

Demographics of Women Who Report Having an Abortion

Executive Summary

This report is an exploration of the demographics of abortion in America for the years 2006 to 2010. It seeks to examine abortion—which the pro-abortion movement attempts to characterize as a mainstream healthcare procedure—across America, as the abortion rate continues to decline nationally and as abortion’s true risks and harms to women continue to be unveiled.

Note that the abortion data included here are reported numbers, and that abortion surveys are disposed to underreporting, possibly by a factor of two or more.

Most women who report having an abortion report having only one abortion and report being quite young when they obtain their first—nearly 50 percent of first abortions are to those 20 years of age and younger, and 80 percent are to those 24 or younger.

Abortion may be less prevalent within some demographic subsets than others. The social and demographic factors across which this report examines abortion include race, income, family structure of origin, marital status, childbearing history, and religious practice:

- African-American women have the highest reported abortion rate.
- The rate of reported abortion does not vary sharply across income groups.
- The reported abortion rate is lower among women who grew up in an always-intact married family than among women who grew up in other family structures: 16 percent vs. 26 percent.
- Abortion appears to be more common among girls who become sexually active at a very early age (e.g., ages 12 to 14).
- Reported abortion rates are higher among women who have been pregnant but never been married than among those who have been pregnant and who have ever been married. Additionally, 83 percent of women who report an abortion have cohabited.
- The fraction of aborting women is nearly twice as high among women who have had children out of wedlock as among women who have had all their children in wedlock.

It is the hope of the authors that this initial exploration of the demographics of abortion will lead to a more comprehensive research strategy on abortion's antecedents and effects on society, women, and unborn children. A full version of this report is available at www.marri.us/abortion-demographics.