

# nchs MONTHLY VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Final Data from the National Center for Health Statistics

Vol. 29, No. 12, Supplement, March 20, 1981

## Births of Hispanic Parentage, 1978

by Stephanie J. Ventura, A.M., and Robert L. Heuser, M.A., Division of Vital Statistics

In 1978 items requesting the origin of both mother and father were included on the birth certificates of 17 States (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Utah, and Wyoming). These States accounted for an estimated 60 percent of all Hispanic or Spanish origin births in the United States.

### Highlights

In 1978, 14.6 percent of the mothers with a reported ethnic origin were Hispanic; the proportion was slightly higher for fathers (15.3 percent). Birth data for Hispanic or Spanish origin women refer principally to Mexican (62.4 percent) and Puerto Rican mothers (17.9 percent). Mothers of Cuban, Central and South American, and other and unknown Hispanic origin account for the remaining one-fifth of Spanish origin births in the 17 States that reported Hispanic or ethnic origin on their birth certificates in 1978.

Birth and fertility rates computed for the total of seven reporting States for which the necessary population data were available indicate that fertility is highest among Mexican women, with a fertility rate of 114.1 births per 1,000 women 15-44 years of age. This was 40 percent greater than the rate for Puerto Rican women (81.3) and 89 percent greater than the rate for non-Hispanic women (60.5). Data on live-birth order also indicate that Hispanic women have higher fertility than do non-Hispanic women, especially white non-Hispanic women. Childbearing is also more concentrated at younger ages for Hispanic women.

The incidence of low birth weight in the 17 reporting States, that is, the proportion of babies weighing 2,500 grams (5 pounds 8 ounces) or less,

is somewhat higher for Hispanic infants (6.7 percent) than for white non-Hispanic infants (5.8 percent) but much lower than for black non-Hispanic infants (12.8 percent). However, infants of Puerto Rican origin were much more likely to be of low birth weight (9.6 percent) than were infants of other Hispanic origins (from 5.8 to 7.0 percent.)

Except for Cuban mothers the educational attainment of Hispanic mothers is considerably less than that of non-Hispanic mothers. Overall, only 39.8 percent of the Hispanic mothers had completed at least 12 years of schooling in 1978 compared with 79.2 percent of the non-Hispanic mothers.

Hispanic women are generally more likely to begin prenatal care later in their pregnancies than are white non-Hispanic women. This characteristic is similar for Hispanic and black non-Hispanic women. In 1978, 57.0 percent of the Hispanic mothers began care in the first trimester of pregnancy compared with 80.7 percent of the white non-Hispanic mothers and 59.1 percent of the black non-Hispanic mothers. Concomitantly, 13.1 percent of the Hispanic mothers received care starting in the third trimester or no care, nearly four times the level for white non-Hispanic mothers, 3.3 percent, and 20 percent higher than for black non-Hispanic mothers, 10.9 percent. The median number of visits for prenatal care was 9.3 for Hispanic women, 11.3 for white non-Hispanic women, and 10.7 for black non-Hispanic women.

### Origin of mother and father

In the 17-State reporting area, 14.6 percent of the mothers and 15.3 percent of the fathers with a reported ethnic origin were Hispanic in 1978. If the origins of both parents are considered simultaneously, there was a somewhat lower proportion of the births with both parents Hispanic (12.9 percent), and a

somewhat higher proportion with either parent Hispanic (16.7 percent). Comparable data for each of the reporting States are shown in table 1.

It can be determined from table 2 that for all births with a reported origin for both parents, 5.0

percent were of mixed parentage, including mixed Hispanic parentage. Babies whose mothers are of Mexican origin were most likely to have fathers of the same origin. In 1978, 87.6 percent of these babies also had Mexican fathers (table 3). More than 80 percent of the infants born to Puerto Rican mothers also had Puerto Rican fathers. The extent of mixed Hispanic parentage was much greater for babies born to Cuban and to Central and South American mothers than for babies born to mothers of other Hispanic origins. Infants born to Cuban mothers were also more likely to have non-Hispanic fathers. The apparently extensive mixed heritage of babies born to Cuban mothers is probably associated with the fact that none of these births was to residents of Florida where, according to 1970 census data, nearly half of the Cuban population resides.<sup>1</sup> Data from the 1978 Current Population Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census indicate that in husband-wife households, 82.1 percent of the Cuban wives had Cuban husbands.<sup>2</sup>

Because the mother's origin is better reported than the father's (tables 4 and 5), the births are tabulated by origin of the mother for the remainder of this report. In addition, many of the demographic and health characteristics discussed refer to the mother, e.g., age, birth order, educational attainment, and prenatal care. The poorer reporting for origin of the father is associated principally with births to unmarried women for which much statistical information concerning the father is usually omitted. A number of classification problems are also encountered when the origins of two parents are used simultaneously.

Table 1. Percent of live births with Hispanic parentage: 17 reporting States, 1978

State of residence	Hispanic origin			
	Both parents <sup>1</sup>	Mother <sup>2</sup>	Father <sup>3</sup>	Either parent <sup>4</sup>
All reporting States . . . . .	12.9	14.6	15.3	16.7
Arizona . . . . .	20.7	24.3	25.3	28.8
Arkansas . . . . .	3.0	3.3	3.5	3.8
California . . . . .	27.2	30.2	31.1	34.1
Colorado . . . . .	11.4	16.4	15.2	19.7
Hawaii . . . . .	2.6	8.3	7.3	12.5
Indiana . . . . .	1.4	2.0	2.2	2.7
Kansas . . . . .	2.1	3.3	3.7	4.7
Maine . . . . .	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.8
Mississippi . . . . .	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4
Nebraska . . . . .	1.2	2.4	2.4	3.4
Nevada . . . . .	5.3	8.5	9.3	11.9
New Jersey . . . . .	11.1	12.9	12.9	14.4
New York . . . . .	13.3	15.4	14.9	16.9
New York City . . . . .	27.4	29.1	30.1	31.2
New York (excluding New York City) . . . . .	2.2	3.1	3.3	4.1
North Dakota . . . . .	0.3	0.8	0.7	1.1
Ohio . . . . .	0.9	1.4	1.5	1.9
Utah . . . . .	1.7	3.7	3.3	5.2
Wyoming . . . . .	3.6	6.3	6.8	9.2

<sup>1</sup>Based on births with origin of both parents reported; excludes births with origin of either or both parents not reported.

<sup>2</sup>Based on births with origin of mother reported.

<sup>3</sup>Based on births with origin of father reported.

<sup>4</sup>Based on births with origin of either parent reported; excludes births with origin of both parents not reported.

Table 2. Live births by Hispanic origin of mother and father: 17 reporting States, 1978

Origin of father	All origins	Origin of mother							Non-Hispanic	Not stated
		Hispanic					Central and South American	Other and unknown Hispanic		
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban					
All origins . . . . .	1,258,876	161,220	100,574	28,786	2,185	14,886	14,789	944,785	152,871	
Hispanic . . . . .	153,454	128,984	86,717	20,554	1,528	11,739	8,446	22,782	1,688	
Mexican . . . . .	101,869	87,251	84,854	301	101	1,211	784	13,599	1,019	
Puerto Rican . . . . .	24,558	20,755	507	18,828	129	970	321	3,480	323	
Cuban . . . . .	2,024	1,504	109	172	1,011	153	59	483	37	
Central and South American . . . . .	12,741	11,344	750	966	206	9,314	108	1,332	65	
Other and unknown Hispanic . . . . .	12,262	8,130	497	287	81	91	7,174	3,888	244	
Non-Hispanic . . . . .	851,072	18,993	10,141	2,341	526	1,699	4,286	825,642	6,437	
Not stated . . . . .	254,350	13,243	3,716	5,891	131	1,448	2,057	96,361	144,746	

**Table 3. Percent distribution of live births by origin of father according to specific Hispanic origin of mother: Total of 17 reporting States, 1978**

[Refers only to births for which origin of both mother and father is stated]

Hispanic origin of mother	Total	Origin of father		
		Same as mother	Other Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Mexican . . . . .	100.0	87.6	1.9	10.5
Puerto Rican . . . . .	100.0	82.2	7.5	10.2
Cuban . . . . .	100.0	49.2	25.2	25.6
Central and South American . . . . .	100.0	69.3	18.0	12.6
Other and unknown Hispanic . . . . .	100.0	56.3	10.0	33.7

### Geographic coverage of Hispanic origin births

The 17 reporting States accounted for 37.8 percent of all births in the United States and an estimated 60 percent of all Hispanic or Spanish origin births.<sup>3</sup> The vast majority of the births to mothers of Hispanic origin in these reporting States were to residents of California (58.0 percent), New York (20.6 percent), New Jersey (5.6 percent), Arizona (5.5 percent), and Colorado (4.1 percent). The remaining 6.3 percent of

the Hispanic origin births were distributed among the other 12 reporting States (table 4).

In California, Arizona, and Colorado, births of Mexican origin are the overwhelming majority of the Hispanic births (87.2 percent). In contrast, births of Puerto Rican origin are predominant (62.7 percent) in New York and New Jersey, with Central and South American origin births comprising an additional 23.5 percent of the Hispanic births in these two States. Since Florida was not in the reporting area in 1978, data on persons of Cuban origin are particularly incomplete. Whereas persons of Cuban heritage comprised nearly 6 percent of the Spanish origin population in the United States in 1978, they accounted for only 1.4 percent of the births in this group in the reporting States in 1978. However, the birth data for the Cuban population may be representative in that they are consistent with national data from the Current Population Survey for age, educational attainment, and family size characteristics.

The addition of reporting from Florida and Illinois in 1979 and from Texas, New Mexico, and Georgia in 1980 will significantly increase the proportion of the Hispanic births that can be identified from birth certificates. It is estimated that the States reporting this information in 1980 will include 85-90 percent of the Hispanic population.

**Table 4. Live births by Hispanic origin of mother: 17 reporting States, 1978**

State of residence	All origins	Origin of mother							
		Hispanic						Non-Hispanic	Not stated
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central and South American	Other and unknown Hispanic		
All reporting States . . . . .	1,258,876	161,220	100,574	28,786	2,185	14,886	14,789	944,785	152,871
Arizona . . . . .	43,112	8,837	8,317	56	10	30	424	27,509	6,766
Arkansas . . . . .	34,793	820	84	20	2	154	560	23,665	10,308
California . . . . .	356,310	93,535	83,634	928	522	4,447	4,004	215,759	47,016
Colorado . . . . .	44,107	6,567	3,040	41	9	52	3,425	33,587	3,953
Hawaii . . . . .	16,753	1,376	182	358	12	24	800	15,114	263
Indiana . . . . .	83,598	1,463	993	197	16	34	223	71,687	10,448
Kansas . . . . .	36,735	1,016	752	62	15	39	148	29,956	5,763
Maine . . . . .	15,847	62	16	8	3	3	32	12,387	3,398
Mississippi . . . . .	44,399	100	42	10	4	6	38	40,747	3,552
Nebraska . . . . .	25,112	564	484	6	4	5	65	23,254	1,294
Nevada . . . . .	10,990	747	446	12	19	23	247	8,065	2,178
New Jersey . . . . .	93,535	8,993	173	5,709	832	1,456	823	60,848	23,694
New York . . . . .	233,954	33,162	452	20,722	672	8,443	2,873	181,678	19,114
North Dakota . . . . .	11,299	84	42	8	-	6	28	10,297	918
Ohio . . . . .	160,863	2,044	873	640	40	97	394	147,602	11,217
Utah . . . . .	38,808	1,362	779	9	23	59	492	35,378	2,068
Wyoming . . . . .	8,661	488	265	-	2	8	213	7,252	921

Table 5. Live births by Hispanic origin of father: 17 reporting States, 1978

State of residence	All origins	Origin of father						Non-Hispanic	Not stated
		Hispanic							
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central and South American	Other and unknown Hispanic		
All reporting States . . . . .	1,258,876	153,454	101,869	24,558	2,024	12,741	12,262	851,072	254,350
Arizona . . . . .	43,112	8,805	8,322	60	6	26	391	25,950	8,357
Arkansas . . . . .	34,793	704	88	24	2	100	490	19,434	14,655
California . . . . .	356,310	94,398	85,260	1,260	502	3,724	3,652	208,723	53,189
Colorado . . . . .	44,107	5,478	2,825	72	14	39	2,528	30,592	8,037
Hawaii . . . . .	16,753	1,076	166	338	16	16	540	13,634	2,043
Indiana . . . . .	83,598	1,424	973	220	16	45	170	63,885	18,289
Kansas . . . . .	36,735	1,050	803	82	6	23	136	27,215	8,470
Maine . . . . .	15,847	43	11	15	1	3	13	10,969	4,835
Mississippi . . . . .	44,399	88	38	8	2	10	30	29,751	14,560
Nebraska . . . . .	25,112	511	451	3	2	11	44	21,230	3,371
Nevada . . . . .	10,990	718	476	16	20	10	196	7,023	3,249
New Jersey . . . . .	93,535	8,012	138	5,039	771	1,363	701	54,320	31,203
New York . . . . .	233,954	27,425	386	16,672	600	7,253	2,514	156,059	50,470
North Dakota . . . . .	11,299	66	38	6	-	2	20	9,549	1,684
Ohio . . . . .	160,863	1,988	803	739	35	79	332	131,727	27,148
Utah . . . . .	38,808	1,175	750	2	27	34	362	34,253	3,380
Wyoming . . . . .	8,661	493	341	2	4	3	143	6,758	1,410

Table 6. Percent of live births with origin of mother not stated: 17 reporting States, 1978

Reporting State of residence	Total percent not stated	Place of occurrence of births with origin not stated		
		Total	In any reporting State	In any non-reporting State
Total . . . . .	12.1	100.0	87.0	13.0
Arizona . . . . .	15.7	100.0	92.0	8.0
Arkansas . . . . .	29.6	100.0	75.3	24.7
California . . . . .	13.2	100.0	98.8	1.2
Colorado . . . . .	9.0	100.0	96.2	3.8
Hawaii . . . . .	1.6	100.0	94.3	5.7
Indiana . . . . .	12.5	100.0	79.3	20.7
Kansas . . . . .	15.7	100.0	50.2	49.8
Maine . . . . .	21.4	100.0	81.6	18.4
Mississippi . . . . .	8.0	100.0	35.5	64.5
Nebraska . . . . .	5.2	100.0	46.9	53.1
Nevada . . . . .	19.8	100.0	96.7	3.3
New Jersey . . . . .	25.3	100.0	90.9	9.1
New York . . . . .	8.2	100.0	91.4	8.6
North Dakota . . . . .	8.1	100.0	50.0	50.0
Ohio . . . . .	7.0	100.0	74.5	25.5
Utah . . . . .	5.3	100.0	93.3	6.7
Wyoming . . . . .	10.6	100.0	78.5	21.5

Data on Hispanic origin are characterized by a comparatively high degree of incompleteness of reporting. Origin of mother was not stated for 12.1 percent of the births in the 17-State reporting area for 1978, with a range of 1.6 to 29.6 percent by

State. Since these data are by place of residence of the mother rather than place of occurrence of the birth and not all States have these items on their birth certificates, some of the "not stated" category represents births occurring in nonreporting States to residents of the reporting States. For such events, there was no opportunity for the origins of the parents to be reported. Table 6 shows the percent of all births with origin of mother not stated as well as the proportions occurring in reporting and nonreporting States. For the total of all 17 reporting States, 13.0 percent of the unknown origin of mother was the result of births occurring in nonreporting States. However, there was a wide range in this percent among the reporting States, from 1.2 percent in California to 64.5 percent in Mississippi.

The reporting of origin is expected to be more complete in 1979 as personnel collecting the information become more familiar with the revised certificates. In addition, a few of the States did not implement their new certificates until late January or early February of 1978. In general the reporting was more complete at the end than at the beginning of the year; for January-March unknown origin of mother averaged 13.6 percent while for October-December it was 9.3 percent.

Another important point about data on Hispanic origin is that they do not refer to a homogeneous

group, as shown by the data in this report as well as by related census data. There are wide variations in demographic, social, and health characteristics among the various Hispanic origin groups, i.e., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Central and South American. Therefore, the analysis that follows for the most part deals with these groups separately as well as in combination.

### Race

The vast majority of all births to mothers of Hispanic origin are white. In 1978, 93.9 percent of these births were white; 4.0 percent were black; and 2.1 percent were of other races (table 7). Although the distribution by race within specified Spanish origin groups varies somewhat from the overall average, the mothers of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban heritage are overwhelmingly white (more than 90 percent for each origin). The racial distribution for mothers of Central and South American origin resembles closely that of the non-Hispanic mothers—80.1 percent, white; 15.4 percent, black; and 4.5 percent, other races.

National data on fertility show that there are wide differences between white and black births according to most characteristics. For this reason most tabulations in this report will show data for the non-Hispanic population classified by race. The data for the Hispanic population will not be shown by race since, as noted above, the three principal specific Spanish origin groups are overwhelmingly white.

### Birth and fertility rates

Birth and fertility rates for 1978 have been computed for a seven-State reporting area for which the necessary population data were derived from the Current Population Survey and made available by the Bureau of the Census. These States (Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio) accounted for 95.9 percent of the Hispanic origin births in the 17 reporting States. The percents for the specific Hispanic groups were 96.9 percent for Mexican, 98.3 percent for Puerto Rican, 96.2 percent for Cuban, and 90.1 percent for other Hispanic.

In 1978 the crude birth rate for the Hispanic population in these seven States was 24.4 births per 1,000 population; it was 14.2 for the non-Hispanic population. These may be compared with rates for the United States derived from the June 1978 Current Population Survey (CPS) of 26.9 for Hispanics and 14.6 for non-Hispanics.<sup>3</sup> The fertility rate for the Hispanic population for the same seven States was 96.9 births per 1,000 women 15-44 years of age; the rate was 60.5 for non-Hispanic women. The most comparable CPS national rates are for women 18-44 years of age. These rates were 115.0 for Hispanic women and 69.8 for non-Hispanic women.

It is evident from the data shown in figure 1 and table 8 that the Mexican origin population has the highest fertility. The Mexican birth rate, 27.8 births per 1,000 total population, was 28 percent higher than the rate for the Puerto Rican population (21.7) and nearly 2½ times the rate for the Cuban group

Table 7. Number and percent distribution of live births by race of child, by Hispanic origin of mother: Total of 17 reporting States, 1978

Race of child	All origins	Origin of mother							Non-Hispanic	Not stated
		Hispanic					Central and South American	Other and unknown Hispanic		
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban					
Number										
All races . . . . .	1,258,876	161,220	100,574	28,786	2,185	14,886	14,789	944,785	152,871	
White . . . . .	1,024,015	151,327	97,980	26,315	2,038	11,924	13,070	751,234	121,454	
Black . . . . .	177,698	6,505	1,333	2,105	127	2,287	653	145,624	25,569	
Other . . . . .	57,163	3,388	1,261	366	20	675	1,066	47,927	5,848	
Percent distribution										
All races . . . . .	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
White . . . . .	81.3	93.9	97.4	91.4	93.3	80.1	88.4	79.5	79.4	
Black . . . . .	14.1	4.0	1.3	7.3	5.8	15.4	4.4	15.4	16.7	
Other . . . . .	4.5	2.1	1.3	1.3	0.9	4.5	7.2	5.1	3.8	

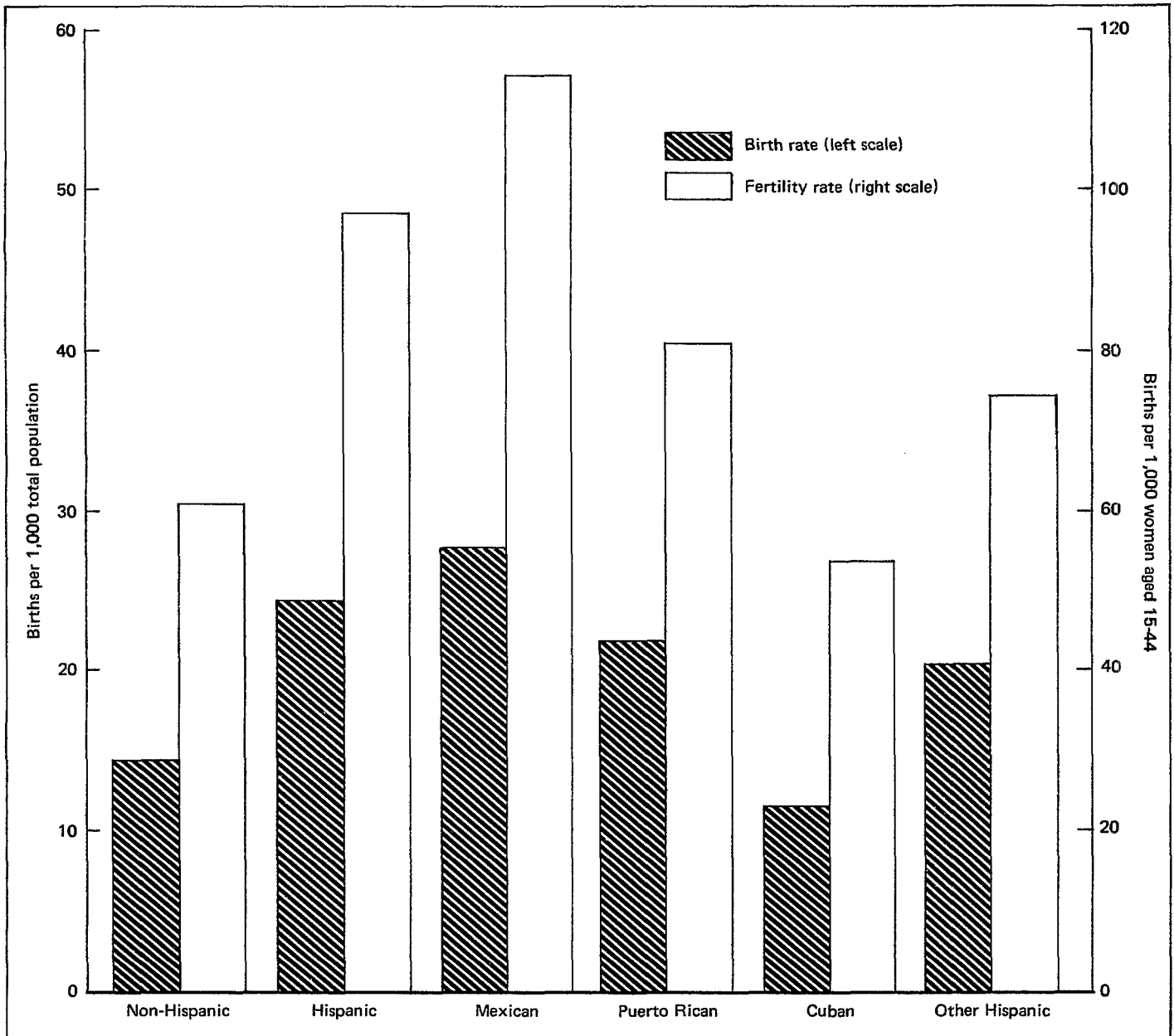


Figure 1. Birth and fertility rates by Hispanic origin of mother: 7 selected States, 1978

(11.6). Similarly, the fertility rate of 114.1 births per 1,000 women 15-44 years of age for Mexican women was 40 percent greater than the rate for Puerto Rican women (81.3) and more than twice the rate for Cuban women (53.9). Except for the rates for the Cuban population, the rates for specific Hispanic origin groups were all substantially higher than the rates for the total non-Hispanic population in these seven States. These relationships among the specific Hispanic groups are consistent with the number of children ever born per 1,000 ever-married

women 35-44 years of age from the 1970 census for the same seven States (table 8). The population data needed to compute fertility rates for the non-Hispanic population by race are not available for these seven States.

Other evidence indicates that, in general, women of Hispanic origin have higher fertility than do non-Hispanic women. For example, table 9 shows that the proportion of births of fifth and higher order for Hispanic women is more than twice that for white non-Hispanic women (8.5 percent compared with

Table 8. Birth rates, fertility rates, and children ever born by Hispanic origin of mother: Total of 7 selected States<sup>1</sup>

Measure	All origins	Hispanic					Non-Hispanic
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Other Hispanic	
Birth rate <sup>2</sup>	15.1	24.4	27.8	21.7	11.6	20.1	14.2
Fertility rate <sup>3</sup>	64.2	96.9	114.1	81.3	53.9	74.7	60.5
Children ever born <sup>4</sup>	2,986	3,611	4,316	3,327	2,004	3,072	2,935

<sup>1</sup>Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio.  
<sup>2</sup>Rate per 1,000 total population (1978).  
<sup>3</sup>Rate per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years (1978).  
<sup>4</sup>Children ever born per 1,000 ever-married women aged 35-44 years (1970).

Table 9. Percent distribution of live births by live-birth order, by Hispanic origin of mother, and by race for non-Hispanic origin mothers: Total of 17 reporting States, 1978

[Excludes births with live-birth order not stated]

Live-birth order	All origins	Origin of mother								
		Hispanic						Non-Hispanic		
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central and South American	Other and unknown Hispanic	Total <sup>1</sup>	White	Black
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
First child	42.2	38.0	37.1	37.6	45.1	41.4	40.8	42.7	43.2	40.1
Second child	31.8	29.4	28.3	30.3	35.8	31.7	31.5	32.2	32.8	29.0
Third child	15.1	16.4	16.3	17.5	13.0	15.5	16.4	15.0	14.8	15.8
Fourth child	6.0	7.7	8.1	7.9	3.5	6.5	6.3	5.7	5.4	7.6
Fifth child	2.5	3.8	4.3	3.5	1.7	2.5	2.7	2.3	2.1	3.4
Sixth child and over	2.5	4.7	5.9	3.1	0.8	2.2	2.3	2.1	1.7	4.0

<sup>1</sup>Includes races other than white and black.

3.8 percent) and about 15 percent greater than that for black non-Hispanic women (7.4 percent). This differential is accounted for principally by the substantial proportion of these high order births among Mexican women (10.2 percent). In addition, data from the March 1978 Current Population Survey show that 16 percent of Hispanic families were comprised of six members or more compared with 8 percent of non-Hispanic families. More families of Mexican origin had six persons or more (19 percent) than did Puerto Rican (12 percent) or Cuban families (11 percent). Evidence from the same survey also suggests, however, that family size among Hispanic groups may be declining, as it has for the non-Hispanic population. The average size of an Hispanic family in 1978 was 3.88 persons compared with an average size of 4.26 persons in 1970.<sup>2</sup>

### Age of mother

Hispanic mothers tend to be considerably younger than white non-Hispanic mothers but somewhat older than black non-Hispanic mothers. Overall, 19.6 percent of Hispanic mothers were under 20 years of age compared with 12.4 percent of white non-Hispanic mothers and 26.2 percent of black non-Hispanic mothers. There are, however, wide differences in the age distributions of mothers of specific Hispanic groups (table 10). Mexican and Puerto Rican mothers were generally youngest. In 1978, 20.6 percent of the Mexican births and 23.2 percent of the Puerto Rican births were to mothers under 20 years of age. This is more than twice the proportion for mothers of Cuban (10.0 percent) and Central and South American origin (9.3 percent).

Conversely, mothers of Cuban and Central and

**Table 10. Percent distribution of live births by age of mother, by Hispanic origin of mother, and by race for non-Hispanic origin mothers: Total of 17 reporting States, 1978**

Age of mother	Origin of mother									
	All origins	Hispanic					Non-Hispanic			
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central and South American	Other and unknown Hispanic	Total <sup>1</sup>	White	Black
Total . . . . .	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 15 years . . . . .	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.9
15-19 years . . . . .	15.0	19.2	20.3	22.6	10.0	9.2	16.3	14.1	12.3	25.3
15 years . . . . .	0.7	1.0	1.1	1.4	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.4	2.0
16 years . . . . .	1.7	2.4	2.5	3.1	0.7	0.9	2.2	1.6	1.2	3.6
17 years . . . . .	3.0	3.8	4.0	4.6	2.2	1.7	3.2	2.8	2.3	5.3
18 years . . . . .	4.2	5.4	5.8	6.2	2.7	2.5	4.8	4.0	3.5	6.9
19 years . . . . .	5.4	6.6	7.0	7.3	4.1	3.7	5.2	5.2	4.8	7.6
20-24 years . . . . .	33.7	35.2	36.2	34.6	31.7	31.5	33.5	33.4	33.5	35.4
25-29 years . . . . .	31.0	26.0	25.3	24.0	32.2	31.5	28.3	31.9	33.5	22.7
30-34 years . . . . .	15.1	13.3	12.3	12.7	16.8	18.7	15.2	15.4	16.0	10.8
35-39 years . . . . .	4.2	4.9	4.5	4.6	7.1	7.7	5.2	4.1	4.0	3.9
40-44 years . . . . .	0.7	1.1	1.1	0.9	1.9	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.8
45-49 years . . . . .	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1

<sup>1</sup>Includes races other than white and black.

**Table 11. Percent distribution of live births by birth weight and percent low birth weight, by Hispanic origin of mother, and by race for non-Hispanic origin mothers: Total of 17 reporting States, 1978**

[Excludes births with birth weight not stated]

Birth weight	Origin of mother									
	All origins	Hispanic					Non-Hispanic			
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central and South American	Other and unknown Hispanic	Total <sup>1</sup>	White	Black
Total . . . . .	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
500 grams or less . . . . .	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
501-1,000 grams . . . . .	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.9
1,001-1,500 grams . . . . .	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	1.3
1,501-2,000 grams . . . . .	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.8	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.1	2.5
2,001-2,500 grams . . . . .	4.5	4.4	3.8	6.4	4.5	4.3	4.9	4.5	3.9	7.9
2,501-3,000 grams . . . . .	17.2	17.9	16.2	23.0	16.3	17.8	19.6	17.2	15.3	25.2
3,001-3,500 grams . . . . .	37.6	39.2	38.9	39.5	37.2	39.9	39.6	37.4	37.1	38.0
3,501-4,000 grams . . . . .	28.2	27.4	29.2	21.8	29.2	27.6	26.2	28.3	30.3	19.1
4,001-4,500 grams . . . . .	8.3	7.4	8.1	5.2	8.6	7.0	6.7	8.5	9.5	4.1
4,501-5,000 grams . . . . .	1.5	1.3	1.5	0.8	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.7	0.7
5,001 grams or more . . . . .	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1
Percent low birth weight <sup>2</sup>	6.9	6.7	5.8	9.6	7.0	6.5	6.9	6.9	5.8	12.8

<sup>1</sup>Includes races other than white and black.

<sup>2</sup>Weight of 2,500 grams or less.

South American origin were more likely than mothers of other origins to be aged 30 years and older. Thus 26.2 percent of Cuban mothers and 27.8 percent of Central and South American mothers were in this age group compared with 20.6 percent for white

non-Hispanic mothers, 18.0 percent for Mexican mothers, and 15.6 percent for black non-Hispanic mothers.

These variations in childbearing by age among the different Hispanic groups are consistent with



comparably wide variations in the median age of women in these groups: Mexican, 21.3 years; Puerto Rican, 22.4 years; Cuban, 37.7 years; and Central and South American, 27.3 years.<sup>2</sup>

### Weight at birth

Babies born to Hispanic origin mothers were somewhat more likely to be of low birth weight than were babies born to white non-Hispanic mothers in 1978. The Hispanic infants, however, were much less likely to be of low birth weight than were the black non-Hispanic infants. Overall, 6.7 percent of Hispanic origin births weighed 2,500 grams or less (equivalent to 5 pounds 8 ounces or less) compared with 5.8 percent of white non-Hispanic babies and 12.8 percent of black non-Hispanic babies (table 11). Within the Hispanic group, there was considerable variation: 9.6 percent of Puerto Rican infants were of low birth weight, nearly two-thirds greater than this proportion among Mexican infants, 5.8 percent. The level of low birth weight among infants of Mexican origin is relatively favorable in spite of the less favorable status of Mexican mothers in terms of educational attainment and prenatal care (see sections below). This same pattern, however, is substantiated by findings from other studies.<sup>4, 5</sup>

Babies born to mothers of other Hispanic origins were at similar risk of being of low birth weight (a range of 6.5 to 7.0 percent). The racial differential

in low birth weight among Hispanic births was considerably smaller (6.6 percent for white births and 8.3 percent for black births) than among non-Hispanic births, although as has been observed, black births comprise only 4.0 percent of Hispanic births.

### Educational attainment of mother

Mothers of Hispanic origin completed fewer years of school as a group than did non-Hispanic mothers. Overall, the median years of schooling for Hispanic mothers was 10.8 years, nearly 2 years less than the median of 12.7 years for non-Hispanic mothers (table 12). Similarly, the proportion of Hispanic mothers completing at least 12 years of school was 39.8 percent, about half the proportion for non-Hispanic mothers (79.2 percent). Within the Hispanic group, Mexican mothers had the lowest educational attainment, with only one-third having completed high school; among Puerto Rican mothers, 42.6 percent completed high school. Cuban mothers closely resembled non-Hispanic mothers in their educational attainment; 78.8 percent had at least a high school education and the median years of school completed was 12.6.

A considerable portion of the observed variation in educational attainment is of course associated with the age of mother distributions of the different groups.

Table 12. Percent distribution of live births by educational attainment of mother and median years of school completed, by Hispanic origin of mother, and by race for non-Hispanic origin mothers: Total of 17 reporting States, 1978

Years of school completed by mother	Origin of mother									
	All origins	Hispanic						Non-Hispanic		
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central and South American	Other and unknown Hispanic	Total <sup>1</sup>	White	Black
Total . . . . .	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years . . . . .	7.0	33.3	41.2	20.1	7.0	31.5	11.5	3.1	2.5	4.8
9-11 years . . . . .	19.1	26.9	25.1	37.2	14.2	21.6	26.6	17.7	15.4	30.8
12 years . . . . .	41.9	28.7	24.4	32.8	48.2	33.6	41.3	43.9	45.1	41.5
13-15 years . . . . .	18.8	8.7	7.9	7.5	19.4	9.2	15.0	20.4	21.0	16.5
16 years or more . . . . .	13.1	2.4	1.4	2.4	11.1	4.2	5.7	14.8	16.0	6.3
Percent completing 12 years or more of school. . . . .	73.8	39.8	33.8	42.6	78.8	46.9	61.9	79.2	82.1	64.4
Median years of school completed . . . . .	12.6	10.8	10.2	11.4	12.6	11.6	12.3	12.7	12.7	12.3

<sup>1</sup>Includes races other than white and black.

### Month of pregnancy prenatal care began

The proportion of Hispanic origin mothers who received prenatal care during the first 3 months of pregnancy was 57.0 percent in 1978, about one-third below the level for white non-Hispanic mothers (80.7 percent) but about the same level measured for black non-Hispanic mothers (59.1 percent). Within the Hispanic origin group, Cuban mothers were most likely to obtain care in the first trimester, 75.9 percent, followed by Mexican mothers, 58.7 percent, and Central and South American mothers, 51.5 percent (table 13).

The proportions of births to mothers receiving late care (care starting in the third trimester of pregnancy) or no care varied inversely with the proportions receiving early care. Thus nearly 1 in 5 Puerto Rican mothers received late or no care compared with 1 in 9 Mexican mothers and 1 in 15 Cuban mothers.

Although relevant data are not shown here, it is very likely that these variations in month prenatal care began by specified Hispanic origin are associated with the educational attainment of the mother and with the age of mother and live-birth order distributions of the births in each of these groups. It is indicated in a previously published report that, in general, mothers with 8 years or fewer of schooling are less likely to begin care early in pregnancy than are better educated mothers.<sup>6</sup> Thus

Mexican and Puerto Rican mothers who tended to have the lowest educational attainment were the least likely to receive early care and most likely to receive late or no care. In contrast, Cuban mothers were the most likely to receive early care and least likely to receive late or no care. That report also demonstrated that teenage mothers and mothers having high order births (fifth or higher order) were more apt to obtain late prenatal care. It has already been noted that there are relatively high concentrations of births to young mothers as well as higher order births in the Mexican and Puerto Rican populations.

### Number of prenatal visits

The number of prenatal visits made by a pregnant woman is closely associated with the point in her pregnancy at which she first obtains prenatal care. Mothers of Hispanic origin generally made fewer visits for prenatal care than did non-Hispanic mothers. The relationships between number of visits and specific Spanish origin groups were similar to those observed for month of pregnancy prenatal care began, although the differences were smaller since the prenatal visit data refer only to women who received some prenatal care. Puerto Rican mothers made the fewest visits (8.8) followed by Mexican mothers (9.3 visits). The median number for Cuban mothers was the same as that for non-Hispanic mothers, 11.1 visits (table 13).

Table 13. Percent distribution of live births by month of pregnancy prenatal care began and median number of prenatal visits, by Hispanic origin of mother, and by race for non-Hispanic origin mothers: Total of 17 reporting States, 1978

Measure of prenatal care	All origins	Origin of mother								
		Hispanic						Non-Hispanic		
		Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central and South American	Other and unknown Hispanic	Total <sup>1</sup>	White	Black
Month prenatal care began										
Total . . . . .	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1st and 2d month . . . . .	47.8	33.1	34.2	25.8	53.0	28.4	42.1	50.4	53.7	34.8
3d month . . . . .	26.3	23.9	24.5	21.9	22.9	23.1	24.9	26.6	27.0	24.3
4th-6th month . . . . .	20.1	29.9	29.8	32.4	17.5	32.4	24.8	18.4	15.9	30.0
7th-9th month . . . . .	4.1	8.7	8.6	10.1	4.4	9.3	6.3	3.4	2.6	6.7
No prenatal care . . . . .	1.7	4.4	2.9	9.8	2.1	6.7	2.0	1.2	0.7	4.2
Number of prenatal visits										
Median <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	10.8	9.3	9.3	8.8	11.1	9.2	10.2	11.1	11.3	10.7

<sup>1</sup>Includes races other than white and black.

<sup>2</sup>Excludes births to mothers with no prenatal care.

**References**

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census: Persons of Spanish origin. *Census of Population: 1970*. Subject Reports. Final Report PC (2)-1C. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census: Persons of Spanish origin in the United States, March 1978. *Current Population Reports*. Series P-20, No. 339. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census: Fertility of American women, June 1979. *Current Population Reports*. Series P-20, No. 358. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980.

<sup>4</sup>National Center for Health Statistics: Factors associated with low birth weight, United States, 1976, by S. Taffel. *Vital and Health Statistics*. Series 21-No. 37. DHEW Pub. No. (PHS) 80-1915. Public Health Service. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, Apr. 1980.

<sup>5</sup>Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, unpublished tabulations of live births for 1978 and 1979.

<sup>6</sup>National Center for Health Statistics: Prenatal care, United States, 1969-1975, by S. Taffel. *Vital and Health Statistics*. Series 21-No. 33. DHEW Pub. No. (PHS) 78-1911. Public Health Service. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, Sept. 1978.

**Symbols**

---	Data not available
...	Category not applicable
-	Quantity zero
0.0	Quantity more than 0 but less than 0.05
*	Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision

**Technical notes**

**Sources of data**

Concurrent with the recommendation of the 1978 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth, the National Center for Health Statistics recommended that States add items to identify the Hispanic or ethnic origin of the newborn's mother and father. All 17 reporting States selected one of two basic formats. The first format was an open ended item to obtain the specific origin or descent of each parent, for example, Italian, Mexican, German, Puerto Rican, English, or Cuban. This format was selected by 11 States (California, Colorado, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wyoming) and New York City, which is an independent registration area. The second format was directed specifically toward the Hispanic population asking whether the mother and father were of Spanish origin. If so, the specific origin—Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.—was to be indicated. This Hispanic origin item was selected by six States (Arizona, Arkansas, Hawaii, Indiana, New York State, and Utah).

**Sampling**

Birth data shown in this report are based on 100 percent of the births occurring in the 36 States which provided data through the Cooperative Health Statistics System. Births occurring in the remaining 14 States and the District of Columbia were sampled at a 50-percent rate. These 14 States are Arizona,

Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The data shown in the tables are for births to all residents of the 17 States reporting ethnic or Hispanic origin, regardless of where the births occurred. Because the sampling rate is large, the associated errors are relatively small.

Data on Hispanic origin from the Bureau of the Census, especially data from the Current Population Survey, are based on small samples and may be subject to substantial sampling error. More information on sampling error may be found in appropriate census publications. <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

**Computation of rates**

In computing vital statistics rates for this report, births with unknown origin of mother and population with unknown origin are included with the non-Hispanic population rather than being distributed. These rates for the Hispanic population are underestimates of the true rates to the extent that the births with unknown origin of mother (12.1 percent) are actually to Hispanic mothers. Since the proportion of the population with unknown origin is low (1.6 percent), the effect on the rates is small. The rates derived from the Current Population Survey and the 1970 census have also been computed with unknown origin included with the non-Hispanic population.

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

---

OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

---

To receive the *Monthly Vital Statistics Report* regularly, contact the National Center for Health Statistics by calling 301-436-NCHS.

---

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HHS  
HHS 396

---

FIRST CLASS MAIL



**HRST**

from the Office of Health Research, Statistics, and Technology  
DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 81-1120