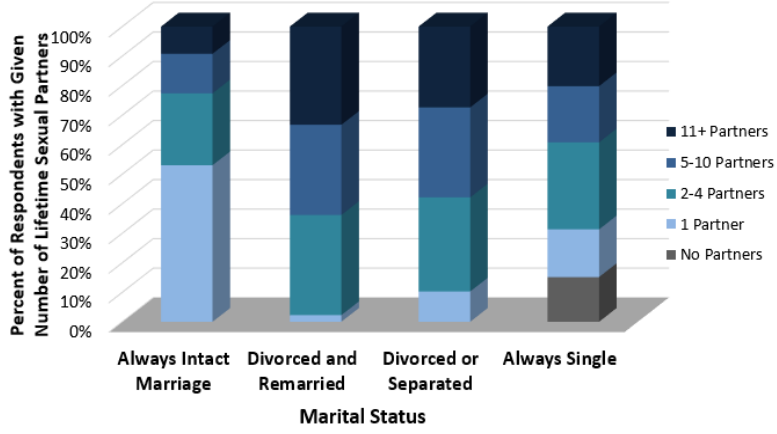


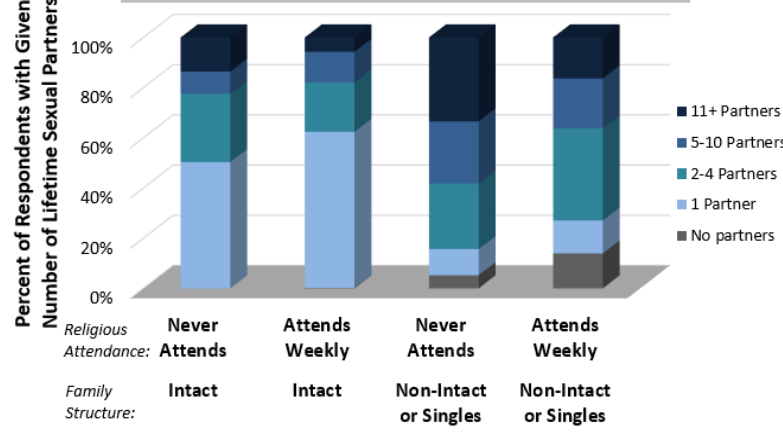
## Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime  
By Family Structure



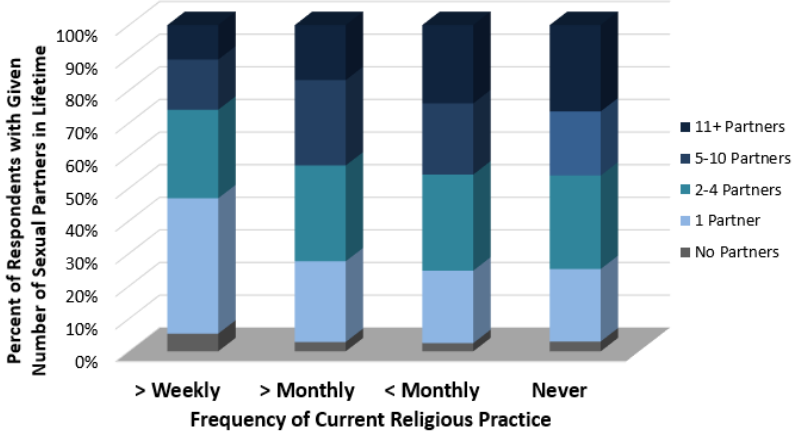
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime  
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime  
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (always-intact vs. non-intact\* and singles) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:  
 The always-intact married individual that worships weekly;  
 The always-intact married individual that never worships;  
 The non-intact\* or single individual that worships weekly;  
 The non-intact\* or single individual that never worships.

(\* The non-intact group consists of divorced or separated and divorced and remarried individuals.)

## **Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime by Family Structure and Religious Practice**

The 1992 National Health and Social Life Survey shows that, of adults aged 18 to 59, those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly had the lowest number of lifetime sexual partners.

**Family Structure:** Those in always-intact marriages were most likely to have been monogamous/ abstinent. Fifty-three percent of individuals in intact marriages had only one sexual partner over the course of their lifetime. Just over 16 percent of always-single individuals had only one sexual partner, and 15.1 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 31.3 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Over 10 percent of those who were divorced or separated had only one sexual partner, and 2.3 percent of those who had divorced and remarried had only one sexual partner. (Zero percent of those in always-intact marriages, those who were divorced or separated, or those who were divorced and remarried had no lifetime sexual partners.)

Those in always-intact marriages also had the smallest percentage of persons with 11 or more lifetime sexual partners: 9.2 percent had 11 or more sexual partners, compared to 20.2 percent of those who were always single, 27.4 percent of those who were divorced or separated, and 33.3 percent of those who were divorced and remarried.

**Religious Practice:** Those who worshipped weekly were most likely to have been monogamous/ abstinent. Approximately 42 percent of those who worshipped weekly had only one lifetime sexual partner, and 5.4 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 46.9 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Among those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly, 24.7 percent had only one lifetime sexual partner, and 2.9 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 27.6 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons); among those who never worshipped, 22.2 percent had only one lifetime sexual partner and 3 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 25.3 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons); and among those who worshipped less than monthly, 22.2 percent had only one lifetime sexual partner and 2.5 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 24.8 percent of monogamous/ abstinent persons).

Those who worshipped weekly also had the smallest percentage of persons with 11 or more lifetime sexual partners: 10.6 percent had 11 or more sexual partners, compared to 16.8 percent of those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly, 24 percent of those who worshipped less than monthly, and 26.5 percent of those who never worshipped.

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** Those who worshipped weekly and were in intact marriages were most likely to have been monogamous/abstinent. Approximately 62 percent of those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly had only one lifetime sexual partner, and .2 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 62.4 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Over 50 percent of those in intact marriages who never worshipped had only one lifetime sexual partner (zero percent reported no lifetime sexual partners). Just over 13 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who

worshipped weekly had only one lifetime sexual partner, and 13.9 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 27.1 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Approximately 11 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped had only one lifetime sexual partner, and 5.2 percent had no lifetime sexual partners (a combined 15.7 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons).

Those who worshipped weekly and were in intact marriages also had the smallest percentage of persons with 11 or more lifetime sexual partners: 5.7 percent have had 11 or more sexual partners, compared to 13.6 percent of those in intact marriages who never worshipped, 16.4 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who worshipped weekly, and 33.4 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped.

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** Analysis of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study, a longitudinal study in New Zealand of a cohort of over one thousand, showed a strong relationship between religious involvement and lifetime sexual abstinence at age 21. Over 11 percent of males and 8.1 percent of females reported never having sexual intercourse.<sup>1</sup> Abstinence was nearly four times as likely among those who reported religious involvement both at age 11 and at age 21 as among those who reported weak or no involvement at either age 11 or age 21,<sup>2</sup> though the authors found that religion may independently influence men’s choice to abstain more strongly than women’s.<sup>3</sup>

Study of 1,334 young, heterosexual urban adults in the 1990-1991 National AIDS Behavioral Surveys found that single persons were eight times as likely as married persons to have multiple sexual partners in the year prior to the survey.<sup>4</sup> Whereas 94.8 percent of married respondents had one sexual partner in the previous year, 86.6 percent of those who were cohabiting and 48.5 percent of those who were single had only one sexual partner. Among single persons, 21.5 percent had not had a sexual partner in the previous year, and 25.2 percent had had two to five partners. Nearly 5 percent had had six or more sexual partners in the previous year.<sup>5</sup>

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

---

<sup>1</sup> Charlotte Paul, Julie Fitzjohn, Jason Eberhart-Phillips, Peter Herbison, and Nigel Dickson, “Sexual Abstinence at Age 21 in New Zealand: the Importance of Religion,” *Social Science and Medicine* 51 (2000): 3.

<sup>2</sup> Charlotte Paul, Julie Fitzjohn, Jason Eberhart-Phillips, Peter Herbison, and Nigel Dickson, “Sexual Abstinence at Age 21 in New Zealand: the Importance of Religion,” *Social Science and Medicine* 51 (2000): 7.

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Paul, Julie Fitzjohn, Jason Eberhart-Phillips, Peter Herbison, and Nigel Dickson, “Sexual Abstinence at Age 21 in New Zealand: the Importance of Religion,” *Social Science and Medicine* 51 (2000): 9.

<sup>4</sup> Diane Binson, M. Margaret Dolcini, Lance M. Pollack, and Joseph A. Catania, “IV. Multiple Sexual Partners among Young Adults in High-Risk Cities,” *Family Planning Perspectives* 25, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1993): 270.

<sup>5</sup> Diane Binson, M. Margaret Dolcini, Lance M. Pollack, and Joseph A. Catania, “IV. Multiple Sexual Partners among Young Adults in High-Risk Cities,” *Family Planning Perspectives* 25, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1993): 271.