

nchs MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Final Data From the National Center for Health Statistics

Vol. 33, No. 11, Supplement • February 28, 1985

Advance Report of Final Divorce Statistics, 1982

Divorces and divorce rates

The number of divorces dropped sharply in 1982, from a historic high of 1,213,000 in 1981 to 1,170,000 in 1982. This was the first decline in the number of divorces in 20 years. The annual total of divorces was 413,000 in 1962; it more than doubled by 1972 (845,000) and nearly tripled by 1981 (table 1). The 3.5-percent drop from 1981 to 1982 was greater than any percent decline since 1948, although the 1958 drop was almost as great (3.4 percent).

The divorce rate also dropped sharply, from 5.3 per 1,000 population in 1981 to 5.0 in 1982. This drop of 6 percent was more precipitous than any annual decline since those recorded following the steep, but temporary, surge in marriages and divorces in the aftermath of World War II.

Because divorce is a process to which only married persons are at risk, it is useful to calculate a rate for married women or men. The divorce rate per 1,000 married women 15 years of age and over was 21.7 in 1982, 4 percent below the rate in 1981 and lower than it has been since 1977. The rate had increased almost every year, from 9.4 in 1962 to 22.8 in 1979, before dipping to 22.6 in 1980, stabilizing in 1981, and then dropping to 21.7 in 1982 (figure 1).

A drop in divorce rates was reported in most parts of the Nation (table 2); the divorce rate rose in only seven States (Vermont, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Delaware, Virginia, and Utah). In the other 38 States and the District of Columbia, for which complete data are available, the rates dropped or were unchanged from 1981. In five of these States (Nevada, Kansas, Mississippi, Idaho, and Iowa) the divorce rate dropped 10 percent or more in 1982.

Numbers of divorces are obtained annually from all States and the District of Columbia. Detailed information about characteristics of husbands and wives as well as about the characteristics of the divorce is reported by the 31 States in the divorce-registration area (DRA), which accounted for half of all divorces in the United States in 1982. It is from these States that number of children, ages of spouses, and duration of marriage can be ascertained.

Children involved in divorce

Reflecting the decline in the number of couples divorcing as well as the shrinking size of American families, the estimated number of children involved in divorces in the United States was 6 percent lower in 1982 (1,108,000) than in 1981 (1,180,000). The annual total, estimated for the United States from data for the DRA, has exceeded 1 million children every year since 1972. It was 532,000 in 1962 and nearly doubled (1,021,000) by 1972 (table 3 and figure 2).

While the annual total of children involved in divorce was increasing in the last two decades, the average number of children per decree has fallen from a high of 1.36 children per decree in 1964 to 0.94 in 1982, 3 percent below the figure of 0.97 in 1981.

The average number of children per decree is similar to the average number of "own children" in "married-couple families" reported by the Bureau of the Census.^{1,2} The average for these families dropped from 0.96 children in 1981 to 0.93 in 1982, a decline very much like the one observed in the average number of children per decree. The fact that divorcing couples have virtually the same number of children as American couples in general suggests that contemporary American couples do not stay married "for the sake of the children," as would be indicated by a smaller number of children per divorcing couple.

Because the number of divorces and the size of American families affect the total number of children involved in divorces, a rate has been calculated that relates the number of children involved in divorces to the total number of children under 18 years of age. This rate reached a historic high for the United States of 18.7 per 1,000 in 1981 and dropped 6 percent, to 17.6 in 1982.

The size of dissolving families is shown in table 4 for States in the DRA. In the DRA 46 percent of divorcing couples had no children under 18 years of age, 26 percent had one child, and the remaining 29 percent had two or more children. Among States, the percent of childless divorcing couples ranged from a low of 37 percent in Nebraska to a high of 50 percent in Alaska, Georgia, and Maryland. The average number of children per

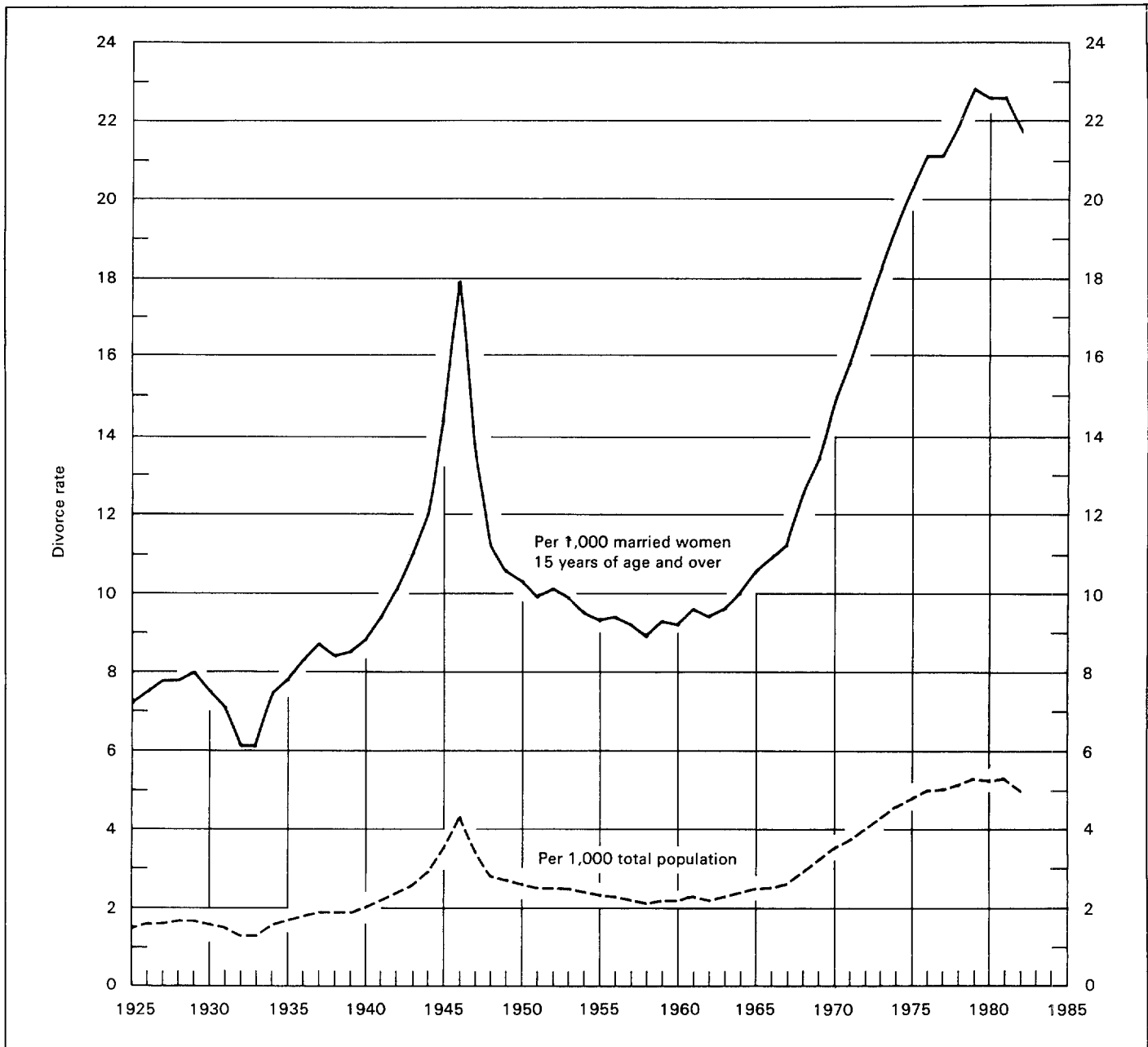


Figure 1. Divorce rates: United States, 1925-82

decreased among reporting States, from 0.78 in Maryland to 1.20 in Utah (table 5). The rate per 1,000 children under 18 years of age ranged from 11.3 in Maryland to 23.9 in Wyoming.

Age

Age-specific divorce rates, which indicate the relative likelihood of divorce among different age groups, have been calculated using data from the 28 registration States in which age at divorce was reported with sufficient completeness to provide satisfactory rates (table 6).

The rates are based on unpublished population estimates

prepared by the Bureau of the Census by age and marital status of men and women. As in the past, fewer men than women are reported as married. This causes the rate of divorce for married men to be higher than that of married women because the base population is smaller. In 1982, for example, the divorce rate per 1,000 married men of all ages was 19.4, slightly higher than the divorce rate of 19.0 for married women of all ages.

It also should be noted that the divorce rate for married women 15 years of age and over in the reporting States (19.0 per 1,000) is lower than the rate for married women 15 years of age and over in the United States (21.7 per 1,000), shown in table 1. Such a difference would be expected because the rate

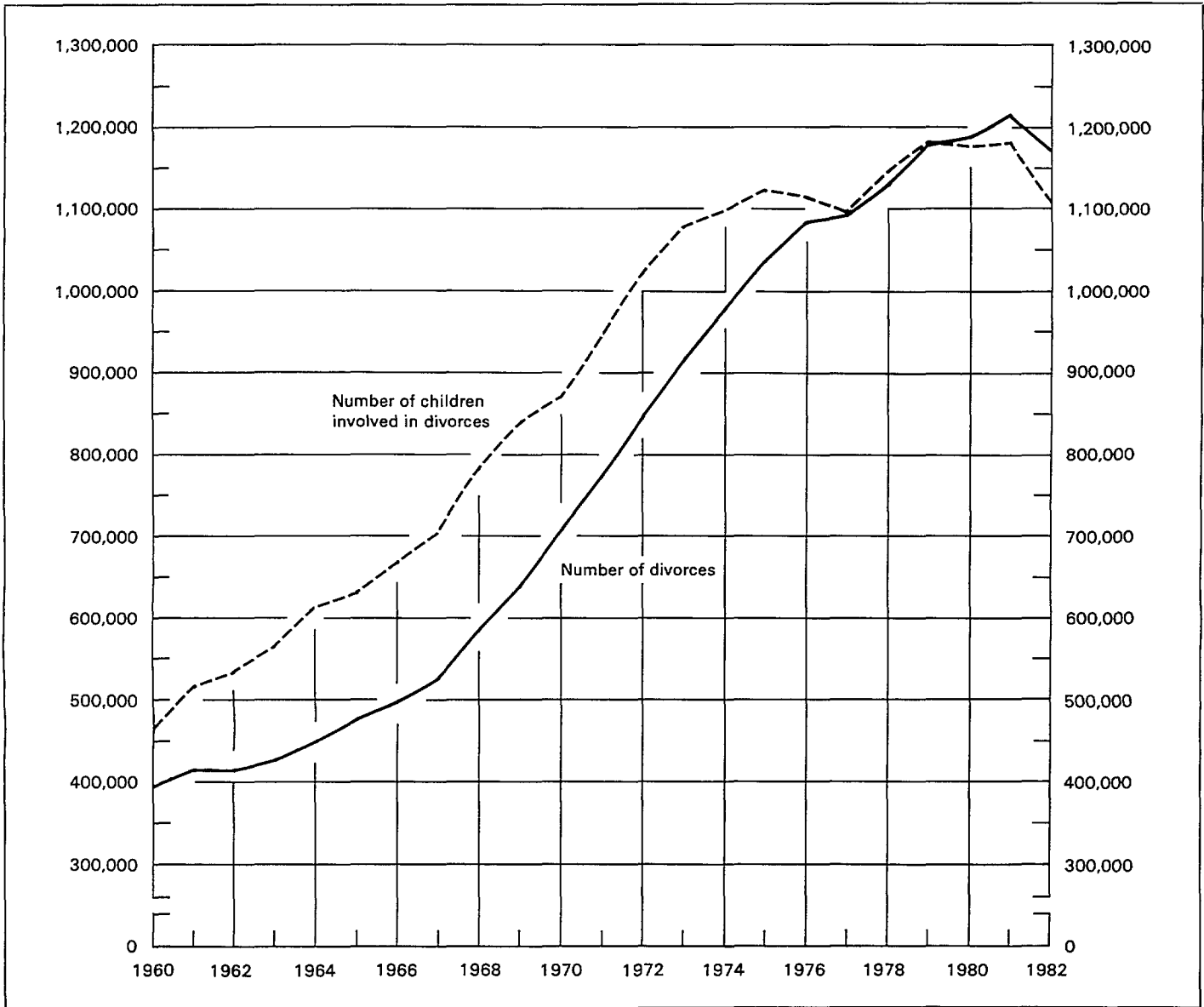


Figure 2. Divorces and children involved: United States, 1960-82

for the United States is higher (5.0 per 1,000 total population) than the rate for the DRA (4.5). These differences reflect the fact that many of the States that do not participate in the DRA are in the South and West Regions where divorce rates tend to be higher than in the Northeast and North Central Regions.

For women the age-specific divorce rate is highest (45.6 per 1,000) for the youngest group, 15-19 years of age. The rate is almost as high for married women 20-24 years of age (44.5 per 1,000) and then drops for each successive age group. The divorce rate for women 35-39 years of age (22.9) is approximately half, and the rate for women 45-49 (11.8) is approximately one-quarter of the rates for women under 25 years of age. For men, unlike women, teenagers do not have the highest divorce rates. The highest rate is for married men 20-24 years of age, 47.0 per 1,000. Then, as with the women,

the rates taper off, dropping to 1.9 per 1,000 men 65 years of age and over. For every age group except teenagers the rates for men are higher than rates for women, 6 percent higher at ages 20-24 and increasing to 53 percent higher at ages 55-59. At 60 years of age and over the difference between men's and women's rates narrows again.

Divorces tend to be concentrated in early adulthood. For both men and women the age group with the largest proportion of divorces, almost one-quarter, was 25-29 years. Men 20-34 years of age accounted for 55 percent and women 20-34 accounted for 63 percent of divorcing spouses. Divorces at the older ages are rare: Only 10 percent of divorcing men and 7 percent of divorcing women were 50 years of age and over. In the last decade, age at divorce has shifted upward slightly (table 7). Between 1972 and 1982 the median age of divorcing

husbands increased 1 year, from 32.6 to 33.6, while the average (mean) age increased from 34.9 to 35.7 years. Age of women at divorce also increased; the median increased from 29.8 to 31.1, while the average (mean) age rose from 32.1 to 33.1. The mean is higher than the median age in distributions that have more cases at the extreme upper than at the lower end of the age range, as is true of the age distribution of divorcing spouses. The trend in age at marriage of divorcing spouses (table 8) shows that the shift to older average age at divorce between 1972 and 1982 was due to a later start of the marriages, not to longer marriages. Mean age of divorcing husbands at marriage rose from 25.4 in 1972 to 26.4 in 1982; that of wives increased from 22.7 in 1972 to 23.8 in 1982. These increases are about the same as the increases in the mean ages of husbands and wives at divorce.

There is a great deal of variation among States in average ages at marriage and at divorce (table 9). Mean age at marriage for women divorcing in 1982 varied by 2.6 years, from 22.7 in Pennsylvania to 25.3 in Oregon. Mean age of women at divorce varied by 3.7 years, from 31.0 in Wyoming to 34.7 in New York.

Duration

Most divorces occur relatively early in marriage. Table 10 shows that 4 percent of divorcing couples had been married less than 1 year and 34 percent from 1–4 years. Half the couples had been married less than 7 years, the median duration in 1982. The other half had been married 7 years or longer, with 11 percent married 20 years or more. Between 1972 and 1982 the distribution of divorces by duration became slightly more concentrated in the middle range, with more marriages dissolving at 5–9 and 10–14 years duration and proportionately fewer at shorter or longer durations.

The mean duration of marriage (9.4 years in 1982) is longer than the median duration (7.0 years). The mean duration was virtually the same in 1982 as in 1972, and the changes from year to year during the decade were minor. In contrast there is much more variation among States in duration of dissolving marriages than there is from one year to the next. In 1982 the mean duration ranged from 7.2 years in Wyoming to 11.5 years in Massachusetts.

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 standards of reliability or precision
-

Table 1. Divorces and annulments and rates: United States, 1940-82

[Data refer only to events occurring within the United States. Alaska included beginning 1959 and Hawaii beginning 1960. Rates per 1,000 population enumerated as of April 1 for census years and estimated as of July 1 for all other years]

Year	Divorces and annulments	Rate per 1,000—	
		Total population	Married women 15 years and over
1982	1,170,000	5.0	21.7
1981	1,213,000	5.3	22.6
1980	1,189,000	5.2	22.6
1979	1,181,000	5.3	22.8
1978	1,130,000	5.1	21.9
1977	1,091,000	5.0	21.1
1976	1,083,000	5.0	21.1
1975	1,036,000	4.8	20.3
1974	977,000	4.6	19.3
1973	915,000	4.3	18.2
1972	845,000	4.0	17.0
1971	773,000	3.7	15.8
1970	708,000	3.5	14.9
1969	639,000	3.2	13.4
1968	584,000	2.9	12.5
1967	523,000	2.6	11.2
1966	499,000	2.5	10.9
1965	479,000	2.5	10.6
1964	450,000	2.4	10.0
1963	428,000	2.3	9.6
1962	413,000	2.2	9.4
1961	414,000	2.3	9.6
1960	393,000	2.2	9.2
1959	395,000	2.2	9.3
1958	368,000	2.1	8.9
1957	381,000	2.2	9.2
1956	382,000	2.3	9.4
1955	377,000	2.3	9.3
1954	379,000	2.4	9.5
1953	390,000	2.5	9.9
1952	392,000	2.5	10.1
1951	381,000	2.5	9.9
1950	385,000	2.6	10.3
1949	397,000	2.7	10.6
1948	408,000	2.8	11.2
1947	483,000	3.4	13.6
1946	610,000	4.3	17.9
1945	485,000	3.5	14.4
1944	400,000	2.9	12.0
1943	359,000	2.6	11.0
1942	321,000	2.4	10.1
1941	293,000	2.2	9.4
1940	264,000	2.0	8.8

Table 2. Divorces and divorce rates: United States, each region, division, and State, 1972, 1981, and 1982

[Data are counts of decrees granted (including reported annulments and dissolutions of marriage), supplied by States except as noted. Figures for the divorce-registration States differ slightly from those based on sample data shown in tables 4 and 5. Rates per 1,000 population in each area estimated as of July 1]

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1982	1981	1972	1982	1981	1972
United States ¹	1,170,000	1,213,000	845,000	5.0	5.3	4.0
Regions:						
Northeast	182,000	180,000	119,000	3.7	3.6	2.4
North Central	272,000	289,000	¹ 218,000	4.6	4.9	¹ 3.8
South	445,000	¹ 465,000	301,000	5.7	¹ 6.1	4.6
West ¹	271,000	279,000	207,000	6.0	6.3	5.7
Northeast:						
New England	49,491	50,430	33,480	4.0	4.1	2.8
Middle Atlantic	132,300	129,798	85,898	3.6	3.5	2.3
North Central:						
East North Central ²	195,800	206,946	157,093	4.7	5.0	*
West North Central	75,891	82,153	56,664	4.4	4.8	3.4
South:						
South Atlantic	206,548	213,930	135,749	5.4	5.7	4.2
East South Central	² 83,583	² 88,716	61,510	² 5.6	² 6.0	4.6
West South Central ²	154,674	160,749	103,749	² 6.1	*	² 5.1
West:						
Mountain ²	83,334	89,432	57,288	*	*	*
Pacific	185,833	188,576	148,975	5.6	5.8	5.4
New England:						
Maine	5,819	6,364	4,157	5.1	5.6	4.0
New Hampshire	5,045	5,248	3,196	5.3	5.6	4.1
Vermont	2,615	2,263	1,253	5.0	4.4	2.7
Massachusetts	19,531	19,502	14,441	3.4	3.4	2.5
Rhode Island	3,619	3,413	2,018	3.8	3.6	2.1
Connecticut	12,862	13,640	8,415	4.1	4.3	2.7
Middle Atlantic:						
New York	63,241	63,359	40,902	3.6	3.6	2.2
New Jersey	27,779	27,597	17,495	3.7	3.7	2.4
Pennsylvania	41,280	38,842	27,501	3.5	3.3	2.3
East North Central:						
Ohio	² 53,315	² 58,567	44,673	² 4.9	² 5.4	4.2
Indiana ³	35,780	34,962	² 22,902	6.5	6.4	*
Illinois	49,639	51,789	43,092	4.3	4.5	3.8
Michigan	39,739	43,167	35,934	4.4	4.7	4.0
Wisconsin	17,327	18,461	10,492	3.7	3.9	2.3
West North Central:						
Minnesota	15,177	16,510	10,250	3.7	4.0	2.7
Iowa	10,868	12,071	8,471	3.7	4.1	3.0
Missouri	26,292	27,975	20,699	5.3	5.7	4.4
North Dakota	2,198	2,319	1,298	3.3	3.5	2.1
South Dakota	2,564	2,772	1,627	3.7	4.0	2.4
Nebraska	6,400	6,769	4,394	4.0	4.3	2.9
Kansas	12,392	13,737	9,925	5.1	5.8	4.4
South Atlantic:						
Delaware	3,213	2,996	1,836	5.4	5.0	3.2
Maryland	16,083	17,150	11,520	3.8	4.0	2.8
District of Columbia	3,545	3,896	3,324	5.7	6.2	4.5
Virginia	26,138	25,103	14,155	4.8	4.6	2.9
West Virginia	10,198	10,748	6,270	5.2	5.5	3.5
North Carolina	29,614	29,593	17,277	4.9	5.0	3.3
South Carolina	13,600	13,974	7,646	4.2	4.4	2.8
Georgia	33,128	35,205	22,044	5.9	6.3	4.6
Florida	71,029	75,265	51,677	6.8	7.4	6.9
East South Central:						
Kentucky	² 16,213	² 16,671	11,854	² 4.4	² 4.5	3.6
Tennessee	29,599	31,072	20,601	6.4	6.7	5.0
Alabama	24,910	26,791	18,958	6.3	6.8	5.4
Mississippi	12,861	14,182	10,097	5.0	5.6	4.4

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Divorces and divorce rates: United States, each region, division, and State, 1972, 1981, and 1982—Con.

[Data are counts of decrees granted (including reported annulments and dissolutions of marriage), supplied by States except as noted. Figures for the divorce-registration States differ slightly from those based on sample data shown in tables 4 and 5. Rates per 1,000 population in each area estimated as of July 1]

Region, division, and State	Number			Rate		
	1982	1981	1972	1982	1981	1972
West South Central:						
Arkansas	² 15,739	16,492	14,499	² 6.8	7.2	7.2
Louisiana ²	16,765	17,397	10,618	3.8	*	2.8
Oklahoma	23,926	25,004	³ 18,289	7.4	8.1	³ 6.9
Texas	98,244	101,856	60,343	6.4	6.9	5.1
Mountain:						
Montana	4,612	5,004	3,609	5.7	6.3	5.0
Idaho	6,186	6,728	3,847	6.3	7.0	5.0
Wyoming	3,961	4,145	2,218	7.8	8.5	6.4
Colorado	18,710	19,515	12,604	6.1	6.6	5.2
New Mexico ^{2,3}	8,101	10,219	5,259	*	*	*
Arizona	20,259	20,819	³ 13,197	7.0	7.5	³ 6.6
Utah	8,413	8,077	4,904	5.4	5.3	4.3
Nevada	13,092	14,925	11,650	14.9	17.6	21.3
Pacific:						
Washington	27,980	29,511	20,513	6.5	7.0	6.0
Oregon	16,792	17,777	11,706	6.3	6.7	5.3
California	133,367	133,578	110,718	5.4	5.5	5.4
Alaska	3,461	3,457	2,147	7.8	8.3	6.6
Hawaii	4,233	4,253	3,891	4.2	4.3	4.7

¹Figure includes estimate.

²Data are incomplete.

³Data include divorce petitions filed for some counties.

Table 3. Estimated number of children involved in divorces and annulments, average number of children per decree, and rate per 1,000 children under 18 years of age: United States, 1950–82

[Data refer to children under 18 years of age and only to events occurring within the United States. For 1960–82, estimated from frequencies based on sample data; for all other years, estimated from total counts. For estimating method see Technical notes. Population enumerated as of April 1 for census years and estimated as of July 1 for all other years]

Year	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree	Rate per 1,000 children under 18 years of age	Year	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree	Rate per 1,000 children under 18 years of age
1982	1,108,000	0.94	17.6	1965	630,000	1.32	8.9
1981	1,180,000	0.97	18.7	1964	613,000	1.36	8.7
1980	1,174,000	0.98	17.3	1963	562,000	1.31	8.2
1979	1,181,000	1.00	18.4	1962	532,000	1.29	7.9
1978	1,147,000	1.01	17.7	1961	516,000	1.25	7.8
1977	1,095,000	1.00	16.7	1960	463,000	1.18	7.2
1976	1,117,000	1.03	16.9	1959	468,000	1.18	7.5
1975	1,123,000	1.08	16.7	1958	398,000	1.08	6.5
1974	1,099,000	1.12	16.2	1957	379,000	0.99	6.4
1973	1,079,000	1.17	15.7	1956	361,000	0.95	6.3
1972	1,021,000	1.20	14.7	1955	347,000	0.92	6.3
1971	946,000	1.22	13.6	1954	341,000	0.90	6.4
1970	870,000	1.22	12.5	1953	330,000	0.85	6.4
1969	840,000	1.31	11.9	1952	318,000	0.81	6.2
1968	784,000	1.34	11.1	1951	304,000	0.80	6.1
1967	701,000	1.34	9.9	1950	299,000	0.78	6.3
1966	669,000	1.34	9.5				

Table 4. Number of divorces and annulments and percent distribution by number of children under 18 years of age involved: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1982

[Based on sample data]

Area	All divorces and annulments Number	Number of children under 18 years of age involved						
		Total	None	1	2	3	4	5 or more
Divorce-registration area	576,928	100.0	45.5	25.8	19.9	6.5	1.6	0.5
Alabama	25,010	100.0	47.4	25.8	18.6	6.2	1.5	0.4
Alaska	3,462	100.0	50.1	22.9	19.2	5.4	1.8	0.6
Connecticut	12,870	100.0	43.5	25.5	22.1	6.8	1.5	0.6
Delaware	3,213	100.0	45.2	27.0	19.2	6.6	1.4	0.6
Georgia	32,830	100.0	50.3	25.1	17.4	5.8	1.2	0.2
Hawaii	4,230	100.0	46.4	23.3	20.5	7.2	2.1	0.6
Idaho ¹	6,246	100.0	47.0	24.5	19.8	6.2	2.0	0.5
Illinois	49,628	100.0	45.5	25.3	19.6	7.1	1.8	0.6
Iowa	10,884	100.0	39.3	25.7	24.2	8.1	2.2	0.6
Kansas	12,400	100.0	45.0	27.3	19.4	6.1	1.6	0.6
Kentucky	16,295	100.0	45.7	29.0	18.2	5.2	1.6	0.3
Maryland	15,975	100.0	49.6	28.1	17.6	3.9	0.6	0.3
Massachusetts	19,485	100.0	39.1	24.8	24.7	8.2	2.2	1.0
Michigan	39,770	100.0	42.5	24.9	22.3	7.6	1.9	0.9
Missouri	26,292	100.0	46.5	26.6	19.1	5.9	1.4	0.5
Montana	4,626	100.0	42.8	24.6	21.5	8.2	2.3	0.6
Nebraska	6,400	100.0	37.4	25.4	25.2	8.7	2.3	1.0
New Hampshire	5,033	100.0	39.5	25.3	24.1	8.5	2.1	0.5
New York	63,067	100.0	48.6	23.8	19.1	6.3	1.6	0.6
Ohio	53,300	100.0	45.0	26.6	19.4	6.9	1.7	0.3
Oregon	16,810	100.0	45.4	25.7	21.5	5.9	1.4	0.1
Pennsylvania	41,220	100.0	45.4	25.8	20.4	6.4	1.4	0.6
Rhode Island	3,619	100.0	40.5	25.8	23.7	7.1	2.2	0.7
South Carolina	13,600	100.0	45.6	27.7	19.1	5.8	1.4	0.4
South Dakota	2,565	100.0	39.0	28.3	22.7	7.5	1.7	0.8
Tennessee	29,700	100.0	49.1	28.3	16.3	4.9	1.2	0.4
Utah	8,396	100.0	39.1	25.9	20.4	8.8	3.3	2.4
Vermont	2,615	100.0	37.6	25.7	25.4	8.5	2.0	0.7
Virginia	26,087	100.0	48.8	26.7	18.1	5.0	1.1	0.3
Wisconsin	17,340	100.0	38.8	25.9	24.0	8.8	2.0	0.5
Wyoming	3,960	100.0	45.6	25.1	20.9	6.1	1.8	0.6

¹This State reports number of children affected by degree.

Table 5. Number of divorces and annulments, estimated number of children involved in divorces and annulments, average number of children per decree, and rate per 1,000 children under 18 years of age: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1982

[Refers to children under 18 years of age. Estimated from frequencies based on sample data]

Area	All divorces and annulments	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree	Rate per 1,000 children under 18 years of age	Area	All * divorces and annulments	Estimated number of children involved	Average number of children per decree	Rate per 1,000 children under 18 years of age
Divorce-registration area.....	576,928	546,119	0.95	15.7	Montana.....	4,626	4,842	1.04	20.9
Alabama.....	25,010	22,487	0.89	19.9	Nebraska.....	6,400	7,450	1.16	16.9
Alaska.....	3,462	3,042	0.87	21.4	New Hampshire...	5,033	5,549	1.10	21.9
Connecticut.....	12,870	12,777	0.99	16.5	New York.....	63,067	57,132	0.90	12.8
Delaware.....	3,213	3,025	0.94	19.1	Ohio.....	53,300	50,474	0.94	17.0
Georgia.....	32,830	27,354	0.83	16.8	Oregon.....	16,810	15,566	0.92	21.8
Hawaii.....	4,230	4,114	0.97	14.7	Pennsylvania.....	41,220	38,921	0.94	13.0
Idaho ¹	6,246	5,849	0.93	18.6	Rhode Island....	3,619	3,888	1.07	16.8
Illinois.....	49,628	47,998	0.96	15.3	South Carolina...	13,600	12,401	0.91	13.3
Iowa.....	10,884	11,996	1.10	15.1	South Dakota....	2,565	2,750	1.07	13.6
Kansas.....	12,400	11,690	0.94	18.1	Tennessee.....	29,700	24,395	0.82	19.3
Kentucky.....	16,295	14,560	0.89	13.9	Utah.....	8,396	10,080	1.20	17.2
Maryland.....	15,975	12,558	0.78	11.3	Vermont.....	2,615	2,984	1.14	21.2
Massachusetts...	19,485	22,079	1.13	15.7	Virginia.....	26,087	21,835	0.83	15.2
Michigan.....	39,770	41,500	1.04	16.1	Wisconsin.....	17,340	19,214	1.10	14.7
Missouri.....	26,292	23,831	0.90	18.1	Wyoming.....	3,960	3,778	0.95	23.9

¹This State reports number of children affected by decree.

Table 6. Divorces and divorce rates by age of men and women at time of decree: Divorce-registration area, 1982

[Based on sample data. For sampling errors and a description of the divorce-registration area, see Technical notes. Rates per 1,000 married population in specified group estimated as of July 1]

Age at time of decree	Men		Women	
	Number	Rate ¹	Number	Rate ¹
All ages.....	576,928	19.4	576,928	19.0
15-19 years ²	3,150	34.9	13,408	45.6
20-24 years.....	58,891	47.0	92,620	44.5
25-29 years.....	110,170	40.3	119,942	35.9
30-34 years.....	106,603	32.4	99,343	28.5
35-39 years.....	81,695	27.0	70,599	22.9
40-44 years.....	53,821	21.8	43,755	17.7
45-49 years.....	34,417	15.3	25,427	11.8
50-54 years.....	23,024	10.1	15,309	6.8
55-59 years.....	14,097	6.1	8,820	4.0
60-64 years.....	7,604	3.8	5,034	2.7
65 years and over.....	7,765	1.9	4,161	1.4
Not stated.....	75,691	...	78,510	...

¹Rates exclude data for Michigan, Ohio, and South Dakota. Prior to calculation of rates, figures for age not stated were distributed.

²Includes divorces of persons under 15 years of age.

Table 7. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments by age of husband and wife at time of decree, and median and mean ages: Divorce-registration area, 1972-82

[Based on sample data]

<i>Age of husband and wife at time of decree</i>	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972
Husband											
	Percent distribution										
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 20 years	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0
20-24 years	11.7	12.5	13.5	13.9	14.8	14.7	15.1	15.2	15.7	15.7	15.9
25-29 years	22.0	22.8	23.4	23.8	24.3	24.0	24.8	25.1	24.2	23.4	23.5
30-34 years	21.3	22.1	21.4	20.8	20.2	19.8	18.6	18.6	18.2	17.9	17.2
35-39 years	16.3	15.1	14.6	14.2	13.8	13.4	12.9	12.5	12.4	12.4	12.3
40-44 years	10.7	10.0	9.8	9.7	9.3	9.4	9.5	9.3	9.6	9.9	10.2
45-49 years	6.9	6.7	6.5	6.7	6.6	6.9	7.2	7.3	7.5	8.0	8.0
50-54 years	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.5
55-59 years	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.0
60-64 years	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7
65 years and over	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Age in years ¹										
Median age	33.6	33.1	32.7	32.5	32.0	32.4	32.3	32.2	32.2	32.4	32.6
Mean age	35.7	35.4	35.1	35.0	34.8	35.1	35.1	35.0	35.1	35.3	34.9
Wife											
	Percent distribution										
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 20 years	2.7	2.9	3.4	3.6	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.3
20-24 years	18.6	19.5	20.8	21.2	22.7	22.3	22.4	22.5	23.0	23.1	23.7
25-29 years	24.1	24.8	24.6	24.8	24.6	24.5	25.1	25.2	24.3	23.7	23.0
30-34 years	19.9	20.2	19.4	18.7	17.9	17.9	16.7	16.3	16.1	15.6	15.0
35-39 years	14.2	13.1	12.8	12.3	11.8	11.3	11.2	10.9	10.7	10.9	11.0
40-44 years	8.8	8.2	7.7	7.9	7.5	7.7	7.9	7.6	7.9	8.4	8.8
45-49 years	5.1	4.9	4.8	5.0	5.0	5.3	5.6	5.7	5.9	6.3	6.6
50-54 years	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.9
55-59 years	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.7	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
60-64 years	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
65 years and over	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8
	Age in years ¹										
Median age	31.1	30.6	30.3	30.1	29.7	29.9	29.7	29.5	29.5	29.7	29.8
Mean age	33.1	32.7	32.4	32.3	32.1	32.4	32.3	32.3	32.3	32.5	32.1

¹ Medians and means computed on data by single years of age.

Table 8. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments by age of husband and wife at time of marriage, and median and mean ages: Divorce-registration area, 1972-82

[Based on sample data]

<i>Age of husband and wife at time of marriage</i>	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972
Husband											
	Percent distribution										
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 20 years	16.1	17.0	18.0	18.4	19.3	18.6	18.9	19.1	19.5	19.3	19.3
20-24 years	43.0	44.0	44.0	44.3	44.7	44.5	44.4	44.8	44.6	44.8	44.5
25-29 years	19.3	18.7	18.4	18.0	17.5	17.4	17.3	17.1	16.7	16.4	16.7
30-34 years	9.0	8.6	8.1	7.9	7.4	7.6	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.2
35-39 years	5.0	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.3
40-44 years	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.0
45 years and over	4.7	4.5	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.8	5.0	5.0
	Age in years ¹										
Median age	23.7	23.4	23.3	23.2	23.0	23.1	23.1	23.0	23.0	22.9	23.0
Mean age	26.4	26.1	25.9	25.8	25.7	25.9	25.9	25.8	25.9	25.9	25.4
Wife											
	Percent distribution										
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 20 years	36.6	38.3	39.9	41.0	42.8	42.2	42.5	43.3	43.8	44.5	44.6
20-24 years	36.2	35.9	35.5	35.1	34.2	34.0	33.8	33.7	33.3	32.8	32.4
25-29 years	12.7	12.1	11.4	11.0	10.5	10.7	10.3	9.9	9.9	9.4	9.3
30-34 years	6.2	5.8	5.6	5.4	5.0	5.2	5.2	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
35-39 years	3.6	3.2	3.1	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.2
40-44 years	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.3
45 years and over	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.7	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Age in years ¹										
Median age	21.3	21.1	20.9	20.9	20.7	20.7	20.7	20.6	20.6	20.5	20.5
Mean age	23.8	23.5	23.3	23.2	23.1	23.3	23.3	23.2	23.2	23.2	22.7

¹Medians and means computed on data by single years of age.

Table 9. Mean ages of divorced husband and wife at time of marriage and at time of decree: Divorce-registration area and each registration State, 1982

[Based on sample data]

<i>Area</i>	<i>Mean age of husband</i>		<i>Mean age of wife</i>	
	<i>At decree</i>	<i>At marriage</i>	<i>At decree</i>	<i>At marriage</i>
Divorce-registration area	35.7	26.4	33.1	23.8
Alabama	34.4	26.6	31.5	23.8
Alaska	34.6	27.3	31.6	24.2
Connecticut	37.1	26.3	34.5	23.7
Delaware	35.7	26.1	33.0	23.6
Georgia	34.5	26.7	31.8	24.1
Hawaii	36.0	27.3	33.1	24.4
Idaho	34.8	27.9	32.0	25.0
Illinois	35.7	26.6	32.9	23.9
Iowa	34.8	25.9	32.2	23.3
Kansas	34.3	26.5	31.8	24.0
Kentucky	34.8	26.5	31.9	23.7
Maryland	36.6	26.0	33.9	23.4
Massachusetts	36.8	25.7	34.3	23.3
Michigan	35.8	26.2	33.1	23.5
Missouri	35.3	26.8	32.5	24.0
Montana	36.0	27.7	32.8	24.5
Nebraska	35.1	25.9	32.6	23.4
New Hampshire	35.4	26.0	32.8	23.4
New York	37.4	26.7	34.7	24.1
Ohio	35.6	26.7	33.0	24.2
Oregon	36.9	28.1	34.1	25.3
Pennsylvania	36.4	25.1	33.9	22.7
Rhode Island	36.4	25.8	33.7	23.1
South Carolina	34.9	25.2	32.4	22.8
South Dakota	34.6	26.0	31.7	23.1
Tennessee	34.8	26.8	32.0	24.1
Utah	34.0	26.4	31.4	23.9
Vermont	36.2	25.5	33.6	22.9
Virginia	35.8	25.5	33.2	23.0
Wisconsin	35.8	25.9	33.3	23.4
Wyoming	33.8	26.7	31.0	24.0

Table 10. Percent distribution of divorces and annulments by duration of marriage to decree and median and mean duration of marriage to decree: Divorce-registration area, 1982

[Based on sample data]

Area	Duration of marriage							Median	Mean
	Total	Under 1 year	1-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20 years and over		
	Percent distribution							Years ¹	
Divorce-registration area	100.0	4.2	33.7	26.5	15.6	8.7	11.3	7.0	9.4
Alabama	100.0	11.8	38.4	23.0	11.4	6.3	9.1	5.0	7.8
Alaska	100.0	7.3	41.1	26.3	12.8	5.8	6.7	5.2	7.4
Connecticut	100.0	1.6	29.6	25.5	17.5	10.7	15.1	8.5	10.9
Delaware	100.0	2.5	34.5	26.1	15.8	9.7	11.5	7.0	9.6
Georgia	100.0	9.3	39.5	23.4	13.4	6.4	8.0	5.2	7.8
Hawaii	100.0	3.7	36.3	28.2	14.7	7.7	9.4	6.4	8.7
Idaho	100.0	9.4	40.4	23.6	12.8	6.8	6.9	5.0	7.5
Illinois	100.0	4.6	35.2	26.2	14.8	8.4	10.8	6.6	9.1
Iowa	100.0	4.0	36.5	26.2	15.1	7.6	10.5	6.5	9.0
Kansas	100.0	8.7	40.1	24.1	12.1	6.4	8.5	5.2	7.8
Kentucky	100.0	7.4	37.4	25.5	12.7	7.7	9.4	5.8	8.3
Maryland	100.0	0.6	24.4	30.6	18.9	11.2	14.2	8.9	11.1
Massachusetts	100.0	0.3	22.3	30.9	20.0	11.1	15.4	9.3	11.5
Michigan	100.0	2.5	32.0	26.9	16.5	10.0	12.1	7.5	9.9
Missouri	100.0	6.0	37.7	25.0	14.2	7.4	9.7	6.0	8.5
Montana	100.0	6.4	37.1	25.8	14.0	7.7	8.9	6.1	8.3
Nebraska	100.0	3.7	35.0	26.2	15.9	8.4	10.9	6.9	9.3
New Hampshire	100.0	2.2	31.4	26.8	18.4	9.3	11.9	7.8	9.9
New York	100.0	2.1	28.0	27.6	17.7	10.2	14.4	8.4	10.8
Ohio	100.0	5.2	37.5	24.4	15.2	7.7	10.0	6.2	8.8
Oregon	100.0	3.9	37.5	26.1	15.3	7.1	10.0	6.4	8.8
Pennsylvania	100.0	0.9	27.2	28.4	18.3	10.2	15.0	8.7	11.1
Rhode Island	100.0	0.7	27.2	28.8	19.6	9.6	14.1	8.6	10.7
South Carolina	100.0	2.6	32.2	28.4	16.7	9.1	10.9	7.4	9.7
South Dakota	100.0	4.0	37.4	28.0	11.9	8.1	10.6	6.3	8.9
Tennessee	100.0	7.2	39.7	24.8	11.9	7.9	8.4	5.4	8.0
Utah	100.0	7.1	41.6	25.7	11.9	6.9	6.6	5.2	7.5
Vermont	100.0	0.3	27.7	29.8	17.5	10.5	14.1	8.5	10.8
Virginia	100.0	0.4	29.3	30.1	18.3	9.6	12.3	8.1	10.3
Wisconsin	100.0	1.8	32.0	27.7	17.3	9.2	11.9	7.7	9.9
Wyoming	100.0	8.9	43.1	24.3	10.5	6.5	6.7	4.7	7.2

¹Medians and means computed on data by single years of duration.

References

¹U.S. Bureau of the Census: Household and family characteristics, March 1981. *Current Population Reports*. Series P-20, No. 371. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1982.

²U.S. Bureau of the Census: Household and family characteristics, March 1982. *Current Population Reports*. Series P-20, No. 381. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1983.

³U.S. Bureau of the Census: Estimates of the population of the United States, by age, sex, and race, 1980 to 1983. *Current Population*

Reports. Series P-25, No. 949. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1984.

⁴U.S. Bureau of the Census: Estimates of the population of States, by age, July 1, 1981, to 1983. *Current Population Reports*. Series P-25, No. 951. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1984.

Technical notes

Place and time of occurrence

Divorces, including absolute divorces, annulments, and dissolutions of marriage, are shown in all tables by State where decree was granted, which is also the State of legal residence of the petitioner. The time of divorce is based on the date the decree was granted.

Sources of data

Nationwide counts

Figures in tables 1 and 2 are based on totals of divorce decrees granted that are supplied by States and counties to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) annually.

Data based on sample

Information about the characteristics of divorces and divorcing spouses is available only from States that participate in the divorce-registration area (DRA). Figures in tables 3–10 are based on data tabulated from State-coded data tapes and from probability samples of divorce records selected and coded at NCHS from copies of the records sent in by States participating in the DRA. In 1972–77, 29 States participated in the DRA; in 1978, 28 States; in 1979–80, 30 States; and in 1981–82, 31 States participated. Divorces in States constituting the DRA accounted for 49 percent of the national total in 1982.

Divorce sample

Sample data used to compute data shown in tables 3–10 were selected by using five different sampling rates, including 5, 10, 20, 50, or 100 percent of the divorces granted in a State. Samples were selected only from the States that participated in the DRA. Eight States—Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia—supplied State-coded data tapes of all their divorce records through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program, and 100 percent of these records were used by NCHS. In all other States sampling rates depended on the size of the annual divorce total for each State. Sampling rates were selected so that the expected sample for each DRA State would contain at least 2,500 records. Alaska, Delaware, New Hampshire, South Dakota, and Wyoming were coded at NCHS with a 100-percent sampling rate.

Sampling errors are given in the table for the estimates that constitute 1, 10, 25, 50, 75, 90, and 99 percent of the annual divorce totals. These sampling errors are given for the DRA and each registration State for 1982 data and only for the DRA for 1972 and 1981 data.

Figures in table 3 were estimated on the assumption that the average number of children per decree was the same nationally as in reporting States. The average was based on reporting States in 1950–59, a nationwide sample in 1960, 16 States in 1961–69, and all registration States thereafter. This

Sampling error of estimated percent: Divorce-registration area, 1972, 1981, and 1982, and each registration State, 1982

[Figures for Alaska, Delaware, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, and Wyoming have no sampling errors in 1982 because all records were tabulated]

Area and year	Sampling error of estimated percent			
	1 or 99	10 or 90	25 or 75	50
Divorce-registration area				
1982 (31 States).....	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
1981 (31 States).....	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
1972 (29 States).....	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2
Registration States, 1982				
Alabama.....	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.9
Alaska.....	...	...	...	...
Connecticut.....	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.4
Delaware.....	...	...	...	...
Georgia.....	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.8
Hawaii.....	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.8
Idaho.....	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.6
Illinois.....	...	...	...	...
Iowa.....	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.5
Kansas.....	0.2	0.5	0.8	0.9
Kentucky.....	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.8
Maryland.....	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.8
Massachusetts.....	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.7
Michigan.....	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.8
Missouri.....	...	...	...	...
Montana.....	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.7
Nebraska.....	...	...	...	...
New Hampshire.....	...	...	...	...
New York.....	...	...	...	...
Ohio.....	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.9
Oregon.....	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.8
Pennsylvania.....	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.7
Rhode Island.....	...	...	...	...
South Carolina.....	...	...	...	...
South Dakota.....	...	...	...	...
Tennessee.....	0.2	0.5	0.8	0.9
Utah.....	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.5
Vermont.....	...	...	...	...
Virginia.....	...	...	...	...
Wisconsin.....	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.8
Wyoming.....	...	...	...	...

HOW TO USE SAMPLING ERROR TABLE: For estimated percents shown in tables 4, 7–8, and 10, find the column closest to that percent to determine the sampling error. For example, in 1982, an estimated 25.8 percent of divorcing couples in the divorce-registration area had 1 child. In the cell formed by column "25 or 75" and the row "1982 (31 States)" is the figure 0.1. Thus, chances are 68 out of 100 that the actual percent of couples with 1 child is between 25.7 and 25.9 (25.8 ± 0.1).

average was multiplied by the national divorce total to estimate the national total number of children involved in divorce.

Population denominators

Divorce rates for 1982 are based on populations estimated as of July 1, 1982.^{3,4} Divorce rates for 1980 are based on the population enumerated in the 1980 census.

NOTE: A list of references follows the text.

**Computation of percent distributions,
medians, and means**

Figures for number of children not stated, duration not stated, and age not stated were subtracted from figures for total

divorces used as denominators before percent distributions and medians were computed. Computations of median and mean age at marriage and median and mean age at decree were based on tabulations of ungrouped data.

This report represents summary tabulations from the final divorce statistics for 1982. More detailed tabulations for 1982 will be published in *Vital Statistics of the United States, Volume III—Marriage and Divorce*. Prior to the publication of that volume, the National Center for Health Statistics will respond to requests for unpublished data whenever possible.

Suggested Citation

National Center for Health Statistics: Advance report of final divorce statistics, 1982. *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*. Vol. 33, No. 11, Supp. DHHS Pub. No. (PHS) 85-1120. Public Health Service. Hyattsville, Md., Feb. 28, 1985.

Copyright Information

This report may be reprinted without further permission.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
National Center for Health Statistics
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
PHS/NCHS
PERMIT No. G-281

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

To receive this publication regularly, contact
the National Center for Health Statistics by
calling 301 436-8500
