

VITAL & HEALTH STATISTICS

Married and Unmarried Couples United States, 1982

Statistics based on data collected in 1982 are presented on dating, the timing of first sexual intercourse and marriage, current marital status, number of marriages, informal marriage, frequency of sexual intercourse, marital dissolution, and remarriage. Statistics are shown for women 15–44 years of age, according to race, age, and selected socioeconomic characteristics.

**Data From the National Survey of
Family Growth
Series 23, No. 15**

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Symbols

- - - Data not available
 - ... Category not applicable
 - Quantity zero
 - 0.0 Quantity more than zero but less than 0.05
 - Z Quantity more than zero but less than 500 where numbers are rounded to thousands
 - * Figure does not meet standard of reliability or precision
 - # Figure suppressed to comply with confidentiality requirements
-

Married and Unmarried Couples

by Christine A. Bachrach, Ph.D., and Marjorie C. Horn, Ph.D., Division of Vital Statistics

Introduction

The National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) is conducted periodically by the National Center for Health Statistics, with a national sample of women 15–44 years of age. Previous cycles of the survey were conducted in 1973 (Cycle I) and 1976 (Cycle II). The present report is based on Cycle III, which was conducted in 1982. Cycle III was the first survey to represent women aged 15–44 years, regardless of marital status. Previous cycles represented never married women only if they had children of their own living with them in the household.

The survey is designed to produce national estimates of statistics on fertility, family planning, and maternal and child health. One of the main purposes of the survey is to furnish information on the “intermediate variables” that determine the birth rate in the United States by influencing women’s exposure to the risk of pregnancy.^{1,2} This report presents statistics relating to one important set of these intermediate variables—the formation and dissolution of marriages and other sexual unions—for women aged 15–44 years in 1982.

Information on marital patterns and levels of sexual activity is important to the understanding of fertility. Of course, the relationship of sexual activity to fertility is often tempered by such factors as contraceptive practice and sterility or subfecundity; nevertheless, identifying the sexually active population is an important first step in studying fertility. Marriage and marital dissolution are important determinants of fertility in the United States because virtually all married couples are sexually active and most want to have children.

Patterns of marriage, marital dissolution, and sexual activity also affect family life in the United States. During the 1960’s and 1970’s, divorce rates in the United States rose sharply.³ During the 1970’s, the age at which women first married also increased and the rate of remarriage for divorced and widowed

women 25–44 years of age declined.^{4,5} These trends, taken together, imply a decline in the proportion of the lifetimes of American women that is spent as part of a married couple. This has implications for the economic well-being of the women and their children,⁶ as well as for the family experiences of children who are growing up. One researcher has predicted that 70 percent of white children and 94 percent of black children born in 1980 will spend some part of their childhood in a one-parent family.⁷

The trend of later marriage is paralleled by other trends affecting American family life. According to estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the number of unmarried couples living together in the same household more than tripled between 1970 and 1983.⁸ For those who are unmarried, then, informal marriage appears to have become an increasingly common choice. In recent decades, the proportion of all births to unmarried women has also increased dramatically—from 1 in 20 in 1960 to 1 in 5 in 1983.^{9,10} This suggests that as marital patterns have changed over the past decades so may the relationship between marriage and women’s exposure to the risks of pregnancy and childbearing.

This report presents final data from the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle III, on a variety of topics related to exposure to sexual intercourse both within and outside of marriage. These include the timing of first date, first sexual intercourse, and first marriage; the proportions of women who have ever had sexual intercourse and the frequency of intercourse in a recent period; current marital status and number of marriages; unmarried cohabitation; and marital dissolution and remarriage. Preliminary data on some of these topics were published in *Advance Data From Vital and Health Statistics*.¹¹ Data in this report supercede those published in the preliminary reports.

Summary of principal findings

The great majority of women of childbearing age have been exposed to the risk of pregnancy. In 1982, 86 percent of women 15–44 years of age and almost all women aged 25 years or older had ever had sexual intercourse (figure 1). Most women begin having sexual intercourse before marriage. Nearly 7 out of every 10 ever married women had begun their sexual experience before they married for the first time. About 6 out of 10 never married women had begun having intercourse by the time of the 1982 interview.

About 65 percent of women aged 15–44 years in 1982 had ever married. Slightly over one-half (52 percent) were currently married, 12 percent were formerly married, and 35 percent had never married. About 6 percent of women who were not currently married in 1982 were informally married or living with a partner. Nearly one-third of ever married women had experienced the dissolution of their first marriage; and of those who had been divorced or widowed, three-fifths had remarried by the time of the survey.

The results shown in this report reveal sharp differences in the patterns of sexual intercourse and marriage across age groups, suggesting changes over recent decades in the timing and duration of marriage and in the extent to which sexual activity begins before marriage. Women in their early twenties (ages 20–24 years) began having intercourse earlier and married later (figure 2) than women in the latter half of their reproductive years (ages 30–44 years). Although first intercourse occurred before marriage for over one-half of ever married women in even the oldest age group (ages 40–44 years), premarital intercourse increasingly has become the rule in the younger age groups. Among ever married women aged 15–24 years, 83 percent began their sexual activity before they were married (figure 2).

The data also suggest a decline in the amount of time that women of reproductive age spend as part of a married couple. Younger women have been marrying at later ages than older women of reproductive age did, and women who first married in the 1970's have experienced the dissolution of their marriages sooner than those who married in the 1960's (figure 3). There is also some evidence that remarriage is less common among women whose first marriages dissolved in the 1970's than among those whose marriages dissolved in the 1960's.

Despite these changes, most American women of childbearing age have continued to marry at some time, and marriage continues to be an important determinant of fertility. All but 5 percent of women 40–44 years of age in 1982 had married; and the percent ever married increases sharply, from 7 percent among women aged 15–19 years to 45 percent among women 20–24 years to 76 percent among women aged 25–29 years. Marriage remains strongly associated with the exposure to the risk of pregnancy: Compared with unmarried women, currently married women were more likely to have had intercourse in the 3 months before the NSFG interview and more likely to have had intercourse frequently during that period.

Patterns of marriage and first sexual intercourse differ substantially by race. Black women began dating at later ages than

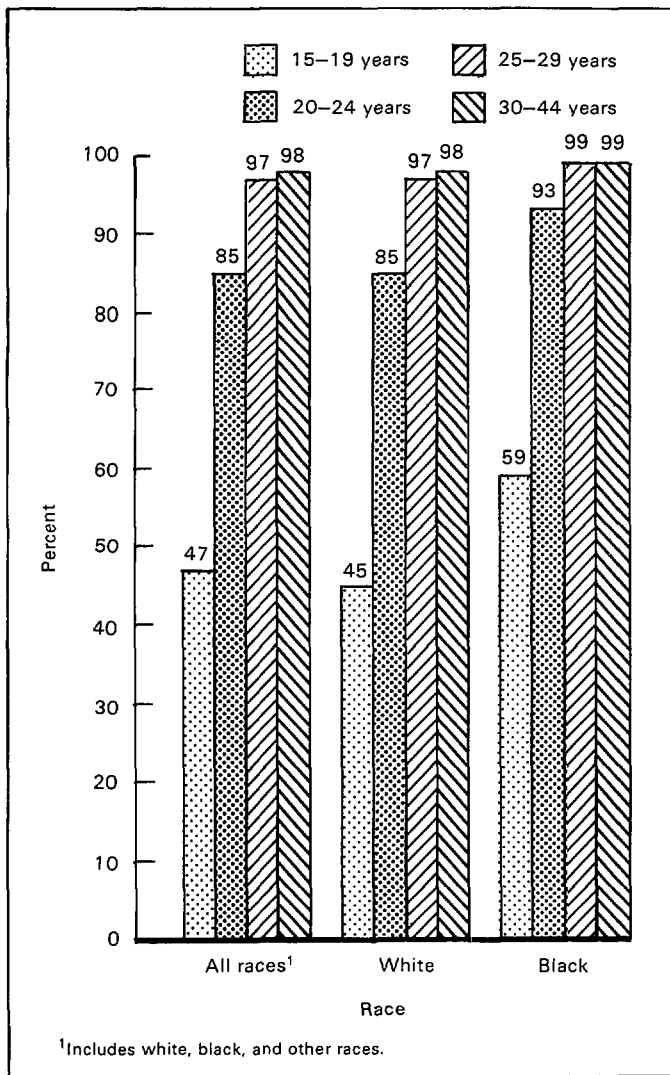


Figure 1. Percent of women 15–44 years of age who ever had sexual intercourse, by age and race: United States, 1982

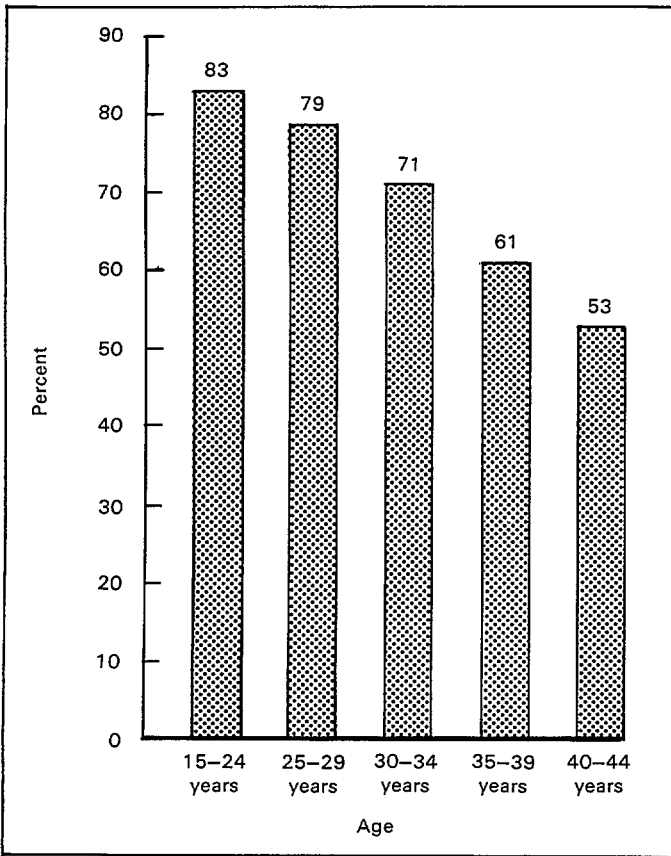


Figure 2. Percent of ever married women 15-44 years of age who first had sexual intercourse before marriage, by age: United States, 1982

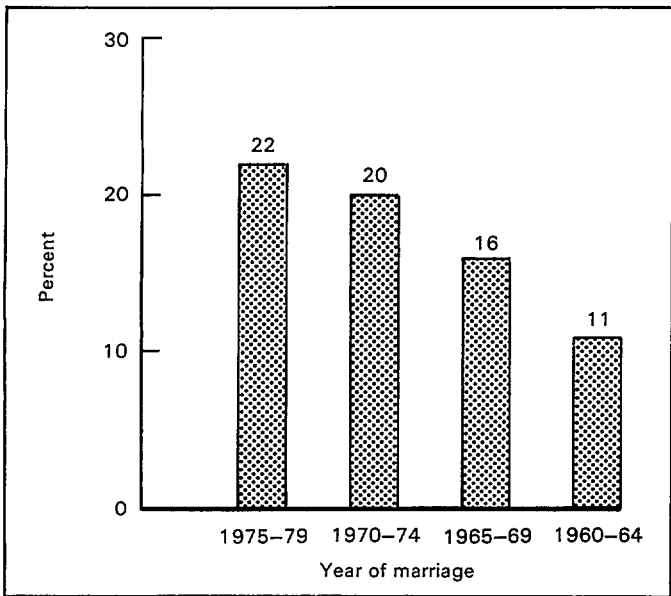


Figure 3. Percent of ever married women 15-44 years of age whose first marriage dissolved within 5 years, by year of first marriage: United States, 1982

white women, but they were more likely to have begun having sexual intercourse by ages 15-24 years (figure 1). Over 91 percent of ever married black women aged 15-44 years had had intercourse by the time they married, compared with 67 percent of ever married white women. Black women spent fewer of

their reproductive years as part of a married couple than white women. They married at later ages, and they were more likely to have never married (figure 4). The first marriages of black women were more likely than those of white women to dissolve, and they were more likely to end in separation rather than in divorce. Once divorced or widowed, black women were less likely than comparable white women to remarry. These differences in marital patterns between black and white women are reflected in the much higher proportion of births to black women that occur outside of marriage.¹⁰

The results in this report also reveal other differences among population groups with respect to patterns of marriage and first intercourse. Women who attended college and women whose parents attended college were likely to begin having intercourse later and to marry later, compared with women

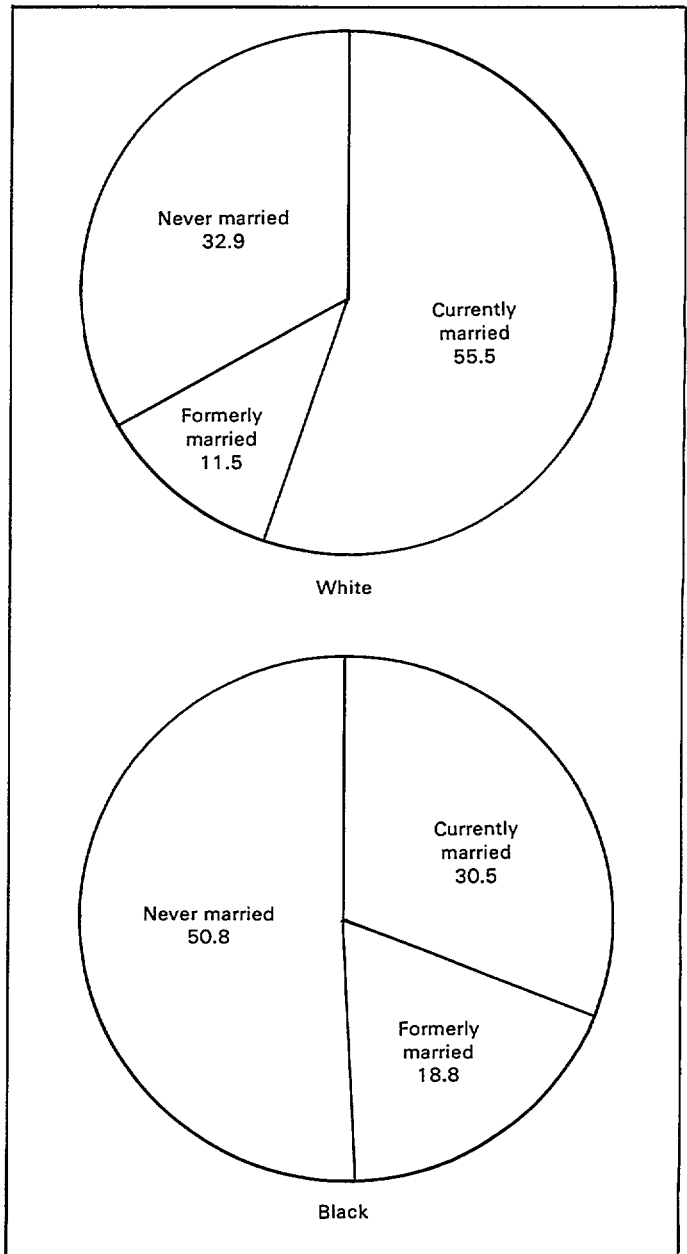


Figure 4. Percent distribution of women 15-44 years of age by marital status, according to race: United States, 1982

who did not complete high school and those whose parents did not complete high school. Once married, college-educated women were less likely to experience marital dissolution.

Patterns of first intercourse and marriage also were associated with another aspect of family background—whether or not the woman was still living with both her parents when she was 14 years of age. Women who were living with neither or only one parent at age 14 years had experienced disruption in their family while they were growing up, most commonly because of the divorce of their parents. Such women were more likely than women who were living with both parents at age 14 years to begin dating, to begin having intercourse, and to marry at early ages. Once married, they were more likely to experience separation or divorce.

Other factors affecting marriage and the timing of first intercourse include religious affiliation and region of residence. Protestant women aged 15–44 years began having intercourse and marrying at earlier ages than Catholic women, but they were not significantly more likely to have intercourse before

marriage. Women living in the Northeast in 1982 were likely to have begun dating earlier, and having intercourse later than women in most other regions of the country; and they also married at later ages. Women living in the West were more likely to experience the dissolution of their first marriages and tended to be more likely to remarry than women in other regions.

Poverty was strongly associated with marital status among women of childbearing age in 1982. Women whose family incomes were less than 1½ times the poverty level were only about one-half as likely to be currently married as women with incomes three times the poverty level or more. Being informally married was also more common among women with family incomes well above the poverty level. These relationships reflect in part the greater family resources, in the form of the number of potential wage earners, available to currently or informally married women, compared with women who do not share their households with a spouse or partner.

Source of data and methodology

The National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle III, was based on interviews with a probability sample of 7,969 women 15–44 years of age living in households or group quarters in the conterminous United States. The interviews were conducted during the period August 1982–February 1983 by trained female interviewers. The interviews averaged 1 hour in length and focused on topics related to each woman’s pregnancies and births, to the use of methods to delay or prevent pregnancy, to marriages, to current ability to become pregnant, and to expectations for future births. The sample design, data collection, and data processing for the survey were carried out by Westat, Inc., under a contract with the National Center for Health Statistics.

The statistics in this report are estimates for the national population represented by the NSFG sample, that is, women 15–44 years of age in the noninstitutional population of the conterminous United States. These estimates are based on a sample and may therefore differ somewhat from the true population values because of sampling error. The sample design and the procedures for estimating standard errors that measure sampling error are described in appendix I. Procedures for determining whether differences between estimates are “statistically significant”—that is, whether they are likely to reflect a real difference in population values or arise out of chance or sampling error—are also described. In this report, differences are discussed without qualification if their estimated probability of arising by chance, if no difference actually existed in the population, was 5 percent or less. Statements about differences that are qualified by the use of phrases such as “tend to” or “the data suggest” indicate differences that are significant at the 10-percent level but not at the 5-percent level. Appendix I also includes a discussion of nonsampling error that may affect the estimates presented and a discussion of the various procedures that were employed to minimize nonsampling error.

This report presents most findings by means of two different types of tables: tables showing simple percents or percent distributions and tables showing cumulative percents. Simple percents or percent distributions are generally used in the report to show the current status of women in the population, for example, the percent distribution by current marital status or the percent who are living with a partner in an informal marriage. Cumulative percents are used to show the timing of events that occurred in the past, for example, the cumulative percent of women who married by a given age.

Cumulative percents of women experiencing any event beyond the 15th birthday are incompletely estimated by the

data. For example, the percent of women marrying by age 18 years is estimated at 11 percent for women 15–44 years. However, by the time women who were 15–17 years of age at the time of the survey reach their 18th birthday, some of them will have married and the true percent marrying will be higher. This report has adopted two approaches to overcome this problem. First, in tables showing cumulative percents by age groups, estimates relating to age groups containing women who have not yet reached the referent birthday are italicized to signal that they are likely to underestimate the final experience for that age group. Statistics for which none of the women in the age group have completed exposure, for example the percent of women aged 15–19 years who married by age 20 years, are not shown in the tables. These conventions are followed only when specific age groups (or marriage or marriage dissolution cohorts) are being examined. When the timing of events for all women regardless of age or for groups other than age groups is examined, the percent experiencing the event by specific ages is shown even though some women in each category have not attained that age.

Second, in some cases special tables are presented that are limited to women who have attained the referent birthday. For example, one table shows the percent of women aged 18–44 years who first had sexual intercourse by age 18 years. This approach is taken when it helps to clarify the relationship between the timing of an event and another important variable.

Throughout this report, data on the timing and prevalence of events relating to marital status and sexual activity are shown in relation to age, race, and Hispanic origin, as well as a large number of other background characteristics related to family formation. These latter characteristics include living arrangements at age 14 years, the education of the woman’s parents and her own education, religion, labor force status, and the region in which she currently resides. Living arrangements at age 14 years measures whether the woman’s parents’ marriage remained intact throughout her childhood (living with both parents) or whether it was disrupted for some reason (living with one or neither parent). The education of the woman’s parents is an indicator of the socioeconomic status of the family in which the woman was raised, and her own education is a current measure of socioeconomic status. However, own education may not be indicative of socioeconomic status for young women, particularly those under age 20 years, many of whom are still attending school. These terms are defined further in appendix II.

This report presents statistics for women classified by poverty level income (that is, family income expressed as a

percent of the poverty level) only in relation to current marital status and informal marriage. This characteristic is strongly associated with marital status because women who are formally or informally married are more likely to have two earners contributing to the family income and less likely to be poor

than women who are not married. Poverty status is not shown in relation to past marital events because such events are more likely to be the cause of (as in the case of a divorce) rather than the effect of current poverty status.

Related sources of data

Data on marriage and divorce are published annually by the National Center for Health Statistics in *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, Advance report of final marriage statistics; *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, Advance report of final divorce statistics; and in *Vital Statistics of the United States*, Volume III, Marriage and Divorce. These data are based on information from two sources: (1) complete counts of events obtained from all States and (2) data on characteristics based on a sample of marriage and divorce certificates from States participating in the marriage-registration area and divorce-registration area. Published statistics include annual rates of marriage, divorce and remarriage, mean and median ages of brides and grooms, and estimates of the numbers of children involved in divorces.

Data on current marital status of all men and women aged 15 years or over in the United States are collected annually by the U.S. Bureau of the Census during the March Current Population Survey. These data are published annually in *Current Population Reports*. (For example, see reference 8.) In addi-

tion, marital history data have been collected at 5-year intervals since 1975 during the June Current Population Survey. Data collected in 1975 also have been published in *Current Population Reports*. (For example, see reference 12.)

Data on the timing of first sexual intercourse were collected in three surveys of U.S. women aged 15–19 years conducted in 1971, 1976, and 1979 by researchers at Johns Hopkins University.^{13,14} The NSFG Cycle III was the first national survey to obtain this information for all women of reproductive age.

Finally, a detailed analysis of remarriage among women whose first marriage ended in divorce is presented in a previous report based on data from the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle II.¹⁵ These data are not directly comparable to those presented in this report because the earlier data are based on computed probabilities of remarriage rather than on cumulative proportions remarrying and because the data in the earlier report are limited to women whose first marriages ended in divorce. Nevertheless, findings of both reports are similar with respect to race differences in remarriage.

Findings

Dating

Most young people date before beginning sexual activity. Dating may be an important precursor of sexual activity for two reasons. First, it may prepare young people for the more serious and stable heterosexual relationships they will take on as adults by providing short-term relationships in which roles may be rehearsed. Second, dating may lead directly to sexual activity by increasing the opportunities for sexual intercourse.

In the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), women aged 15–24 years were asked, “At what age, if ever, did you first start dating, that is, going out with a boy?” Women aged 25 years or over were not asked the question because recall was expected to be more difficult for them. Overall, the vast majority of women 15–24 years of age (94 percent) had begun dating by the time of the survey (table 1). About one-third had begun to date by age 15 years (31 percent) and nearly seven-eighths by age 17 years (81 percent). The percent who had begun dating by the survey date was higher for women 20–24 years of age (98 percent) than for women 15–19 years of age (89 percent), as one would expect. One would not expect, however, the marked difference (table 1) in the percent who dated by age 15 years between women aged 15–19 years (37 percent) and women aged 20–24 years (25 percent). This finding could be explained in any of the following three ways:

- By a large change in the onset of dating during the years preceding the survey.
- By recall error among women 20–24 years of age.
- By the tendency to interpret the meaning of the word “dating” differently in the two age groups.

If dating behavior had, in fact, changed as dramatically over the years preceding the 1982 survey as suggested in table 1, other aspects of adolescent sexual behavior, such as the percent having had intercourse, also would be expected to have changed dramatically. But they have not.¹⁶ Therefore, it is more likely that the pattern of differences in the initiation of dating by age (table 1) mainly reflects recall error or differences in interpretation of terms.

The data in table 1 suggest that white women began dating earlier than black women. About 32 percent of white women 15–24 years of age, compared with 22 percent of black women of the same age, began dating by age 15 years. The differences narrow with increasing age: The difference between the percents of black and white women who had dated by age 18 years

was significant at the 10-percent level only, and there was no significant difference in the percent of black and white women who had begun dating by the time of the interview. Differences by Hispanic origin in timing of first date were not statistically significant.

Few of the background characteristics shown in table 2 were associated with the timing of the first date or the percent of women who had begun dating by the time of the survey. Women with fewer than 12 years of education were more likely than other women to have dated by age 15 years, but they were less likely to have dated by the interview date, probably because they were younger at the time of the survey. Women who had lived with both parents at age 14 years tended to have dated by age 15 years less often than women who lived with one or neither parent. Women living in the Northeast Region were most likely to have begun dating by age 15, and women living in the West were least likely to have begun dating by the time of the survey. These regional differences may reflect differences in the interpretation of the term “dating” as well as real differences in behavior.

Beginning sexual activity

The onset of sexual activity marks the beginning of a woman’s exposure to the risk of pregnancy. Studies have shown that the timing of this event has a strong impact on the woman’s use of methods to prevent or delay pregnancy and, hence, on the likelihood of an early or unintended pregnancy.^{17,18} Almost 7 out of 8 women 15–44 years of age had ever had sexual intercourse by the time of the NSFG interview (table 3). This means that the great majority of women of childbearing age in 1982 had been exposed to the risk of pregnancy. Among women 15–19 years of age, less than one-half (47 percent) had begun sexual activity; this proportion increased to 85 percent among women 20–24 years of age, to 97 percent among women 25–29 years of age, and to about 98 percent among women 30 years of age or over. About 8 percent of women first had sexual intercourse before reaching their 15th birthday, 40 percent before age 18 years, and 66 percent before age 20 years.

The timing of first intercourse differed substantially between women who were under 30 years of age in 1982 and those who were 30–44 years of age. For example, the percent beginning sexual activity before age 15 years was between 3 and 5 percent among women aged 30–44 years and between 9 and 12 percent among women aged 15–29 years (table 3). The percent who first had intercourse before age 18 years ranged from 31 to 34 percent among women aged 30–44 years, com-

pared with 48 and 47 percent, respectively, among women 20–24 and 25–29 years of age. Differences by age among women under 30 years of age and among those 30 years or over tended to be insignificant.

This suggests that, rather than a smooth trend toward earlier intercourse over the birth cohorts represented by the survey, there was a major shift between cohorts aged 25–29 years and cohorts aged 30–34 years at the survey date and that there were relatively minor changes in earlier and later cohorts. These findings are consistent with the results of other studies that show a dramatic increase in the percent of teenage women who were sexually active during the 1970's but show a leveling off in the percent in the most recent years.¹⁶ The trend toward earlier intercourse also is reflected in the change in the mean age at which women first had intercourse between women who began sexual activity during the years 1965–69 and those who began during the years 1975–79. As table A shows, women having their first intercourse in the later period were on the average nearly 1 year younger than women having first intercourse in the earlier period.

Black women began having sexual intercourse earlier than white women. Among women beginning sexual activity during the years 1965–79, the average age at first intercourse was from 1.4 to 1.8 years younger among black women than among white women (table A). Among all women aged 15–44 years (table 3), the percent having had intercourse by age 15 years was nearly 3 times as great for black women as for white women (17 and 6 percent, respectively); and the percent having had intercourse by age 18 years was almost two-thirds greater among black women. At the time of the survey, black women aged 15–19 and 20–24 years were significantly more likely than white women of similar age to have had intercourse; but among women aged 25–44 years, white women were just as likely as black women to have begun having intercourse.

Women who were still living with both parents at age 14 years began their sexual experience later than women who were not living in an intact family at that age. By age 18 years, for

example, 36 percent of the former group and 53 percent of the latter group had begun having intercourse (table 4).

Parental education also was associated closely with the timing of first intercourse. Women with mothers and fathers who did not complete high school were more likely to have begun their sexual experience by each successive birthday than women with college-educated parents. About 33 percent of women with college-educated mothers had intercourse by age 18 years, compared with 48 percent of women whose mothers did not complete high school.

Women who themselves had completed fewer than 12 years of school at the time of the survey were more likely than women with more schooling to have begun having intercourse by ages 15 through 18 years, but they were less likely to have had intercourse by the time of the survey (table 4). This pattern results from the inclusion of teenagers who are still in school in the lowest category of education. When attention is restricted to women 18–44 years of age, as in table B, differences by education in the percent of women who began having intercourse by age 18 years are even sharper. Seventy percent of those who had completed fewer than 12 years of school had begun sexual activity by age 18 years, compared with 43 percent of those who had completed 12 years of school and 27 percent of those who had completed 13 years or more.

Because the educational levels of racial and ethnic groups in the United States differ, it is useful to examine the associations between timing of first intercourse and both race and origin within categories of education. Educational attainment was closely associated with the timing of first intercourse among both black and white women and among both Hispanic and non-Hispanic women (table B). Within each category of education, black women were more likely than white women to have had intercourse by age 18 years. Overall, Hispanic and non-Hispanic women were equally likely to have had intercourse by age 18 years. However, among women with fewer than 12 years of school (the largest educational category for Hispanic women and the smallest for non-Hispanic women), Hispanic women were less likely to have begun sexual activity by age 18 years. Among more highly educated women, the percents beginning intercourse by age 18 years were similar with respect to origin.

Protestant women began their sexual exposure earlier than Catholic women, and they were more likely to have had intercourse by the time of the survey. For example, 44 percent of Protestant women, compared with 33 percent of Catholic women, began having intercourse by age 18 years (table 4). Women living in the Northeast were less likely to have begun their sexual experience before age 18 years than women living in other regions of the country, and women living in the South were more likely to have done so. By age 18 years, 29 percent of Northeastern women had had intercourse, compared with 47 percent of women from the South (table 4). Regional differences in the timing of first intercourse may reflect other differences among the regions, for example, the much higher proportion of Catholic women in the Northeast and the relatively high proportion of black women in the South. However, the same pattern of regional differences is observed when Catholic, Protestant, and white women are examined separately, although the pattern is sharply diminished among black women (data not

Table A. Number of women who first had intercourse during the years 1965–79, and mean age at first intercourse, by year of first intercourse and race: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race	Year of first intercourse		
	1965–69	1970–74	1975–79
	Number of women		
All races ¹	9,283	11,317	10,266
White	7,831	9,537	8,484
Black	1,165	1,492	1,423
	Mean age		
All races ¹	19.0 (0.1)	18.6 (0.1)	18.2 (0.1)
White	19.2 (0.2)	18.8 (0.2)	18.3 (0.1)
Black	17.7 (0.2)	17.0 (0.1)	16.9 (0.1)

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

NOTE: Standard errors of means shown in parentheses.

Table B. Number of women 18–44 years of age and percent who first had sexual intercourse by age 18 years, by educational attainment, race, and Hispanic origin: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Educational attainment	Race			Hispanic origin	
	All women ¹	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Number of women in thousands					
All levels	48,977	41,248	6,164	3,892	45,084
Less than 12 years	8,534	6,573	1,602	1,825	6,709
12 years	20,077	17,149	2,466	1,157	18,920
13 years or more	20,366	17,525	2,096	910	19,455
Percent who had intercourse by age 18					
All levels	40.9	37.8	63.8	40.9	40.9
Less than 12 years	70.4	68.5	82.3	50.0	75.9
12 years	42.9	39.8	64.1	41.5	42.9
13 years or more	26.7	24.5	49.2	21.8	26.9

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

shown). Differences by region in the percent who had ever had intercourse by the time of the interview were small and not statistically significant.

Never married women

Not surprisingly, marital status is a very important determinant of the likelihood of having ever had sexual intercourse. All of the ever married women had been sexually active at some time (data not shown), compared with about three-fifths of never married women. The percent of never married women who had ever had intercourse generally increased with age, from 30 percent among never married women aged 15–17 years and 43 percent among women aged 15–19 years to 73 percent among women aged 20–24 years and 86 percent of women aged 25–34 years (table 5). Among never married women 35–44 years of age, the percent who had ever had intercourse was only 67 percent. This decline at the oldest age group was observed for white women but not for black women. The following two possible factors may contribute to this lower percent in the oldest age group: (1) Women in this age group may have been less likely than women in the younger age groups to have had premarital sex (as shown later), and (2) to the extent that marriage is selective of women who do become sexually active, women who reach the ages of 35–44 years without having married may be disproportionately likely to lead sexually inactive lives.

In all other respects, the timing of first sexual intercourse among never married women (tables 5 and 6) is very similar to that observed for all women (tables 3 and 4). Never married women were less likely to have begun having intercourse by all ages over 18 years, but the pattern of differences by race, origin, and all characteristics shown in table 6 is the same as that observed for women of all marital statuses.

First marriage

Although the majority of never married women have had sexual intercourse at some time, sustained exposure to the risk of pregnancy begins for many at the time of the first marriage. First marriage also signals for many the beginning of family

building. About 4 out of 5 births occur to married women,¹⁰ and most births that do not occur to married women are unintended.¹⁹ The strong association between marriage and fertility is shown in table C. Women who had never married had borne, on the average, far fewer children than ever married women had, both in their lifetimes (children ever born) and in the most recent 5 years. Fertility in the most recent 5 years was highest for currently married women. The mean number of births expected in the future, by contrast, was highest for never married women, most of whom had not yet begun having children.

In 1982, nearly two-thirds of women 15–44 years of age had ever married: 11 percent had married by age 18 years, 32 percent by age 20 years, and 59 percent by age 25 years (table 7). The percent ever married in 1982 increased with age, from 7 percent among women 15–19 years of age to 45 percent among women 20–24 years, 76 percent among women 25–29 years, 88 percent among women 30–34 years, and 93 to 95 percent among women 35–44 years.

The data for 5-year age groups show a decline in the pace of first marriage, particularly among the younger age groups.

Table C. Number of women 15–44 years of age and mean numbers of children ever born, births in the 5 years before interview, and additional children expected, by current marital status: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Item	Current marital status		
	Never married	Currently married	Formerly married
Number of women in thousands	19,164	28,231	6,704
Mean number of children ever born .....	.23 (.02)	1.89 (.04)	1.96 (.08)
Mean number of births during 5 years before interview .....	.11 (.01)	.51 (.01)	.28 (.02)
Mean number of additional births intended	1.98 (.03)	.60 (.02)	.46 (.05)

NOTE: Standard errors of means shown in parentheses.

For example, the percent marrying by age 18 years declined from 14 percent among women 25–29 years of age to 8 percent among women aged 20–24 years. The percent marrying by age 20 years was 38 among women aged 25–29 years, compared with 26 among women aged 20–24 years. This decline is consistent with the rapid increase in the median age of bride at first marriage observed in the marriage-registration area since the mid-1970's (figure 5).

The slowing of the pace of first marriages occurred among both white women and black women, but it appears to be more marked among black women. For example, whereas white women aged 20–24 years were about three-fifths as likely to

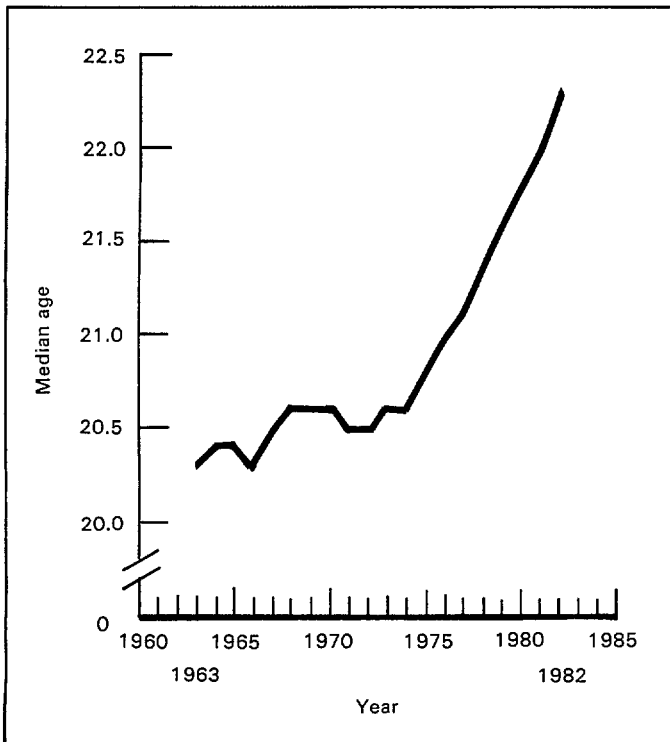


Figure 5. Median age of bride at first marriage: Marriage-registration area, 1963–82

have married by age 18 years, compared with white women aged 40–44 years, black women aged 20–24 years were only about one-fifth as likely to have married by that age, compared with black women aged 40–44 years.

Black women were less likely than white women to have married by age 18 years or over and were less likely to have married by the survey date. One out of 3 white women aged 15–44 years had married by age 20 years, and 2 out of 3 had married by the time of the survey. By contrast, only 1 out of 5 black women had married by age 20 years and only one-half by the survey date. A similar difference by race in the percent marrying by age 20 years is observed when the comparison is limited to women aged 20–44 years at the survey (table D). However, this difference is largest among women who had completed fewer than 12 years of school (among whom 36 percent of black women and 68 percent of white women had married by age 20 years), and nonexistent among women who had completed 13 or more years of school. Many of the women in the highest category of education were likely to still be attending school at age 20 years. Race differences in first marriage reemerged, but were smaller among women aged 25–44 years who had completed 13 or more years of school, among whom 61 percent of black women and 70 percent of white women had married by age 25 years (data not shown).

Differences by Hispanic origin in the timing of first marriage were not statistically significant (table 7). However, the data in table D suggest that Hispanic women 20–44 years of age who had completed 12 years of school were less likely than comparable non-Hispanic women to have married by age 20 years.

The timing of first marriage varied according to the characteristics of the families in which women grew up (table 8). Women who still lived with both parents at age 14 years were less likely than women who lived with one or neither parent to have married by age 18 years but were more likely to have married by the survey date. Women whose mother and/or father completed 13 or more years of school were much less likely to have married by each birthday shown and by the

Table D. Number of women 20–44 years of age and percent who first married by age 20 years, by educational attainment, race, and Hispanic origin: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Educational attainment	Race			Hispanic origin	
	All women ¹	White	Black	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Number of women in thousands					
All levels	44,578	37,552	5,569	3,506	41,072
Less than 12 years	7,470	5,780	1,371	1,642	5,828
12 years	17,614	15,039	2,175	994	16,620
13 years or more	19,494	16,733	2,023	870	18,624
Percent first married by age 20 years					
All levels	36.8	38.6	26.5	40.2	36.5
Less than 12 years	61.4	68.0	35.9	55.2	63.1
12 years	46.4	49.0	28.3	34.4	47.1
13 years or more	18.6	19.1	18.3	*18.6	18.7

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

survey date, than women whose parents completed less than 12 years of school.

The woman's own educational attainment also was strongly associated with the timing of first marriage. Women who completed fewer than 12 years of school were more likely than women with more education to have married by age 18 years. Women with fewer than 12 years of school appeared *less* likely than women with 12 years of school to marry before the 20th and later birthdays (table 8), but this pattern reflects the preponderance of women aged 15–19 years in the lowest category of education. When attention is restricted to women 20–44 years of age, as in table D, the percent marrying by age 20 years is about three times as high for women with fewer than 12 years of school as for women with 13 years of school or more.

The percent ever married by the time of the survey and by each birthday shown was lower for Catholic than for Protestant women and lower for women living in the Northeast than in other regions. The lower percent married among Catholic women was observed in each region of the country, and the lower percent married among residents of the Northeast was apparent within each racial and religious group (data not shown).

Timing of first intercourse in relation to marriage

It is clear from the findings presented in tables 3–8 that many women aged 15–44 years in 1982 began their sexual experience before they married for the first time. For example, although only 11 percent of women had married by age 18 (table 7), 40 percent had had intercourse by that age (table 3). Three out of 5 never married women had had sexual experience by the time of the NSFG interview (table 5).

Less than one-third of ever married women (31 percent) delayed their first intercourse until marriage (table 9). About one-quarter began having intercourse at least 3 years before they married, one-quarter began 1 or 2 years before marriage, and one-fifth began less than a year before marriage.

Because these data are limited to ever married women, they represent only the experience of those women who had married by the survey date. Statistics for the youngest age groups are especially affected by this problem because they refer only to women who marry at an early age. The proportion who delay sexual intercourse until marriage is likely to be even lower for women who marry at later ages because these women will have experienced a longer period of time during which premarital sex could have occurred.

Despite this limitation, the percent of women who delayed having intercourse until marriage declined dramatically from the oldest to the youngest age groups. Although differences between adjacent age groups were significant only in the case of women aged 30–34 and 35–39 years, differences between non-adjacent groups were statistically significant and consistently indicated a decline. The percent who waited until marriage to begin intercourse declined from 47 percent among women aged 40–44 years, to 17 percent among women aged 15–24 years.

Compared with older ever married women, those in the youngest age groups also were likely to have delayed marriage for a longer period after beginning intercourse. For example,

23 percent of women aged 15–24 years married 3 or 4 years after their first sexual intercourse, compared with 7 percent of women aged 40–44 years. This means that younger ever married women had had a longer period of premarital exposure to the risk of pregnancy, on the average, than their older counterparts. This lengthening of the period of premarital sexual activity reflects not only the earlier age at which women in the younger age groups first had intercourse (table 3) but also the older ages at which they married (table 7).

The timing of first sexual intercourse in relation to marriage differed sharply by race, and somewhat less so by Hispanic origin. Compared with ever married white women, ever married black women were less likely to have delayed sexual intercourse until marriage (33 percent of white women compared with 9 percent of black women) and more likely to have experienced 3 or more years of premarital sexual activity (23 percent of white women compared with 49 percent of black women). Differences by age in the percent of women who delayed intercourse until marriage generally followed the same pattern among both black women and white women, but the absolute differences were smaller and in most cases nonsignificant among black women. The data suggest that Hispanic women may have been more likely than non-Hispanic women to postpone intercourse until marriage (40 compared with 30 percent, table 9).

In contrast to the sharp differences by age and race in the timing of first sexual intercourse and marriage, differences by the social and economic characteristics shown in table 10 are relatively small, and few are significant even at the 10-percent level. This similarity contrasts with the differences (observed in earlier tables) in the proportions who began having intercourse and who married by specific ages, by the same characteristics. These results suggest that although these social characteristics may have a strong effect on the age at which these important life cycle events occur, they have little effect on the relative timing of first intercourse and marriage.

Current marital status

Despite the prevalence of premarital sexual intercourse, a woman's marital status continues to have an important effect on her exposure to sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and childbearing. Therefore, the distribution by marital status of women of childbearing age is a potentially important predictor of fertility levels in a population. In this report, marital status refers to the woman's formal marital status. Women living with men to whom they are not married are classified according to whether they have ever been legally married. However, women who are separated from their husbands are included with divorced and widowed women in the category "formerly married." This is done because the risk of pregnancy and childbearing is lower for these women than for other currently married women who are still living with their spouses.

Approximately one-half (52 percent) of women 15–44 years of age were currently married at the time of the NSFG interview (table 11). About 35 percent had never married and 12 percent were formerly married. Divorced women (8 percent) made up the majority of the formerly married; and separated

women (4 percent) were nearly all of the remainder. Widowhood was rare (less than one percent), reflecting the low death rates for persons under age 50 years in the United States.

Because the majority of women first marry in their late teens and twenties (table 7), it is not surprising that the distribution of women by marital status differs dramatically over these age groups and varies relatively little among women in age groups over 30 years. The percent currently married rose from 6 percent among women aged 15–19 years to 39 percent among those aged 20–24 years and to 69 percent among those aged 30–34 years (table 11). Among women aged 40–44 years, 75 percent of women were currently married. Never married women were a vast majority among women aged 15–19 years (93 percent). By ages 20–24 years, however, they constituted only 55 percent of all women; by ages 30–34 years, only 12 percent; and by ages 40–44 years, 5 percent. The percents of women who were formerly married (and within that category, divorced) rose from age 15–19 to age 30–34. Less than 1 percent of women aged 15–19 years were formerly married, compared with 19 percent of women aged 30–34 years and 20 percent of women aged 40–44 years.

Black and white women differed sharply by marital status. Black women 15–44 years of age were much more likely than white women to have never married (51 percent compared with 33 percent) or to have been formerly married (19 compared with 12 percent), and they were much less likely to be currently married (31 compared with 56 percent). Although similar percents of black and white women were divorced (8 percent), black women were three times as likely to be separated (10 compared with 3 percent). Separation accounted for over one-half of all formerly married black women, compared with only about one-quarter of all formerly married white women. The differences by race in the percents never married reflect the lower rates of first marriage observed among black women (table 7). Differences in the percents formerly married and separated suggest that when black women do marry, they are less likely than white women to remain married and less likely than white women to end their marriages in divorce.

The distribution by marital status also differed according to most of the social characteristics shown in table 12. Many of these differences reflect differences in the rate of first marriages observed previously in table 8. Women who lived with both parents at age 14 years were more likely than women who lived with neither or only one parent to be currently married at the survey date. The percents currently married and formerly married were lowest among women whose mothers completed 13 years of school or more and highest among women whose mothers completed fewer than 12 years. Father's education was related to marital status in the same way. The relationship between marital status and the woman's own educational attainment is confounded by the concentration of young women in the lowest educational category. If this category is disregarded, women with higher levels of educational attainment (13 years or more) were less likely to be currently married and more likely to be never married than women with lower levels (12 years).

The distribution by marital status differed sharply by level of family income. Women with family incomes of less than 150 percent of the poverty level were less likely than women with

higher income levels to be currently married and more likely to be never or formerly married. These differences may reflect the effect of marriage on economic resources as well as the effect of economic resources on marriage. Currently married women are more likely than unmarried women to belong to two-earner households and to households containing male earners (who earn more, on the average, than female earners) and, hence, are less likely to be poor. Only 16 percent of currently married women had incomes of less than 150 percent of the poverty level, compared with 34 percent of never married women and 41 percent of formerly married women (data not shown).

With respect to religious affiliation, Catholic women were less likely than Protestant women to be currently married and more likely to be never married. Women living in the Northeast were more likely than women living in other regions to have never married, less likely than women living in the Midwest and South to be currently married, and less likely than women living in the West to be formerly married. Women living in the West were more likely than those in the South and Northeast to be divorced. Regional differences in marital status were apparent among Protestant, Catholic, and white women when these groups were examined separately, but they were smaller among black women (data not shown).

The differences by marital status between women who are in the labor force and those who are not may largely reflect the greater need of unmarried women than of married women to earn their own living. Because of this, women who are in the labor force are more likely than women who are not in the labor force to be formerly married and less likely to be currently married.

Just as current marital status affects a woman's exposure to the risk of pregnancy and fertility, fertility is affected by a woman's past marital history—that is, whether she has experienced marital dissolution and whether she has remarried. Marital disruption tends to reduce fertility by transferring women into a nonmarried state; and remarriage, at least for white women, is often associated with renewed childbearing.²⁰

Among ever married women 15–44 years of age in 1982, 84 percent had married only once, and 14 percent had married two times (table 13). The remainder—about 2 percent—had married three or more times. The percent married once was highest among women in the youngest age group (15–24 years). Among black women aged 25–44 years, that percent tended to decline as age increased, although differences between adjacent age groups were not always statistically significant. Among white women aged 25–44 years, the percent married once only did not vary by age. Considering all age groups together, black women and white women and Hispanic and non-Hispanic women were similar with respect to number of marriages.

About 2 out of 3 ever married women were currently married and had been married once only (68 percent); that is, they had never experienced a marital disruption. As shown in table 13, this percent was higher among white women than black women; and in both racial groups, it was highest among women in the youngest age group (15–24 years). Among black women aged 25–44 years, the percent still married to the first husband tended to decrease with each older age group, although differences between adjacent age groups were not always statis-

tically significant. By contrast, white women aged 40–44 years were no less likely than were their counterparts 25–29 years of age to have remained married to their first husbands despite having presumably been exposed to the risk of dissolution for a considerably longer period of time. This reflects the increases in divorce rates over the past decades (figure 6). By the time women who were aged 25–29 years in 1982 reach the end of their childbearing years, considerably fewer than 70 percent will be likely to have remained married to their first husbands.

The percent of ever married women who were still married to their first husband was significantly associated with several of the characteristics shown in table 14. This percent was higher among ever married women who were still living with both parents at age 14 years (that is, women whose parents' marriage was still intact at that age), than among women who were not. It was higher among women whose mother or father had completed high school than among women whose mother or father had not completed high school. The percent still married to the first husband also was associated with the woman's own educational attainment: 56 percent of those who completed fewer than 12 years of school, compared with 73 percent of those who had completed some college, were still in their first marriages. Catholic women were more likely than Protestant women to have remained married to their first husbands, and women living in the Northeast and Midwest were more likely than women living in the West to have done so. The apparent differences according to labor force status probably reflect the effect of marital status on the likelihood of working outside the home rather than the reverse. Differences in the percent of ever married women married only once paralleled those in the percent still married to their first husband, but they were generally smaller and less often statistically significant.

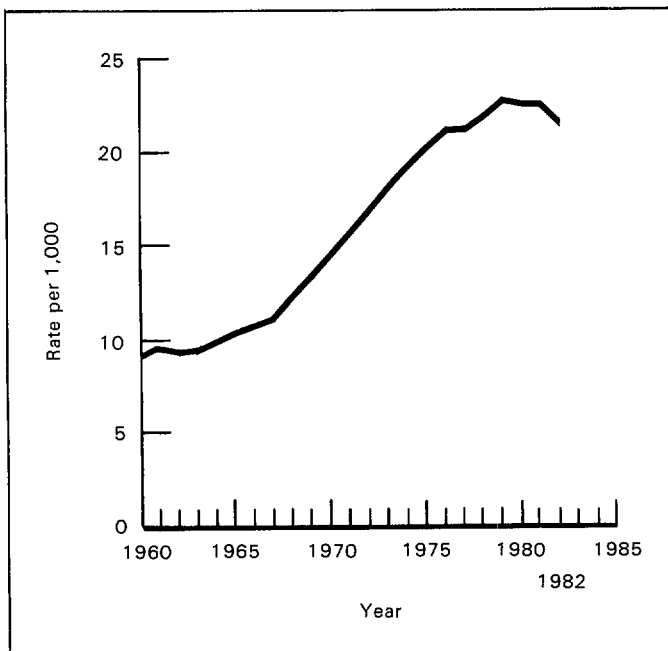


Figure 6. Rate of divorces and annulments per 1,000 married women 15 years of age or over: United States, 1960–82

Informal marriage

In recent years, increasing numbers of couples have chosen to live together informally without being legally married. According to estimates from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the number of such couples more than tripled, from 523,000 in 1970 to 1,891,000 in 1983.⁸ These estimates refer to the number of households consisting of two (and only two) unrelated adults of opposite sex, with or without children under age 15 years present. Because they include some people who live together as friends, roommates, or lodgers, and exclude some couples who live together informally as a couple but share their household with other adults, the estimates capture only approximately the population of couples who live together as unmarried couples. In Cycle III of the National Survey of Family Growth, direct information was collected for the first time on informal marriage with a national sample of women. Women were asked directly whether they were “married, not married but living together with a partner, widowed, divorced or . . . never been married.” Estimates derived from this direct question were generally comparable to those published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, although in some subgroups of the population the estimates differed.²¹

Researchers view informal marriage alternatively as a prelude to marriage, in which partners “try out” being married before creating a legal (and less easily dissolved) union, and as a substitute for marriage, in which partners live together without any intention of legally marrying.²² In any case, informal marriage has a profound effect on the woman's exposure to the risk of pregnancy (as embodied in such factors as frequency of intercourse) and also on women's intentions regarding childbearing in the near future.²¹

In 1982, about 6 percent of unmarried women 15–44 years of age were informally living with a partner (table 15). About 5 percent of never married women and 9 percent of formerly married women were informally married. The percent informally married was highest among women 25–29 years of age (16 percent) and those 30–34 years of age (11 percent) and lowest among those in the youngest and oldest age groups. White unmarried women were more likely than black unmarried women to be living with a partner, particularly in the age groups 25–34 years. However, when all women 15–44 years were considered, including married and unmarried women, a similar proportion of black and white women (3 percent) were informally married (data not shown). Unmarried women of Hispanic origin were about 3 times as likely as other women to be informally married.

The percent informally married varied little according to the woman's living arrangements at age 14 years or by religious affiliation (table 16), but it was associated with level of parental education. Women whose mothers and/or fathers had completed fewer than 12 years of school were more likely than those whose parents completed more years of school to be living with a partner. The woman's own educational attainment was not significantly associated with informal marriage for all age groups combined; but when women 15–19 years (many of whom had not completed their education) were excluded, women who had not completed high school were more likely to be living with a partner than those who had completed high school.²¹

Women with family incomes at least 1½ times the poverty level were more likely to be informally married than women with lower incomes. This probably occurs because families headed by two adults—whether formally or informally married—have broader financial resources than families containing only one adult. Informal marriage was more common in the West than in the Northeast or South.

Frequency of sexual intercourse

Marital status and the formation and dissolution of sexual unions are relevant to the fertility levels found in a population primarily because they affect women's exposure to the risk of pregnancy. One of the most basic determinants of this risk is whether the woman has sexual intercourse and, if she does, how frequently. All other things being equal, women who have intercourse more frequently than other women run a higher risk of conception, because they are more likely to have intercourse during their fertile periods.²³ Given the high levels of contraceptive practice in the United States,²⁴ modest variations in frequency of intercourse may have relatively minor effects on fertility levels. However, when comparing the fertility of married and unmarried populations, the level of sexual activity is likely to be a very important factor.

About 9 out of 10 women 15–44 years of age who had ever had intercourse were sexually active in the 3 months before their interview, and this proportion did not vary markedly by age, although it tended to be highest among women 25–29 years of age and lowest in the youngest and oldest age groups (table 17). Among women who had had intercourse in the 3 months before the interview, over two-thirds reported having intercourse once a week or more, and over two-fifths said they had intercourse at least several times a week. The distribution by frequency of intercourse also tended to vary by age. For example, women aged 15–19 years tended to be more likely than women in other age groups to have had intercourse only once a month and less likely to have had intercourse several times a week. Women aged 25–29 years were more likely than either younger or older women to have had intercourse several times a week. These data suggest a pattern whereby intercourse becomes more frequent as age increases, reaches a peak in the age group 25–29 years, and thereafter declines.

Among women who have ever had intercourse, marital status has a profound effect on both the likelihood of having had intercourse in a recent period (the 3 months before the interview) and on the frequency of intercourse in that period. Virtually all currently married women had had sexual intercourse in the 3 months before the interview, compared with three-quarters of unmarried women who had ever had intercourse. The percent recently sexually active did not vary by age among currently married women, but, among unmarried women, women in the youngest age groups were more likely than women in the oldest age groups to have had intercourse recently. Never-married women were more likely than formerly married women to have had intercourse in the last 3 months (77 compared with 71 percent, data not shown); but among those who had been recently sexually active, the frequency

of intercourse was similar and followed a similar pattern by age.

Married women who had had intercourse in the 3 months before the interview reported higher frequencies of intercourse than comparable unmarried women. Currently married women were more likely than women who were not currently married to have had intercourse several times a week (42 percent compared with 29 percent of unmarried women) and less likely to have had intercourse once a month or 2 to 3 times a month. Frequency of intercourse appears to decline with age among currently married women—for example, the percent having had intercourse several times a week or more was 62 percent among currently married women 15–19 years of age, compared with 35 percent among women 40–44 years of age. By contrast, among unmarried women, frequency is highest among women aged 25–29 years. The percent having intercourse several times a week or more is 26 among women 15–19 years, 50 among women 25–29 years, and 35 among women 30–44 years (calculated from table 17).

To summarize, the data indicate that currently married women were virtually certain to have had intercourse in the 3 months before interview, regardless of age, but their frequency of intercourse tended to decline with advancing age. Unmarried women were less likely to have had intercourse recently, particularly as they became older; among those who had had recent intercourse, frequency appeared to increase with age up to ages 25–29 years, but it returned to a lower level after age 30 years.

Because the distributions of black and white women by marital status differ substantially (table 11) and because marital status has a strong effect on frequency of intercourse, racial differences in frequency of intercourse should not be examined without reference to marital status differences. Overall, similar proportions of black women and white women had had intercourse in the 3 months before the interview; among women who had been recently sexually active, black women had lower frequencies of intercourse (table 18). However, among currently married women, there were no differences by race with respect to frequency of intercourse or the likelihood of having had intercourse recently (table E). Among unmarried women, black women were more likely than white women to have had intercourse in the last 3 months (84 compared with 72 percent); but, if they had had intercourse recently, they were less likely to have had intercourse frequently. For example, the percent having intercourse several times a week was 22 among black unmarried women and 31 percent among white unmarried women. These data indicate that among unmarried women, black women were more likely than white women to have had intercourse infrequently (less than once a week), whereas white women were more likely to have had it either frequently or not at all.

The background factors shown in table 19 had little effect on the proportion of women having had intercourse in the 3 months before the interview and on the frequency of intercourse. For all the groups shown, the percent who had had intercourse in the last 3 months varied between 87 and 92 percent, and the percent distributions by frequency were also generally similar.

Table E. Number of women 15–44 years of age who ever had sexual intercourse, percent who had intercourse in the last 3 months, and percent distribution of women who had intercourse in the last 3 months by frequency of sexual intercourse, according to marital status, race, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Marital status, race, and age	Number in thousands who ever had intercourse	Percent who had intercourse in the last 3 months	Frequency of intercourse					
			Total	Once a month	2–3 times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day
CURRENTLY MARRIED			Percent distribution					
White								
15–44 years	25,195	99.7	100.0	4.3	17.8	30.7	41.8	5.4
15–24 years	4,323	100.0	100.0	*3.4	11.9	27.7	43.7	13.3
25–34 years	11,457	99.9	100.0	4.3	16.4	29.4	45.6	4.3
35–44 years	9,414	99.2	100.0	4.9	22.3	33.6	36.2	3.0
Black								
15–44 years	2,130	98.1	100.0	4.4	19.6	25.4	44.3	6.3
15–24 years	328	97.2	100.0	*4.2	21.4	19.0	45.7	*9.6
25–34 years	1,025	97.6	100.0	*3.8	17.4	22.9	47.5	8.4
35–44 years	778	99.0	100.0	*5.3	21.7	31.2	39.7	*2.2
NOT CURRENTLY MARRIED								
White								
15–44 years	13,836	72.2	100.0	14.8	23.6	24.1	31.3	6.2
15–24 years	6,669	78.5	100.0	16.8	27.4	25.8	25.5	4.6
25–34 years	4,627	74.3	100.0	10.8	20.5	20.9	39.4	8.4
35–44 years	2,540	51.8	100.0	17.1	16.6	26.0	33.4	*6.8
Black								
15–44 years	4,133	84.3	100.0	20.1	32.3	21.8	22.4	3.3
15–24 years	1,879	87.5	100.0	21.4	33.4	23.5	18.7	*3.1
25–34 years	1,421	83.0	100.0	15.9	34.4	18.5	27.7	*3.5
35–44 years	833	79.7	100.0	24.7	26.1	23.6	22.4	*3.3

Marital dissolution and remarriage

During the 1960's and 1970's, divorce rates in the United States more than doubled, from 9.2 divorces per 1,000 married women aged 15 years or over in 1960 to 22.8 in 1979³ (figure 6). In 1982, nearly one-third (32 percent) of ever married women 15–44 years of age had experienced the dissolution of their first marriage through divorce, separation, or death of the husband (table 20). Of these first marriages, 78 percent had been dissolved by divorce, 15 percent by separation, and only 7 percent by death (figure 7).

The proportion of these women whose marriages dissolve ultimately will be higher, because women whose first marriages were still intact at the time of the survey continue to be at risk of divorce, separation, or widowhood. Moreover, women who first married many years before the survey had had more time in which to end their marriages than those who married only recently. In order to control for length of exposure to the risk of disruption and to analyze trends in the proportions experiencing dissolution, women were tabulated by when their first marriages began—that is, by 5-year marriage cohorts (table 20).

The percent of first marriages that dissolved within 5 years of marriage was about twice as high for women married during the years 1975–79 as for women married during the years

1960–64 (22 compared with 11 percent, table 20). This is true even though some women who married during the years 1975–79 first married less than 5 years before the interview date, and they had not completed 5 full years of exposure to the chance of dissolution. This incomplete experience for the 1975–79 marriage cohort is indicated in table 20 by the percents in italics. The higher levels of dissolution for women marrying in the late 1970's rather than in the early 1960's reflect, of course, the substantial rise in divorce rates during the period 1960–79. Estimates of 5-year dissolution rates for the 1960–79 marriage cohorts shown in table 20 are generally consistent with and show the same pattern as those estimated from divorce-registration data.²⁵

Marriages of black women were dissolved at a faster pace than marriages of white women at each duration of marriage. By the time of the interview, about 30 percent of white ever married women, compared with 48 percent of black ever married women, had experienced the dissolution of their first marriage. These differences have narrowed considerably over time. Differences by race in the percent of first marriages that were dissolved within 5 years and by the time of interview were large and statistically significant among women first married in 1960–64, but they were smaller and nonsignificant among those first married in 1975–79. The increase in marital dissolu-

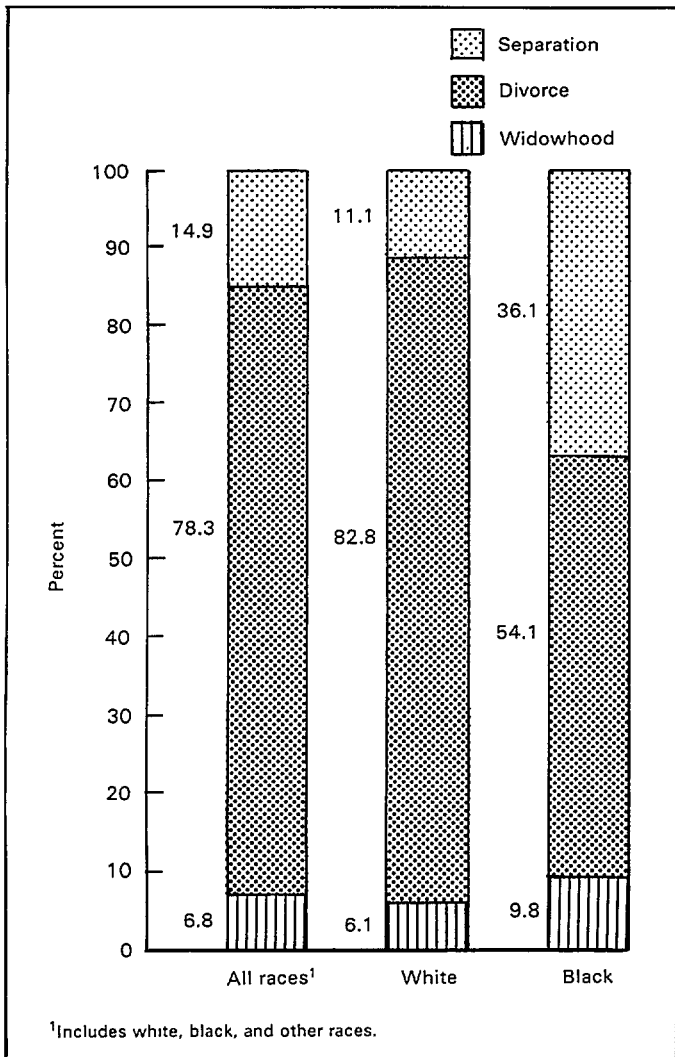


Figure 7. Percent distribution of dissolved first marriages of women 15-44 years of age by type of dissolution, according to race: United States, 1982

tion during the 1960-79 period appears to have been confined to marriages involving white women. Black women first married in the years 1960-64 were no less likely than those first married in the late 1970's to experience marital dissolution.

The pace of marital dissolution also was associated with several of the background characteristics shown in table 21. The percents who had had a marital dissolution within 5 years of first marriage and by the time of the survey were higher for women who had lived with one or neither of their parents at age 14 years than for women who had lived with both, suggesting that marital disruption in the parental household tends to repeat itself in the daughter's own life. Marital dissolution was not significantly associated with parental education, but it was with the woman's own educational attainment. About 23 percent of women who completed fewer than 12 years of school had experienced marital dissolution within 5 years of marriage, and 44 percent had done so by the time of interview. Among women with 13 or more years of completed schooling, the percents were lower—14 and 27, respectively.

The percent experiencing marital disruption within 5 years of marriage did not differ by religious affiliation; but by the

time of the survey, the first marriages of Protestant women were more likely than those of Catholic women to have dissolved. Marital dissolution was more common in the West than in the Northeast and Midwest, both at the time of the survey and within 5 years of marriage. Women in the labor force at the time of the survey were more likely than women who were not to have experienced the dissolution of their first marriage. Because labor force status is measured as of the time of the survey, this may reflect the effect of dissolution on entry into the labor force, as well as the effect of labor force participation (and the economic independence it affords women) on the likelihood of dissolution.²⁶

Age at first marriage had a pronounced effect on the likelihood of dissolution. Women first married at age 19 years or younger were about 60 percent more likely than women who married at a later age to have experienced a marital dissolution within 5 years of marriage, and they were close to 80 percent more likely to have experienced marital dissolution by the time of the survey.

As divorce rates have risen, data from the marriage-registration area have shown an increase in the number of remarriages involving women of childbearing age during recent decades, but the rate of remarriage per 1,000 widowed or divorced women aged 25-44 years has declined⁵ (figure 8). In 1982, about 61 percent of women 15-44 years of age whose first marriage was dissolved by divorce or death had remarried (table 22). Over four-fifths of women who were divorced or widowed in the 1960's had remarried by the time of the survey, compared with only about one-half of the women divorced or widowed during the period 1975-79. This reflects the longer period of time in which the former group of women could have remarried, and it may also reflect the decline in the likelihood

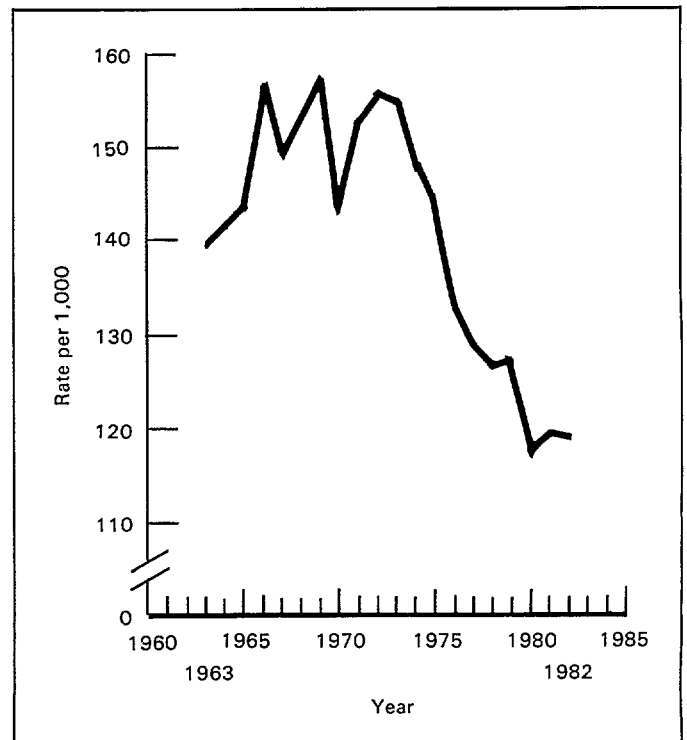


Figure 8. Rate of remarriages per 1,000 widowed or divorced women 25-44 years of age: Marriage-registration area, 1963-82

of remarriage between the 1960's and late 1970's. Women whose first marriages ended in the 1970's were less likely than women whose first marriages ended in the 1960's to remarry within 2 to 5 years. However, women whose first marriages ended in the 1970's were probably older, on the average, at the time their marriages ended than women who were divorced or were widowed in the 1960's. This difference in age is likely because the survey sample represented only those women who were divorced and widowed in the 1960's and who were age 44 years or younger in 1982. These women were likely to be relatively young at widowhood or divorce and were therefore more likely to remarry. Because of this limitation of the survey sample and because none of the differences in the percents remarrying within 2 to 5 years are significant, these results by themselves can not conclusively demonstrate a decline in the likelihood of remarriage. As in table 20, some of the percents in table 22 are biased downward, in this case because not all women whose marriages ended during a given period of time had completed the indicated number of years between dissolution and interview. These percents are italicized.

The likelihood of remarriage among divorced or widowed women was significantly lower for black women than for white women. Considering all marriage cohorts together, 62 percent of white women and 48 percent of black women had remarried by the time of the survey. Similar differences appear in the cumulative proportions remarrying within 2 to 5 years after divorce or death and for 3 of the 4 marriage dissolution cohorts.

Women whose first marriage ended in separation only are

not included in table 22 because they are not legally able to remarry. However, if all women whose first marriages dissolved are considered, including women whose first marriage ended in separation only, the difference by race in the percent who remarried is even larger (31 percent of black women compared with 55 percent of white women). This is because the first marriages of black women are more likely than those of white women to end in separation only. As shown in figure 7, 36 percent of dissolved first marriages of black women ended in separation only, compared with 11 percent of dissolved first marriages of white women. Thus the lower percent of divorced or widowed black women who remarried is compounded by a higher proportion of black women who are no longer married but are not legally free to remarry.

Remarriage was more common among women who were relatively young—24 years or less—when their first marriage dissolved than among women who were older (table 23). About 58 percent of the former group, compared with only 39 percent of the latter, had remarried within 5 years of divorce or death of the spouse. Remarriage within 5 years was also more common among women living in the West or South than among those living in the Northeast and among women who were not in the labor force at the time of the survey than among women who were. This latter difference is significant at the 10-percent level only, and it probably reflects the effect of remarriage on labor force participation as well as the effect of labor force participation on the likelihood of remarriage. None of the other characteristics shown in table 23 were significantly related to the cumulative proportions remarrying.

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Table 1. Number of women 15–24 years of age and cumulative percent who began dating before reaching selected ages, by race, Hispanic origin, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and age	Number of women in thousands	Exact age							
		13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years	20 years	All ages
All races and origins ¹		Cumulative percent							
15–24 years	20,150	4.6	14.2	31.0	54.5	81.3	88.8	93.2	93.7
15–19 years	9,521	6.0	17.7	37.3	62.2	84.3	88.1	...	88.9
15–17 years	5,122	6.4	20.4	41.0	66.0	80.1	...	...	81.7
18–19 years	4,399	5.6	14.6	33.1	57.7	89.1	95.6	...	97.2
20–24 years	10,629	3.3	11.0	25.2	47.7	78.6	89.4	97.1	98.0
RACE									
White									
15–24 years	16,670	4.7	14.9	32.4	56.3	83.6	89.8	93.8	94.3
15–19 years	7,815	6.4	19.0	39.2	63.6	85.8	88.8	...	89.6
15–17 years	4,119	6.6	21.7	43.5	67.5	81.4	...	...	82.8
18–19 years	3,695	6.1	15.9	34.4	59.2	90.6	95.5	...	97.2
20–24	8,855	3.2	11.2	26.5	49.9	81.8	90.8	97.6	98.5
Black									
15–24 years	2,888	3.7	10.5	22.2	44.7	72.0	86.1	92.7	93.0
15–19 years	1,416	4.9	12.5	26.4	53.0	77.1	85.5	...	86.2
15–17 years	821	6.2	16.1	31.2	59.9	75.6	...	...	78.2
18–19 years	595	*3.1	*7.6	19.9	43.5	79.2	95.6	...	97.3
20–24 years	1,472	*2.6	8.5	18.1	36.7	67.0	86.6	99.0	99.5
Hispanic origin									
Hispanic	1,697	*3.0	*10.2	29.2	55.1	72.0	81.4	86.6	86.6
Non-Hispanic	18,452	4.7	14.5	31.1	54.5	82.2	89.4	93.8	94.3

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

Table 2. Number of women 15–24 years of age and cumulative percent who began dating before reaching selected ages, by selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Characteristic of respondent	Number of women in thousands	Exact age							
		13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years	20 years	All ages
All women ¹	20,150	4.6	14.2	31.0	54.5	81.3	88.8	93.2	93.7
Cumulative percent									
Living arrangements at age 14 years									
Living with both parents	14,775	4.1	13.2	29.1	52.6	80.3	88.1	93.1	93.7
Living with one or neither parent	5,375	5.9	16.8	36.1	59.7	84.0	90.6	93.5	93.6
Respondent's mother's education									
Less than 12 years	5,213	4.7	12.4	28.4	53.5	80.3	89.1	93.0	93.4
12 years	9,748	4.2	14.8	30.7	54.0	82.5	88.7	93.4	93.8
13 years or more	5,189	5.3	14.8	34.1	56.5	80.0	88.6	93.1	93.8
Respondent's father's education									
Less than 12 years	6,064	3.9	11.2	28.3	52.5	81.1	88.8	93.5	93.6
12 years	7,594	5.2	16.0	31.6	52.5	80.5	87.6	92.7	93.0
13 years or more	6,492	4.5	14.8	32.7	58.8	82.4	90.1	93.6	94.5
Education									
Less than 12 years	7,816	5.7	18.7	38.4	62.2	80.6	84.8	86.0	86.0
12 years	6,835	4.2	11.9	25.9	51.6	83.3	92.2	98.3	98.3
13 years or more	5,498	*3.5	10.6	26.7	47.3	79.9	90.2	97.3	98.9
Religion									
Protestant	11,265	3.7	13.0	28.8	52.9	81.0	89.0	93.5	94.0
Catholic	7,074	5.0	14.8	32.3	56.0	81.7	88.8	92.6	93.2
Region									
Northeast	4,432	7.5	20.6	40.2	62.4	83.8	89.7	95.4	95.9
Midwest	5,360	*4.1	13.3	28.5	53.1	84.8	92.6	95.0	95.3
South	6,508	3.6	11.3	28.0	51.5	80.0	88.3	93.8	94.0
West	3,849	*3.7	12.8	28.8	52.5	75.6	83.2	87.4	88.4
Labor force status									
In labor force	10,375	4.3	12.7	28.0	50.3	81.3	90.3	96.0	96.7
Not in labor force	9,775	4.9	15.7	34.1	59.0	81.3	87.1	90.3	90.5

¹Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 3. Number of women 15–44 years of age and cumulative percent who ever had sexual intercourse before reaching selected ages, by race, Hispanic origin, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and age	Number of women in thousands	Exact age							
		15 years	17 years	18 years	19 years	20 years	22 years	25 years	All ages
All races and origins ¹		Cumulative percent							
15–44 years	54,099	7.5	26.7	40.1	55.1	65.7	77.6	84.0	86.3
15–19 years	9,521	11.8	34.0	42.4	46.3	...	...	...	46.9
20–24 years	10,629	9.7	32.9	48.3	64.7	73.8	82.8	...	85.4
25–29 years	10,263	8.7	29.4	47.4	65.7	78.0	90.1	95.2	96.7
30–34 years	9,381	4.8	20.0	34.4	52.3	67.3	86.3	95.1	98.0
35–39 years	7,893	4.5	20.2	31.1	48.0	62.6	79.6	93.2	97.9
40–44 years	6,412	*3.3	19.5	30.7	48.1	61.8	79.3	91.2	98.2
RACE									
White									
15–44 years	45,367	6.1	24.0	37.1	52.6	64.0	77.0	83.8	86.0
15–19 years	7,815	10.2	31.2	39.9	44.2	...	...	...	44.9
20–24 years	8,855	7.8	29.8	44.9	62.0	71.8	81.6	...	84.5
25–29 years	8,569	7.7	27.2	45.0	64.0	76.8	90.5	95.9	97.0
30–34 years	7,916	3.5	17.8	31.8	49.8	65.9	86.3	95.6	98.2
35–39 years	6,697	3.7	17.3	28.2	45.5	61.1	78.9	93.2	97.6
40–44 years	5,515	*1.9	16.5	27.0	44.3	59.2	78.2	91.0	98.3
Black									
15–44 years	6,985	16.6	45.9	61.4	74.2	80.9	86.7	88.8	89.7
15–19 years	1,416	19.8	49.1	56.7	58.7	...	...	...	58.9
20–24 years	1,472	20.7	52.2	70.7	84.2	88.5	92.8	...	93.2
25–29 years	1,335	14.9	47.4	68.7	83.1	92.4	95.5	97.7	98.6
30–34 years	1,144	13.6	37.7	53.9	71.5	81.5	94.4	98.2	98.8
35–39 years	884	12.5	38.7	53.9	70.3	81.4	92.8	96.9	99.4
40–44 years	734	15.1	46.0	59.7	76.4	85.4	92.5	96.7	99.7
HISPANIC ORIGIN									
Hispanic									
15–44 years	4,393	9.2	28.7	40.1	52.3	63.3	75.4	81.2	84.5
15–29 years	2,600	11.9	34.8	45.5	56.2	64.7	73.7	75.6	75.6
30–44 years	1,793	*5.2	19.9	32.4	46.6	61.2	78.0	89.2	97.5
Non-Hispanic									
15–44 years	49,706	7.4	26.6	40.1	55.3	65.9	77.8	84.3	86.4
15–29 years	27,813	9.8	31.8	46.2	59.6	67.0	74.1	76.8	77.3
30–44 years	21,893	4.2	19.9	32.3	50.0	64.5	82.5	93.8	98.0

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

Table 4. Number of women 15–44 years of age and cumulative percent who ever had sexual intercourse before reaching selected ages, by selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Characteristic of respondent	Number of women in thousands	Exact age							
		15 years	17 years	18 years	19 years	20 years	22 years	25 years	All ages
All women ¹	54,099	7.5	26.7	40.1	55.1	65.7	77.6	84.0	86.3
Cumulative percent									
Living arrangements at age 14 years									
Living with both parents	40,849	5.5	22.7	35.8	50.9	62.3	75.6	82.9	85.5
Living with one or neither parent	13,250	13.8	39.2	53.4	68.1	76.0	83.7	87.5	88.8
Respondent's mother's education									
Less than 12 years	18,846	10.0	33.6	48.4	64.5	74.6	85.1	90.4	92.7
12 years	23,982	6.7	23.6	37.0	52.1	63.4	75.8	82.0	84.3
13 years or more	11,271	5.1	21.9	32.8	45.7	55.7	69.0	77.6	79.9
Respondent's father's education									
Less than 12 years	20,505	9.3	33.0	47.0	63.7	73.7	84.2	89.4	91.6
12 years	19,381	7.7	23.9	37.4	52.4	64.2	76.6	82.8	85.0
13 years or more	14,214	4.6	21.6	33.8	46.4	56.1	69.4	77.9	80.5
Education									
Less than 12 years	13,465	16.4	46.2	56.1	63.1	66.7	69.2	71.1	71.8
12 years	20,257	5.9	25.2	43.0	62.8	73.6	85.4	89.6	91.6
13 years or more	20,377	3.3	15.4	26.7	42.1	57.1	75.4	87.0	90.6
Religion									
Protestant	31,298	8.6	29.7	44.3	60.8	70.9	80.9	85.9	87.7
Catholic	17,377	5.3	21.2	32.7	44.7	56.3	71.8	79.9	82.8
Region									
Northeast	11,851	4.8	18.8	29.0	43.5	53.6	70.6	80.4	83.3
Midwest	13,981	7.0	26.9	41.4	55.4	66.4	78.0	83.7	85.9
South	17,308	9.2	31.8	46.8	62.1	71.8	81.7	86.2	87.9
West	10,958	8.3	27.0	40.0	56.3	68.0	78.2	84.9	87.4
Labor force status									
In labor force	31,685	6.6	24.3	38.7	53.8	65.9	79.1	85.8	88.3
Not in labor force	22,414	8.8	30.2	42.1	56.9	65.3	75.5	81.5	83.5

¹Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 5. Number of never married women 15–44 years of age and cumulative percent who ever had sexual intercourse before reaching selected ages, by race, Hispanic origin, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and age	Number of never married women	Exact age							
		15 years	17 years	18 years	19 years	20 years	22 years	25 years	All ages
All races and origins ¹		Cumulative percent							
15–44 years	19,164	8.3	25.9	36.6	46.6	52.2	57.7	60.5	61.3
15–19 years	8,839	10.4	30.5	38.6	42.3	...	...	...	42.8
15–17 years	4,968	12.6	26.9	...	...	...	...	...	30.1
20–24 years	5,811	6.5	24.2	36.9	52.0	60.4	70.4	...	73.3
25–34 years	3,648	7.4	20.1	35.1	50.3	63.1	75.1	82.9	85.6
35–44 years	866	*4.1	*14.1	19.8	39.0	46.6	51.7	59.8	66.9
RACE									
White									
15–44 years	14,948	6.1	21.0	31.3	41.6	47.5	53.6	56.8	57.6
15–19 years	7,193	8.5	27.0	35.6	39.6	...	...	...	40.2
15–17 years	3,971	10.5	24.2	...	...	...	...	...	27.5
20–24 years	4,502	*3.4	18.1	29.5	45.3	54.5	65.7	...	69.5
25–34 years	2,666	*5.2	13.6	28.8	44.3	58.6	72.6	82.2	85.0
35–44 years	586	*1.0	*2.6	*4.5	25.9	33.7	37.6	48.3	55.9
Black									
15–44 years	3,545	17.3	46.3	59.9	69.8	73.9	77.9	79.0	79.6
15–19 years	1,377	19.6	48.4	55.5	57.6	...	...	...	57.8
15–17 years	818	21.9	40.6	...	...	...	...	...	43.8
20–24 years	1,084	17.0	48.9	67.5	80.7	85.3	90.6	...	90.8
25–34 years	851	15.3	42.9	59.9	75.9	84.6	91.9	95.6	96.1
35–44 years	233	*12.9	34.6	51.0	68.4	77.2	86.1	89.3	96.8
HISPANIC ORIGIN									
Hispanic									
15–44 years	1,479	*8.3	24.8	36.8	43.5	48.2	50.5	51.9	54.1
15–19 years	745	*8.6	29.9	40.1	40.4	...	...	...	40.4
20–44 years	734	*8.1	*19.6	33.5	46.7	56.1	60.8	63.5	67.9
Non-Hispanic									
15–44 years	17,685	8.3	26.0	36.6	46.8	52.5	58.3	61.2	61.9
15–19 years	8,094	10.5	30.6	38.5	42.4	...	...	...	43.0
20–44 years	9,591	6.5	22.0	35.0	50.6	60.5	71.2	76.5	77.8

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

Table 6. Number of never married women 15–44 years of age and cumulative percent who ever had sexual intercourse before reaching selected ages, by selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

<i>Characteristic of respondent</i>	<i>Number of never married women</i>	<i>Exact age</i>								
		<i>15 years</i>	<i>17 years</i>	<i>18 years</i>	<i>19 years</i>	<i>20 years</i>	<i>22 years</i>	<i>25 years</i>	<i>All ages</i>	
		Cumulative percent								
All women ¹	19,164	8.3	25.9	36.6	46.6	52.2	57.7	60.5	61.3	
Living arrangements at age 14 years										
Living with both parents	13,953	5.7	20.7	31.1	41.4	47.1	53.5	56.7	57.5	
Living with one or neither parent	5,211	15.4	39.6	51.2	60.6	65.7	69.2	70.6	71.5	
Respondent's mother's education										
Less than 12 years	4,754	12.9	36.7	48.6	58.5	63.4	67.1	69.6	71.0	
12 years	9,053	7.6	22.7	33.7	43.7	49.8	55.8	58.0	58.4	
13 years or more	5,357	5.6	21.7	30.8	40.8	46.3	52.8	56.6	57.6	
Respondent's father's education										
Less than 12 years	5,547	12.6	35.5	48.0	57.5	60.6	64.8	67.8	68.9	
12 years	6,897	9.2	24.3	33.9	43.5	50.0	54.3	56.9	57.8	
13 years or more	6,720	4.0	19.5	29.9	40.7	47.4	55.4	58.1	58.7	
Education										
Less than 12 years	6,889	15.0	34.4	39.9	42.0	43.6	44.0	44.6	44.9	
12 years	5,414	5.8	26.5	42.3	54.6	59.0	65.6	67.4	68.6	
13 years or more	6,861	3.6	16.8	28.8	44.9	55.4	65.3	71.0	72.0	
Religion										
Protestant	9,884	10.4	29.4	39.8	49.7	54.5	58.4	60.1	61.1	
Catholic	7,101	5.1	19.8	30.2	39.2	45.5	53.3	57.3	58.0	
Region										
Northeast	4,970	5.5	18.6	28.4	41.2	46.8	54.7	59.7	60.2	
Midwest	4,903	7.4	26.4	38.7	46.2	52.3	57.2	58.8	59.8	
South	5,666	11.1	31.1	43.1	52.6	57.1	61.1	62.3	63.1	
West	3,624	9.3	26.8	34.8	45.1	51.8	57.3	61.0	62.0	
Labor force status										
In labor force	11,061	6.2	22.1	34.0	45.4	53.0	61.9	65.0	66.4	
Not in labor force	8,103	11.3	31.0	40.1	48.2	51.0	52.0	54.3	54.4	

¹Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 7. Number of women 15–44 years of age and cumulative percent who ever married before reaching selected ages, by race, Hispanic origin, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and age	Number of women in thousands	Exact age							
		17 years	18 years	19 years	20 years	21 years	22 years	25 years	All ages
All races and origins ¹		Cumulative percent							
15–44 years.....	54,099	5.6	11.4	21.4	31.6	39.7	46.8	58.5	64.6
15–19 years.....	9,521	*2.3	4.8	6.7	...	...	...	...	7.2
20–24 years.....	10,629	4.4	8.2	16.9	25.9	34.3	39.1	...	45.3
25–29 years.....	10,263	6.1	13.6	26.2	38.1	46.3	55.4	70.7	75.8
30–34 years.....	9,381	5.9	12.8	25.7	38.7	49.8	60.0	76.1	87.6
35–39 years.....	7,893	8.4	15.5	27.0	40.8	52.8	62.6	82.1	93.1
40–44 years.....	6,412	7.7	15.9	30.0	44.7	55.2	66.1	82.4	95.0
RACE									
White									
15–44 years.....	45,367	5.7	11.7	22.4	33.3	41.9	49.4	61.3	67.1
15–19 years.....	7,815	*2.6	5.4	7.5	...	...	...	...	8.0
20–24 years.....	8,855	4.9	9.1	18.9	28.9	38.0	42.6	...	49.2
25–29 years.....	8,569	6.2	14.0	27.2	39.8	48.6	58.7	74.3	78.4
30–34 years.....	7,916	5.9	12.9	26.2	40.1	51.6	62.4	78.5	89.7
35–39 years.....	6,697	8.3	15.0	27.4	42.2	54.8	64.2	83.9	94.5
40–44 years.....	5,515	7.2	15.7	30.4	45.9	56.2	67.6	84.2	96.1
Black									
15–44 years.....	6,985	5.0	9.1	15.0	21.7	28.2	33.8	42.8	49.2
15–19 years.....	1,416	*0.2	*1.4	*2.1	...	...	...	...	*2.8
20–24 years.....	1,472	*1.4	*3.7	7.3	12.2	17.3	21.8	...	26.4
25–29 years.....	1,335	5.5	10.5	18.8	27.0	32.9	37.9	51.1	58.2
30–34 years.....	1,144	*5.4	11.6	19.9	30.3	40.0	47.1	61.2	74.4
35–39 years.....	884	10.1	17.8	25.8	33.9	45.9	58.7	72.8	83.4
40–44 years.....	734	13.4	17.9	27.5	39.7	50.9	60.0	72.7	88.3
HISPANIC ORIGIN									
Hispanic									
15–44 years.....	4,393	9.3	14.8	23.6	35.3	44.7	50.5	61.1	66.3
15–29 years.....	2,600	*8.1	14.2	21.6	30.1	37.0	41.5	49.4	50.4
30–44 years.....	1,793	*11.0	15.8	26.6	42.9	55.9	63.4	78.1	89.4
Non-Hispanic									
15–44 years.....	49,706	5.3	11.1	21.2	31.2	39.2	46.5	58.3	64.4
15–29 years.....	27,813	4.0	8.5	16.4	23.6	29.2	34.0	41.3	43.0
30–44 years.....	21,893	6.9	14.4	27.3	40.9	52.0	62.4	79.9	91.6

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

Table 8. Number of women 15–44 years of age and cumulative percent who ever married before reaching selected ages, by selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Characteristic of respondent	Number of women in thousands	Exact age							
		17 years	18 years	19 years	20 years	21 years	22 years	25 years	All ages
All women ¹	54,099	5.6	11.4	21.4	31.6	39.7	46.8	58.5	64.6
Living arrangements at age 14 years									
Living with both parents	40,849	4.7	10.3	20.1	30.6	38.8	46.9	59.3	65.8
Living with one or neither parent	13,250	8.5	14.7	25.5	34.5	42.5	46.6	56.1	60.7
Respondent's mother's education									
Less than 12 years	18,846	9.7	18.1	31.3	43.8	51.6	59.6	69.1	74.8
12 years	23,982	4.1	9.3	18.7	27.8	37.1	44.5	56.4	62.3
13 years or more	11,271	*2.0	4.7	10.6	19.0	25.1	30.5	45.4	52.5
Respondent's father's education									
Less than 12 years	20,505	8.4	16.0	29.4	41.0	50.5	57.5	66.8	72.9
12 years	19,381	4.8	10.4	20.0	30.6	38.6	46.3	59.6	64.4
13 years or more	14,214	2.6	6.2	11.7	19.3	25.5	32.1	45.2	52.7
Education									
Less than 12 years	13,465	15.0	23.6	31.7	37.1	40.5	42.8	46.6	48.8
12 years	20,257	3.5	11.1	27.4	41.5	51.3	59.5	69.0	73.3
13 years or more	20,377	1.5	3.7	8.6	18.0	27.6	36.9	55.9	66.3
Religion									
Protestant	31,298	7.0	14.2	26.0	37.1	45.3	52.4	63.0	68.4
Catholic	17,377	3.4	7.5	14.7	23.7	32.8	40.4	52.7	59.1
Region									
Northeast	11,851	2.8	6.1	13.1	19.9	28.0	35.4	49.7	58.1
Midwest	13,981	5.4	11.2	20.6	31.7	40.5	48.5	59.4	64.9
South	17,308	7.7	14.9	27.1	38.1	45.3	52.4	62.8	67.3
West	10,958	5.6	11.9	22.5	33.7	42.3	48.3	60.1	66.9
Labor force status									
In labor force	31,685	4.8	10.6	20.4	30.5	38.7	46.2	58.2	65.1
Not in labor force	22,414	6.7	12.5	22.8	33.1	41.1	47.7	59.0	63.8

¹Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 9. Number of ever married women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by timing of marriage relative to first sexual intercourse, according to race, Hispanic origin, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and age	Number of women in thousands	Total	First intercourse in same month as marriage or later	Months between first intercourse and marriage				
				5 months or less	6–11 months	12–35 months	36–59 months	60 months or more
All races and origins ¹				Percent distribution				
15–44 years	34,935	100.0	30.5	12.1	7.7	24.3	12.7	12.6
15–24 years	5,500	100.0	16.7	8.3	9.3	32.4	22.9	10.3
25–29 years	7,778	100.0	21.4	12.4	8.1	26.9	14.2	16.9
30–34 years	8,218	100.0	28.5	14.5	7.1	24.1	11.3	14.4
35–39 years	7,349	100.0	39.1	12.4	8.1	19.9	9.8	10.6
40–44 years	6,090	100.0	46.9	11.7	*6.2	19.0	6.9	9.3
White								
15–44 years	30,419	100.0	32.6	12.4	7.7	24.3	11.7	11.2
15–24 years	4,975	100.0	17.7	8.9	9.4	33.2	22.0	8.9
25–29 years	6,719	100.0	22.5	12.7	8.6	27.4	13.2	15.6
30–34 years	7,099	100.0	30.2	15.3	6.9	23.8	10.6	13.2
35–39 years	6,326	100.0	41.8	12.3	8.2	18.9	9.1	9.7
40–44 years	5,300	100.0	51.8	11.9	*5.5	18.9	*5.0	*7.0
Black								
15–44 years	3,440	100.0	8.5	8.3	8.1	25.9	22.7	26.6
15–24 years	427	100.0	*4.0	*3.6	*4.7	23.6	35.8	28.3
25–29 years	777	100.0	*4.1	*8.3	*5.1	26.1	24.7	31.6
30–34 years	851	100.0	10.2	8.9	8.1	27.4	19.5	26.0
35–39 years	737	100.0	14.3	*7.3	10.7	30.8	16.8	20.1
40–44 years	648	100.0	*7.8	11.6	11.1	19.4	22.6	27.4
Hispanic origin								
Hispanic	2,914	100.0	40.2	*11.7	*6.6	21.2	*11.0	*9.3
Non-Hispanic	32,021	100.0	29.6	12.2	7.9	24.5	12.9	12.9

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

Table 10. Number of ever married women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by timing of marriage relative to first sexual intercourse, according to selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Characteristic of respondent	Number of women in thousands	Total	First intercourse in same month as marriage or later	Months between first intercourse and marriage				
				5 months or less	6–11 months	12–35 months	36–59 months	60 months or more
Percent distribution								
All women ¹	34,935	100.0	30.5	12.1	7.7	24.3	12.7	12.6
Living arrangements at age 14 years								
Living with both parents	26,896	100.0	32.0	12.6	7.5	23.6	12.5	11.9
Living with one or neither parent	8,039	100.0	25.5	10.7	8.6	26.6	13.6	15.1
Respondent's mother's education								
Less than 12 years	14,092	100.0	32.6	13.4	8.6	23.9	10.7	10.9
12 years	14,929	100.0	29.0	12.0	8.0	25.0	13.0	13.0
13 years or more	5,914	100.0	29.3	9.3	*5.1	23.4	16.9	16.0
Respondent's father's education								
Less than 12 years	14,958	100.0	31.1	13.7	8.1	23.1	12.0	12.0
12 years	12,484	100.0	30.8	11.5	9.2	23.8	13.3	11.3
13 years or more	7,493	100.0	28.6	10.0	*4.5	27.5	13.2	16.1
Education								
Less than 12 years	6,575	100.0	26.0	16.2	10.2	26.9	10.9	9.9
12 years	14,844	100.0	31.2	12.0	8.6	26.3	12.5	9.4
13 years or more	13,515	100.0	31.9	10.3	5.7	20.7	13.8	17.6
Religion								
Protestant	21,414	100.0	29.8	12.2	8.2	24.4	13.6	11.6
Catholic	10,276	100.0	33.2	11.9	8.1	23.3	10.5	13.0
Region								
Northeast	6,881	100.0	29.6	11.7	6.6	26.3	12.1	13.7
Midwest	9,078	100.0	27.5	13.5	9.9	22.6	13.4	13.1
South	11,642	100.0	33.6	12.5	7.4	22.8	13.4	10.3
West	7,334	100.0	30.1	10.2	6.7	26.6	11.4	14.9
Labor force status								
In labor force	20,625	100.0	29.2	12.1	7.7	23.8	13.3	13.8
Not in labor force	14,310	100.0	32.3	12.2	7.7	24.9	11.9	10.9

¹Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 11. Number of women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by marital status, according to race, Hispanic origin, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and age	Number of women in thousands	Marital status						
		Total	Never married	Currently married	Formerly married			
					Total	Widowed	Divorced	Separated
All races and origins ¹		Percent distribution						
15–44 years.....	54,099	100.0	35.4	52.2	12.4	0.8	7.9	3.7
15–19 years.....	9,521	100.0	92.8	6.4	*0.7	-	*0.3	*0.4
20–24 years.....	10,629	100.0	54.7	38.9	6.5	*0.3	3.5	2.6
25–29 years.....	10,263	100.0	24.2	62.8	13.0	*0.3	7.7	5.0
30–34 years.....	9,381	100.0	12.4	69.1	18.5	*0.8	11.9	5.8
35–39 years.....	7,893	100.0	6.9	73.3	19.8	*1.6	14.5	3.8
40–44 years.....	6,412	100.0	5.0	74.6	20.4	*2.3	12.7	5.4
RACE								
White								
15–44 years.....	45,367	100.0	32.9	55.5	11.5	0.6	8.0	2.9
15–19 years.....	7,815	100.0	92.0	7.2	*0.8	-	*0.3	*0.5
20–24 years.....	8,855	100.0	50.8	42.5	6.7	*0.3	4.0	*2.3
25–29 years.....	8,569	100.0	21.6	66.3	12.1	*0.2	7.8	4.1
30–34 years.....	7,916	100.0	10.3	73.0	16.7	*0.6	12.2	3.9
35–39 years.....	6,697	100.0	5.5	76.1	18.4	*1.4	14.2	*2.8
40–44 years.....	5,515	100.0	*3.9	78.3	17.8	*1.6	12.4	*3.8
Black								
15–44 years.....	6,985	100.0	50.8	30.5	18.8	1.4	7.7	9.7
15–19 years.....	1,416	100.0	97.2	*2.5	0.3	-	-	*0.3
20–24 years.....	1,472	100.0	73.6	19.9	6.5	*0.2	*1.3	5.0
25–29 years.....	1,335	100.0	41.8	39.8	18.4	*1.1	7.7	9.6
30–34 years.....	1,144	100.0	25.6	43.1	31.2	*1.5	10.6	19.1
35–39 years.....	884	100.0	16.6	47.9	35.5	*3.4	19.4	12.7
40–44 years.....	734	100.0	11.7	48.3	40.0	*4.7	16.3	19.0
HISPANIC ORIGIN								
Hispanic								
15–44 years.....	4,393	100.0	33.7	52.3	14.1	*0.8	7.1	6.1
15–29 years.....	2,600	100.0	49.6	42.0	8.4	*0.1	*2.8	*5.5
30–44 years.....	1,793	100.0	*10.6	67.2	22.3	*1.9	13.4	*7.0
Non-Hispanic								
15–44 years.....	49,706	100.0	35.6	52.2	12.2	0.8	8.0	3.5
15–29 years.....	27,813	100.0	57.0	36.3	6.7	*0.2	4.0	2.5
30–44 years.....	21,893	100.0	8.4	72.4	19.2	1.4	13.0	4.8

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

Table 12. Number of women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by marital status, according to selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Characteristic of respondent	Number of women in thousands	Marital status						
		Total	Never married	Currently married	Formerly married			
					Total	Widowed	Divorced	Separated
Percent distribution								
All women ¹	54,099	100.0	35.4	52.2	12.4	0.8	7.9	3.7
Living arrangements at age 14 years								
Living with both parents.....	40,849	100.0	34.2	54.8	11.0	0.7	7.0	3.3
Living with one or neither parent.....	13,250	100.0	39.3	44.0	16.6	*0.9	10.8	5.0
Respondent's mother's education								
Less than 12 years.....	18,846	100.0	25.2	58.6	16.2	*1.2	9.4	5.5
12 years.....	23,982	100.0	37.7	51.5	10.7	*0.6	7.1	3.1
13 years or more.....	11,271	100.0	47.5	42.8	9.6	*0.5	6.9	2.2
Respondent's father's education								
Less than 12 years.....	20,505	100.0	27.1	56.6	16.3	*1.0	10.2	5.2
12 years.....	19,381	100.0	35.6	54.4	10.1	*0.7	6.6	2.8
13 years or more.....	14,214	100.0	47.3	42.8	9.9	*0.6	6.3	3.0
Poverty level income								
Less than 150 percent.....	13,843	100.0	47.0	33.1	20.0	*1.3	11.0	7.7
150 percent or more.....	40,256	100.0	31.5	58.8	9.8	0.6	6.8	2.4
300 percent or more.....	23,411	100.0	29.8	63.0	7.3	*0.4	4.9	1.9
Education								
Less than 12 years.....	13,465	100.0	51.2	36.0	12.9	*0.8	6.8	5.3
12 years.....	20,257	100.0	26.7	60.2	13.1	*0.9	8.4	3.8
13 years or more.....	20,377	100.0	33.7	54.9	11.4	*0.6	8.1	2.7
Religion								
Protestant.....	31,298	100.0	31.6	55.6	12.8	0.9	7.9	4.0
Catholic.....	17,377	100.0	40.9	48.4	10.7	*0.6	6.8	3.3
Region								
Northeast.....	11,851	100.0	41.9	46.8	11.2	*0.5	6.7	4.0
Midwest.....	13,981	100.0	35.1	54.6	10.3	*0.7	7.6	2.1
South.....	17,308	100.0	32.7	54.6	12.7	*1.0	6.8	4.8
West.....	10,958	100.0	33.1	51.1	15.8	*0.7	11.3	3.8
Labor force status								
In labor force.....	31,685	100.0	34.9	49.5	15.6	0.8	10.8	3.9
Not in labor force.....	22,414	100.0	36.2	56.0	7.9	*0.7	3.7	3.5

¹Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 13. Number of ever married women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by number of marriages and current marital status, according to race, Hispanic origin, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and age	Number of ever married women in thousands	Current marital status and number of marriages								
		All women			Currently married			Widowed, separated, or divorced		
		Total ¹	1 marriage	2 marriages	Total ¹	1 marriage	2 marriages	Total ¹	1 marriage	2 marriages
All races and origins ²		Percent distribution								
15–44 years	34,935	100.0	83.6	14.1	80.8	68.3	10.8	19.2	15.4	3.2
15–24 years	5,500	100.0	94.1	*5.4	86.2	81.4	*4.4	13.8	12.6	*1.0
25–29 years	7,778	100.0	85.0	13.8	82.8	70.2	11.5	17.2	14.8	*2.3
30–34 years	8,218	100.0	80.8	17.3	78.9	63.8	13.8	21.1	17.0	*3.5
35–39 years	7,349	100.0	79.7	17.0	78.7	63.1	12.6	21.3	16.5	*4.3
40–44 years	6,090	100.0	81.0	14.3	78.5	66.3	9.8	21.5	14.8	*4.6
RACE										
White										
15–44 years	30,419	100.0	83.4	14.3	82.8	69.9	11.2	17.2	13.5	3.1
15–24 years	4,975	100.0	93.7	*5.6	86.9	81.9	*4.6	13.1	11.8	*1.0
25–29 years	6,719	100.0	84.4	14.4	84.6	71.0	12.4	15.4	13.4	*2.1
30–34 years	7,099	100.0	80.0	18.1	81.3	65.5	14.4	18.7	14.5	*3.7
35–39 years	6,326	100.0	79.5	17.1	80.6	64.5	13.1	19.4	15.0	*4.0
40–44 years	5,300	100.0	81.8	13.5	81.5	69.7	9.2	18.5	12.1	*4.3
Black										
15–44 years	3,440	100.0	85.2	13.5	61.9	52.1	9.2	38.1	33.1	4.3
15–24 years	427	100.0	96.6	*3.4	76.7	73.6	*3.1	23.3	23.0	*0.3
25–29 years	777	100.0	93.2	*6.6	68.4	63.3	*4.9	31.6	29.9	*1.7
30–34 years	851	100.0	88.0	10.7	58.0	49.7	*7.4	42.0	38.4	*3.3
35–39 years	737	100.0	77.6	21.1	57.5	43.1	13.3	42.5	34.6	*7.8
40–44 years	648	100.0	72.8	23.6	54.7	37.7	16.0	45.3	35.1	*7.6
HISPANIC ORIGIN										
Hispanic										
15–44 years	2,914	100.0	85.9	*11.7	78.8	68.2	*8.6	21.2	17.7	*3.1
15–29 years	1,310	100.0	91.6	*8.4	83.3	75.9	*7.5	*16.7	*15.7	*0.9
30–44 years	1,603	100.0	81.2	*14.4	75.1	61.9	*9.5	24.9	*19.3	*4.9
Non-Hispanic										
15–44 years	32,021	100.0	83.4	14.3	81.0	68.3	11.1	19.0	15.1	3.2
15–29 years	11,968	100.0	88.4	10.5	84.3	74.7	8.7	15.7	13.7	*1.9
30–44 years	20,054	100.0	80.4	16.5	79.0	64.4	12.5	21.0	16.0	4.0

¹Includes women married 3 times or more, not shown separately.

²Includes white, black, and other races.

Table 14. Number of ever married women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by number of marriages and current marital status, according to selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Characteristic of respondent	Number of ever married women in thousands	Current marital status and number of marriages								
		All women			Currently married			Widowed, separated, or divorced		
		Total ¹	1 marriage	2 marriages	Total ¹	1 marriage	2 marriages	Total ¹	1 marriage	2 marriages
		Percent distribution								
All women ²	34,935	100.0	83.6	14.1	80.8	68.3	10.8	19.2	15.4	3.2
Living arrangements at age 14 years										
Living with both parents.	26,896	100.0	84.9	13.0	83.3	71.8	10.1	16.7	13.1	3.0
Living with one or neither parent	8,039	100.0	79.3	17.5	72.6	56.4	13.5	27.4	22.9	*4.0
Respondent's mother's education										
Less than 12 years	14,092	100.0	81.0	16.0	78.4	63.5	12.5	21.6	17.5	3.4
12 years.	14,929	100.0	84.9	13.4	82.8	71.2	10.3	17.2	13.7	3.1
13 years or more.	5,914	100.0	86.7	11.3	81.6	72.4	8.2	18.4	14.3	*3.1
Respondent's father's education										
Less than 12 years	14,958	100.0	82.4	14.7	77.6	64.1	11.5	22.4	18.3	3.3
12 years.	12,484	100.0	84.4	13.5	84.4	72.3	10.5	15.6	12.1	*3.0
13 years or more.	7,493	100.0	84.7	13.7	81.2	69.9	10.2	18.8	14.8	*3.5
Education										
Less than 12 years	6,576	100.0	78.0	17.1	73.7	56.1	13.6	26.3	21.9	*3.5
12 years.	14,844	100.0	83.9	14.1	82.1	69.7	10.9	17.9	14.2	3.2
13 years or more.	13,515	100.0	86.0	12.5	82.8	72.6	9.4	17.2	13.5	*3.1
Religion										
Protestant	21,414	100.0	80.7	16.7	81.3	65.9	13.5	18.7	14.8	3.2
Catholic	10,276	100.0	88.7	9.9	81.9	74.2	6.7	18.1	14.5	*3.2
Region										
Northeast.	6,881	100.0	91.1	8.4	80.6	73.6	6.7	19.4	17.5	*1.7
Midwest.	9,078	100.0	85.6	12.3	84.1	73.0	9.7	15.9	12.7	*2.6
South.	11,642	100.0	81.3	16.1	81.2	65.9	13.1	18.8	15.4	*3.1
West	7,334	100.0	77.8	18.3	76.3	61.2	12.7	23.7	16.6	*5.6
Labor force status										
In labor force.	20,625	100.0	82.2	15.6	76.1	63.4	11.2	23.9	18.8	4.3
Not in labor force	14,310	100.0	85.7	11.9	87.7	75.3	10.3	12.3	10.4	*1.6

¹Includes women married 3 times or more, not shown separately.
²Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 15. Number of unmarried¹ women 15–44 years of age and percent informally married, by marital status, race, Hispanic origin, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

<i>Race, Hispanic origin, and age</i>	<i>Number in thousands</i>			<i>Percent informally married</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Never married</i>	<i>Widowed, divorced, or separated</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Never married</i>	<i>Widowed, divorced, or separated</i>
All races and origins²						
15–44 years	25,868	19,164	6,704	6.4	5.4	9.4
15–19 years	8,909	8,839	70	*1.8	*1.8	-
20–24 years	6,499	5,811	688	5.9	5.4	*10.9
25–29 years	3,821	2,485	1,336	15.6	16.5	*13.8
30–34 years	2,899	1,163	1,736	11.1	*10.6	*11.5
35–39 years	2,110	544	1,566	*6.9	*3.2	*8.2
40–44 years	1,629	322	1,307	*2.8	*0.5	*3.4
RACE						
White						
15–44 years	20,172	14,948	5,224	7.2	6.0	10.6
15–24 years	12,347	11,696	652	3.9	3.5	*11.0
25–34 years	5,027	2,666	2,361	16.3	17.9	*14.5
35–44 years	2,798	586	2,212	*5.3	*1.7	*6.3
Black						
15–44 years	4,855	3,545	1,310	4.0	3.5	5.4
15–24 years	2,560	2,461	99	*2.5	*2.5	*3.3
25–34 years	1,454	851	603	6.8	*6.6	*7.0
35–44 years	840	233	607	*4.1	*3.9	*4.1
Hispanic origin						
Hispanic	2,097	1,479	618	15.7	14.6	*18.4
Non-Hispanic	23,771	17,685	6,086	5.6	4.6	8.5

¹Includes widowed, divorced, separated, and never married women.

²Includes white, black, and other races.

Table 16. Number of unmarried¹ women 15–44 years of age and percent informally married, by selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

<i>Characteristic of respondent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Never married</i>	<i>Widowed, divorced, or separated</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Never married</i>	<i>Widowed, divorced, or separated</i>
All women ²	25,868	19,164	6,704	6.4	5.4	9.4
Living arrangements at age 14 years						
Living with both parents	18,452	13,953	4,499	5.6	4.6	*8.7
Living with one or neither parent	7,415	5,211	2,205	8.3	7.3	*10.8
Respondent's mother's education						
Less than 12 years	7,797	4,754	3,044	10.2	10.1	*10.3
12 years	11,627	9,053	2,574	4.9	3.6	*9.5
13 years or more	6,443	5,357	1,086	4.6	4.2	*6.7
Respondent's father's education						
Less than 12 years	8,893	5,547	3,346	8.7	7.3	*10.9
12 years	8,846	6,897	1,950	5.5	4.6	*8.4
13 years or more	8,128	6,720	1,408	5.0	4.5	*7.4
Poverty level income						
Less than 150 percent	9,263	6,501	2,762	4.0	3.5	*5.0
150 percent or more	16,604	12,663	3,941	7.8	6.3	12.5
300 percent or more	8,673	6,966	1,707	9.9	7.8	*18.8
Education						
Less than 12 years	8,621	6,889	1,732	5.5	3.7	*12.7
12 years	8,066	5,414	2,652	5.9	5.6	*6.6
13 years or more	9,181	6,861	2,319	7.7	6.8	*10.2
Religion						
Protestant	13,889	9,884	4,005	4.8	4.0	*7.0
Catholic	8,965	7,101	1,864	7.0	5.2	*13.9
Region						
Northeast	6,303	4,970	1,332	5.1	4.1	*8.6
Midwest	6,349	4,903	1,446	7.6	6.3	*11.8
South	7,856	5,666	2,190	4.7	3.7	*7.2
West	5,360	3,624	1,736	9.2	8.3	*10.9
Labor force status						
In labor force	15,997	11,061	4,936	7.7	6.9	9.5
Not in labor force	9,871	8,103	1,767	4.4	3.3	*9.3

¹Includes widowed, divorced, separated, and never married women.

²Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 17. Number of women 15–44 years of age who ever had sexual intercourse, percent who had sexual intercourse in the last 3 months, and percent distribution of women who had intercourse in the last 3 months by frequency of sexual intercourse, according to marital status and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Marital status and age	Number of women in thousands	Percent who had intercourse in the last 3 months	Frequency of intercourse					
			Total	Once a month	2–3 times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day
All marital statuses			Percent distribution					
15–44 years	46,684	89.7	100.0	8.2	20.5	28.2	37.7	5.4
15–19 years	4,467	85.2	100.0	17.5	27.0	24.1	24.3	7.1
20–24 years	9,080	88.4	100.0	9.4	19.9	27.1	35.4	8.2
25–29 years	9,929	92.3	100.0	5.7	17.4	23.6	47.2	6.1
30–34 years	9,189	91.6	100.0	6.9	19.4	29.8	39.5	4.4
35–39 years	7,725	90.7	100.0	6.1	21.2	31.6	37.9	*3.3
40–44 years	6,293	87.1	100.0	8.5	22.6	33.7	31.7	*3.5
Currently married			Percent distribution					
15–44 years	28,231	99.5	100.0	4.3	17.8	30.5	42.0	5.4
15–19 years	612	100.0	100.0	*6.3	*13.9	*17.9	43.6	*18.2
20–24 years	4,130	99.8	100.0	*3.1	12.4	28.4	43.6	12.5
25–29 years	6,442	99.7	100.0	*2.9	16.0	26.4	49.5	5.2
30–34 years	6,482	99.7	100.0	5.3	16.5	31.4	42.6	4.1
35–39 years	5,783	99.7	100.0	4.6	21.4	31.9	39.2	*2.9
40–44 years	4,783	98.2	100.0	5.1	23.1	36.3	32.6	*2.8
Not currently married			Percent distribution					
15–44 years	18,452	74.9	100.0	16.1	25.8	23.6	29.1	5.5
15–19 years	3,855	82.8	100.0	19.7	29.5	25.3	20.6	*4.9
20–24 years	4,950	78.8	100.0	16.0	27.8	25.7	26.7	*3.7
25–29 years	3,487	78.6	100.0	12.4	20.5	16.9	41.8	8.4
30–34 years	2,707	72.1	100.0	12.1	29.2	24.3	29.2	*5.3
35–39 years	1,943	64.0	100.0	*12.9	20.3	30.0	31.8	*5.0
40–44 years	1,510	51.7	100.0	29.3	*19.1	*18.1	26.1	*7.4

Table 18. Number of women 15–44 years of age who ever had sexual intercourse, percent who had sexual intercourse in the last 3 months, and percent distribution of women who had intercourse in the last 3 months by frequency of sexual intercourse, according to race, Hispanic origin, and age: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and age	Number of women in thousands	Percent who had intercourse in the last 3 months	Frequency of intercourse					
			Total	Once a month or less	2–3 times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day
All races and origins ¹			Percent distribution					
15–44 years	46,684	89.7	100.0	8.2	20.5	28.2	37.7	5.4
15–19 years	4,467	85.2	100.0	17.5	27.0	24.1	24.3	7.1
20–24 years	9,080	88.4	100.0	9.4	19.9	27.1	35.4	8.2
25–29 years	9,929	92.3	100.0	5.7	17.4	23.6	47.2	6.1
30–34 years	9,189	91.6	100.0	6.9	19.4	29.8	39.5	4.4
35–39 years	7,725	90.7	100.0	6.1	21.2	31.6	37.9	*3.3
40–44 years	6,293	87.1	100.0	8.5	22.6	33.7	31.7	*3.5
RACE								
White								
15–44 years	39,031	89.9	100.0	7.3	19.4	28.8	38.8	5.6
15–19 years	3,512	84.2	100.0	14.3	26.0	24.9	26.7	8.1
20–24 years	7,480	88.3	100.0	9.1	17.8	27.4	36.9	8.8
25–29 years	8,313	93.0	100.0	5.2	16.3	24.5	48.0	5.9
30–34 years	7,771	92.0	100.0	6.4	18.5	30.6	40.0	4.5
35–39 years	6,535	90.7	100.0	5.6	20.6	31.8	38.5	*3.5
40–44 years	5,419	87.3	100.0	7.4	22.8	33.8	32.5	*3.5
Black								
15–44 years	6,263	89.0	100.0	14.2	27.6	23.2	30.6	4.4
15–19 years	835	91.0	100.0	30.6	30.7	21.3	14.9	*2.5
20–24 years	1,372	87.6	100.0	10.9	31.9	23.8	28.2	*5.2
25–29 years	1,316	89.3	100.0	9.1	27.2	19.4	37.7	6.6
30–34 years	1,130	88.9	100.0	11.8	25.9	21.9	35.7	*4.8
35–39 years	879	88.8	100.0	10.8	24.6	24.4	37.4	*2.8
40–44 years	732	89.3	100.0	18.3	22.7	31.6	24.9	*2.6
HISPANIC ORIGIN								
Hispanic								
15–44 years	3,713	89.1	100.0	9.0	17.7	29.7	39.3	*4.3
15–29 years	1,966	92.8	100.0	*9.9	13.7	27.7	42.4	*6.3
30–44 years	1,747	85.0	100.0	*7.9	22.6	32.1	35.4	*2.0
Non-Hispanic								
15–44 years	42,970	89.8	100.0	8.1	20.7	28.1	37.6	5.5
15–29 years	21,510	89.1	100.0	9.2	20.7	24.8	38.2	7.2
30–44 years	21,461	90.5	100.0	7.0	20.7	31.4	37.0	3.9

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

Table 19. Number of women 15–44 years of age who ever had sexual intercourse, percent who had sexual intercourse in the last 3 months, and percent distribution of women who had intercourse in the last 3 months by frequency of sexual intercourse, according to selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Characteristic of respondent	Number of women in thousands	Percent who had intercourse in the last 3 months	Frequency of intercourse					
			Total	Once a month or less	2–3 times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day
All women ¹	46,684	89.7	100.0	8.2	20.5	28.2	37.7	5.4
Living arrangements at age 14 years								
Living with both parents	34,921	90.0	100.0	7.2	20.1	28.7	39.2	4.8
Living with one or neither parent	11,763	88.9	100.0	10.9	21.6	26.8	33.3	7.3
Respondent's mother's education								
Less than 12 years	17,466	90.4	100.0	7.6	21.3	28.9	36.2	6.0
12 years	20,217	90.6	100.0	8.1	18.1	29.0	39.3	5.4
13 years or more	9,001	86.5	100.0	9.4	24.3	24.9	37.0	4.4
Respondent's father's education								
Less than 12 years	18,778	90.6	100.0	9.0	19.6	29.2	36.2	6.0
12 years	16,469	90.4	100.0	6.6	19.6	30.0	38.1	5.6
13 years or more	11,437	87.4	100.0	9.0	23.2	23.9	39.8	4.1
Education								
Less than 12 years	9,668	88.4	100.0	11.8	22.7	27.1	31.7	6.6
12 years	18,557	90.5	100.0	7.2	19.8	29.9	37.2	5.9
13 years or more	18,459	89.7	100.0	7.3	19.9	27.1	41.4	4.4
Religion								
Protestant	27,458	90.6	100.0	8.0	20.2	27.8	37.9	6.1
Catholic	14,395	87.9	100.0	8.3	21.1	29.8	36.6	4.1
Region								
Northeast	9,873	88.0	100.0	9.0	23.9	27.2	36.4	3.5
Midwest	12,009	91.5	100.0	7.6	18.5	29.9	37.8	6.2
South	15,220	90.7	100.0	8.3	18.7	29.1	38.7	5.2
West	9,581	87.8	100.0	7.8	22.3	25.6	37.5	6.8
Labor force status								
In labor force	27,967	88.4	100.0	7.9	19.7	28.8	38.6	5.0
Not in labor force	18,717	91.7	100.0	8.6	21.5	27.4	36.5	6.1

¹Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 20. Number of ever married women 15–44 years of age and cumulative percent whose first marriage was dissolved by separation, divorce, or death, by exact years since first marriage,¹ race, Hispanic origin, and year of first marriage: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and year of first marriage	Number of ever married women in thousands	Exact years since first marriage							
		1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	10 years	15 years	All years
All races and origins ²		Cumulative percent							
All years ³	34,935	3.9	7.8	11.8	14.3	16.4	25.5	29.7	31.7
1975–79	7,376	*4.5	10.3	15.8	20.1	21.5	23.2	...	23.2
1970–74	8,325	*3.5	8.1	13.4	16.8	19.6	33.5	34.0	34.0
1965–69	7,338	*3.8	7.1	11.1	12.9	15.9	29.8	39.8	40.7
1960–64	5,586	*3.6	*6.0	7.7	9.4	10.8	23.0	31.5	37.6
White									
All years	30,419	3.6	7.4	11.4	13.7	15.4	24.1	28.1	30.1
1975–79	6,509	*4.4	10.3	15.7	19.8	21.2	22.5	...	22.5
1970–74	7,232	*3.3	7.8	13.1	16.0	18.7	32.0	32.4	32.4
1965–69	6,403	*3.5	6.7	10.6	12.3	14.4	28.4	38.4	39.4
1960–64	4,864	*2.7	*5.1	*6.7	*8.3	9.1	20.3	28.2	34.5
Black									
All years	3,440	7.2	12.4	16.8	20.5	26.0	39.1	45.2	47.9
1975–79	693	*6.7	12.1	18.7	25.2	27.5	30.9	...	30.9
1970–74	788	*5.5	11.9	17.6	22.5	27.4	46.4	48.3	48.3
1965–69	717	*7.7	12.9	16.9	19.2	30.5	46.1	57.2	57.5
1960–64	553	*9.6	13.5	16.8	19.0	23.7	45.6	59.0	63.9
Hispanic origin									
Hispanic	2,914	*4.2	*9.8	14.4	16.3	18.3	26.3	30.1	31.8
Non-Hispanic	32,021	3.9	7.6	11.5	14.1	16.2	25.4	29.7	31.7

¹Date of separation for marriages ending in divorce or separation; date of death for marriages ending in death.

²Includes white, black, and other races.

³Includes first marriages dissolved before 1960 and between 1980 and interview.

Table 21. Number of ever married women 15–44 years of age and cumulative percent whose first marriage was dissolved by separation, divorce, or death, by exact years since first marriage,¹ and selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Characteristic of respondent	Number of ever married women in thousands	Exact years since first marriage								
		1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	10 years	15 years	All years	
		Cumulative percent								
All women ²	34,935	3.9	7.8	11.8	14.3	16.4	25.5	29.7	31.7	
Living arrangements at age 14 years										
Living with both parents	26,896	3.4	6.8	10.4	12.5	14.2	22.5	26.3	28.2	
Living with one or neither parent	8,039	5.9	11.3	16.1	20.2	23.5	35.6	40.9	43.6	
Respondent's mother's education										
Less than 12 years	14,092	4.7	9.2	13.0	15.8	18.5	28.2	33.6	36.5	
12 years	14,929	3.1	6.7	11.5	14.0	15.7	24.1	27.3	28.8	
13 years or more	5,914	*4.3	7.3	9.5	11.6	12.9	22.5	26.4	27.6	
Respondent's father's education										
Less than 12 years	14,958	4.1	9.0	13.0	15.9	18.3	28.1	33.3	35.9	
12 years	12,484	3.9	7.1	10.7	13.4	15.4	22.7	25.9	27.7	
13 years or more	7,493	*3.6	6.5	10.9	12.6	14.3	24.9	28.7	30.1	
Education										
Less than 12 years	6,576	*6.2	12.8	16.7	20.4	23.3	34.6	41.2	43.9	
12 years	14,844	3.6	6.8	10.8	13.4	15.1	24.1	27.7	30.3	
13 years or more	13,515	3.2	6.5	10.4	12.3	14.4	22.5	26.3	27.4	
Religion										
Protestant	21,414	4.3	8.3	12.2	14.7	16.7	27.2	31.6	34.1	
Catholic	10,276	*2.5	6.5	10.4	12.4	14.6	21.5	24.9	25.8	
Region										
Northeast	6,881	*3.4	6.2	8.9	11.5	13.3	20.7	24.4	26.4	
Midwest	9,078	*2.3	6.0	9.5	11.0	13.5	21.8	25.2	27.0	
South	11,642	4.7	8.6	12.0	15.3	17.2	26.7	31.6	34.1	
West	7,334	*5.1	10.4	16.8	19.5	21.4	32.6	37.1	38.8	
Labor force status										
In labor force	20,645	4.3	8.5	13.3	15.9	18.4	28.3	34.0	36.6	
Not in labor force	14,310	3.4	6.8	9.5	12.0	13.4	21.4	23.5	24.7	
Age at first marriage										
19 years or less	17,073	4.5	9.1	14.3	17.8	20.3	32.2	37.9	40.9	
20 years or more	17,862	3.4	6.5	9.4	11.0	12.6	19.0	21.8	22.9	

¹Date of separation for marriages ending in divorce or separation; date of death for marriages ending in death.

²Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

Table 22. Number of women 15–44 years of age whose first marriage was dissolved by divorce or death, and cumulative percent who remarried, by exact years since dissolution,¹ race, Hispanic origin, and year first marriage dissolved: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Race, Hispanic origin, and year dissolved first marriage	Number of women in thousands whose first marriage dissolved	Years since dissolution of first marriage					
		1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	All years
All races and origins ²		Cumulative percent					
All years ³	9,457	7.0	24.0	35.7	43.3	49.4	60.5
1975–79.....	3,352	*6.4	22.8	35.5	43.9	47.9	53.2
1970–74.....	2,653	*8.7	21.3	35.0	41.8	51.4	68.8
1965–69.....	1,316	*6.7	32.9	45.6	54.4	59.4	80.8
1960–64.....	607	*4.8	*32.0	42.7	58.1	71.7	89.4
White							
All years.....	8,145	7.5	25.6	37.6	45.5	51.6	61.9
1975–79.....	2,965	*6.6	24.5	36.5	45.9	49.8	54.9
1970–74.....	2,277	*10.0	23.0	37.8	44.1	54.0	71.0
1965–69.....	1,111	*5.9	34.9	49.7	58.8	63.2	83.2
1960–64.....	444	*4.5	*38.7	*48.5	66.9	82.7	95.3
Black							
All years.....	1,055	*4.3	11.0	18.7	24.3	30.3	48.4
1975–79.....	296	*5.9	*9.1	*17.3	*19.1	24.2	30.2
1970–74.....	320	*0.4	*7.5	*16.3	24.0	29.6	51.1
1965–69.....	184	*6.7	*19.2	*20.5	28.3	38.1	70.3
1960–64.....	141	*6.4	*9.5	*24.4	*32.7	41.8	68.7
Hispanic origin							
Hispanic.....	701	*3.4	*18.3	*31.6	*38.0	40.9	58.7
Non-Hispanic.....	8,756	7.3	24.4	36.1	43.7	50.0	60.6

¹Date of divorce for marriages ending in divorce; date of death for marriages ending in death.

²Includes white, black, and other races.

³Includes first marriages dissolved before 1960 and between 1980 and interview.

Table 23. Number of women 15–44 years of age whose first marriage was dissolved by divorce or death and cumulative percent who remarried, by exact years since dissolution¹ and selected characteristics: United States, 1982

[Statistics are based on a sample of the household population of the conterminous United States. See appendixes for discussion of the sample design, estimates of sampling variability, and definitions of terms]

Characteristic of respondent	Number of women in thousands	Years since dissolution of first marriage					
		1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	All years
		Cumulative percent					
All women ²	9,457	7.0	24.0	35.7	43.3	49.4	60.5
Living arrangements at age 14 years							
Living with both parents	6,503	6.7	25.0	38.1	45.5	52.2	62.4
Living with one or neither parent	2,954	*7.7	21.6	30.5	38.4	43.0	56.3
Respondent's mother's education							
Less than 12 years	4,323	*7.5	26.4	37.3	44.4	51.3	62.1
12 years	3,689	*6.2	22.1	35.1	43.1	49.2	61.1
13 years or more	1,446	*7.5	*21.4	32.6	40.4	44.0	54.4
Respondent's father's education							
Less than 12 years	4,518	*6.6	25.8	36.5	44.5	49.6	58.2
12 years	2,985	*7.4	24.5	38.8	44.4	50.9	65.1
13 years or more	1,954	*7.2	18.9	29.3	38.9	46.5	58.7
Education							
Less than 12 years	2,309	*7.0	26.9	39.2	47.3	51.8	62.6
12 years	3,945	*8.2	25.4	35.5	44.2	50.1	60.6
13 years or more	3,204	*5.5	20.0	33.5	39.3	46.7	58.9
Religion							
Protestant	6,336	8.1	26.9	38.3	46.8	53.2	65.2
Catholic	2,169	*5.1	19.2	33.3	37.8	42.4	53.5
Region							
Northeast	1,338	*4.8	*16.8	*20.9	27.3	32.0	44.1
Midwest	2,237	*7.5	24.4	37.2	43.6	47.0	58.3
South	3,294	*8.8	27.9	38.7	46.8	54.0	66.0
West	2,538	*5.4	22.3	38.7	47.2	55.0	64.3
Labor force status							
In labor force	6,580	*5.7	20.8	32.5	40.2	45.2	55.8
Not in labor force	2,877	*10.0	31.1	43.2	50.5	58.9	71.2
Age at dissolution of marriage							
24 years or less	5,052	*7.2	27.6	40.3	51.0	58.4	72.5
25 years or more	4,405	*6.7	19.8	30.5	34.4	39.0	46.7

¹Date of divorce for marriages ending in divorce; date of death for marriages ending in death.

²Includes Protestant, Catholic, other religions, and no religion.

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Appendix I

Technical notes

Background

This report is one of a series based on the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The NSFG was designed to provide data on fertility, family planning, and aspects of maternal and child health that are closely related to childbearing.

The NSFG is a periodic survey based on personal interviews with a nationwide sample of women. The NSFG has been conducted three times, in 1973, 1976, and 1982. The present report is based on Cycle III of the NSFG. A detailed report on Cycle III is contained in “National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle III: Sample Design, Weighting, and Estimation Procedures,” Series 2, No. 98, of *Vital and Health Statistics*.²⁷ A detailed description of the methods and procedures used in Cycle I can be found in “National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle I: Sample Design, Estimation Procedures, and Variance Estimation,” Series 2, No. 76, of *Vital and Health Statistics*.²⁸ A detailed description of the methods and procedures of Cycle II can be found in “National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle II: Sample Design, Estimation Procedures, and Variance Estimation,” Series 2, No. 87, of *Vital and Health Statistics*.²⁹ This appendix presents a summary of the more important technical aspects of the 1982 NSFG.

Fieldwork for Cycle III was carried out under a contract with NCHS by Westat, Inc., between August of 1982 and February of 1983. For the first time, the sample represented all women 15–44 years of age, regardless of marital status, including never married women in the noninstitutional population of the conterminous United States. Women living in group quarters, such as college dormitories, were included in Cycle III. Interviews were conducted with 7,969 women; 3,201 were black, 4,577 were white, and 191 were of other races.

Interviews were conducted by trained female interviewers in the respondents’ homes, and they lasted an average of 1 hour. The interview focused on a woman’s pregnancy history, her use of contraceptives in each pregnancy interval, her physical ability to bear children, her expectations of bearing children in the future, her use of family planning and infertility services, her marital history, her labor force participation, and on a wide range of social, economic, and demographic characteristics.

Statistical design

The NSFG is based on a multistage area probability sample. Black households and households with resident teenage women were sampled at higher rates than other households so that reliable estimates of statistics could be presented separately for black and teenage women. In addition, the sample was designed to provide tabulations for each of the four major geographic regions of the United States.

The first stage of the sample design consisted of drawing a sample of primary sampling units (PSU’s). A PSU consisted of a county, a small group of contiguous counties, or a standard metropolitan statistical area as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1970. The second and third stages of sampling were used to select several segments (clusters of 15 to about 60 dwelling units) within each PSU. A systematic sample of dwelling units was then selected from each segment. Each sample dwelling unit was visited by an interviewer who listed all household members. The interviewer then consulted a computer-generated sampling table to determine which woman, if any, should be interviewed.

The statistics in this report are estimates for the national population, and they were computed by multiplying each sample case by the number of women she represented in the population. The multipliers, or final weights, ranged from under 500 to over 50,000 and averaged about 7,000. They were derived by using three basic steps:

- *Inflation by the reciprocal of the probability of selection*—The probability of selection is the product of the probabilities of selection of the PSU, segment, household, and sample person within the household.
- *Nonresponse adjustment*—The weighted estimates were ratio adjusted for nonresponse by a multiplication of two factors. The first factor adjusted for nonresponse to the screener by imputing the characteristics of women in responding households to women in nonresponding households in the same PSU and stratum. The second factor adjusted for nonresponse to the interview by imputing the characteristics of responding women to nonresponding women in the same age-race-marital status category and PSU. Response to the screener was 95.1 percent; the response to the interview was 83.5 percent, yielding a combined response rate of approximately 79.4 percent.
- *Poststratification by marital status, age, and race*—The estimates were ratio adjusted within each of 24 age-race-

NOTE: A list of references follows the text.

marital status categories to independent estimates of the population of women 15–44. The independent estimates were derived from the U.S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Surveys.

The effect of the ratio-estimating process was to make the sample more closely representative of the noninstitutional population of women 15–44 years of age in the conterminous United States. The final poststratification reduced the sample variance of the estimates for most statistics.

All figures were individually rounded; aggregate figures (numbers) were rounded to the nearest thousand. Aggregate numbers and percents may not sum to the total because of the rounding.

Measurement process

Field operations for Cycle III were carried out by Westat, Inc., under contract with NCHS; these operations included pretesting the interview schedule, selecting the sample, interviewing respondents, and performing specified quality control checks. Interviewers, all of whom were female, were trained for 1 week prior to field work. The first five interview schedules done by each interviewer were reviewed; after a high level of quality was achieved by an interviewer, this review was reduced to a sample of questionnaires, unless an unacceptable level of error was found. A 10-percent sample of respondents was recontacted by telephone to verify that the interview had taken place and that certain key items were accurately recorded.

Two forms of the questionnaire were used, one for women 15–24 years of age and one for women 25–44 years of age. The questionnaire for women 15–24 included a few additional items that referred to early experiences that women over 25 could not be expected to remember accurately.

Data reduction

The responses of each woman to the interview questions were translated into predetermined numerical codes, and these code numbers were recorded on computer tapes. The first few questionnaires coded by each coder were checked completely; after an acceptable level of quality was reached, verification of coding was performed on a systematic sample of each coder's questionnaires. The data were edited by computer to identify inconsistencies between responses, as well as code numbers that were not allowed in the coding scheme; these errors were corrected.

Missing data on all variables used in this report were imputed in order to provide consistent national estimates. (To speed release of the public-use computer tape, however, not all variables on the computer tape were imputed.) If the level of missing data is relatively high (more than 5 percent), this fact is noted in the "Concepts and definitions." Four items are so affected: poverty level income, age (or date) of first intercourse, and mother's and father's educational attainment.

Reliability of estimates

Because the statistics presented in this report are based on a sample, they may differ somewhat from the figures that would

have been obtained if a complete census had been taken using the same questionnaires, instructions, interviewing personnel, and field procedures. This chance difference between sample results and a complete count is referred to as sampling error.

Sampling error is measured by a statistic called the standard error of estimate. The chances are about 68 out of 100 that an estimate from the sample will differ from a complete count by less than the standard error. The chances are about 95 out of 100 that the difference between the sample estimate and a complete count will be less than twice the standard error. The relative standard error of an estimate is obtained by dividing the standard error of the estimate by the estimate itself, and it is expressed as a percent of the estimate. Numbers and percents that have a relative standard error that is more than 30 percent are considered unreliable. These figures are marked with an asterisk to caution the user, but they may be combined to make other types of comparisons of greater reliability.

Estimation of standard errors

Because of the complex multistage design of the NSFG sample, conventional formulas for calculating sampling errors are inapplicable. Standard errors were, therefore, estimated empirically by using a technique known as balanced half-sample replication. This technique produces highly reliable, unbiased estimates of sampling errors. Its application to the NSFG has been described elsewhere.²⁷

Because it would be prohibitively expensive to estimate and cumbersome to publish a standard error for each percent or other statistic by this technique, standard errors were computed for selected statistics and population subgroups that were chosen to represent a wide variety of demographic characteristics and a wide variation in the size of the estimates themselves. Curves were then fitted to the relative standard error estimates (ratio of the standard error to the estimate itself) for numbers of women according to the model

$$RSE(N') = \left(A + \frac{B}{N'} \right)^{1/2}$$

where N' is the number of women and A and B are the parameters whose estimates determine the shape of the curve. Separate curves were fitted for women of all races combined, and white women, and for black women, because a different sampling rate was used for black women. Separate curves were fitted for teenagers, for the same reason. The estimates of A and B are shown in table I.

To calculate the estimated standard error or relative standard error of an aggregate or percent, the appropriate estimates of A and B are used in the equations:

$$RSE_{N'} = \left(A + \frac{B}{N'} \right)^{1/2}$$

$$SE_{N'} = \left(A + \frac{B}{N'} \right)^{1/2} (N')$$

NOTE: A list of references follows the text.

Table I. Estimates of parameters A and B for relative standard error curves, by age, race, and marital status

Age, race, and marital status	Parameter A	Parameter B
Women aged 15-44 years		
All races and white		
All marital statuses	-0.0003935957	21306.413351
Ever married	-0.0010973290	39809.167683
Never married	-0.0009351043	17608.883330
Black		
All marital statuses, ever married, never married	-0.0009086323	6346.048380
Women aged 15-19 years		
All races and white	-0.001456493	13862.104404
Black	-0.003322363	4727.056926

Table II. Approximate relative standard errors and standard errors for estimated numbers of women of all races combined: 1982 National Survey of Family Growth

Size of estimate	Relative standard error	Standard error
50,000	65.2	33,000
100,000	46.1	46,000
500,000	20.5	102,000
1,000,000	14.5	144,000
3,000,000	8.2	245,000
5,000,000	6.2	310,000
7,000,000	5.1	359,000
10,000,000	4.2	416,000
30,000,000	1.8	532,000

$$RSE_{P'} = \left(\frac{B}{P'} \cdot \frac{100 - P'}{X'} \right)^{1/2}$$

$$SE_{P'} = \left(B \cdot P' \cdot \frac{100 - P'}{X'} \right)^{1/2}$$

where N' = number of women

P' = percent

X' = number of women in the denominator of the percent

SE = standard error

RSE = relative standard error

Tables II and III show some illustrative standard errors of aggregates and percents of women of all races from Cycle III of the NSFG.

Testing differences

The standard error of a difference between two comparative statistics, such as the proportion surgically sterile among white couples compared with black couples, is approximately the square root of the sum of the squares of the standard errors of the statistics considered separately, or calculated by the formula,

$$d = P'_1 - P'_2$$

if

then

$$S_d = \sqrt{(P'_1)^2 \cdot (RSE_{P'_1})^2 + (P'_2)^2 \cdot (RSE_{P'_2})^2}$$

where P'_1 is the estimated percent for one group and P'_2 is the estimated percent for the other group, and $RSE_{P'_1}$ and $RSE_{P'_2}$ are the relative standard errors of P'_1 and P'_2 , respectively. This formula will represent the actual standard error quite accurately for the difference between separate and uncorrelated characteristics although it is only a rough approximation in most other cases.

A difference among comparable proportions or other statistics from two or more subgroups is considered to be statistically significant when a difference of that size or larger would be expected by chance in less than 5 percent of repeated samples of the same size and type if no true difference existed in the populations sampled. Such a difference would be statistically significant at the 0.05 level. By this criterion, if the observed difference or a larger one could be expected by chance in more than 5 percent of repeated samples, then one cannot be sufficiently confident to conclude that a real difference exists between the populations. When an observed difference is large enough to be statistically significant, the true difference in the

Table III. Approximate standard errors for estimated percents expressed in percentage points for women of all races: 1982 National Survey of Family Growth

Base of percent	Estimated percent						
	2 or 98	5 or 95	10 or 90	20 or 80	30 or 70	40 or 60	50
100,000	6.5	10.1	13.8	18.5	21.2	22.6	23.1
500,000	2.9	4.5	6.2	8.2	9.5	10.1	10.3
1,000,000	2.0	3.2	4.4	5.8	6.7	7.1	7.3
5,000,000	0.9	1.4	2.0	2.6	3.0	3.2	3.3
10,000,000	0.6	1.0	1.4	1.8	2.1	2.3	2.3
30,000,000	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.3
50,000,000	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0

EXAMPLE OF USE OF TABLE III: If 30 percent of women in a specific category were currently married and the base of that percent was 10,000,000, then the 30-percent column and the 10,000,000 row indicate that 1 standard error is 2.1 percentage points and 2 standard errors are twice that, or 4.2 percentage points. Therefore, the chances are 95 out of 100 that the true percent in the population was between 25.8 and 34.2 (30.0 percent plus or minus 4.2 percent). This is called a 95-percent confidence interval. In addition, the relative standard error of that 30-percent estimate is 2.1 percent divided by 30 percent, or 7.0 percent.

population is estimated to lie between the observed difference plus or minus 2 standard errors of that difference in 95 out of 100 samples.

Although the 5-percent criterion is conventionally applied, it is in a sense arbitrary; depending on the purpose of the particular comparison, a different level of significance may be more useful. For greater confidence, one would test for significance at the 0.01 (1-percent) level, but if one can accept a 10-percent chance of concluding a difference exists when there actually is none in the population, a test of significance at the 10-percent level would be appropriate.

The term "similar" means that any observed difference between two estimates being compared is not statistically significant, but terms such as "greater," "less," "larger," and "smaller" indicate that the observed differences are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, by using a two-tailed *t*-test with 39 degrees of freedom. Statements about differences that are qualified in some way (e.g., by the phrases "the data suggest" or "some evidence") indicate that the difference is significant at the 0.10 level but not the 0.05 level.

When a substantial difference observed is found not to be statistically significant, one should not conclude that no difference exists, but simply that such a difference cannot be established with 95-percent confidence from this sample. This is especially important in Cycle III because the number of ever married women in this sample is 4,651, compared with 7,970 in Cycle II—a reduction of 42 percent. This means that the standard errors in Cycle III are larger than those in Cycle II, so it is harder in Cycle III than in Cycle II to establish significant differences. Lack of comment in the text about any two statistics does not mean that the difference was tested and found not to be significant.

The number of replicates in the balanced half-sample replication design minus one (39 in Cycle III) can reasonably be used as an estimate of the number of degrees of freedom, although the exact value of the degrees of freedom is unknown. Therefore, in this report, differences between sample statistics are compared by using a two-tailed *t*-test with 39 degrees of freedom.

Example: In 1982, 11.5 percent of 45,367,000 white women were formerly married, compared with 18.8 percent of 6,985,000 black women. To test this racial difference at the .05 level of significance, compute

$$t = \frac{18.8 - 11.5}{\sqrt{(18.8)^2 \cdot RSE_{(18.8)}^2 + (11.5)^2 \cdot RSE_{(11.5)}^2}}$$

Relative standard errors are computed using the appropriate values for B from table I:

$$RSE_{(11.5)} = \sqrt{\frac{(21306.413351) \cdot (100 - 11.5)}{(11.5) \cdot (45,367,000)}} \\ = 0.060$$

and

$$RSE_{(18.8)} = \sqrt{\frac{6346.0484 \cdot (100 - 18.8)}{18.8 \cdot 6,985,000}} \\ = 0.063$$

thus

$$t = \frac{18.8 - 11.5}{\sqrt{(18.8)^2 \cdot (0.063)^2 + (11.5)^2 \cdot (0.060)^2}} \\ = 5.33$$

The two-tailed .95 critical value ($1 - \alpha$) for a *t* statistic with 39 degrees of freedom is 2.02. Therefore, the difference is significant at the 5 percent level.

Nonsampling error

Although sampling error affects the reliability of survey estimates, nonsampling error may introduce bias. The results of any survey are subject to at least four types of potential nonsampling error: interview nonresponse; nonresponse to individual questions or items within the interview; inconsistency of responses to questions; and errors of recording, coding, and keying by survey personnel.

To minimize nonsampling error, stringent quality control procedures were introduced at every stage of the survey including a check on completeness of the household listing; extensive training and practice of interviewers; field editing of questionnaires; short verification interviews with a subsample of respondents; verification of coding and editing; an independent recode of a sample of questionnaires by NCHS; keypunch verification; and an extensive computer "cleaning" to check for inconsistent responses, missing data, and invalid codes. A detailed description of some of these procedures follows; others were previously discussed.

Interview nonresponse

Interview nonresponse occurs when an interview is not obtained. It can result from failures at any of three principal steps: (1) failing to list all households in sample segments, (2) failing to screen all listed households, and (3) failing to interview an eligible woman in each screened household. A discussion of these steps follows.

The completeness of listing cannot be tested directly because it requires an independent, accurate enumeration of the households that should have been listed. In the NSFG, listing completeness and accuracy were tested by the missed dwelling unit (DU) procedure at the time of screening: if the first structure in a segment was included in the sample, the whole segment was checked to see if any structures had been missed in the listing process; if the first structure was a multiple-DU structure and if the first-listed unit in the building was included in the sample, the entire structure was checked for missed DU's.

Of the original sample of 34,641 DU's screened, 3,614 were found vacant or not DU's. Of the 31,027 occupied DU's, 4.9

percent were not screened successfully. Screening was completed in 29,511 households; 9,964 of these contained eligible respondents who were selected for interview. Interviews were not completed with 16.5 percent of these cases because of refusals by respondents (8.3 percent) and by the parents of respondents under 18 years of age (1.5 percent) and because of no contact after repeated calls (2.8 percent) or other problems (4.0 percent).

The nonrespondent adjustment for interview nonresponse described earlier imputes the characteristics of responding women of the same age group, race, marital status, and geographic area to nonresponding women.

Item nonresponse

Item nonresponse may have occurred when a respondent refused to answer a question or did not know the answer to a

question, when the question was erroneously not asked or the answer was not recorded by the interviewer, or when the answer could not be coded. Nonresponse to individual questions was very low in Cycle III, as it was in Cycle II. Some examples of item nonresponse among a total of 7,969 respondents are religion of respondent, 11 cases; and respondent's occupation, 37 cases. The item with the most item nonresponse was family income (from which poverty level income was derived), with 1,767 cases. Missing data were imputed for all data items in this report. For those few items where the proportion of cases imputed was as high, this fact is noted in the appropriate section of the definitions.

As with all survey data, responses to the NSFG are subject to possible deliberate misreporting by the respondent. Such misreporting cannot be detected directly, but can be detected indirectly by the extensive computer "cleaning" and editing procedures used in the NSFG.

Appendix II

Definitions of terms

Marriage, first intercourse, and related terms

Dating—Women under age 25 years at the interview date were classified as having dated if they provided an age in response to the question, “At what age, if ever, did you first start dating, that is, going out with a boy?” As discussed in the text, there is some evidence that younger women may have interpreted the meaning of the term “dating” more broadly than older women. Women who stated that they had never dated were so classified. This question was not asked of women 25–44 years of age.

Timing of first sexual intercourse—The date of first sexual intercourse was ascertained by the question, “Thinking back, after your first menstrual period, when did you have sexual intercourse for the first time—what month and year was that?” Women who were unable to recall the exact month and year were probed for a season and year, their age at first intercourse, and whether or not it occurred before or after the birthday for the given age. Approximately 8 percent of women were unable to give either an age or a month and year of first intercourse, or gave information that was inconsistent with other responses. Imputed values were assigned for these women.

Age at first intercourse was calculated from month and year for women who were able to provide the month and year of first intercourse. Age was classified according to the woman’s age at her last birthday before her first intercourse. To measure the timing of first sexual intercourse in relation to marriage, dates of first intercourse were compared with the date of first formal marriage. Thus, women whose first intercourse occurred after initiating an informal marriage were classified as having premarital intercourse. For women who gave ages or seasons rather than exact dates of first intercourse, dates were estimated for purposes of classifying timing in relation to marriage.

Marital status—Persons were classified by marital status as married, widowed, divorced, separated, or never married. In Cycles I and II, informally married women—women who volunteered that they were sharing living quarters with their sexual partner—were classified as currently married. These women constituted about 2 percent of currently married respondents in Cycle I and 3 percent in Cycle II. In Cycle III, such women were classified according to their legal marital status.

In all cycles, women who were married but separated from their spouse were classified as separated if the reason for the separation was marital discord and as currently married otherwise.

Number of marriages—Number of marriages refers to the number of times a woman has been legally married. Multiple marriages to the same husband are individually counted.

Informal marriage—Women who were not currently married but living in the same household with a partner, boyfriend, or fiancé were classified as being informally married. Women were so classified if they were identified as “living with a partner” in the screening interview and verified this in the extended interview. In addition, a few women were classified as informally married because they identified other members of their households as their boyfriends or fiancés during the screener interview.

Frequency of sexual intercourse—Women were asked, “In the last three months, how frequently did you have intercourse?”, and asked to choose one of the categories “A. Once a month,” “B. Two or three times a month,” “C. Once a week,” “D. Several times a week,” “E. Almost every day or every day” from a printed card. Women were told, “Just tell me the letter that is closest to your answer.” Women who had not had sexual intercourse in any of the 3 months before the interview were asked about the last 3 months in which they were having intercourse; such women are excluded from the percent distributions shown in this report.

Marital dissolution—Dissolution of formal marriage includes death of the spouse, separation because of marital discord, and divorce. In the case of divorce, the date that a woman and her husband separated is used to compute the number of years between first marriage and dissolution.

Remarriage—Remarriage refers to a marriage following dissolution by divorce or death of a previous marriage. The number of months or years between dissolution and remarriage refers to the length of time between divorce or death and the beginning of the next formal marriage.

Demographic terms

Age—Age is classified by the age of the respondent at her last birthday before the date of interview.

Race—Race refers to the race of the woman interviewed and is reported as black, white, or other. In Cycle III, race was classified according to the woman’s report of which race best described her. In Cycles I and II, race was classified by the observation of the interviewer. Comparisons of the results of Cycle III using both definitions indicate that results of both methods of classification are very similar.

Hispanic origin—A respondent was classified as being of Hispanic origin if she reported that her only or principal national origin was Puerto Rican, Cuban, Mexican American, Central or South American or other Spanish. In tables where data are presented for women by race, women of Hispanic origin are included in the statistics for white and black women if they were classified as such by race.

Living arrangements at age 14 years—Women were classified as living with both parents if they answered “yes” to the question, “When you were 14, were you living with both your own mother and your own father?” If they answered “no,” they were classified as living with one or neither parent.

Mother’s or father’s education—Parent’s education was classified according to the highest grade or year of regular school or college completed by the mother or father. This information was obtained from women aged 18–44 by the question “What was the highest grade or year of regular school or college that your (father/mother) completed?” For women aged 15–17, education of mother and father was asked in a brief interview with a parent (usually the mother). Father’s education was not ascertained for 20.4 percent of interviewed women; mother’s education was not ascertained for 10.0 percent of interviewed women. Imputed values were assigned for these women. Because of the high level of missing data on father’s education, small differences by father’s education should be interpreted with caution.

Poverty level income—The poverty index ratio was calculated by dividing the total family income by the weighted average threshold income of families with the head of household under 65 years of age, based on the poverty levels shown in U.S. Bureau of the Census *Current Population Reports*, Series P–60, No. 140, “Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States, 1982,” table A–1.³⁰ This definition takes into account the sex of the family head and the number of persons in the family. Total family income includes income from all sources for all members of the respondent’s family. For a substantial number of respondents (22 percent), total family income was not ascertained. These missing values were imputed using a known value of another similar, randomly selected respondent. Because of these high levels of missing data, small differences by poverty level income should be interpreted with caution.

Education—The woman’s education was classified according to the highest grade or year of regular school or college that was completed. Determination of the highest year of regular school or college completed by the woman was based on responses to a series of questions concerning the last grade or year of school attended and whether that grade was completed.

Religion—Women were classified by religion in response to the question, “Are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or something else?” In addition to the three major religious groupings, two other categories—other and none—were used. Because the category of Protestant includes numerous individual denominations, these respondents were further asked to identify the denomination to which they belonged. Those who answered “other” to the original question and named a Protestant denomination were included as Protestant. Although specific denominational names were obtained and recorded, the numbers of cases for most denominations were too few to produce reliable estimates; therefore, they were combined in larger categories.

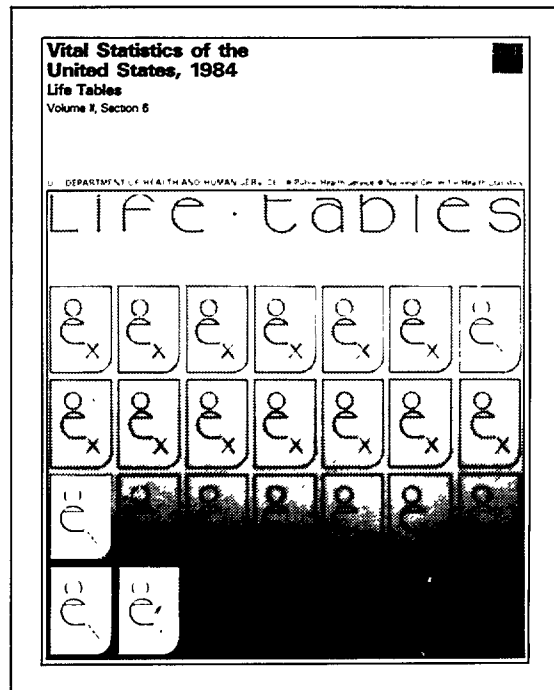
Region of residence—Data are classified by region of residence into the four major Census regions: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. Sample size greatly restricts the possibility of meaningful analyses by social characteristics among smaller geographic divisions. The areas comprising these four major geographic regions are as follows:

<i>Geographic region and division</i>	<i>States included</i>
Northeast:	
New England	Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut
Middle Atlantic	New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
Midwest:	
East North Central	Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin
West North Central	Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas
South:	
South Atlantic	Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida
East South Central	Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi
West South Central	Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
West:	
Mountain	Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada
Pacific	Washington, Oregon, California

Labor force status—A woman was categorized as being “in the labor force” if she was working full time; part time; had a job, but was not at work because of temporary illness, vacation, or a strike; or if she was unemployed, laid off, or looking for work; or if she was on maternity leave.

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