0.80	0.022	0.85	0.017
Not Hispanic or Latina:											
White, single race	34,240	0.14	0.009	0.48	0.016	0.74	0.013	0.84	0.011	0.89	0.011
Black or African American, single race	7,534	0.05	0.007	0.24	0.015	0.47	0.023	0.58	0.022	0.64	0.024
Asian, single race	2,272	0.07	0.023	0.37	0.039	0.74	0.047	0.85	0.040	0.94	0.029
Education[2]											
No high school diploma or GED	6,844	0.27	0.021	0.50	0.022	0.66	0.024	0.72	0.023	0.77	0.026
High school diploma or GED	11,578	0.22	0.014	0.53	0.019	0.70	0.016	0.78	0.015	0.82	0.016
Some college, no bachelor's degree	13,702	0.14	0.010	0.47	0.018	0.68	0.017	0.77	0.018	0.82	0.017
Bachelor's degree	11,024	0.03	0.005	0.37	0.020	0.70	0.021	0.84	0.018	0.89	0.016
Master's degree or higher	4,059	0.02	0.006	0.29	0.029	0.63	0.025	0.78	0.026	0.88	0.025
Parental living arrangements at age 14											
Both biological or adoptive parents	36,999	0.13	0.007	0.45	0.013	0.70	0.012	0.80	0.011	0.86	0.010
Other[3]	18,918	0.15	0.012	0.43	0.017	0.65	0.018	0.73	0.016	0.78	0.016
Religion raised											
None	5,082	0.11	0.015	0.37	0.026	0.63	0.030	0.74	0.030	0.78	0.029
Protestant	26,770	0.15	0.009	0.46	0.017	0.69	0.014	0.78	0.014	0.82	0.014
Catholic	18,569	0.12	0.011	0.42	0.015	0.68	0.014	0.78	0.014	0.85	0.016
Other religions	5,400	0.13	0.021	0.51	0.039	0.74	0.032	0.83	0.030	0.89	0.026
First birth occurred before first marriage											
Yes	15,162	0.07	0.007	0.31	0.012	0.51	0.015	0.61	0.018	0.69	0.019
No[4]	40,756	0.16	0.009	0.50	0.015	0.76	0.012	0.86	0.009	0.90	0.009
Ever cohabited before first marriage											
Cohabited before first marriage	29,476	0.10	0.007	0.38	0.012	0.65	0.012	0.77	0.012	0.84	0.011
Did not cohabit before first marriage	26,442	0.17	0.011	0.53	0.017	0.73	0.016	0.80	0.014	0.83	0.016

. . . Category not applicable.

[1]Includes women of other or multiple race and origin groups, and those with missing data on nativity, not shown separately.

[2]Limited to women aged 22–44 years at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

[3]Refers to anything other than two biological or adoptive parents, including single parent, stepparent, and no parents.

[4]Includes women who never had a live birth.

NOTE: SE is standard error.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth (1995, 2002, and 2006–2010).

Table 4. Probability of first marriage among men aged 18–44 years, by specified age and selected characteristics: United States, 2002 and 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number in thousands	Probability of first marriage by age									
		20	SE	25	SE	30	SE	35	SE	40	SE
All men[1]											
2002	55,399	0.08	0.009	0.36	0.013	0.61	0.015	0.75	0.013	0.81	0.012
2006–2010	55,504	0.05	0.004	0.31	0.011	0.56	0.013	0.71	0.013	0.78	0.013
Total 2006–2010											
Age at interview:											
18–24 years	14,587	0.03	0.006	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
25–44 years	40,917	0.05	0.005	0.32	0.011	0.57	0.013	0.71	0.013	0.78	0.013
25–29 years	10,758	0.05	0.006	0.26	0.018	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
30–34 years	9,228	0.04	0.009	0.31	0.017	0.56	0.019	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
35–39 years	10,405	0.04	0.008	0.32	0.020	0.59	0.022	0.74	0.018	. . .	. . .
40–44 years	10,526	0.08	0.012	0.39	0.024	0.61	0.022	0.73	0.020	0.79	0.018
Hispanic origin and race											
Hispanic or Latino	10,676	0.07	0.007	0.31	0.015	0.52	0.021	0.65	0.022	0.78	0.033
U.S. born	4,820	0.06	0.011	0.27	0.022	0.46	0.030	0.60	0.043	0.73	0.055
Foreign born	5,851	0.07	0.011	0.33	0.022	0.56	0.026	0.68	0.025	0.81	0.031
Not Hispanic or Latino:											
White, single race	33,497	0.04	0.006	0.34	0.015	0.60	0.016	0.74	0.016	0.79	0.017
Black or African American, single race	6,356	0.03	0.006	0.20	0.019	0.44	0.030	0.61	0.027	0.71	0.028
Asian, single race	2,153	0.01	0.005	0.12	0.035	0.56	0.043	0.80	0.042	0.87	0.030
Education[2]											
No high school diploma or GED	9,008	0.12	0.014	0.38	0.020	0.53	0.024	0.65	0.026	0.72	0.030
High school diploma or GED	1,930	0.06	0.008	0.35	0.019	0.56	0.020	0.71	0.021	0.77	0.021
Some college, no bachelor's degree	2,036	0.03	0.005	0.30	0.020	0.55	0.023	0.69	0.024	0.77	0.027
Bachelor's degree	8,924	0.02	0.006	0.25	0.022	0.58	0.026	0.73	0.022	0.80	0.028
Master's degree or higher	3,857	0.01	0.004	0.23	0.032	0.63	0.034	0.81	0.028	0.86	0.026
Parental living arrangements at age 14											
Both biological or adoptive parents	39,022	0.04	0.005	0.32	0.013	0.58	0.016	0.72	0.014	0.79	0.015
Other[3]	16,482	0.06	0.009	0.30	0.015	0.51	0.018	0.67	0.020	0.75	0.021
Religion raised											
None	5,661	0.04	0.011	0.29	0.033	0.51	0.031	0.62	0.037	0.69	0.039
Protestant	25,302	0.05	0.007	0.36	0.016	0.59	0.017	0.73	0.018	0.79	0.017
Catholic	19,347	0.04	0.005	0.26	0.012	0.53	0.018	0.68	0.019	0.76	0.021
Other religions	5,054	0.04	0.006	0.30	0.038	0.60	0.034	0.84	0.040	0.88	0.033
First child's birth occurred before first marriage											
Yes	11,459	0.03	0.006	0.23	0.016	0.42	0.020	0.58	0.022	0.70	0.027
No[4]	44,045	0.05	0.005	0.34	0.013	0.61	0.014	0.75	0.014	0.80	0.014
Ever cohabited before first marriage											
Cohabited before first marriage	28,561	0.04	0.005	0.28	0.011	0.53	0.014	0.70	0.014	0.79	0.016
Did not cohabit before first marriage	26,943	0.05	0.006	0.36	0.018	0.60	0.019	0.71	0.021	0.75	0.021

. . . Category not applicable.
[1]Includes men of other or multiple race and origin groups, and those with missing data on nativity, not shown separately.
[2]Limited to men aged 22–44 years at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.
[3]Refers to anything other than two biological or adoptive parents, including single parent, stepparent, and no parents.
[4]Includes men who never had a biological child.

NOTE: SE is standard error.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth (2002 and 2006–2010).

Table 5. Probability that a first marriage will remain intact (survive) at specified durations among women aged 15–44 years, by selected characteristics: United States, 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number in thousands	Probability of survival after 5 years	SE	10 years	SE	15 years	SE	20 years	SE
All women[1]									
1995	37,521	0.80	0.006	0.67	0.007	0.57	0.009	0.50	0.010
2002	35,849	0.78	0.008	0.64	0.015	*	*	*	*
2006–2010	32,904	0.80	0.009	0.68	0.012	0.60	0.015	0.52	0.020
Total 2006–2010									
Hispanic origin and race									
Hispanic or Latina	5,412	0.84	0.017	0.73	0.020	0.64	0.024	0.53	0.027
U.S. born	2,065	0.77	0.031	0.67	0.033	0.55	0.042	0.47	0.041
Foreign born	3,348	0.87	0.018	0.76	0.023	0.68	0.029	0.56	0.038
Not Hispanic or Latina:									
White, single race	21,703	0.80	0.011	0.68	0.014	0.61	0.017	0.54	0.027
Black or African American, single race	3,134	0.72	0.030	0.56	0.036	0.45	0.044	0.37	0.057
Asian, single race	1,438	0.91	0.031	0.83	0.044	0.78	0.055	0.69	0.075
Age at first marriage									
Under 20 years	6,874	0.70	0.021	0.54	0.024	0.46	0.023	0.37	0.026
20–24 years	14,166	0.81	0.012	0.69	0.017	0.60	0.021	0.55	0.025
25 years and over	11,863	0.86	0.011	0.78	0.018	0.73	0.022	*	*
Education[2]									
No high school diploma or GED	4,524	0.76	0.020	0.60	0.025	0.53	0.030	0.39	0.050
High school diploma or GED	8,078	0.75	0.019	0.60	0.024	0.51	0.028	0.41	0.033
Some college, no bachelor's degree	9,007	0.76	0.017	0.63	0.022	0.54	0.025	0.49	0.029
Bachelor's degree	7,511	0.90	0.012	0.85	0.015	0.79	0.022	0.78	0.027
Master's degree or higher	3,066	0.88	0.023	0.82	0.027	0.78	0.035	*	*
Parental living arrangements at age 14 years									
Both biological or adoptive parents	22,707	0.83	0.010	0.73	0.013	0.66	0.018	0.58	0.022
Other[3]	10,197	0.73	0.016	0.57	0.022	0.47	0.029	0.38	0.042
Religion raised									
None	2,495	0.73	0.033	0.61	0.041	0.58	0.042	0.43	0.074
Protestant	15,738	0.77	0.012	0.65	0.016	0.56	0.021	0.50	0.026
Catholic	11,215	0.84	0.014	0.73	0.016	0.63	0.024	0.53	0.034
Other religions	3,390	0.86	0.023	0.75	0.032	0.68	0.037	0.65	0.046
Parity at time of first marriage									
No births	25,234	0.82	0.009	0.71	0.013	0.64	0.015	0.56	0.020
One or more births	7,670	0.74	0.018	0.56	0.025	0.44	0.031	0.33	0.044
First birth timing relative to first marriage									
No first birth	6,164	0.72	0.026	0.56	0.034	0.50	0.038	*	*
Birth before marriage	7,670	0.74	0.018	0.56	0.025	0.44	0.031	0.33	0.044
Birth during marriage:									
0–7 months after	3,188	0.76	0.031	0.55	0.042	0.48	0.043	0.41	0.047
8 or more months after	14,320	0.93	0.008	0.85	0.013	0.77	0.017	0.68	0.025

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

[1]Includes women of other or multiple race and origin groups and those with missing information on nativity, not shown separately.

[2]Limited to women aged 22–44 years at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

[3]Refers to anything other than two biological or adoptive parents, including single parent, stepparent, and no parents.

NOTE: SE is standard error.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth (1995, 2002, and 2006–2010).

Table 6. Probability that a first marriage will remain intact (survive) at specified durations among men aged 15–44 years, by selected characteristics: United States, 2002 and 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number in thousands	Probability of survival after							
		5 years	SE	10 years	SE	15 years	SE	20 years	SE
All men[1]									
2002	30,972	0.78	0.008	0.66	0.009	*	*	*	*
2006–2010	28,094	0.81	0.012	0.70	0.014	0.62	0.016	0.56	0.026
Total 2006–2010									
Hispanic origin and race									
Hispanic or Latino	5,073	0.82	0.020	0.73	0.022	0.67	0.025	0.62	0.022
U.S. born	1,813	0.76	0.046	0.62	0.051	0.55	0.061	0.48	0.057
Foreign born	3,259	0.86	0.019	0.78	0.024	0.73	0.027	0.70	0.030
Not Hispanic or Latino:									
White, single race	17,813	0.82	0.015	0.70	0.019	0.61	0.021	0.54	0.035
Black or African American, single race	2,567	0.75	0.023	0.64	0.035	0.55	0.042	0.53	0.044
Age at first marriage									
Under 20 years	2,438	0.66	0.055	0.48	0.056	0.46	0.056	0.41	0.062
20–24 years	11,709	0.81	0.016	0.70	0.019	0.60	0.022	0.54	0.036
25 years and over	13,947	0.84	0.012	0.76	0.017	0.68	0.023	*	*
Education[2]									
No high school diploma or GED	5,024	0.79	0.028	0.66	0.033	0.56	0.036	0.54	0.039
High school diploma or GED	7,446	0.80	0.019	0.66	0.028	0.54	0.033	0.47	0.047
Some college, no bachelor's degree	7,209	0.76	0.021	0.64	0.027	0.57	0.030	0.54	0.036
Bachelor's degree	5,255	0.87	0.019	0.80	0.024	0.75	0.028	0.65	0.083
Master's degree or higher	2,912	0.90	0.027	0.88	0.029	0.83	0.040	*	*
Parental living arrangements at age 14									
Both biological or adoptive parents	20,423	0.84	0.011	0.74	0.015	0.66	0.018	0.60	0.029
Other[3]	7,671	0.75	0.025	0.60	0.027	0.49	0.032	0.44	0.039
Religion raised									
None	2,420	0.79	0.037	0.68	0.040	0.54	0.062	*	*
Protestant	13,375	0.80	0.016	0.67	0.018	0.58	0.021	0.53	0.030
Catholic	9,392	0.83	0.019	0.74	0.023	0.67	0.026	0.59	0.048
Other religions	2,850	0.83	0.032	0.73	0.049	0.72	0.053	*	*
Number of biological children at time of first marriage									
No children	22,250	0.83	0.013	0.74	0.016	0.65	0.019	0.59	0.030
One or more children	5,843	0.74	0.030	0.55	0.032	0.48	0.033	0.43	0.050
Timing of first child's birth relative to first marriage									
No first birth	5,948	0.73	0.030	0.63	0.035	0.52	0.050	*	*
Birth before marriage	5,843	0.74	0.030	0.55	0.032	0.48	0.033	0.43	0.050
Birth during marriage:									
0–7 months after	2,645	0.78	0.034	0.68	0.043	0.55	0.062	0.42	0.099
8 or more months after	12,262	0.95	0.009	0.86	0.016	0.78	0.023	0.74	0.031

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

[1]Includes men of other or multiple race and origin groups and those with missing information on nativity, not shown separately.

[2]Limited to men aged 22–44 years at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

[3]Refers to anything other than two biological or adoptive parents, including single parent, stepparent, and no parents.

NOTE: SE is standard error.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth (2002 and 2006–2010).

Table 7. Probability that a first marriage will remain intact (survive) at specified durations among women and men aged 15–44 years, by cohabitation status and selected partner characteristics: United States, 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number in thousands	Probability of survival after 5 years	SE	10 years	SE	15 years	SE	20 years	SE
Women									
Total 2006–2010	32,904	0.80	0.009	0.68	0.012	0.60	0.015	0.52	0.020
Cohabited with and engaged to first husband before marriage[1]									
Yes, cohabited and engaged	9,855	0.81	0.016	0.67	0.022	0.58	0.030	0.46	0.040
Yes, cohabited but not engaged	8,062	0.78	0.016	0.61	0.026	0.53	0.033	0.45	0.051
No, did not cohabit with first husband	14,954	0.80	0.013	0.71	0.015	0.63	0.017	0.57	0.026
First husband ever married before this marriage									
Yes	4,498	0.75	0.026	0.62	0.031	0.53	0.036	0.38	0.058
No	28,379	0.81	0.009	0.69	0.013	0.61	0.015	0.54	0.020
First husband had any children from previous relationships when they married									
Yes	5,425	0.72	0.021	0.57	0.027	0.48	0.032	0.37	0.048
No	27,428	0.82	0.009	0.70	0.013	0.62	0.016	0.54	0.022
Men									
Total 2006–2010	28,094	0.81	0.012	0.70	0.014	0.62	0.016	0.56	0.026
Cohabited with and engaged to first wife before marriage[1]									
Yes, cohabited and engaged	8,386	0.81	0.016	0.71	0.021	0.63	0.024	0.57	0.037
Yes, cohabited but not engaged	7,062	0.79	0.024	0.66	0.032	0.55	0.042	0.49	0.063
No, did not cohabit with first wife	12,492	0.82	0.018	0.73	0.021	0.65	0.025	0.60	0.036
First wife ever married before this marriage									
Yes	3,342	0.76	0.032	0.59	0.045	0.50	0.053	*	*
No	24,459	0.82	0.014	0.72	0.016	0.64	0.018	0.58	0.029
First wife had any children from previous relationships when they married									
Yes	4,487	0.72	0.029	0.55	0.039	0.39	0.047	*	*
No	23,311	0.84	0.012	0.74	0.014	0.67	0.017	0.61	0.028

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

[1]See "Technical Notes" for question wording on engagement status among women and men who indicated that they had a premarital cohabitation with their first spouse.

NOTE: SE is standard error.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth, 2006–2010.

Table 8. Probability that a separation from a first marriage transitions to a divorce among women and men aged 15–44 years, by duration of separation and selected characteristics, United States, 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010

Characteristic	Number in thousands	Probability of divorce within					
		1 year	SE	3 years	SE	5 years	SE
All women[1]							
1995	12,947	0.54	0.013	0.84	0.009	0.91	0.007
2006–2010	9,876	0.53	0.027	0.79	0.023	0.86	0.016
Women 2006–2010							
Hispanic origin and race							
Hispanic or Latina	1,530	0.42	0.042	0.64	0.043	0.75	0.037
U.S. born	632	0.44	0.059	0.72	0.051	*	*
Foreign born	898	0.40	0.046	0.58	0.055	0.69	0.056
Not Hispanic or Latina							
White, single race	6,410	0.59	0.024	0.87	0.015	0.92	0.011
Black or African American, single race	1,228	0.30	0.044	0.60	0.050	0.67	0.050
Age at time of separation							
Under 25 years	3,889	0.53	0.027	0.79	0.027	0.86	0.022
25 years and over	5,988	0.51	0.027	0.80	0.018	0.86	0.015
Education[2]							
No high school diploma or GED	1,881	0.37	0.040	0.61	0.034	0.72	0.035
High school diploma or GED	3,304	0.52	0.035	0.79	0.028	0.87	0.020
More than high school diploma or GED	4,613	0.58	0.023	0.87	0.015	0.91	0.013
Parity at time of separation							
No births	2,949	0.68	0.035	0.86	0.023	0.90	0.020
One or more births	6,927	0.45	0.027	0.77	0.021	0.84	0.016
All men[1]							
2002	9,137	0.65	0.008	0.90	0.004	0.92	0.003
2006–2010	7,402	0.65	0.033	0.81	0.004	0.87	0.022
Men 2006–2010							
Hispanic origin and race							
Hispanic or Latino	1,137	0.47	0.054	0.77	0.048	0.92	0.031
U.S. born	572	0.44	0.086	0.75	0.010	0.83	0.073
Foreign born	565	0.51	0.097	0.65	0.009	0.69	0.073
Not Hispanic or Latino:							
White, single race	4,952	0.69	0.033	0.88	0.005	0.91	0.016
Black or African American, single race	738	0.36	0.053	0.46	0.015	0.64	0.048
Age at time of separation							
Under 25 years	1,881	0.61	0.045	0.85	0.006	0.86	0.034
25 years and over	5,521	0.62	0.033	0.82	0.005	0.87	0.020
Education[2]							
No high school diploma or GED	1,468	0.54	0.047	0.69	0.004	0.80	0.044
High school diploma or GED	2,483	0.61	0.041	0.61	0.008	0.83	0.029
More than high school diploma or GED	3,416	0.66	0.035	0.88	0.006	0.91	0.019
Number of biological children at time of separation							
No children	2,657	0.64	0.039	0.85	0.008	0.89	0.025
One or more children	4,745	0.61	0.032	0.79	0.005	0.85	0.022

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

[1]Includes persons of other or multiple race and origin groups and those with missing information on nativity, not shown separately.

[2]Limited to women and men aged 22–44 years at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development high school equivalency diploma.

NOTE: SE is standard error.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Survey of Family Growth (1995, 2002, and 2006–2010).

Technical Notes

Definition of terms

Further details on the variables used in this report are provided in previous NSFG reports. See, for example, Bramlett MD, Mosher WD. Cohabitation, marriage, divorce, and remarriage in the United States. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 23(22). 2002.

Age at event (marriage, separation)—For women and men, age at time of the event was calculated as the number of months between the date of birth (CMBIRTH) and the date of the event, divided by 12 and truncated to the integer value. The recode FMAR1AGE was used for age at first marriage.

Age at interview—The recode AGER was used for the respondent's age at the time of interview.

Children fathered—Dates of birth of the male respondent's biological children (DATBABY1, biodob02–10) were compared with the date of an event (marriage, separation) to determine how many biological children he had fathered at the time of an event.

Cohabited before first marriage—Cohabitation relative to first marriage was based on a recode COHSTAT.

Cohabited with first spouse before first marriage—The recode COHSTAT indicates whether the respondent cohabited at all before first marriage. Using COHSTAT in conjunction with a raw variable for whether the respondent cohabited premaritally with the first spouse, a variable was defined for cohabitation with first spouse before they were married.

Education—Educational attainment at time of interview was based on a recode HIEDUC indicating the highest degree earned by the respondent. The tables in this report show data by education only for respondents aged 22–44 at interview because a large percentage of respondents aged 15–21 may still be attending school. Where possible, ''Bachelor's degree'' and ''Master's degree or higher'' were shown separately. For the duration between separation and divorce, categories of education beyond high school were collapsed to ''More than high school diploma or GED'' due to small sample sizes.

Engaged to first spouse before first marriage—Women and men who cohabited premaritally with their first spouse were asked the question *"At the time you began living together, were you and [he/she] engaged to be married or have definite plans to get married?"* Respondents who answered ''yes'' were classified as being engaged at the time of cohabitation. Those respondents who indicated ''no'' were classified as not being engaged at the time of cohabitation.

Hispanic origin and race—The recode HISPRACE2 used in this report conforms with the 1997 OMB classification standards for Hispanic origin and race in federal surveys (23). The 1997 guidelines allow respondents to report more than one race or ethnic origin. In this report, the categories Hispanic, Non-Hispanic white, and Non-Hispanic black are shown. The category of ''Asian, single race'' is also shown in some tables. Non-Hispanic members of other races, and those reporting two or more race or origin groups, are not shown separately in this report because of small sample sizes.

Interval to first marriage—For the probability of first marriage, duration was calculated as the number of months between the 15th birthday and the date of first marriage using the recodes CMBIRTH and MARDAT01.

Marital and cohabitation status at time of interview—The recode RMARITAL was used for the respondent's current marital status.

Marital disruption or dissolution—Disruption and dissolution are used interchangeably and are defined in this report as either separation or divorce. Widowhood is very rare in the age range for the sample and is not defined as disruption.

Marital duration—For the probability that a first marriage remained intact, the duration of marriage was calculated as the number of months between the first marriage date and the date of separation or divorce, or alternatively, between first marriage date and the date of interview, if censored by the interview. First marriages that ended in widowhood or are still intact at the time of interview were considered censored because the time that the first marriage would have lasted is unknown. The recode variables used to define marital duration were MARDAT01 and MARDIS01.

Nativity—In this report, Hispanics are classified by whether the respondent was born in the United States (''U.S. born'') or born outside of the United States (''foreign born'') using the variable BRNOUT. Having been born ''in the United States'' was defined in the NSFG as including the 50 states, Washington, D.C., and U.S. possessions and territories such as Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This definition was read aloud to the respondent only if they asked the interviewer for clarification.

Parental living arrangements at age 14—The recode PARAGE14 indicates the presence and relationship to the respondent of male and female parents or parental figures living in the household when the respondent was age 14. This variable is presented with two categories, both biological or adoptive parents and other parental situation or a nonparental situation.

Parity—The recode PARITY indicates the number of live-born children the women has ever had. The number of children a woman had at the time of an event (parity at marriage, parity at separation) was calculated from her children's dates of birth (DATEND recodes for live births), compared with dates of the event.

Religion raised—All NSFG respondents were asked current religious affiliation and the religion in which they were raised. The 1995 NSFG report on marriage showed religion at the time of interview (6). For the current report, the tables show the religion in which the respondent was raised (RELRAISD) to avoid temporal problems associated with current religious affiliation and the likelihood of marriage or divorce, particularly for younger respondents. The NSFG User's Guide (Part 2), ''Religion Data in the NSFG'' provides

more information about the religion variable used in this report (35).

Separation—Separation from first spouse was defined as the date when the husband and wife stopped living together for the last time. The probability that a separation from first marriage will transition to divorce was measured by the interval between the date of separation from first marriage and the date of divorce. Women and men who were separated from their first marriage but not divorced at the time of interview were censored at interview. The recode MARDIS01 is computed using raw variables that measure the date of separation and the date of divorce. For respondents who reported a date of separation that was greater than the date of divorce, the time interval until divorce was set to 0.

Spouse's children from previous relationships—For women, the raw variable kidshx was used to determine whether her first husband had any children from previous relationships. For men, whether the first wife had any children from previous relationships was drawn from one of these variables that indicate previous childbearing experience of his wives (cwpotkid, pxotkid, pxotkid2, pxotkid3, fwpotkid).

Spouse's former marital experience—For women, the raw variable marbefhx was used to determine whether her first husband had ever been married before. For men, the first wife's former marital status was drawn from one of these variables that corresponded with marital experience of his wives (cwpmarbf, pxmarbf, pxmarbf2, pxmarbf3, fwpmarbf).

Timing of first birth relative to first marriage—For female and male respondents, the recode B1PREMAR indicates whether a first birth occured before first marriage or later than first marriage. For female respondents, the recode MAR1BIR1 gives the number of months between the female respondent's first marriage and her first birth. For male respondents, a comparable measure was constructed based on the date of first birth (recode DATBABY1) and the date of first marriage (recode MARDAT01).

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