

Mapping America

Sexuality

Table of Content

Sexual Initiation

First Sexual Intercourse Before Age 18 (Females) By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and First Intercourse
Received Public Assistance By Age at First Intercourse
Adolescents Who Have Ever Engaged in Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Father Strongly Disapproves of Adolescent Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Number of Sexual Partners

Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Girls By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Cumulative Number of Women's Lifetime Sexual Partners By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Women with Two or More Cohabitations in their Lifetime By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Women Who Cohabited with Eventual First Husband By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Number of Sexual Partners in Previous Year By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Non-Romantic Sexual Relationships By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Adolescents Who Have Had Four or More Sexual Partners By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Marriage and Sexual Fidelity

Marital Happiness By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Parental Stress By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Divorce or Separation By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Adultery By Family Structure and Religious Practice
The Importance of Marriage By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Current Sexual Partner Has Other Sexual Partners By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Ever Cheated on Spouse or Cohabiting Partner By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Current in First (Only) Marriage By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Sexual Risks

Has Ever Paid or Been Paid for Sex By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Frequency of STDs By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Women Who Had a Homosexual Partner By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Had Sexual Intercourse with a "Pick-Up" By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and First Intercourse
Non-Romantic Sexual Relationships By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Pregnancy and Abortion

Women Who Aborted First Pregnancy By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Average Number of Unwanted Pregnancies By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Unwanted Pregnancies By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Fathers Who Have Encouraged an Abortion By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Has Ever Had an Abortion By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Has Had Multiple Abortions By Family Structure and Father Figure
Teen Pregnancy and Family Response By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Adolescents OK with Having a Child Out-of-Wedlock By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Sexual Satisfaction

Feels Thrilled, Excited During Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Feels Guilty During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Feels Scared, Afraid During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Feels “Taken Care Of” During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Feels Loved During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Feels Sad During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Feels Satisfied During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Feels Wanted, Needed During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice
Feels Anxious, Worried During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Outcomes by Number of Sexual Partners

Heavy Drinking Among Adults by Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice
Completed Some College by Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice
Adult Marijuana Use by Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice
Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure, Partner Status at First Intercourse, and Age at First Intercourse
Received Public Assistance by Age at First Intercourse

About the Mapping America Project

The *Mapping America Project* of the Marriage and Religion Research Institute (MARRI) draws data from federal surveys to map the demographic behaviors of Americans based on their family structure, frequency of religious practice, and a combination of the two. The federal surveys used to graph these national behaviors include the General Social Survey, the Adolescent Health Survey, the National Survey of Children’s Health, the National Survey of Family Growth, and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth.



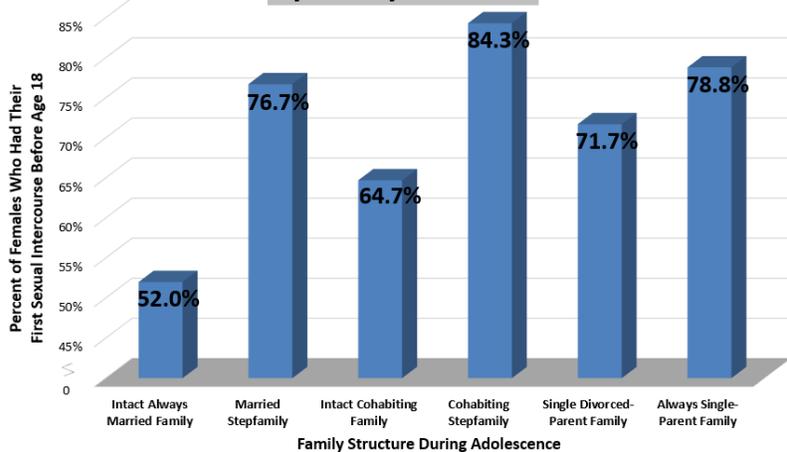


Sexual Initiation

First Sexual Intercourse Before Age 18 (Females) By Family Structure and Religious Practice

First Sexual Intercourse Before Age 18 (Females)

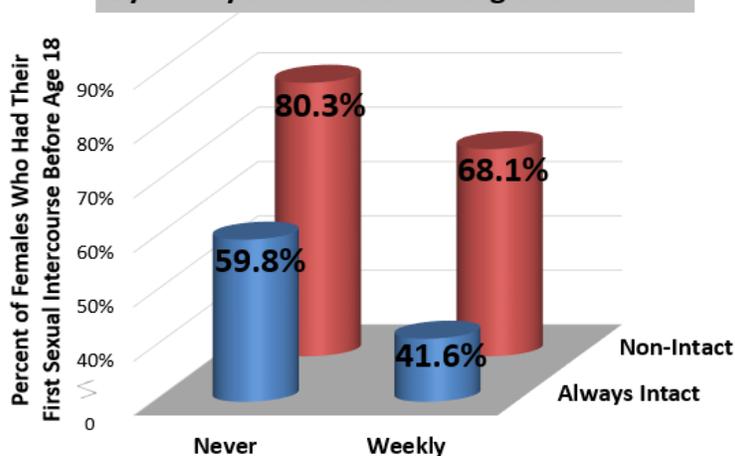
By Family Structure



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

First Sexual Intercourse Before Age 18 (Females)

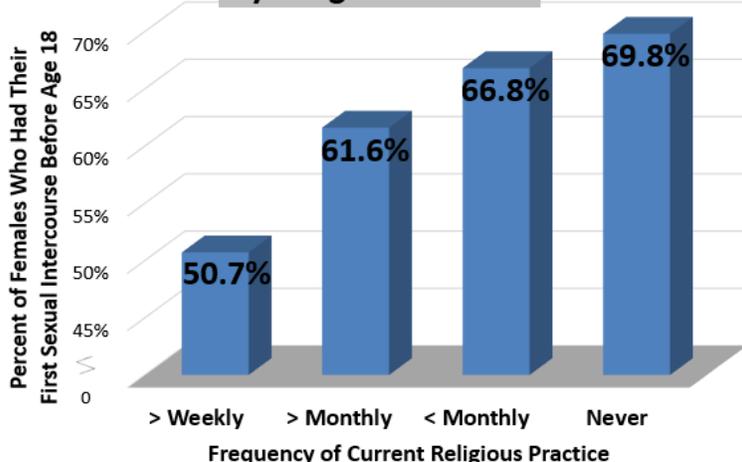
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

First Sexual Intercourse Before Age 18 (Females)

By Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

This chart looks at women who had sexual intercourse before age 18 at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- The non-intact family* that worships weekly;*
- The non-intact family* that never worships.*

(The non-intact group consists of women in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)*

Females Who Had Their First Sexual Intercourse Before Age 18 (Females) by Family Structure and Religious Practice

According to the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002),¹ women who grew up in an intact married family and who worshipped weekly at the time of the survey were the least likely to have had sexual intercourse before age 18, when viewed from the perspective of family structure and religious attendance.

Family Structure: 52 percent of women who grew up in intact married families had sexual intercourse before turning 18, followed by women from intact cohabiting families (64.7 percent), single divorced parent families (71.7 percent), married stepfamilies (76.7 percent), always single parent families (78.8 percent), and cohabiting stepfamilies (84.3 percent).

Religious Practice: 50.7 percent of women who worshipped at least weekly at the time of the survey had sexual intercourse before turning 18, followed by those who attended religious services between one and three times a month (61.6 percent), those who attended religious services less than once a month (66.8 percent), and those who never attended religious services (69.8 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: According to the National Survey of Family Growth, 41.6 percent of women who grew up in intact married families and worshipped at least weekly at the time of the survey had sexual intercourse before turning 18, followed by women who grew up in intact married families and who never worshipped (59.8 percent), those who grew up in other family structures and worshipped at least weekly (68.1 percent), and those who grew up in other family structures and never worshipped (80.3 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Sam Hardy and Marcela Raffaelli of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln reported that “higher religiosity at 15-16 years was significantly associated with still being a virgin 2 years later.”²

Jill Sinha of Princeton University and colleagues also found that “[b]oth attendance in worship services and participation in a religious youth group were negatively correlated with sexual activity.”³

¹ These charts draw on data collected by the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002). The sample consists of women between the ages of 14 and 44 and numbers 7,643.

² Sam A. Hardy and Marcela Raffaelli, “Adolescent Religiosity and Sexuality: An Investigation of Reciprocal Influences,” *Journal of Adolescence* 26 (2003): 731-9.

³ Jill W. Sinha, Ram A. Cnaan, and Richard W. Gelles, “Adolescent Risk Behaviors and Religion: Findings from a National Study,” *Journal of Adolescence* 30 (2007): 231-49.

Cristina Lammers of the University of Uruguay and colleagues reported that adolescents under “17 years of age, from two-parent families, were more likely than peers from single-parent families to delay sexual intercourse.”⁴

Mignon Moore of Columbia University and P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale also found that teenagers living in single mother families have a greater chance of sexual debut than those living in married families.⁵

Dawn Upchurch of the University of California, Los Angeles and colleagues reported that “[t]eenagers living with a single parent or in a stepfamily had significantly higher rates of transition to first sex than did those living with both biological parents.”⁶

As the evidence indicates, women who grew up in an intact family and who worship weekly are less likely to have had sexual intercourse before turning 18.

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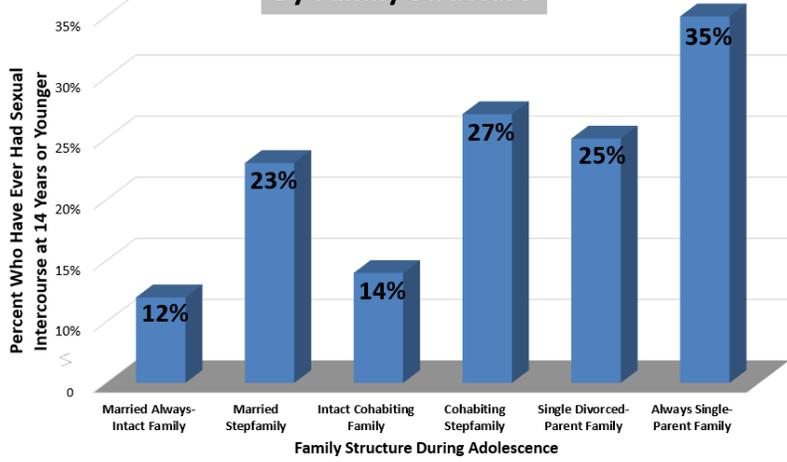
⁴ Cristina Lammers, Marjorie Ireland, Michael Resnick, and Robert Blum, “Influences on Adolescents’ Decision to Postpone Onset of Sexual Intercourse: A Survival Analysis of Virginity among Youths Aged 13 to 18 Years,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 26 (2000): 42-8.

⁵ Mignon R. Moore and P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, “Sexual Intercourse and Pregnancy among African American Girls in High-Poverty Neighborhoods: The Role of Family and Perceived Community Environment,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63 (2001): 1146-57.

⁶ Dawn M. Upchurch, Lené Levy-Storms, Clea A. Sucoff, and Carol S. Aneshensel, “Gender and Ethnic Differences in the Timing of First Sexual Intercourse,” *Family Planning Perspectives* 30 (1998): 121-7.

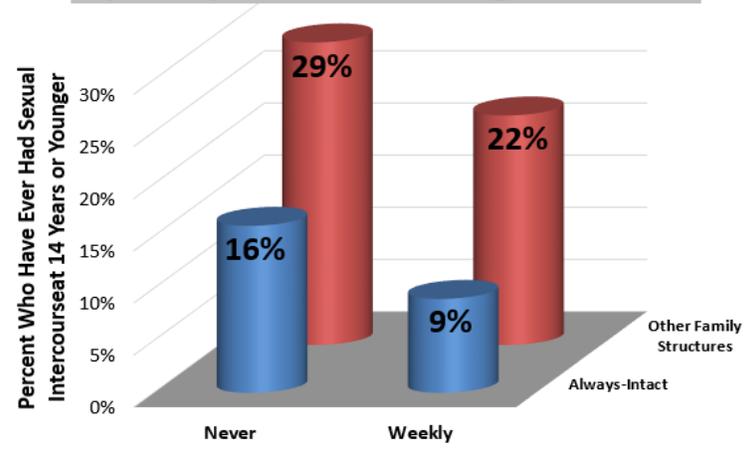
Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger
By Family Structure**



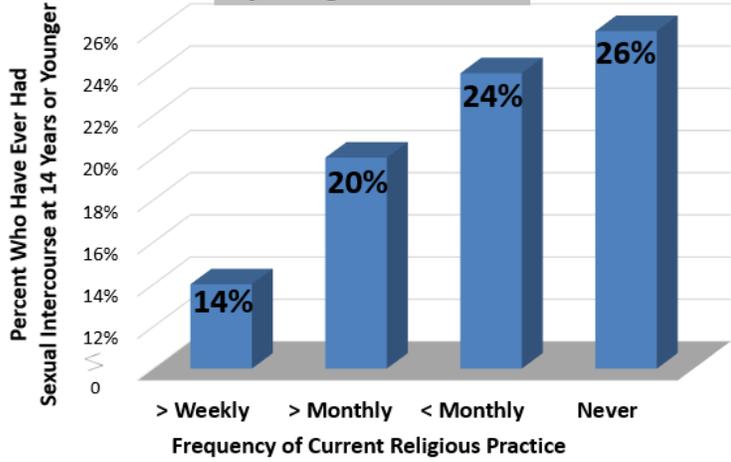
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

**Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

**Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger
By Religious Practice**



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

This chart looks at adolescents who have ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. non-intact) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).*

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- All other family structures* that worship weekly;*
- All other family structures* that never worship.*

*(*This group consists of individuals in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always- single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)*

Sexual Intercourse at 14 Years of Age or Younger by Family Structure and Religious Practice

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth showed that, among adolescents 14 and younger, those who grew up in married, intact families and attended weekly religious services at the time of the survey were the least likely to have had sexual intercourse.

Family Structure: According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 12 percent of adolescents who grew up in an intact married family ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger, followed by children of intact cohabiting families (14 percent), children of married stepfamilies (23 percent), single divorced-parent families (25 percent), cohabiting stepfamilies (27 percent) and always-single parent households (35 percent).

Religious Practice: Only 14 percent of adolescents who attended weekly religious services at the time of the survey had ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger, compared to those who attended church one to three times a month (20 percent), less than monthly (24 percent), and those who never attended church (26 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that 9 percent of adolescents who grew up in intact married families and attended church weekly at the time of the survey had ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger, followed by those who never attended church but grew up in an always intact married family (16 percent). Twenty-two percent of adolescents from all other family structures who attended church weekly had ever had sexual intercourse at 14 years of age or younger, followed by those who never attended church and grew up in all other family structures (29 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Data from the Longitudinal cohort study, Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, found that adolescents aged 11 to 16 who were living with their biological parents were less likely to engage in sexual intercourse than were their peers who lived without both biological parents.¹ Data from a different study confirmed this same trend, that teens that live with both parents are significantly less likely to have ever had intercourse than their peers who do not live with both parents.²

Data from the National Survey of Family Growth also found that young girls who lived with both of their biological parents at age 14 had a lower risk of first sexual intercourse than their peers who did not live with both biological parents at 14.³

¹ Browning, C.R. T. Leventhal and J. Brooks-Gunn, "Neighborhood context and racial differences in early adolescent sexual activity," *Demography* 41(4) 2004, PP. 697-720.

² Collins, R.L., M.N. Elliot, S.H. Berry, D.E. Kanouse, D. Kunkel, S.B. Hunter, "Watching sex on television predicts adolescent initiation of sexual behavior," *Pediatrics* 114(3) 2004, pp. 280-289.

³ Brewster, K. L., E.C. Cooksey, D.K. Guiley, R.R. Rindfuss, "The changing impact of religion on the sexual and contraceptive behavior of adolescent women in the United States," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 60(2) 1998, pp. 493-504..

One study found that those adolescents who emphasized the importance of religion in their lives were less likely to engage in premarital sexual activity. In this study, young women who attended church once or more per week were less likely to be sexually active than those who attended less often. Thirty-eight percent of young women who attended church once or more per week were sexually active. Of those who attended church less often, 65.4 percent were sexually active.⁴

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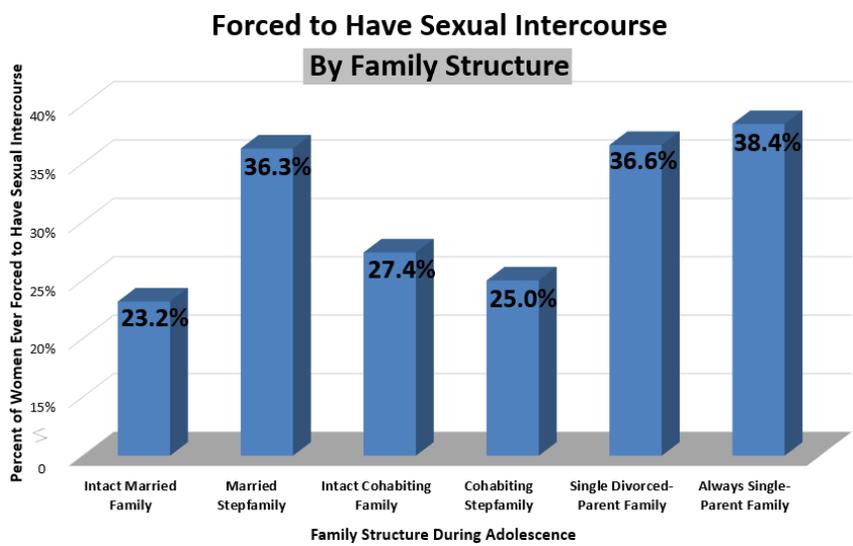
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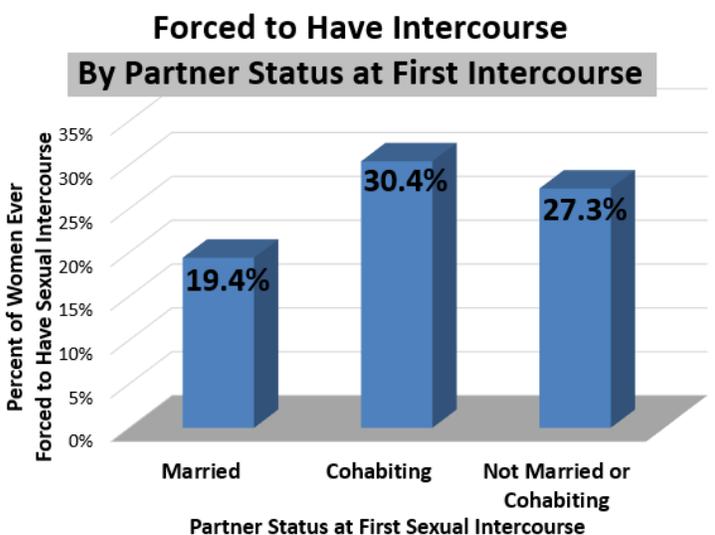
Scott Talkington has been Research Director for the National Association of Scholars and Senior Research Fellow at George Mason University School of Public Policy since 1998.

⁴ Studer, Marlana, Arland Thornton, "Adolescent Religiosity and Contraceptive Usage," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 49(1) 1987, pp. 117-128.

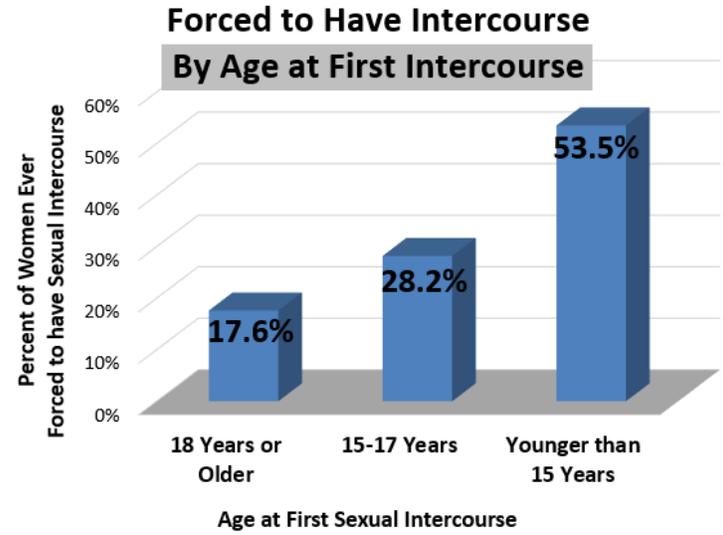
Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and First Intercourse



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)

Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure, Age at First Intercourse, and Partner Status at First Intercourse

The 2002 cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth showed that, among women aged 38 to 44,¹ ever being forced to have sexual intercourse was least common among those raised in an intact married family and among those who save sex for marriage.

Family Structure: At the time of the survey, fewer women raised in an intact family had ever been forced to have sexual intercourse than those raised in a non-intact family. Thirty eight percent of those raised in an always single parent family had been forced to have intercourse, followed by those raised in a single divorced-parent family (36.6 percent), those raised in a married stepfamily (36.3 percent), those raised in an intact cohabiting family (27.4 percent), and those raised in a cohabiting stepfamily (25 percent). Women aged 38 to 44 raised in an intact married family were least likely to have been forced to have sexual intercourse (23.2 percent).

Age at First Intercourse: The National Survey of Family Growth showed that fifty three percent of those who had their first intercourse before age 15 were ever forced to have sexual intercourse, dropping to twenty-eight percent of those who had their first intercourse between ages 15 and 17, and seventeen percent of those who had their first intercourse at age 18 or older.

Partner Status at First Intercourse: Nineteen percent of women who were married at their first intercourse had ever experienced forced sexual intercourse. This figure rose to thirty percent for those cohabiting at their first intercourse and twenty-seven percent for those who were neither cohabiting nor married at their first intercourse.

Related Insights from Other Studies: A 1989 analysis showed that among white girls, having lived apart from one's parents for more than four months prior to age 16 was associated with an increased likelihood of having been sexually abused, even after controlling for other factors. Parental drug use, heavy drinking, and smoking (during the teenage years) were other factors associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing sexual abuse. Poverty was found to be marginally associated with the risk of experiencing sexual abuse.²

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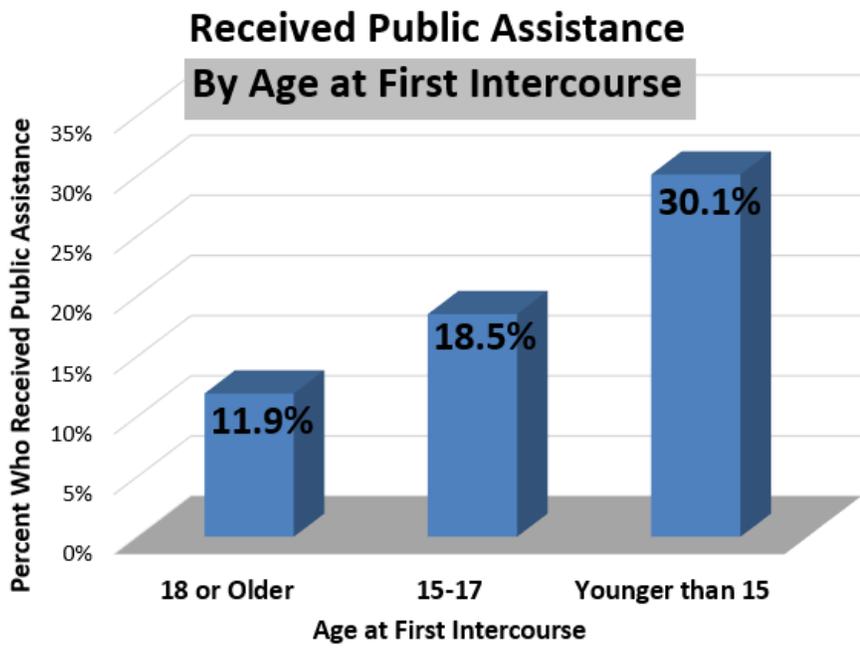
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¹ NSFG only surveys women up to age 44. The oldest group of women was selected in order to capture the most complete range of outcomes for sexual experience.

² Kristin Anderson Moore, Christine Winquist Nord, and James L. Peterson, "Nonvoluntary Sexual Activity Among Adolescents," *Family Planning Perspectives* 21, no. 3 (1989): 110-114.

Received Public Assistance By Age at First Intercourse



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

The *National Survey of Family Growth* showed that women who had been sexually active as younger teens were more likely to be on public assistance decades later.

Age at First Intercourse: Among women aged 38 to 44,¹ those who had postponed sexual activity until adulthood, defined as age 18 or older, were least likely to have recently received public assistance. 11.9 percent of those aged 38 to 44 who had their first intercourse at age 18 or older received public assistance in the year 2001. By

contrast, 18.5 percent of those who had their first intercourse between ages 15 and 17 received aid, and 30.1 percent of those who had their first intercourse before age 15 received aid.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Age of sexual debut (first intercourse) is correlated with and likely modifies a number of outcomes later in life ranging from educational achievement, to income, to marital stability.² One study found that beginning sexual activity at an older age is linked to greater happiness, lower rates of maternal and child poverty, and higher relationship stability.³ Moreover, postponing sexual intercourse until marriage tends to produce the best outcomes: relationship quality is higher and sexual satisfaction stronger.

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¹ NSFG only surveys women up to age 44. The oldest group of women was selected in order to capture the most complete range of outcomes for sexual experience.

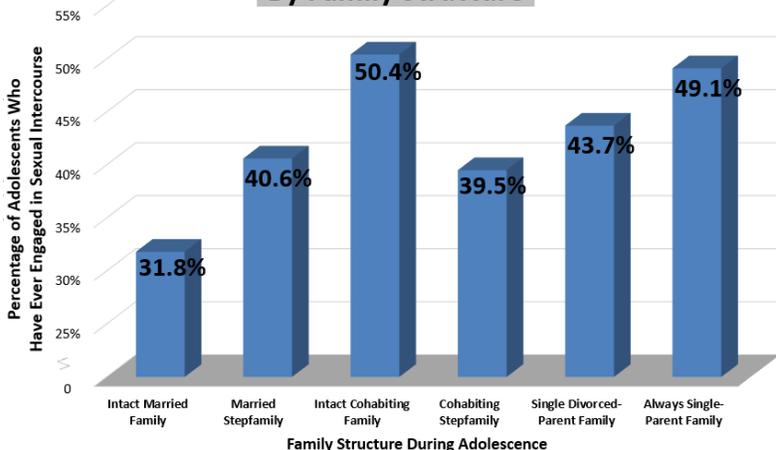
² Paige Harden, "True love waits? A sibling-comparison study of age at first sexual intercourse and romantic relationships in young adulthood," *Psychological science* (2012): 0956797612442550.

³ Robert Rector, Kirk Johnson, Shannan Martin, and Lauren Noyes, "Harmful Effects of Early Sexual Activity and Multiple Sexual Partners Among Women: A Book of Charts," *The Heritage Foundation*, June 2003. Available at <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2003/06/harmful-effects-of-early-sexual-activity-and-multiple-sexual-partners-among-women-a-book-of-charts>

Adolescents Who Have Ever Engaged in Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adolescents Who Have Ever Engaged in Sexual Intercourse

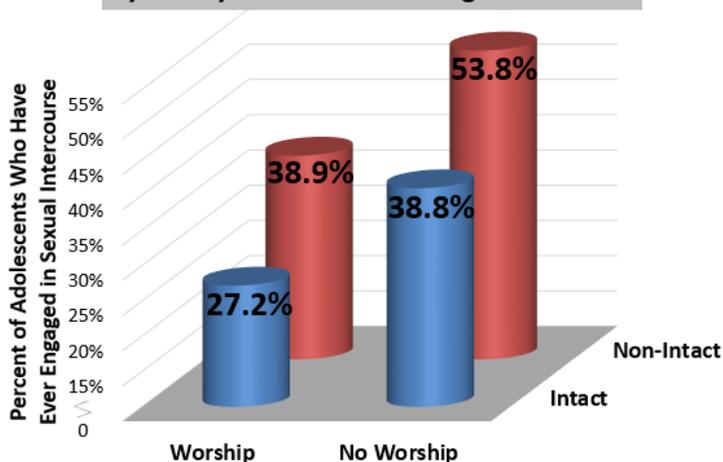
By Family Structure



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave 1

Adolescents Who Have Ever Engaged in Sexual Intercourse

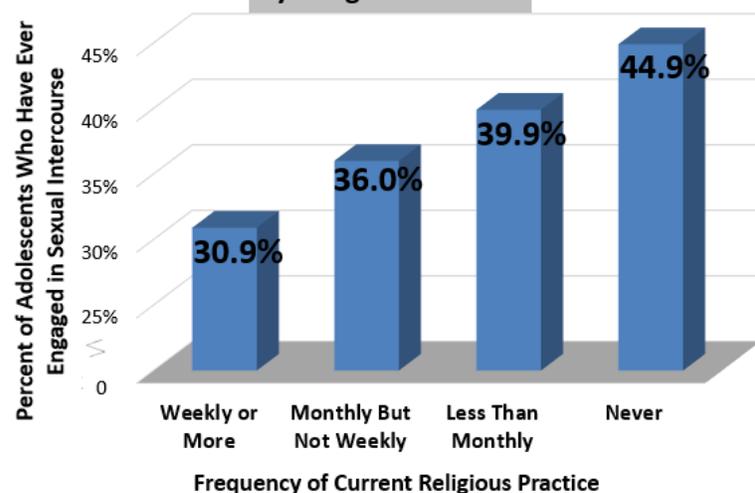
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave 1

Adolescents Who Have Ever Engaged in Sexual Intercourse

By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave 1

This chart looks at the number of children who have ever engaged in sexual intercourse at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (intact versus non-intact)* and two sets of religious attendance (worship vs. no worship).**

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The children from intact families that worship.
- The children from intact families that do not worship.
- The children from non-intact families that worship.
- The children from non-intact families that do not worship.

*The intact married family consists of children who live with their two biological parents who are married. Non-intact includes all other family types.

**Those who worship report attending religious services once a week or more often in the past year. Those who do not worship never attended religious services in the past year.

Adolescents Who Have Ever Engaged in Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Wave I of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health)¹ found that teenagers in intact families that worshipped weekly were least likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse.

Family Structure: At the time of the survey, fewer 13- to 19-year-olds in intact families had ever engaged in sexual intercourse than those in non-intact families. Adolescents in intact married families were least likely to have ever had sex (31.8%), followed by those in cohabiting stepfamilies (39.5%), married stepfamilies (40.6%), single-parent divorced families (43.7%), and always single-parent families (49.1%). Teenagers from intact cohabiting families were most likely to have ever had sexual intercourse (50.4%).

Religious Practice: The likelihood that an adolescent had ever had sex decreased as the adolescent's religious involvement increased. Thirteen to nineteen year-olds who attended religious services weekly or more within the past year were less likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse (30.9%) than those who attended less than monthly but not weekly (36.0%), less than monthly (39.9%), or never (44.9%).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Teenagers in intact worshipping families were least likely to have ever engaged in sexual intercourse (27.2%). Thirteen to nineteen year olds in intact non-worshipping families (38.8%) and non-intact worshipping families (38.9%) were more likely to have ever had sex. Teenagers in non-intact families that did not worship were most likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse (53.8%).

Related Insights from Other Studies: A large body of research shows that teens who worship frequently are less likely to be sexually active. Likewise, youth who receive spiritual support from friends and family are less likely to engage in sex, and girls who attend church are less likely to experience a teenage pregnancy.² Eva S. Lefkowitz, Meghan M. Gillen, Cindy L. Shearer, and Tanya L. Boone found that religious behavior was the strongest predictor of sexual behavior.³

¹ The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health) is a congressionally-mandated longitudinal survey of American adolescents. Add Health interviewed a random sample of 20,745 adolescents aged 13-19 in 1995 drawn from junior high and high schools (Wave I) and has followed them in successive waves in 2001 (Wave III) and 2009 (Wave IV).

² Sharon S. Rostosky, Brian L. Wilcox, Margaret L.C. Wright, and Brandy Randall, "The Impact of religiosity on Adolescent Sexual Behavior: A Review of the Evidence," *Journal of Adolescent Research*: 19 (2004): 677-697.

³ Eva S. Lefkowitz, Meghan M. Gillen, Cindy L. Shearer, and Tanya L. Boone, "Religiosity, Sexual Behaviors, and Sexual Attitudes During Emerging Adulthood," *The Journal of Sex Research* 41 (2004): 150-159.

Studies have found that teenagers who place a large emphasis on religion are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. They are less likely to abuse alcohol, use marijuana, smoke,⁴ or engage in delinquency.⁵ Frequent religious worship among adolescents is a powerful good that will naturally benefit society.

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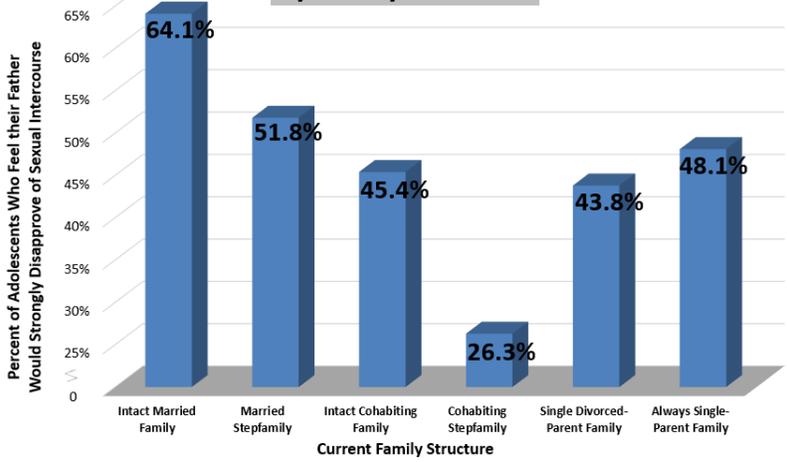
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⁴ Jill W. Sinha, Ram A. Cnaan, and Richard J. Gelles, "Adolescent Risk Behaviors and Religion: Findings from a National Study," *Journal of Adolescence*: 30 (2007): 231–249.

⁵ Mark D. Regnerus and Glenn H. Elder, "Religion and Vulnerability Among Low-Risk Adolescents," *Social Science Research*: 32 (2003): 633–658.

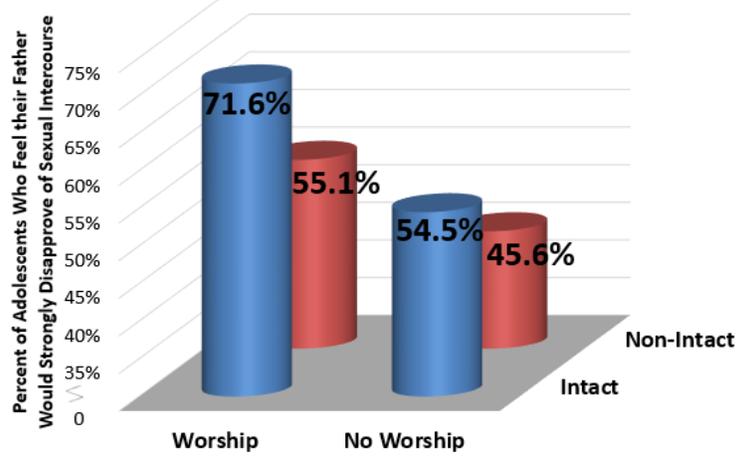
Father Strongly Disapproves of Adolescent Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Father Would Disapprove of Adolescent Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure



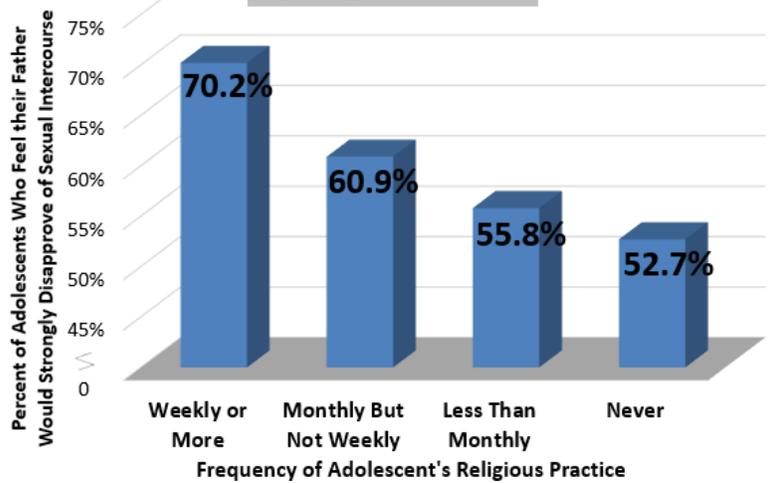
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Wave I

Father Would Disapprove of Adolescent Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Wave I

Father Would Disapprove of Adolescent Sexual Intercourse
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Wave I

This chart looks at the number of children who feel that their father would strongly disapprove if they engaged in sexual intercourse, at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (intact versus non-intact)* and two sets of religious attendance (worship vs. no worship).**

- The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:
- The children from intact families that worship.
 - The children from intact families that do not worship.
 - The children from non-intact families that worship.
 - The children from non-intact families that do not worship.

*The intact married family consists of children who live with their two biological parents who are married. Non-intact includes all other family types.

**Those who worship report attending religious services once a week or more often in the past year. Those who do not worship never attended religious services in the past year.

Father Strongly Disapproves of Adolescent Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Wave 1 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health)¹ found that adolescents aged 13 to 19 in intact families that worshipped weekly or more were most likely to feel that their father would strongly disapprove² of their engaging in sexual intercourse at this time in their life.

Family Structure: Adolescents in intact married families were most likely to feel that their father would strongly disapprove of their engaging in sexual intercourse (64.1 percent). They were followed by teens raised in a married stepfamily (51.8 percent), an always-single-parent family (48.1 percent), an intact cohabiting family (45.4 percent), a single-divorce-parent family (43.8 percent), and a cohabiting stepfamily (26.3 percent). Notably, adolescents raised in an intact married family were more than twice as likely as adolescents raised in a cohabiting stepfamily to think their father would disapprove of sexual intercourse (64.1 percent versus 26.3 percent, respectively).

Religious Practice: Teens who attended religious services were more likely to feel that their father would strongly disapprove of their engaging in sexual intercourse. Thirteen- to nineteen-year-olds who worshipped weekly or more often within the past year were more likely to believe that their father would disapprove of their having sexual intercourse (70.2 percent) than those who attended monthly but not weekly (60.9 percent), less than monthly (55.8 percent), or never (52.7 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Thirteen- to nineteen-year-olds in intact worshipping families were most likely to feel that their father would strongly disapprove of their engaging in sexual intercourse (71.6 percent). Teens in non-intact worshipping families (55.1%) and intact non-worshipping families (54.5 percent) were less likely to believe their father would strongly disapprove of sexual intercourse. Teens in non-intact families that did not worship were least likely to think their father would disapprove (45.6 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Parents play a significant role in shaping adolescent sexual behavior. Vincent Guilamo-Ramos et al. found that paternal disapproval of teen sexual activity was associated with later sexual debut,³ while Carl A. Ford et al. showed that an adolescent's perceived parental disapproval of sexual intercourse has a protective influence on the teen's

¹ The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health) is a congressionally-mandated longitudinal survey of American adolescents. Add Health drew a random sample of adolescents aged 13-19 in 1995 from junior high and high schools (Wave I) and has followed them in successive waves in 2001 (Wave III) and 2009 (Wave IV).

² Respondents were asked to react to the statement "How would [your father] feel about your having sex at this time in your life?" Their options included: "strongly disapprove," "disapprove," "neither disapprove nor approve," "approve," "strongly approve," "refused," "don't know," or "not applicable."

³ Vincent Guilamo-Ramos, Alida Bouris, Jane Lee, Katharine McCarthy, Shannon L. Micahel, Seraphine Pitt-Barnes, and Patricia Dittus, "Paternal Influences on Adolescent Sexual Risk Behaviors: A Structured Literature Review," *Pediatrics* 130 (2012): e1314-e1325.

risk for acquiring STIs.⁴ Married parents are most likely to exhibit traits, such as these, that foster an environment that prevents early sexual activity and/ or risky sexual conduct.⁵ Improving adolescent sexual behavior begins in the home with the parents.

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⁴ Carol A. Ford, Brian Wells Pence, William C. Miller, Michael D. Resnick, Linda H. Bearinger, Sandy Pettingell, and Myron Cohen, "Predicting adolescents' longitudinal risk for sexually transmitted infection: results from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health," *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 159 (2005): 657-64.

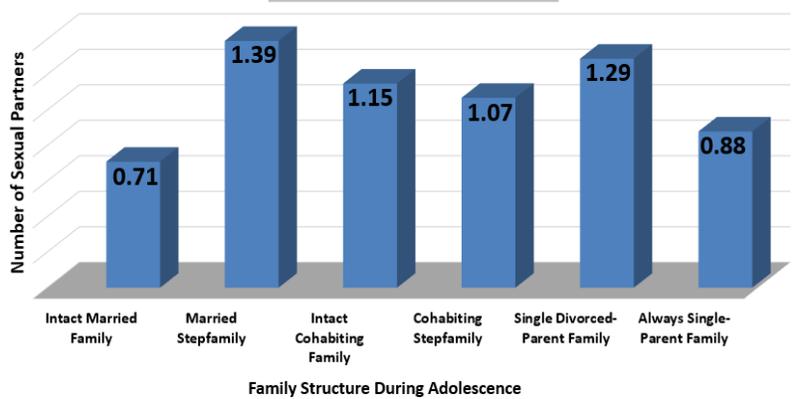
⁵ Patrick F. Fagan and Aaron Churchill, "The Effects of Divorce on Children" (January 2012), available at <http://marri.us/effects-divorce-children>



Number of Sexual Partners

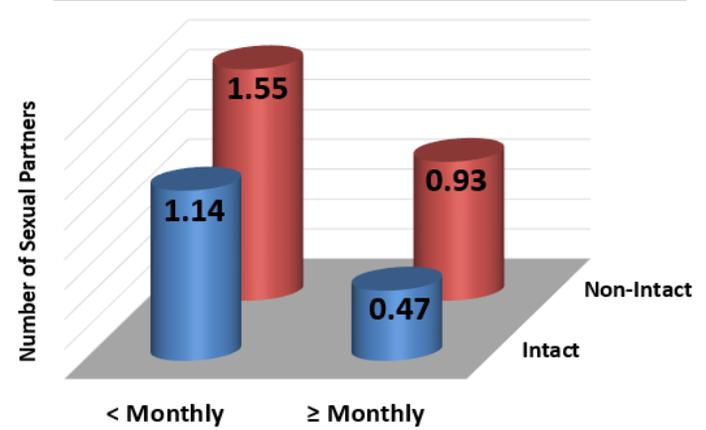
Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Girls By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Girls
By Family Structure



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Wave I and II. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Girls
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Wave I and II. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

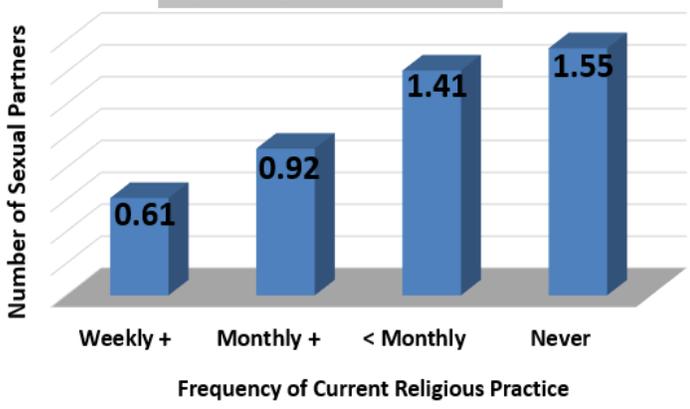
This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

These charts depict the average number of sexual intercourse partners for American adolescent girls in Grades 7-12 when correlated with religious attendance and family structure.

Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Girls
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Wave I and II. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

Number of Sexual Partners for Adolescent Females by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II, female students in Grades 7-12 had an average of 0.71 sexual partners when they lived in intact married families, whereas those who had a stepparent or divorced parents had an average of 1.39 and 1.29 sexual partners, respectively. In between were those whose parents never married (0.88), and those who lived in cohabiting families with one natural parent (1.07) or both natural parents (1.15).

Religious Practice: Female students in Grades 7-12 who worshipped at least weekly had an average of 0.61 sexual intercourse partners, while those who worshipped one to three times a month had an average of 0.92, or 50 percent higher, according to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II. The average jumped significantly for students who attended a few times a year (1.41), 130 percent higher, or never (1.55), 150 percent higher.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Adolescent girls from intact families who worshipped frequently had the fewest sexual partners in high school. Female students in Grades 7-12 had an average of 0.47 sexual partners when they lived in intact families and worshipped at least monthly. By contrast, those who worshipped less than monthly and came from broken or reconstituted families had an average of 1.55 sexual partners. Those who worshipped at least monthly but came from broken or reconstituted families had 0.93 partners, and girls who came from intact families but worshipped less than monthly had a slightly higher average of 1.14. The data was taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I and II.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate findings along these lines.¹ Analyzing fathers' relationships with their adolescent daughters, Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas at Austin and Laura Luchies of Northwestern University report that while dads may feel off balance when their daughters become teenagers, their involvement in their daughters' lives makes a significant difference, especially if they take them to church weekly and minimize their dating.²

Surveying more than 26,000 female and male adolescents, Christina Lammers of South Dakota State University and colleagues reveal that teens are more likely to practice sexual abstinence if

¹ The following findings are from www.familyfacts.org, except for Regnerus and Luchies, which is from the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society.

² Mark D. Regnerus and Laura B. Luchies, "The Parent-Child Relationship and Opportunities for Adolescents' First Sex," *Journal of Family Issues* 27 (February 2006): 159-183.

they are more religious, live in a two-parent household, and believe that their parents care about their actions.³

Michael J. Donahue and Peter L. Benson of the Search Institute in Minneapolis also find that religious worship is the aspect of religiosity most directly correlated to abstinence among adolescents, more so than considering religion important or participating in church-related activities.⁴

Analyzing contextual environmental data on family structure and religious adherence, Karin L. Brewster of the University of North Carolina and colleagues report that adolescent girls who live in neighborhoods with a high percentage of divorced or separated women are particularly likely to have premarital sexual intercourse. This likelihood, however, is modified by the percentage of religious believers in the community. The greater the percentage of those who practice their faith the less the sexual activity of adolescent girls.⁵

Absent fathers and empty churches contribute to the increased sexual activity of female adolescents. The evidence strongly indicates that teenage girls are least likely to engage in sexual intercourse when living in an intact family that worships frequently.

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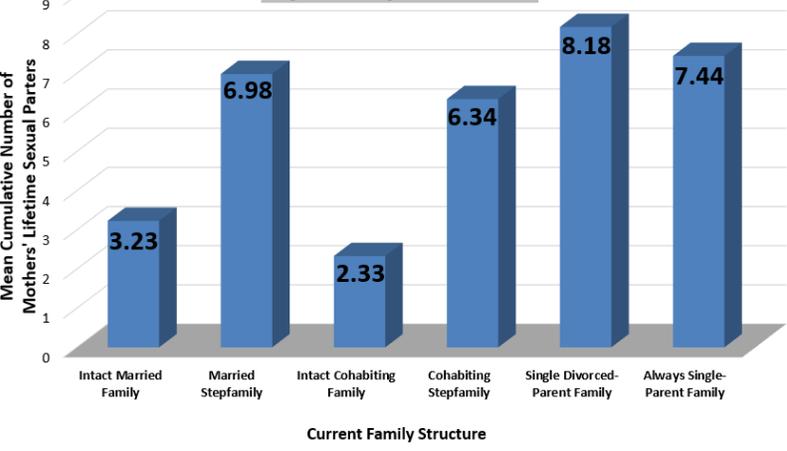
³ Cristina Lammers, Marjorie Ireland, Michael Resnick, and Robert Blum, "Influences on Adolescents' Decision to Postpone Onset of Sexual Intercourse: A Survival Analysis of Virginity among Youths Aged 13 to 18 Years," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 26 (2000): 42-48.

⁴ Michael J. Donahue and Peter L. Benson, "Religion and the Well-Being of Adolescents," *Journal of Social Issues* 51 (1995): 145-160.

⁵ Karin L. Brewster, William R. Grady, and John O. G. Billy, "Contextual Effects on the Sexual Behavior of Adolescent Women," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56 (1994): 387-404.

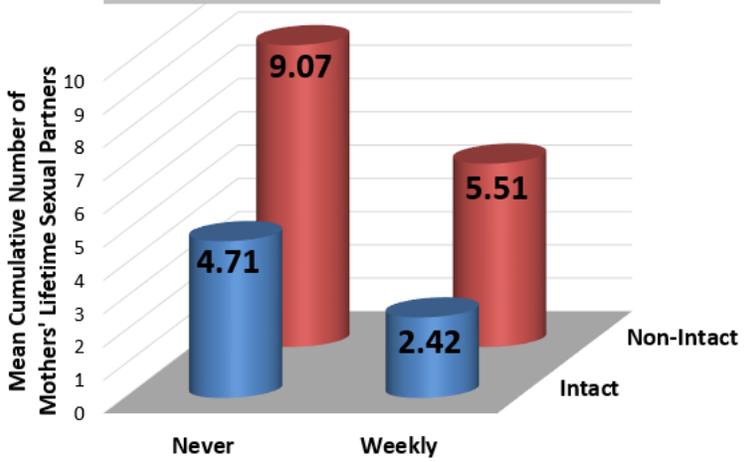
Cumulative Number of Women's Lifetime Sexual Partners By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Cumulative Number of Mothers' Lifetime Sexual Partners
 By Family Structure**



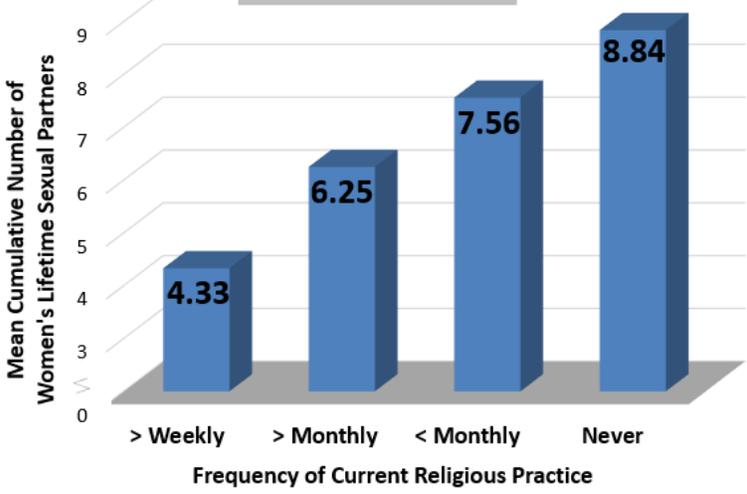
Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

**Cumulative Number of Mothers' Lifetime Sexual Partners
 By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

**Cumulative Number of Women's Lifetime Sexual Partners
 By Religious Practice**



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

This chart looks at the cumulative number of mothers' lifetime sexual partners at the extremes of four demographic quadrants. These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures(always-intact vs non-intact) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).*

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

(The non-intact group consists of mothers in the following categories: married stepfamily, intact cohabiting partners, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent.)*

Cumulative Number of Women's Lifetime Sexual Partners by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002),¹ mothers aged 35-44 in intact cohabiting relationships had, on average, 2.33 lifetime sexual partners, followed by mothers in always-intact marriages (3.23), those in cohabiting stepfamilies (6.34), those in married stepfamilies (6.98), those who had always been single (7.44), and those who were divorced (8.18).

Religious Practice: Based on the National Survey of Family Growth (2002),² women aged 35-44 who worshiped at least weekly had, on average, 4.33 lifetime sexual partners, followed by those who worshiped between one and three times a month (6.25), those who attended religious services less than once a month (7.56), and those who never attended religious services (8.84).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Mothers, aged 35-44, in always-intact marriages who worshiped at least weekly were more likely to have had fewer lifetime sexual partners than mothers in all other family structure and worship combinations. According to the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), mothers in always-intact marriages who attended religious services at least weekly had, on average, 2.42 lifetime sexual partners, followed by mothers in always-intact marriages who never worshiped (4.71), those in other family structures who worshiped at least weekly (5.51), and those in other family structures who never worshiped (9.07).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Jay Teachman of Western Washington University reported that women who engaged in multiple premarital intimate relationships increased their risk of divorce.³

Jason Weeden of Arizona State University and colleagues also found that religious attendance correlates to a marriage-centered sexual and reproductive strategy.⁴

¹ These charts draw on data collected by the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002). The sample consists of women between the ages of 35 and 44 and numbers 2,479.

² Whereas the present family structure sample data and combined religious attendance/family structure sample data describe only the population of mothers between the ages of 35 and 44, the religious attendance data describe the population of *all* women between the ages of 35 and 44. We realize these charts would have more value if all three charts drew from the same population set, but the difference was only noted after the data was in.

³ Jay Teachman, "Premarital Sex, Premarital Cohabitation, and the Risk of Subsequent Marital Dissolution among Women," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65 (2003): 444-55.

⁴ Jason Weeden, Adam B. Cohen, and Douglas T. Kenrick, "Religious Attendance as Reproductive Support," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 29 (2008): 327-34.

Wade C. Rowatt of Baylor University and David P. Schmitt of Bradley University reported that those who view religion as an end, rather than as a means to another personal or social end, show less interest in having multiple sex partners.⁵

As the evidence indicates, mothers in always-intact marriages who worship at least weekly have fewer sexual partners than those in most other family structures who worship less frequently.

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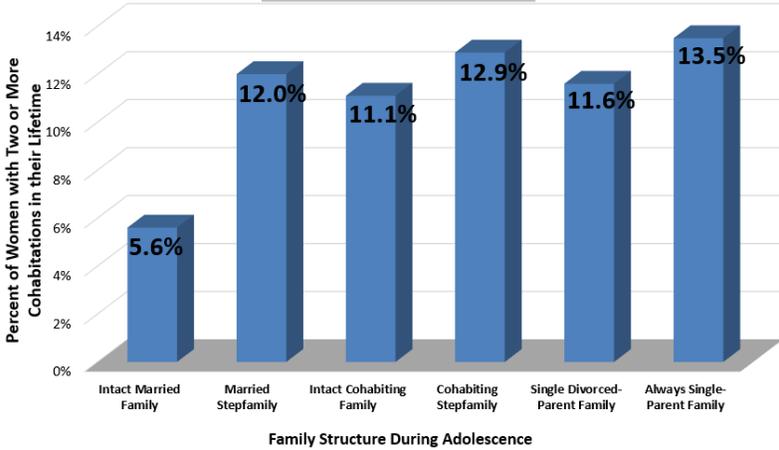
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Dr. Sullins is an associate professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America.

⁵ Wade C. Rowatt and David P. Schmitt, "Associations between Religious Orientation and Varieties of Sexual Experience," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42 (2003): 455-65.

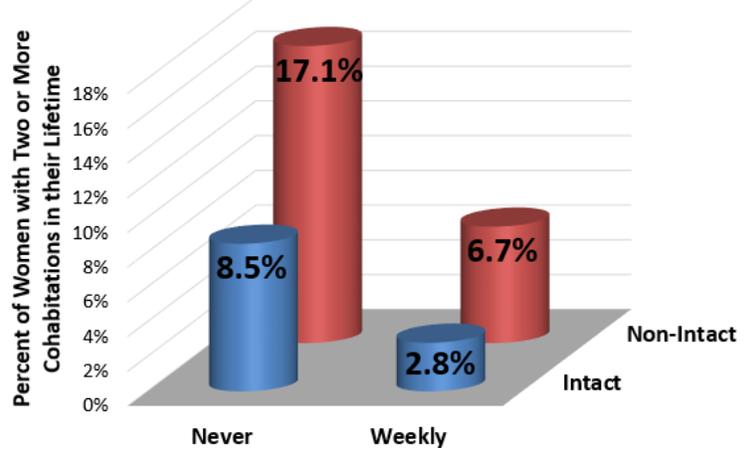
Women with Two or More Cohabitations in their Lifetime By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Women with Two or More Cohabitations in their Lifetime
 By Family Structure**



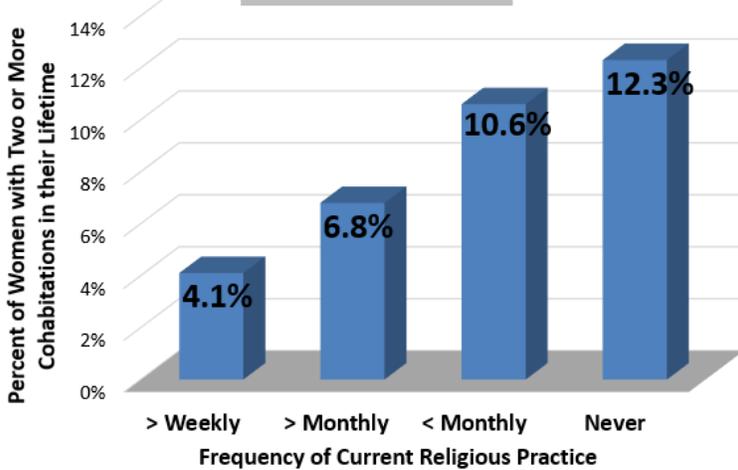
Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

**Women with Two or More Cohabitations in their Lifetime
 By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

**Women with Two or More Cohabitations in their Lifetime
 By Religious Practice**



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

This chart looks at women who have had two or more cohabitations in their lifetime at the extremes of four demographic quadrants. These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. non-intact) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).*

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- The non-intact family* that worships weekly;*
- The non-intact family* that never worships.*

(The non-intact group consists of women in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent.)*

Women with Two or More Cohabitations in their Lifetime by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the National Survey of Family Growth (2002), 5.6 percent of women (aged 14-44) who grew up in intact married families had two or more cohabitations in their lifetime, followed by women who grew up in intact cohabiting families (11.1 percent), those from single divorced parent families (11.6 percent), married stepfamilies (12 percent), cohabiting stepfamilies (12.9 percent), and always single parent families (13.5 percent). Overall, women raised in intact married families were only half as likely to have had two or more lifetime cohabitations as those from all other structures.¹

Religious Practice: The National Survey of Family Growth shows that 4.1 percent of women who worshiped at least weekly at the time of the survey had cohabited two or more times in their lifetime, followed by those who attended religious services between one and three times a month (6.8 percent), those who worshiped less than once a month (10.6 percent), and those who never attended religious services (12.3 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Women (aged 14-44) who grew up in married intact families and who worshiped weekly at the time of the survey were the least likely to have had two or more cohabitations in their lifetime. According to the National Survey of Family Growth, 2.8 percent of women who grew up in intact married families and worshiped at least weekly had two or more cohabitations in their lifetime, followed by women who grew up in other family structures and worshiped at least weekly (6.7 percent), those who grew up in intact married families who never worshiped (8.5 percent), and those who grew up in other family structures and never worshiped (17.1 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Jeremy Uecker of the University of Texas at Austin and colleagues found that cohabiting young adults were less likely to attend religious services than their non-cohabiting peers.²

David Eggebeen of Pennsylvania State University and Jeffrey Dew of the University of Virginia reported that adolescents who frequently attended church services were less likely to cohabit as adults.³

Valerie Martin of McGill University and colleagues also found that children from divorced families were more likely to cohabit as adults than children from intact families.⁴

¹ These charts draw on data collected by the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002). The sample consists of 7,643 women between the ages of 14 and 44 who are statistically representative of all U.S. women.

² Jeremy E. Uecker, Mark D. Regnerus, and Margaret L. Vaaler, "Losing My Religion: The Social Sources of Religious Decline in Early Adulthood," *Social Forces* 85 (2007): 1667-92.

³ David Eggebeen and Jeffrey Dew, "The Role of Religion in Adolescence for Family Formation in Young Adulthood," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 71 (2009): 108-21.

As the evidence indicates, women who grew up in intact married families and worship at least weekly have had fewer cohabitations than those from other family structures who never worship.

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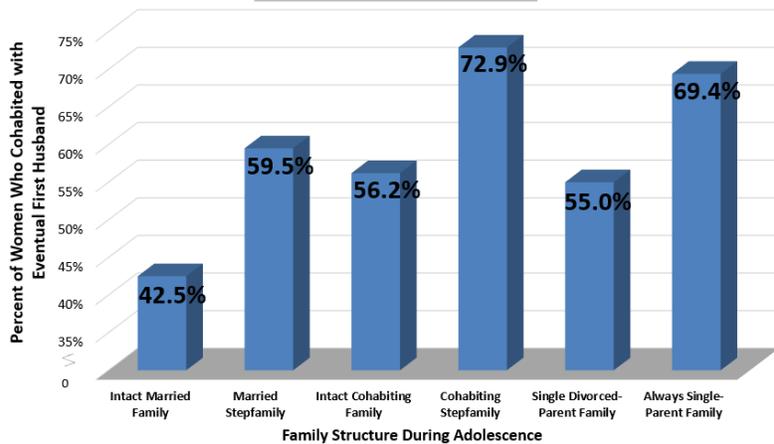
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⁴ Valerie Martin, Melinda Mills, and Celine Le Bourdais, "The Consequences of Parental Divorce on the Life Course Outcomes of Canadian Children," *Canadian Studies in Population* 32 (2005): 29-51.

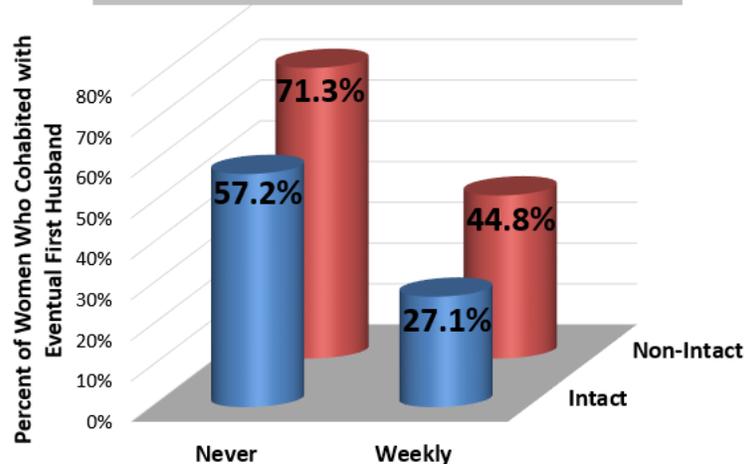
Women Who Cohabited with Eventual First Husband By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Women Who Cohabited with Eventual First Husband
By Family Structure



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

Women Who Cohabited with Eventual First Husband
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

This chart looks at women who cohabited with their eventual first husband at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

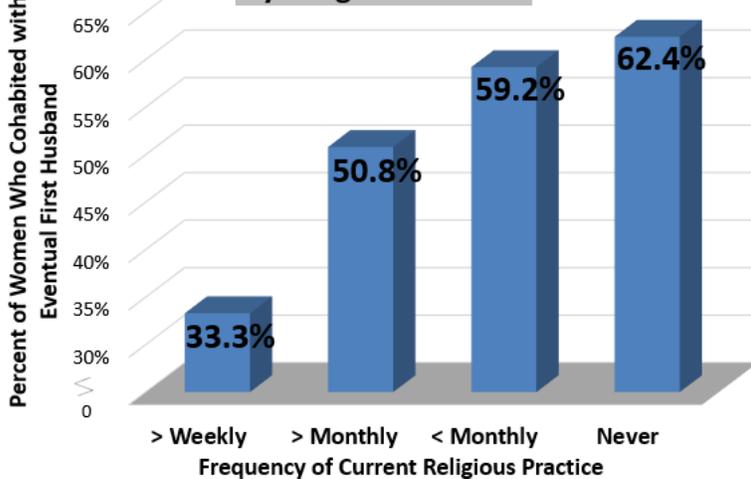
These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. non-intact) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).*

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- The non-intact family* that worships weekly;*
- The non-intact family* that never worships.*

(The non-intact group consists of women in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)*

Women Who Cohabited with Eventual First Husband
By Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

Women Who Cohabited with Eventual First Husband by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002), 42.5 percent of women who grew up in an intact married family cohabited with their eventual first husband, followed by women from single divorced parent families (55 percent), intact cohabiting families (56.2 percent), married stepfamilies (59.5 percent), always single parent families (69.4 percent), and cohabiting stepfamilies (72.9 percent).¹

Religious Practice: The National Survey of Family Growth shows that 33.7 percent of women who worshiped at least weekly were less likely to cohabit with their eventual first husband, followed by those who attended religious services between one and three times a month (61.6 percent), those who attended religious services less than once a month (66.8 percent), and those who never attended religious services (69.8 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Women who were least likely to have cohabited with their eventual first husband were those who grew up in an intact married family and who worshiped at least weekly at the time of the survey. According to the National Survey of Family Growth, 27.1 percent of women who grew up in an intact married family and who worshiped at least weekly cohabited with their eventual first husband, followed by women who grew up in other family structures and worshiped at least weekly (44.8 percent), those who grew up in intact married families and never worshiped (57.2 percent), and those who grew up in other family structures and never worshiped (71.3 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Wendy Manning of Bowling Green State University and colleagues reported that adolescents who “have greater religiosity report lower cohabitation expectations” and that “adolescents from single, cohabiting, and married stepparent families have greater expectations to cohabit than do teens living with two biological parents.”²

Jay Teachman of Western Washington University also found that those “who grew up with two biological parents...were less likely to cohabit before marriage.”³ Valerie Martin of McGill University and colleagues also reported that “[s]ignificantly higher levels of entry into cohabitation, as opposed to marriage, and higher levels of divorce were found among children of divorce, compared to children from intact families.”⁴ As the data show, infrequent religious attendance and a non-intact family correlate significantly with cohabitation before first marriage.

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¹ These charts draw on data collected by the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002). The sample consists of women between the ages of 14 and 44 and numbers 7,643.

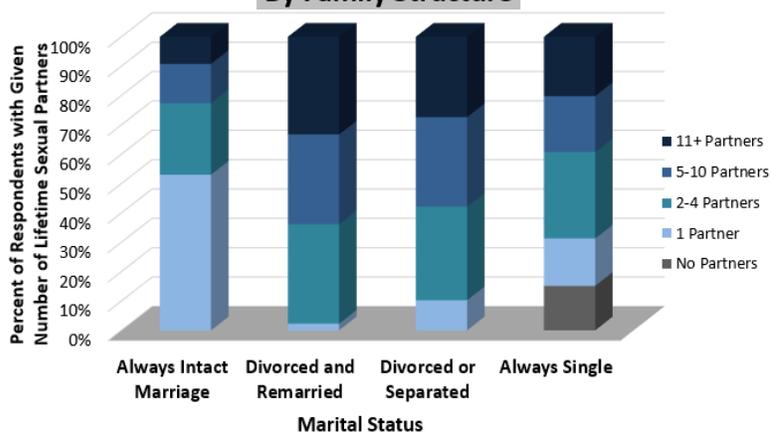
² Wendy D. Manning, Monica A. Longmore, and Peggy C. Giordano, “The Changing Institution of Marriage: Adolescents’ Expectations to Cohabit and to Marry,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 69 (2007): 559-75.

³ Jay D. Teachman, “The Childhood Living Arrangements of Children and the Characteristics of Their Marriages,” *Journal of Family Issues* 25 (2004): 86-111.

⁴ Valerie Martin, Melinda Mills, and Céline Le Bourdais, “The Consequences of Parental Divorce on the Life Course Outcomes of Canadian Children,” *Canadian Studies in Population* 32 (2005): 29-51.

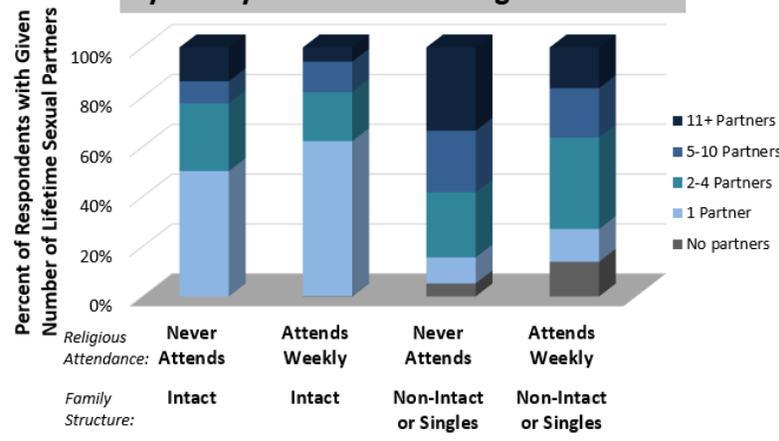
Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Number of Sexual Partners in Lifetime
By Family Structure



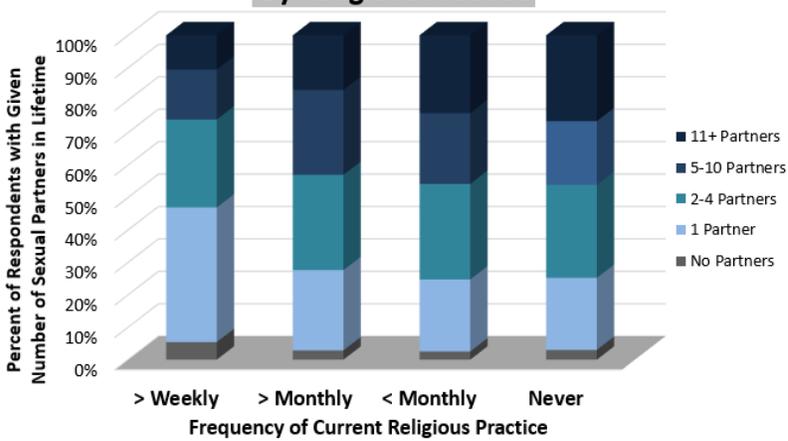
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

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 (weekly vs. never).

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.¹ 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 21,² though the authors found that religion may independently influence men's choice to abstain more strongly than women's.³

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.⁴ 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.⁵

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

¹ 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.

² 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.

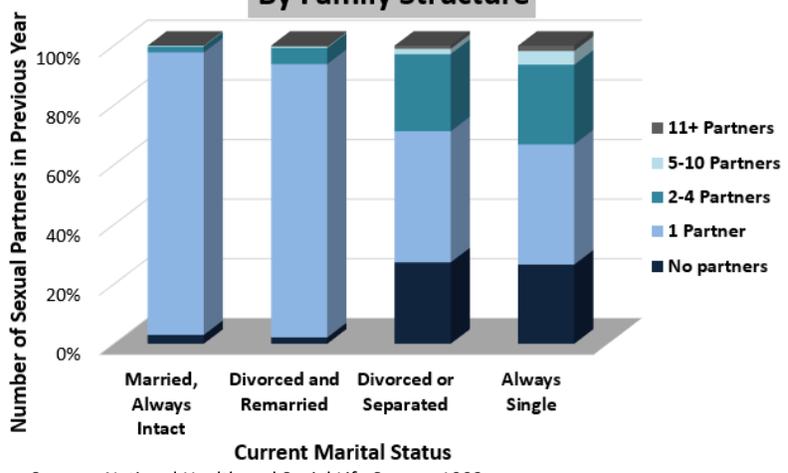
³ Charlotte Paul, Julie Fitzjohn, Jason Eberhart-Phillips, Peter Herbison, and Nigel Dickson, "Sexual Abstinence at Age 21 in New Zealand: the Importance of Religion," *Social Science and Medicine* 51 (2000): 9.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

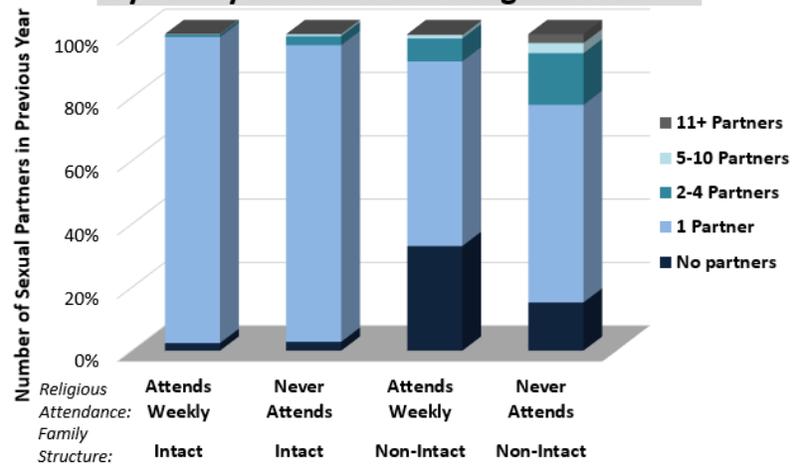
Number of Sexual Partners in Previous Year By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Number of Sexual Partners in Previous Year
By Family Structure



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Number of Sexual Partners in Previous Year
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at adults' number of sexual partners in the previous year at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

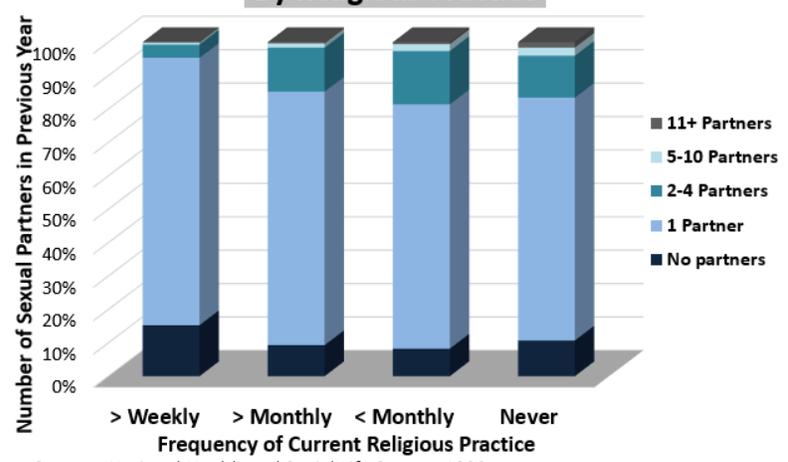
These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (always-intact vs. non-intact and singles) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).*

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 Previous Year
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Number of Sexual Partners in Previous Year 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 sexual partners in the previous year.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages had the largest percentage of monogamous/abstinent persons. Nearly 95 percent of individuals in intact marriages had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 3 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 97.7 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Nearly 92 percent of individuals who had divorced and remarried had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 2.1 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 93.8 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Forty-four percent of those who were divorced or separated had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 27.3 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 71.3 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Over 40 percent of always-single individuals had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 26.6 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 66.9 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons).

Those in always-intact marriages also had the smallest percentage of persons with 11 or more sexual partners in the previous year: zero percent reported 11 or more sexual partners, compared to .3 percent of those who were divorced and remarried, 1.1 percent of those who were divorced or separated, and 1.8 percent of those who were always single.

Religious Practice: The “worships weekly” category contained the largest percentage of monogamous/abstinent persons. Approximately 80 percent of those who worshipped weekly at the time of the survey had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 15.3 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 95.3 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Among those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly, 75.9 percent had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 9.3 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 85.2 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons); among those who never worshipped, 72.7 percent had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 10.7 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 83.4 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons); and among those who worshipped less than monthly, 73.1 percent had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 8.2 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 81.4 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons).

Those who worshipped weekly also had the smallest percentage of persons with 11 or more sexual partners in the previous year: .1 percent had 11 or more sexual partners, compared to .4 percent of those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly, .6 percent of those who worshipped less than monthly, and 1.6 percent of those who never worshipped.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: The category of those who worshipped weekly and were in intact marriages contained the largest percentage of monogamous/

abstinent persons. Nearly 97 percent of those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 2.4 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 99.1 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Approximately 94 percent of those in intact marriages who never worshipped had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 2.8 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 96.5 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Just over 58 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who worshipped weekly had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 33.1 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 91.4 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons). Approximately 62 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped had only one sexual partner in the previous year, and 15.2 percent had no sexual partners (a combined 77.7 percent of monogamous/abstinent persons).

Those in intact marriages (among those who worshipped weekly and those who never worshipped) reported that zero percent had 11 or more sexual partners in the previous year. A similarly small percentage (.3 percent) of those in non-intact family structures and singles who worship weekly reported 11 or more sexual partners in the previous year. Approximately 3 percent of those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped reported 11 or more sexual partners in the previous year.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Analysis of the National Survey of Family Growth Cycle IV showed that among sexually active women aged 15 to 44, .4 percent of those who were married had had two or more sexual partners in the previous three months, compared to 7.9 percent of always-single women and 9.5 percent of women who were divorced or separated. Approximately 3 percent of religiously affiliated women had had two or more sexual partners in the previous three months, compared to 8.7 percent of women who were religiously unaffiliated.¹ Multivariate analysis showed that among always-single and divorced or separated white women, religious nonaffiliation is predictive of having multiple sexual partners in the past three months, whereas among always-single and divorced or separated black women, less than monthly worship is predictive of multiple sexual partners in the past three months.²

Analysis of over 8,000 14- to 22-year-olds in the 1992 National Health Interview Survey and Youth Risk Behavior Survey showed that married males and females were significantly less likely to have had multiple sexual partners in the past three months than always-single males and females.³

Among females in a survey of approximately 200 students at a large southeastern university (over 60 percent of whom were female and most of whom were Caucasian), strength of religious conviction (a composite variable that included strength of belief in God and belief in

¹ Stuart N. Seidmati, William D. Mosfieri, and Sevgi O. Aral, "Women with Multiple Sexual Partners: United States, 1988," *American Journal of Public Health* 82, no. 10 (1992): 1390.

² Stuart N. Seidmati, William D. Mosfieri, and Sevgi O. Aral, "Women with Multiple Sexual Partners: United States, 1988," *American Journal of Public Health* 82, no. 10 (1992): 1390-1391.

³ John S. Santelli, Nancy D. Brener, Richard Lowry, Amita Bhatt, and Laurie S. Zabin, "Multiple Sexual Partners Among U.S. Adolescents and Young Adults," *Family Planning Perspectives* 30, no. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1998): 273.

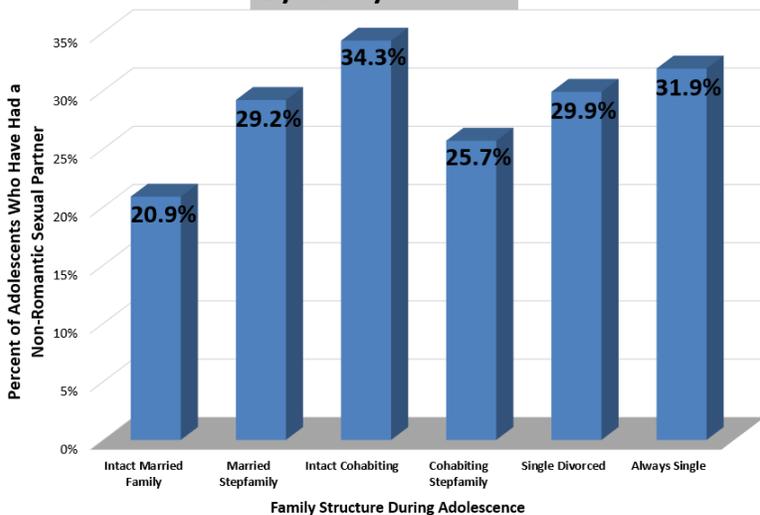
regular religious worship) was inversely related to engaging in risky sexual behavior (a composite variable that included number of sexual partners in the previous year, participation in specific sexual activities, and participation in other, more non-conventional, sexual activities).⁴

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⁴ Ronald L. Poulson, Marion A. Eppler, Tammy N. Sattershite, Karl L. Wuensch, and Lessie A. Bass, "Alcohol consumption, strength of religious beliefs, and risky sexual behavior in college students," *Journal of American College Health* 46, no. 5 (Mar. 1998): 230.

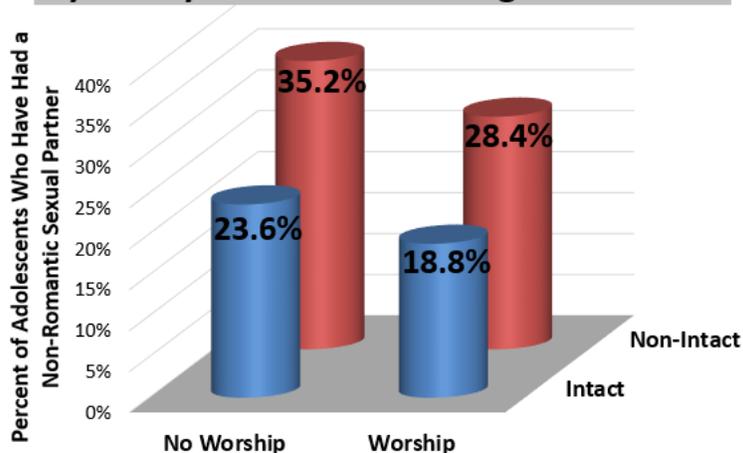
Non-Romantic Sexual Relationships By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Non-Romantic Sexual Relationship
By Family Structure



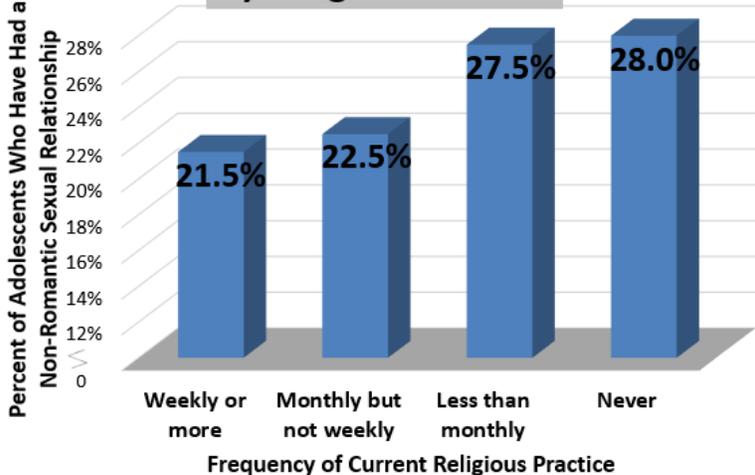
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Wave I

Non-Romantic Sexual Relationship
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Wave I

Non-Romantic Sexual Relationship
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Wave I

This chart looks at the number of children who have had non-romantic sexual relationships at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (intact versus non-intact)* and two sets of religious attendance (worship vs. no worship).**

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The children from intact families that worship.
- The children from intact families that do not worship.
- The children from non-intact families that worship.
- The children from non-intact families that do not worship.

*The intact married family consists of children who live with their two biological parents who are married. Non-intact includes all other family types.

**Those who worship report attending religious services once a week or more often in the past year. Those who do not worship never attended religious services in the past year.

Non-Romantic Sexual Relationships by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Wave 1 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health)¹ found that adolescents aged 13 to 19 in intact families that worshipped weekly or more were least likely to have had a non-romantic sexual relationship.²

Family Structure: Fewer teens in intact married families ever had a non-romantic sexual partner than those in other family types (20.9 percent versus 30.7 percent, respectively). At the time of the survey, 20.9 percent of 13- to 19-year olds in intact married families had engaged in non-romantic sexual intercourse, versus 29.2 percent of teens in married stepfamilies, 34.3 percent of teens in intact cohabiting families, 25.7 percent of teens in cohabiting stepfamilies, 29.9 percent of teens in single divorced families, and 31.9 percent of teens in always-single families.

Religious Practice: The likelihood that an adolescent had a non-romantic sexual relationship decreased as the adolescent's religious involvement increased. Teens who attended religious services weekly or more within the past year were less likely to have had non-romantic sexual intercourse (21.5 percent) than those who attended monthly but not weekly (22.5 percent), less than monthly (27.5 percent), or never (28.0 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Thirteen to nineteen-year-olds in intact worshipping families were least likely to have ever had a non-romantic sexual relationship (18.8 percent). Teens in intact non-worshipping families (23.6 percent) and non-intact worshipping families (28.4 percent) were more likely to have ever had non-romantic sexual intercourse. Teens in non-intact families that did not worship were most likely to have had non-romantic sexual relationships (35.2 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Research suggests that non-romantic sexual relationships or 'hook-ups' "may present greater risks for teens regarding unplanned pregnancy and exposure to sexually transmitted infections ... [and] may be a potential springboard for longer-term problems associated with relationship patterns that lack commitment."³ Wendy Manning and colleagues also found that "teen's normative beliefs have significant effects on teenage non-romantic sexual activity."⁴ An adolescent's family structure impacts the stability and

¹ The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health) is a congressionally-mandated longitudinal survey of American adolescents. Add Health drew a random sample of adolescents aged 13-19 in 1995 from junior high and high schools (Wave I) and has followed them in successive waves in 2001 (Wave III) and 2009 (Wave IV).

² Respondents were asked: "Not counting romantic relationships, have you ever had a sexual relationship with anyone?"

³ Wendy D. Manning, Monica A. Longmore, and Peggy C. Giordano, "Adolescents' involvement in non-romantic sexual activity," *Social Science Research* 34 (2005): 385.

⁴ Wendy D. Manning, Monica A. Longmore, and Peggy C. Giordano, "Adolescents' involvement in non-romantic sexual activity," *Social Science Research* 34 (2005): 385.

durability of the adolescent's romantic relationships.⁵ Heidi Lyons et al. concluded that teens raised by single parents or stepparents were more likely to partake in casual sexual relationships, and were more likely to continue this behavior into adulthood.⁶ Examining retrospective data for 10,847 U.S. women, Robert Quinlan found that divorce/separation between birth and age 5 predicted early first sexual intercourse and first pregnancy, and shorter duration of first marriage.⁷ Teens from non-intact families were more likely to have sexual intercourse earlier and more frequently than teens in intact families.⁸

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⁵ Shannon Cavanagh, "Family Structure History and Adolescent Romance," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 70 (2008): 698-714.

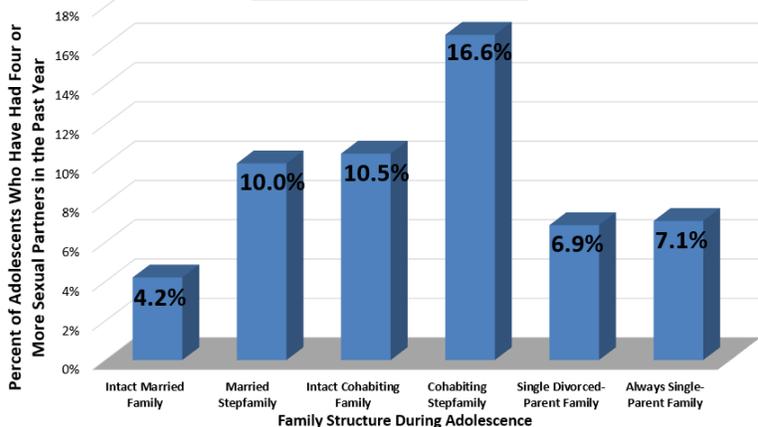
⁶ Heidi Lyons, Wendy Manning, Peggy Giordano, and Monica Longmore, "Predictors of Heterosexual Casual Sex Among Young Adults," *National Institute of Health* 42(2013) available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3888028/pdf/nihms498099.pdf>.

⁷ Robert J. Quinlin, "Father Absence, Parental Care, and Female Reproductive Development," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 24 (2003): 376-390.

⁸ Samuel W. Sturgeon, "The Relationship Between Family Structure and Adolescent Sexual Activity," (November 2008) available at http://www.familyfacts.org/featuredfinding/ff_01.pdf.

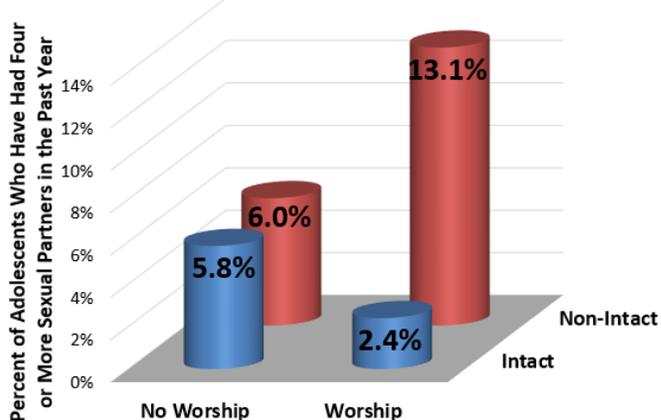
Adolescents Who Have Had Four or More Sexual Partners By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adolescents Who Have Had Four or More Sexual Partners
By Family Structure



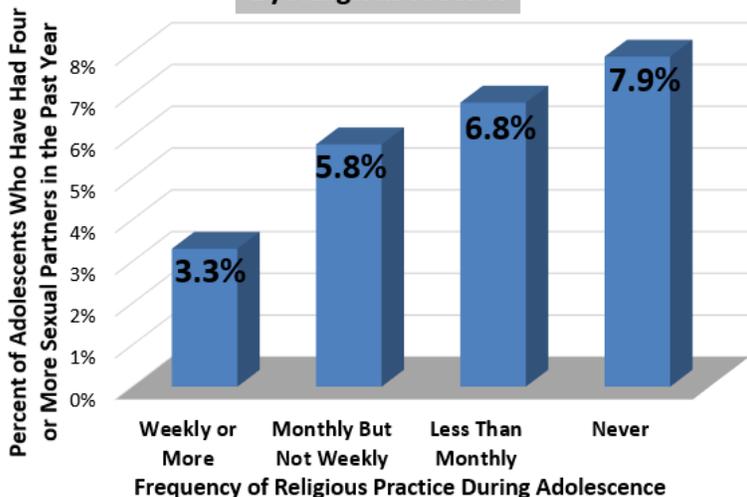
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave I

Adolescents Who Have Had Four or More Sexual Partners
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave I

Adolescents Who Have Had Four or More Sexual Partners
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave I

This chart looks at the number of adolescents who have had four or more sexual partners in the past year, at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (intact versus non-intact) and two sets of religious attendance (worship vs. no worship).***

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

The children from intact families that worship.

The children from intact families that do not worship.

The children from non-intact families that worship.

The children from non-intact families that do not worship.

**The intact married family consists of children who live with their two biological parents who are married. Non-intact includes all other family types.*

***Those who worship report attending religious services once a week or more often in the past year. Those who do not worship never attended religious services in the past year.*

Adolescents Who Have Had Four or More Sexual Partners by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adolescents (aged 13 to 19) raised in an intact family that attended religious services weekly or more were least likely to have had four or more sexual partners in the past year, according to the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health.¹

Family Structure: Adolescents raised in intact married families were least likely to have had four or more sexual partners in the past year (5.9 percent). Teens raised in married stepfamilies were more likely to have had four or more sexual partners (9.9 percent), as were those in intact cohabiting families (11.7 percent), single-divorced-parent families (11.9 percent), and cohabiting stepfamilies (15.8 percent). Comparatively, adolescents raised in cohabiting stepfamilies were more than twice as likely as those raised in intact married families to have had four or more sexual partners (15.8 percent versus 5.9 percent, respectively).

Religious Practice: Thirteen-to-nineteen-year-olds who attended religious services weekly or more were least likely to have had four or more sexual partners in the past year (6.3 percent). Adolescents who never attended church and adolescents who attended less than once a week were more likely to have four or more sexual partners: there was almost no statistical difference between the two (8.8 percent versus 8.9 percent respectively).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Adolescents were least likely to have four or more sexual partners in the past year when raised in intact worshipping families (4.4 percent). Teens raised in intact non-worshipping families were more likely to have four or more sexual partners (5.6 percent), as were those in non-intact worshipping families (11.3 percent) and non-intact non-worshipping families (14 percent). Comparatively, those from non-intact non-worshipping families were more than three times as likely to have four or more sexual partners as those raised in an intact worshipping family (14 percent versus 4.4 percent respectively).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Research shows that adolescent girls living in intact married families have the fewest number of sexual partners prior to marriage of any family structure (on average 0.71 sexual partners).² Research also shows that adolescents from intact married families have the fewest number of sexual partners, principally due to the effect of intact family structure on delaying sexual debut.³

¹The data come from Wave 1 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health). Respondents were asked to respond to the question "Since January 1, with how many people in total have you had a sexual relationship?" Their answer choices were to give a specific number or to answer "refused," "legitimate skip," "don't know," or "not applicable."

² Patrick F. Fagan, "Family Structure and Sexual Intercourse Partners--Adolescent Girls." *MARRI*, Available at <http://marri.us/get.cfm?i=MA08E04>

³ Samuel W. Sturgeon, "The Relationship between Family Structure and Adolescent Sexual Activity" *The Heritage Foundation* (November 2008): 13. Available at http://www.familyfacts.org/featuredfinding/ff_01.pdf.

Religious worship also plays a role in premarital sexual activity. According to the Relationships in America Survey, those who are married and attending religious service weekly are 31 percent less likely to have had premarital sex than those who are married and have never attended religious service.⁴

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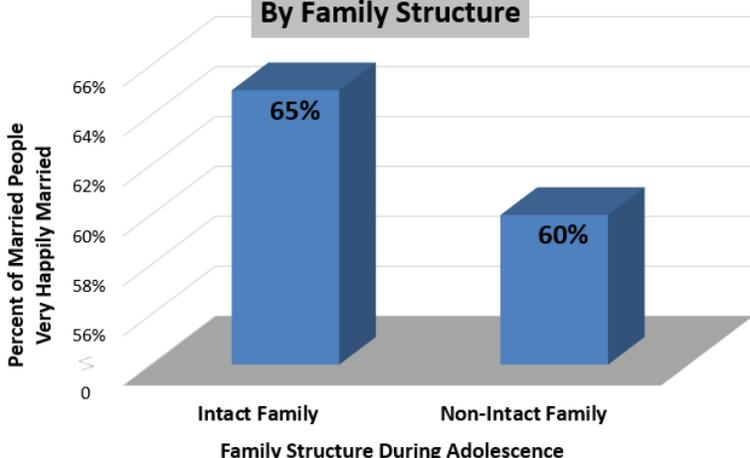
⁴ The Austin Institute of the Study of Family and Culture, "Relationships in America Survey," *The Austin Institute of the Study of Family and Culture*, (2014) <http://relationshipsinafrica.com/relationships-and-sex/how-common-is-premarital-sex>.



Marriage and Sexual Fidelity

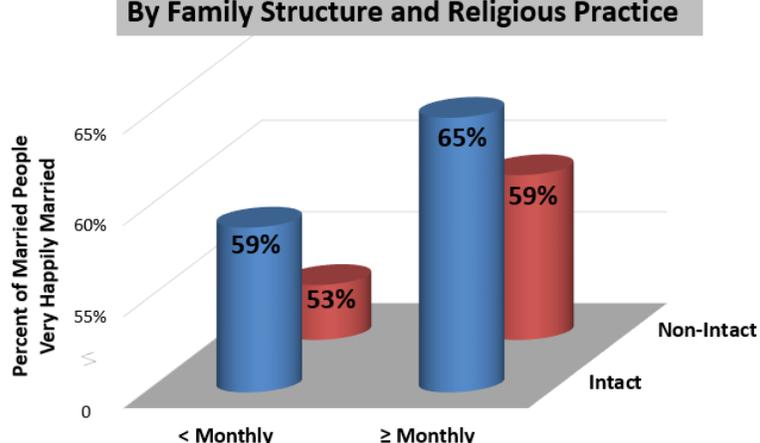
Marital Happiness By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Very Happily Married
By Family Structure**



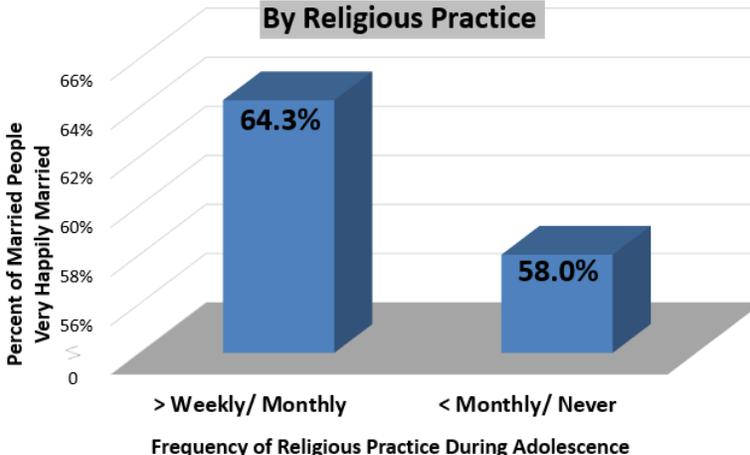
Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006

**Very Happily Married
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006

**Very Happily Married
By Religious Practice**



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006

This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

Marital Happiness by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the 1972-2006 General Social Survey, 65 percent of married adults who lived in an intact family as adolescents were very happy with their current marriage, compared to 60 percent of married adults who lived in a non-intact family.

Religious Practice: The General Social Survey showed that 64.3 percent of married adults who attended religious services at least monthly as adolescents were very happy with their current marriage, compared to 58 percent of married adults who attended worship less than monthly as adolescents.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: The 1972-2006 General Social Survey indicated that 65 percent of married adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in intact families as adolescents were very happy with their current marriage, compared to 53 percent of married adults who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in non-intact families as adolescents. In between were those married adults who had attended religious services at least monthly but lived in non-intact families (59 percent) and those who lived in intact families but attended religious services less than monthly (also 59 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Paul Amato and Alan Booth of the Pennsylvania State University reported that strong parental religiosity led to fewer instances of parental marital discord and “that parents’ marital quality has a causal impact on offspring’s marital quality.”¹

W. Bradford Wilcox also found that husbands who believed strongly in religious attendance and the importance of intact families had wives who reported high levels of marital happiness.²

The data indicate that the benefits of frequent religious attendance and the intactness of parents’ marriages will positively affect marital happiness in adulthood.

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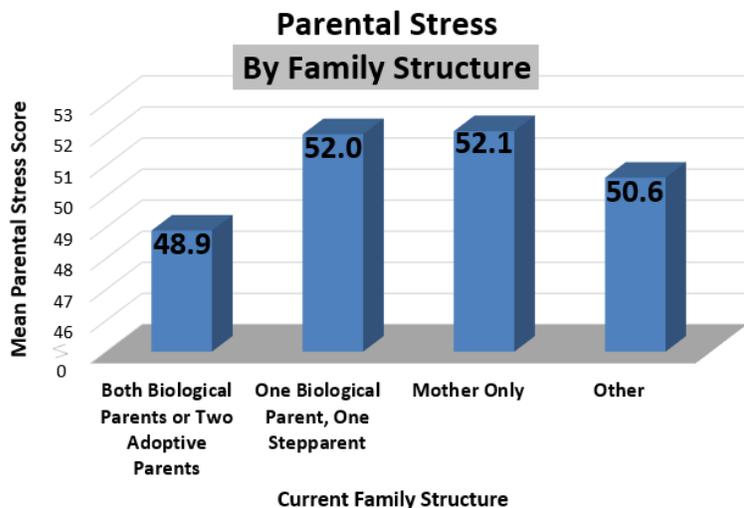
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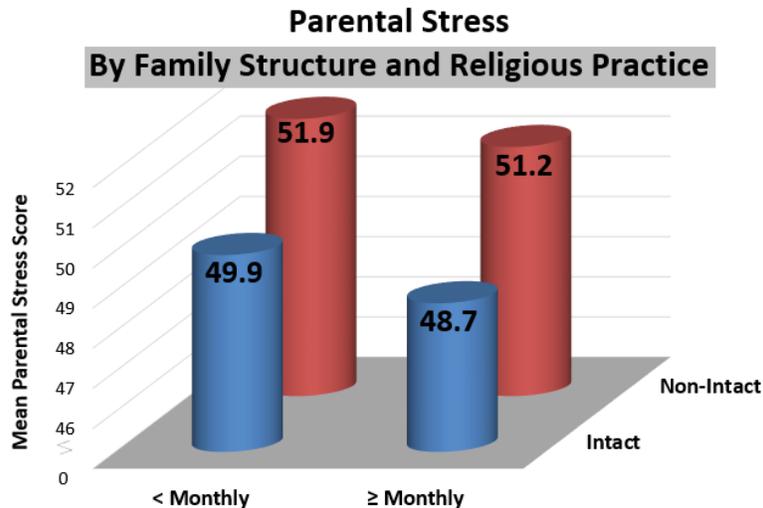
¹ Paul R. Amato and Alan Booth, “The Legacy of Parents’ Marital Discord: Consequences for Children’s Marital Quality,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 81 (2001): 627-638.

² W. Bradford Wilcox, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 178, 186. This finding is from www.familyfacts.org.

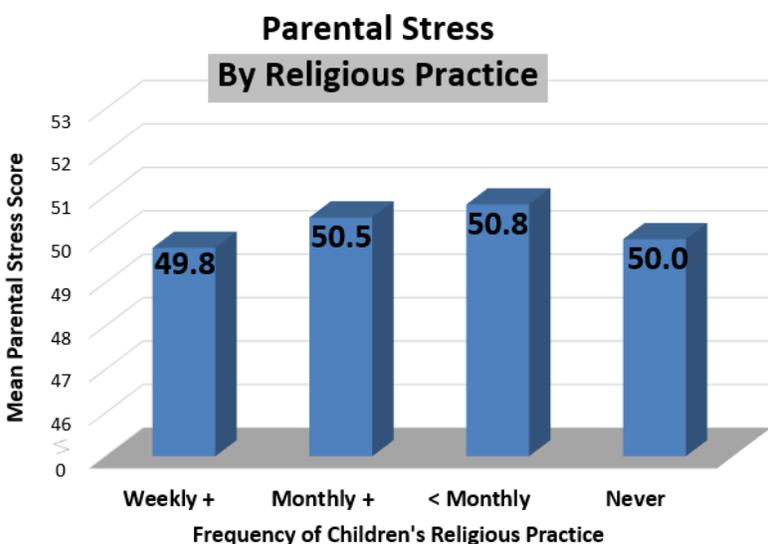
Parental Stress By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Children's Health, Adolescents Aged 6-17.



Source: National Survey of Children's Health, Adolescents Aged 6-17.



Source: National Survey of Children's Health, Adolescents Aged 6-17.

This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

These charts depict the mean parental stress scores of parents with children aged 6 to 17, correlated with children's religious attendance and family structure.

Parental Stress by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the National Survey of Children's Health, biological parents and adoptive parents who lived together reported less parenting stress (48.9) than single mothers (52.1). In between were parents who lived within another family structure (50.6)¹ and stepfamilies (52.0).²

Religious Practice: Based on the National Survey of Children's Health, parents whose children attended religious services at least weekly scored lower on the parenting stress scale (49.8) than those who worshipped less than once a month (50.8). In between were those who worshipped one to three times a month (50.5) and those who never attended religious services (50).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Parents in intact families or adoptive families whose children worshipped at least monthly had a lower parenting stress score (48.7) than those who were single parents or part of a reconstituted family and whose children worshipped less than monthly (51.9). In between were those who lived in intact families and worshipped less than monthly (49.9) and those who lived in non-intact families who worshipped at least monthly (51.2). The data were taken from the National Survey of Children's Health.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Paul Amato of the Pennsylvania State University reported that "adults and children from divorced families, as a group, score lower than their counterparts in married-couple families on a variety of indicators of well-being," including happiness, self-conceptions, and psychological distress.³

John Cairney of the University of Toronto and colleagues also found that single mothers reported "higher levels of chronic stress" than married mothers did.⁴

Rukmalie Jayakody and Dawn Stauffer of the Pennsylvania State University found that, compared to married mothers, single mothers exhibit a significantly higher rate of psychiatric disorders, the most common being depression.⁵

¹ Categories covered under "other" include children with father only, foster parent, and children living with grandparent or other relatives.

² Most of the parents in the "biological parent and a stepparent" category are married.

³ Paul R. Amato, "The Consequence of Divorce for Adults and Children," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol. 62 (2000): 1269-1287.

⁴ John Cairney, et al., "Stress, Social Support, and Depression in Single and Married Mothers," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, vol. 38 (2003): 442-449.

⁵ Rukmalie Jayakody and Dawn Stauffer, "Mental Health Problems among Single Mothers: Implications for Work and Welfare Reform," *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 56 (2000): 617-634.

As the evidence shows, biological parents who live together are less stressed and much healthier than their single and divorced counterparts.

Though little work has been done on the connection between children's religious attendance and parenting stress, several other studies support a positive correlation between religious attendance and stress relief. David Schlundt of Vanderbilt University and colleagues reported a significant correlation between religious attendance and better mental health.⁶

In an analysis of the Canadian Community Health Survey, Marilyn Baetz of the University of Saskatchewan and colleagues found that frequent religious attendance is associated with lower lifetime depression and fewer psychiatric disorders.⁷

Alexander Moreira-Almeida of the University of São Paulo in Brazil and colleagues also reported that religiousness "usually has a positive association with good mental health."⁸

Marc Musick of the University of Texas at Austin and colleagues found a significant "protective effect of service attendance on mortality."⁹

As the data indicate, parents of families that frequently attend religious services are least likely to be stressed.

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⁶ David Schlundt, et al., "Religious Affiliation, Health Behaviors and Outcomes: Nashville REACH 2010," *American Journal of Health Behavior*, vol. 32 (2008): 714-724.

⁷ Marilyn Baetz, et al., "How Spiritual Values and Worship Attendance Relate to Psychiatric Disorders in the Canadian Population," *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 51 (2006): 654-661.

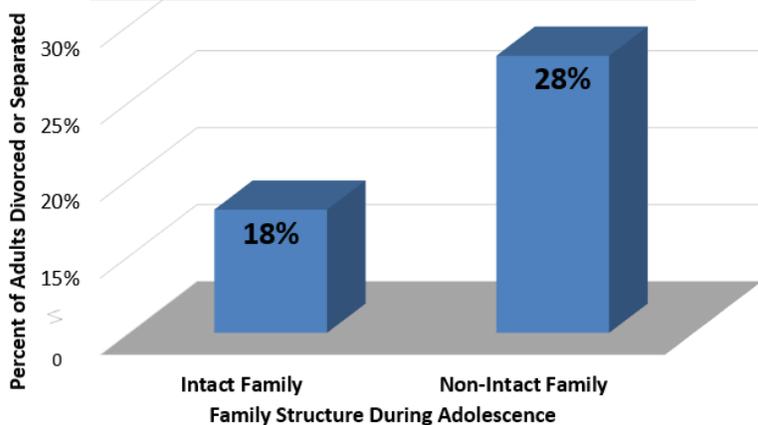
⁸ Alexander Moreira-Almeida, et al., "Religiousness and Mental Health: A Review," *Revista Brasileira de Psiquiatria*, vol. 28 (2006): 242-250.

⁹ Marc A. Musick, et al., "Attendance at Religious Services and Mortality in a National Sample," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol. 45 (2004): 198-213.

Divorce or Separation By Family Structure and Religious Practice During Adolescence

Divorce or Separation

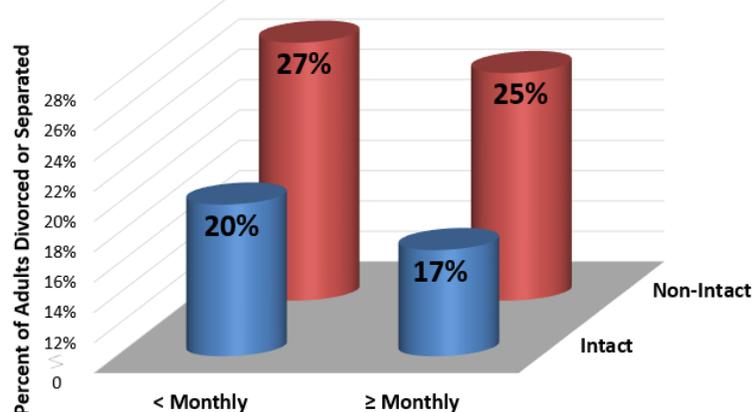
By Family Structure During Adolescence



Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2006

Divorce or Separation

By Family Structure and Religious Practice During Adolescence



Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2006

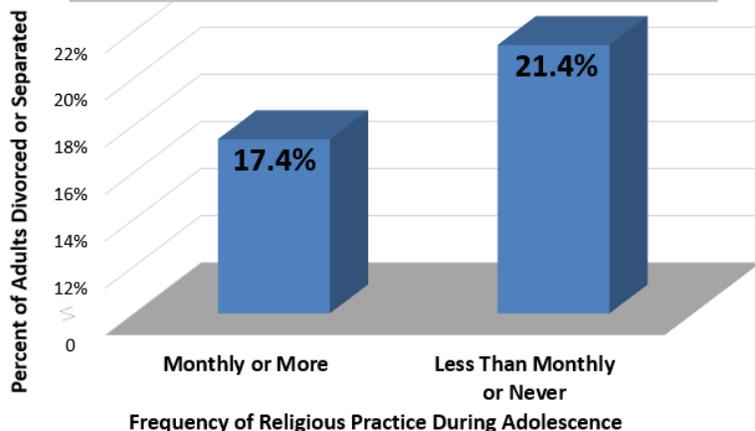
This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

Divorce or Separation

By Religious Practice During Adolescence



Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2006

These charts draw on data collected by the General Social Surveys, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

Divorce or Separation in Adulthood by Family Structure and Religious Practice in Adolescence

Family Structure: Adults who grew up living with both biological parents are less likely ever to be divorced or separated than those who did not. According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 18 percent of adults who lived in an intact family during adolescence had ever been divorced or separated, compared to 28 percent of those who lived in a non-intact family.¹

Religious Practice: Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents were less likely ever to be divorced or separated than those who did not. According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 17.4 percent of adults who worshiped at least monthly as adolescents had been divorced or separated, compared to 21.4 percent of adults who worshiped less frequently.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Adults who frequently attended religious services as adolescents and who grew up living with both biological parents were least likely to have ever divorced or separated. According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), 17 percent of adults who attended religious services at least monthly and lived in an intact family throughout adolescence had ever been divorced or separated, compared to 27 percent of those who attended religious services less than monthly and lived in a non-intact family as adolescents. In between were those who attended religious services at least monthly but lived in a non-intact family (25 percent) and those who lived in an intact family but worshiped less than monthly (20 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies analyzing the association of contemporaneous religious attendance with marital stability corroborate the direction of these findings. Vaughn Call and Tim Heaton of Brigham Young University reported that, compared to other religious elements such as affiliation or strength of beliefs, "attendance has the greatest impact on marital stability." Couples who attend church together weekly have a lower risk of divorce than those who worship less frequently.²

John Wilson and Marc Musick of Duke University also found that "the higher the level of involvement in the social life of the church, the more [a couple's] marriage is valued."³ Similarly, Timothy Clydesdale of the College of New Jersey reported that "nonparticipation in a religious

¹ This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Surveys, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

² Vaughn R. A. Call and Tim B. Heaton, "Religious Influence on Marital Stability," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 36 (1997): 382-392.

³ John Wilson and Marc Musick, "Religion and Marital Dependency," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 35 (1996): 30-40.

worship community was associated significantly with...an increased likelihood of having been divorced."⁴

As the evidence indicates, frequent religious attendance in adolescence and adulthood, reduces the odds of divorce or separation.

A number of studies also indicate the positive effects of growing up in an intact family. Paul Amato of the University of Nebraska found that "adult children of divorced parents have an elevated risk of seeing their own marriages end in divorce."⁵

Pamela Webster of Brown University and colleagues reported that "children of divorce, more than those from any other single-parent family type, express the most doubts about their marital stability (in addition to the greater perceived chances of divorce, they more often report marital trouble even when very happily married). Moreover, among those in less than very happy marriages, children of divorce are more likely than those with any other single-parent history to escalate conflict and reduce communication with their spouse, and those marital interactions are associated with an increased self-reported risk of divorce."⁶

Several studies have analyzed religiosity, childhood family structure, and adult divorce combined. Matthew Bramlett and William Mosher of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that "women whose religion is somewhat or very important are...less likely to experience a breakup of their first marriage than those whose religion is not important" and that women who grew up living with both parents "are less likely to experience the breakup of their first marriage than women who were not raised with two parents throughout childhood."⁷

Examining divorce in the Netherlands, Paul de Graaf of Radboud University Nijmegen and Matthijs Kalmijn of Tilburg University also reported that "religion has a clear negative effect on divorce" and that "the overall effect of a parental divorce is significant and substantial: People who have divorced parents (when they were growing up) have a 1.9 times higher odds of divorce than others."⁸

Religion and an intact family during childhood prove effective in strengthening marriages against the possibility of divorce.

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⁴ Timothy T. Clydesdale, "Family Behaviors among Early U.S. Baby Boomers: Exploring the Effects of Religion and Income Change, 1965-1982," *Social Forces*, vol. 76 (1997): 605-635.

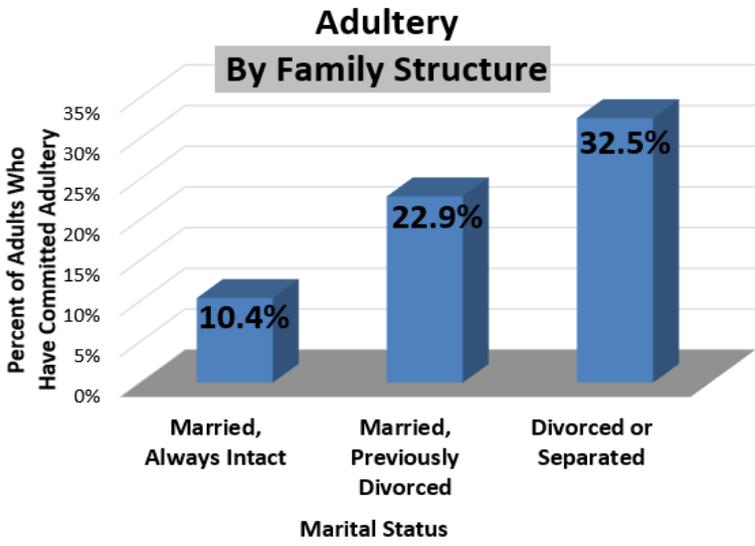
⁵ Paul R. Amato, "Explaining the Intergenerational Transmission of Divorce," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol. 58 (1996): 628-640.

⁶ Pamela S. Webster, et al., "Effects of Childhood Family Background on Adult Marital Quality and Perceived Stability," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 101 (1995): 404-432.

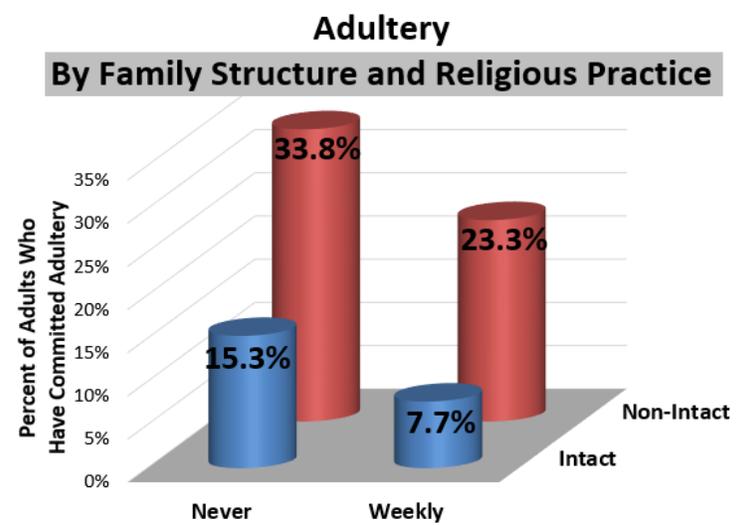
⁷ Matthew D. Bramlett and William D. Mosher, "Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the United States," *Vital and Health Statistics*, series 22 (2002): 1-32.

⁸ Paul de Graaf and Matthijs Kalmijn, "Change and Stability in the Social Determinants of Divorce: A Comparison of Marriage Cohorts in the Netherlands," *European Sociological Review*, vol. 22 (2006): 561-572.

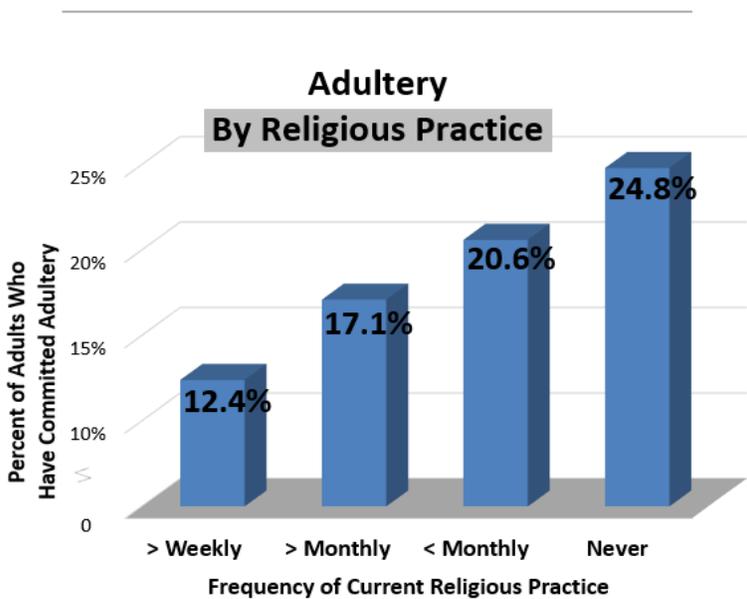
Adultery By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006



Source: General Social Survey, 1972-2006

These charts group the data in four categories, with two different subsets for each of two major variables, frequency of religious attendance (weekly vs. never) and marital status (always intact vs. non-intact).

The always intact subset consists of adults in always-intact marriages. The non-intact subset for this question on adultery is composed of married, previously-divorced adults and divorced or separated adults.

The resultant four categories are 1) always intact marital status with weekly religious attendance; 2) always intact marital status with no religious attendance; 3) non-intact marital status with weekly religious attendance; and 4) non-intact marital status with no religious attendance.

Adultery by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the 1972-1993 General Social Surveys, adults who were married were less likely to have committed adultery than adults who were divorced or separated. Adults in always-intact marriages had the lowest adultery rate (10.4 percent), compared to 22.9 percent of married, previously-divorced adults and 32.5 percent of divorced or separated adults.¹

Religious Practice: Of adults currently or previously married, those who attended religious services once a week or more at the time of the survey were the least likely to have committed adultery. According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), among adults currently or previously married, 12.4 percent who worshiped once a week or more had had sexual relations with someone other than their spouse, followed by 17.1 percent of those who worshiped between one and three times a month, 20.6 percent of those who worshiped less than once a month, and 24.8 percent of those who never attended religious services.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Adults in always-intact marriages who worshiped at least weekly were the least likely of all to have had adulterous sexual relations. According to the General Social Surveys (GSS), adults in always-intact marriages who attended religious services at least weekly were the most likely to be faithful to their spouses, with an adultery rate of 7.7 percent. Adults in always-intact marriages who never attended worship had a 15.3 percent rate of adultery. Among those who were in non-intact relationships, those who worshiped weekly had a 23.3 percent rate of adultery and those who never worshiped had a 33.8 percent rate of adultery.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Amy Burdette of the University of North Carolina and colleagues reported that "frequency of religious attendance is inversely associated with the likelihood of having engaged in infidelity."²

Vaughn Call and Tim Heaton of Brigham Young University found that "of the dimensions of religious experience, attendance has the greatest impact on marital stability."³

Judith Treas of the University of California and Irvine and Deirdre Giesen of Utrecht University also reported that "those who often attended religious services were less likely to have had multiple sex partners in the previous year."⁴

¹ These charts draw on data collected by the General Social Surveys, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

² Amy M. Burdette, Christopher G. Ellison, Darren E. Sherkat, and Kurt A. Gore, "Are There Religious Variations in Marital Infidelity?" *Journal of Family Issues* 28 (2007): 1553-81.

³ Vaughn R. A. Call and Tim B. Heaton, "Religious Influence on Marital Stability," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36 (1997): 382-92.

As the data indicate, the more frequently married adults attend religious services, the less likely they are to be unfaithful to their spouses.

Paul Amato and Denise Previti of Pennsylvania State University reported that infidelity was "the most commonly reported cause of divorce."⁵ This finding follows up a previous study by Paul Amato and Stacy Rogers of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that infidelity was one of the "most consistent predictors of divorce," along with jealousy, drug use, drinking, and spending money foolishly.⁶

Studies indicate that adults in always-intact marriages are less likely to have committed adultery than adults who have divorced.

Social science data shows that always-intact married adults who attend religious services at least weekly are the least likely to have committed adultery. Mark Whisman of the University of Colorado at Boulder and colleagues reported that infidelity was "negatively associated with" religiosity and "was predicted by greater marital dissatisfaction."⁷

Paul Amato and Stacy Rogers of the Pennsylvania State University also found that "frequent church attendance appears to lower the likelihood of divorce" and that infidelity was one of the "most consistent predictors of divorce," along with jealousy, drug use, drinking, and spending money foolishly.⁸

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⁴ Judith Treas and Deirdre Giesen, "Sexual Infidelity among Married and Cohabiting Americans," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62 (2000): 48-60.

⁵ Paul R. Amato and Denise Previti, "People's Reasons for Divorcing: Gender, Social Class, the Life Course, and Adjustment," *Journal of Family Issues* 24 (2003): 602-26.

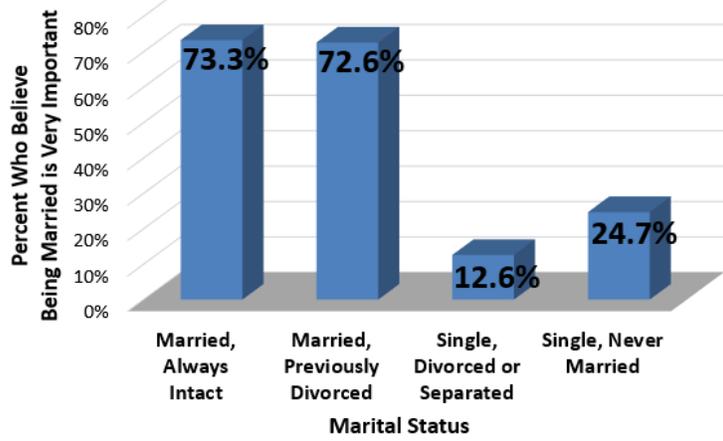
⁶ Paul R. Amato and Stacy J. Rogers, "A Longitudinal Study of Marital Problems and Subsequent Divorce," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59 (1997): 612-24.

⁷ Mark A. Whisman, Kristina Koop Gordon, and Yael Chatav, "Predicting Sexual Infidelity in a Population-Based Sample of Married Individuals," *Journal of Family Psychology* 21 (2007): 320-24.

⁸ Paul R. Amato and Stacy J. Rogers, "A Longitudinal Study of Marital Problems and Subsequent Divorce," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59 (1997): 612-24.

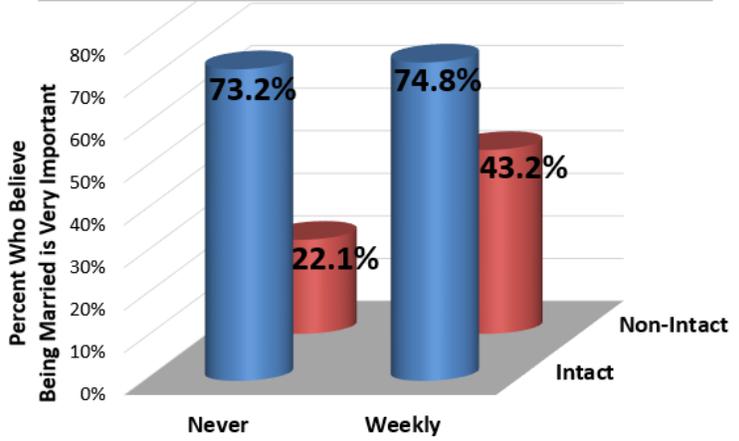
The Importance of Marriage By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Being Married is Very Important
By Family Structure**



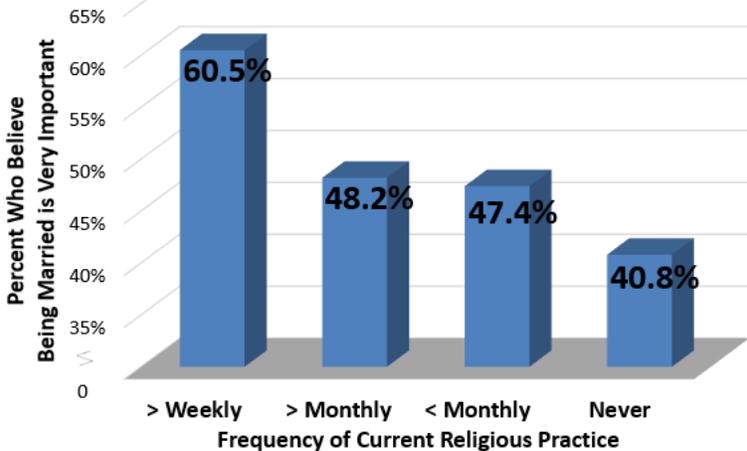
Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2006

**Being Married is Very Important
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2006

**Being Married is Very Important
By Religious Practice**



Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2006

These charts take the national data on “the personal importance of being married” and splits it into four quadrants. It then illustrates the poles of each quadrant to highlight the difference in outcomes that correlate with the different poles of marital status and religious attendance.

The starting points are demographics that mark two major social institutions: marital status and religious attendance. Marital status is divided further into two groups: always-intact marriages and all other marital status categories.* Religious attendance is also divided into two groups: high and low worship of which the two poles “weekly attendance” and “never attends” are subcategories used in this chart.

The resultant four poles are 1) Americans in always-intact marriages who worship weekly; 2) Americans in always-intact marriages who never worship; 3) Americans in all other marital status categories who worship weekly; and 4) Americans in all other marital status categories who never worship.

* The “all other marital status categories” group consists of adults who are “married, previously divorced,” “single, divorced or separated,” and “single, never married.”

The Importance of Marriage by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 73.3 percent of always-intact married adults reported that being married was either very important to them or one of the most important values they held, followed by 72.6 percent of married, previously-divorced adults, 24.7 percent of single, never-married adults, and 12.6 percent of single, divorced or separated adults.¹

Religious Practice: According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 60.5 percent of adults who worshiped at least weekly reported that being married was either very important to them or one of the most important values they held, followed by 48.2 percent of those who worshiped between one and three times a month, 47.4 percent of those who attended religious services less than once a month, and 40.8 percent of those who never attended religious services.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 74.8 percent of adults in always-intact marriages who attended religious services at least weekly reported that being married was either very important to them or one of the most important values they held, followed by 73.2 percent of adults in always-intact marriages who never attended worship, 43.2 percent of all other adults who worshiped at least weekly, and 22.1 percent of all other adults who never attended religious services.

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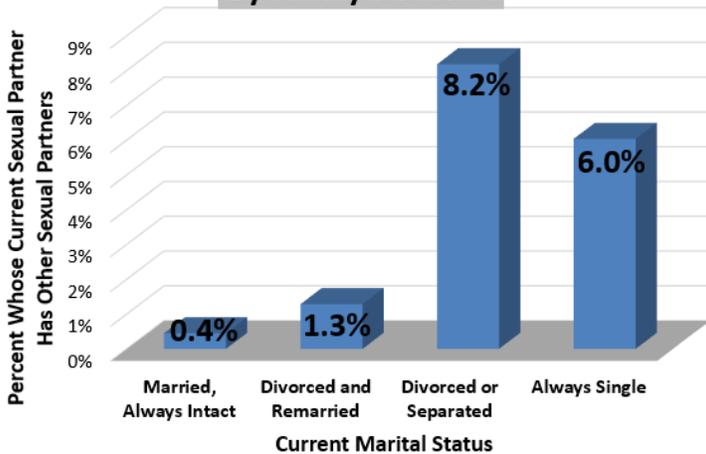
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¹ These charts draw on data collected by the General Social Surveys, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

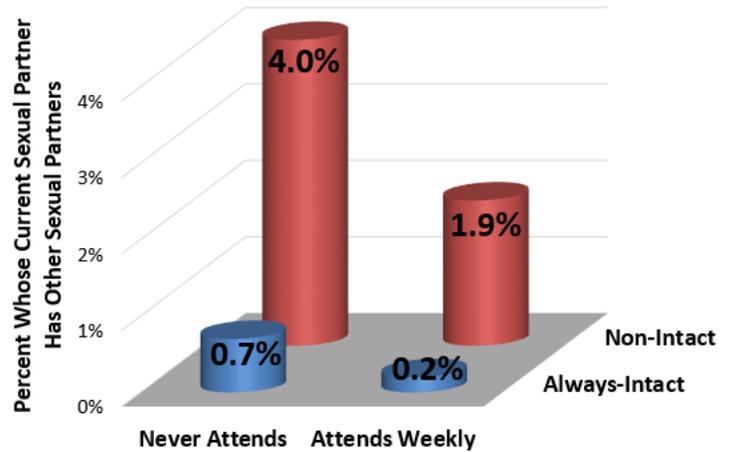
Current Sexual Partner Has Other Sexual Partners By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Current Sexual Partner Has Other Sexual Partners
By Family Structure



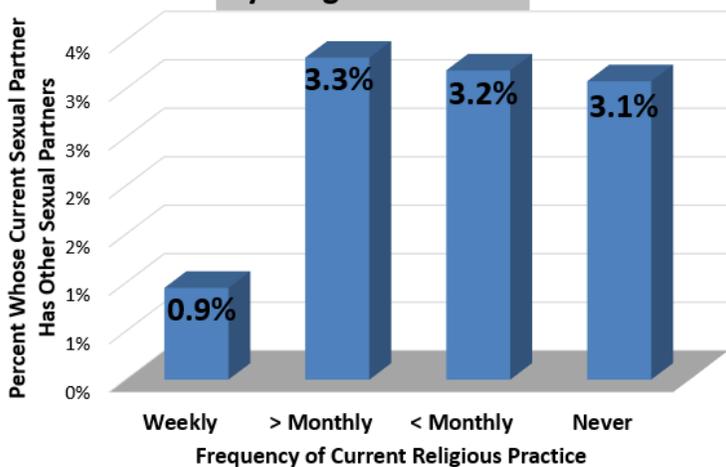
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Current Sexual Partner Has Other Sexual Partners
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Current Sexual Partner Has Other Sexual Partners
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at the number of adults whose current sexual partner also had other sexual partners at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)

Current Sexual Partner Has Other Sexual Partners by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were least likely to have a current sexual partner who had other concurrent sexual partners, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were least likely to have a current sexual partner who had other concurrent sexual partners (4 percent). This was more prevalent in non-intact family structures and among singles: 1.3 percent of those who were divorced or remarried had a sexual partner who had other concurrent sexual partners; 6 percent of those who were always single had a sexual partner who had other concurrent sexual partners; and 8.2 percent of those who were divorced or separated had a sexual partner who had other concurrent sexual partners.

Religious Practice: Those who worshiped weekly were least likely to have a current sexual partner who had other concurrent sexual partners (.9 percent), followed by those who never worshiped (3.1 percent), those who worshiped less than monthly (3.2 percent), and those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly (3.3 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were the least likely to have a current sexual partner who had other concurrent sexual partners (.2 percent), followed by those in intact marriages who never worshiped (.7 percent), those in non-intact family structures or who were single who worshiped weekly (1.9 percent), and those in non-intact family structures or who were single who never worshiped (4 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: A survey of 10,868 adolescent females from a state in the Midwest found that adolescents whose parents were involved in their lives, were aware of their child's activities, and themselves disapproved of teenage sexual activity had fewer sexual partners than other adolescents.¹

Analysis of data on 8,450 males and females aged 14 to 22 from the 1992 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found a strong association between alcohol use and having multiple sexual partners. Logistic regression analyses showed that alcohol use and a younger age at first intercourse were associated with greater odds that male and female respondents had two or more partners in the three months prior to the survey.²

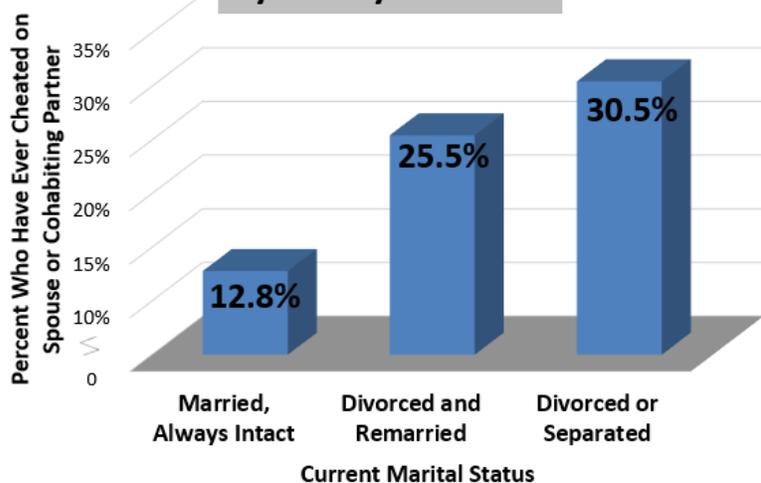
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

¹ Tom Luster and Stephen A. Small, "Sexual Abuse History and Number of Sex Partners Among Female Adolescents," *Journal of Family Planning Perspectives* 29, no. 5 (October 1997): 204-211.

² John S. Santelli, Nancy D. Brener, Richard Lowry, Amita Bhatt and Laurie S. Zabin, "Multiple Sexual Partners Among U.S. Adolescents and Young Adults," *Journal of Family Planning Perspectives* 30, no. 6 (November/December 1998): 271-275.

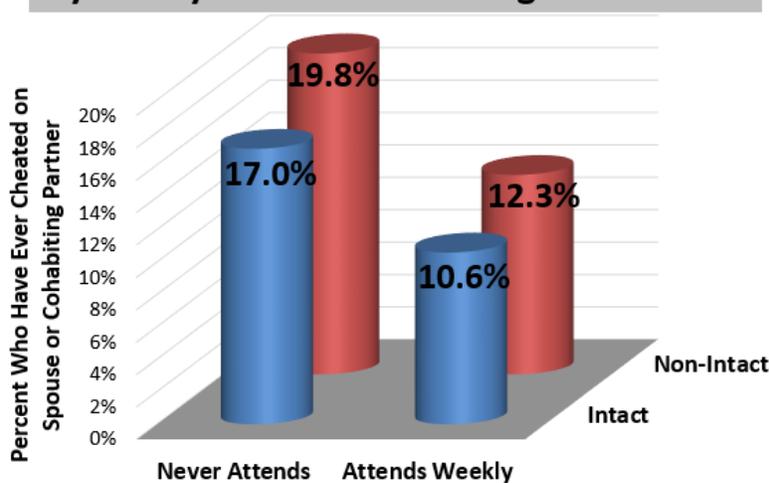
Ever Cheated on Spouse or Cohabiting Partner By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Cheated on Spouse or Partner
By Family Structure**



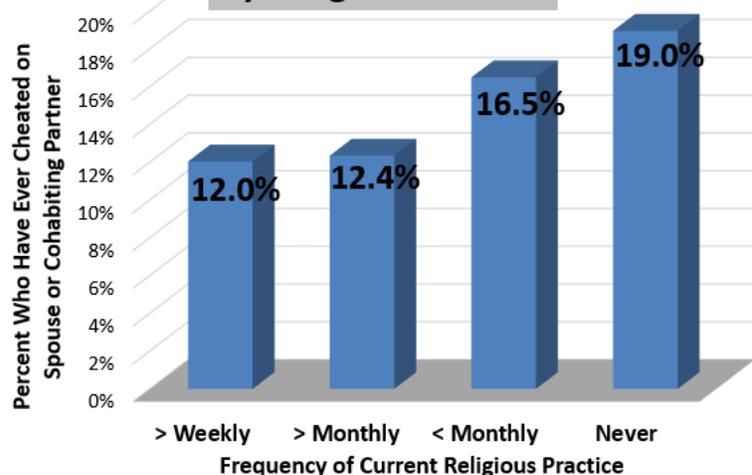
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

**Cheated on Spouse or Partner
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

**Cheated on Spouse or Partner
By Religious Practice**



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at the number of adults who have ever cheated on a spouse or cohabiting partner at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)*

Ever Cheated on Spouse or Cohabiting Partner by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were least likely to have ever cheated on their spouse or cohabiting partner, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were least likely to have ever cheated on their spouse or cohabiting partner (12.8 percent). A history of infidelity was more prevalent among those in non-intact family structures and among singles: 25.5 percent of those who were divorced and remarried ever cheated on their spouse or cohabiting partner, and 30.5 percent of those who were divorced or separated had ever been unfaithful.

Religious Practice: Religious attendance was inversely related to cheating on one's spouse or cohabiting partner. Those who worshiped weekly were least likely to have ever been unfaithful (12 percent), followed by those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly (12.4 percent), those who worshiped less than monthly (16.5 percent), and those who never worshiped (19 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were the least likely to have ever cheated on a spouse or cohabiting partner (10.6 percent), followed by those in non-intact family structures or who were single and worshiped weekly (12.3 percent). Those in intact marriages who never worshiped (17 percent) and those in non-intact family structures or who were single and never worshiped (19.8 percent) were more likely to have cheated on their spouse or cohabiting partner.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Data from the 1991- 2004 General Social Survey found that both attending church and holding to Biblical beliefs were associated with lower odds of marital infidelity,¹ and another study found that individuals who said they were in "very happy" marriages exhibited strong religious behavior.²

A different analysis of nationally representative survey data found higher likelihood of sexual infidelity among married or cohabiting couples with "stronger sexual interests, more permissive sexual values, lower subjective satisfaction with their union, weaker network ties to partner, and greater sexual opportunities."³

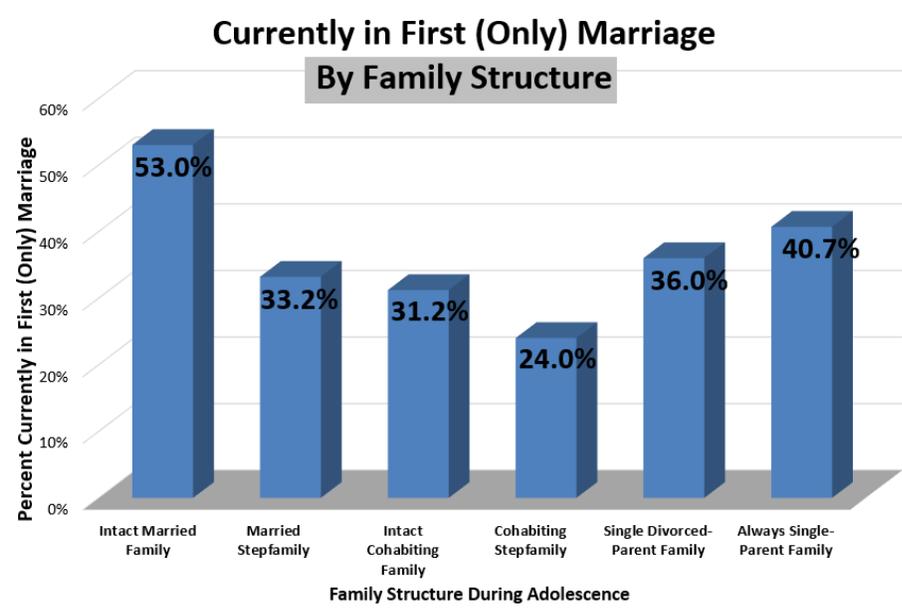
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai

¹ Amy Burdette, Christopher Ellison, Darren Sherkat and Kurt Gore, "Are There Religious Variations in Marital Infidelity?" *Journal of Family Issues* 28, no. 12 (December 2007): 1553-1581.

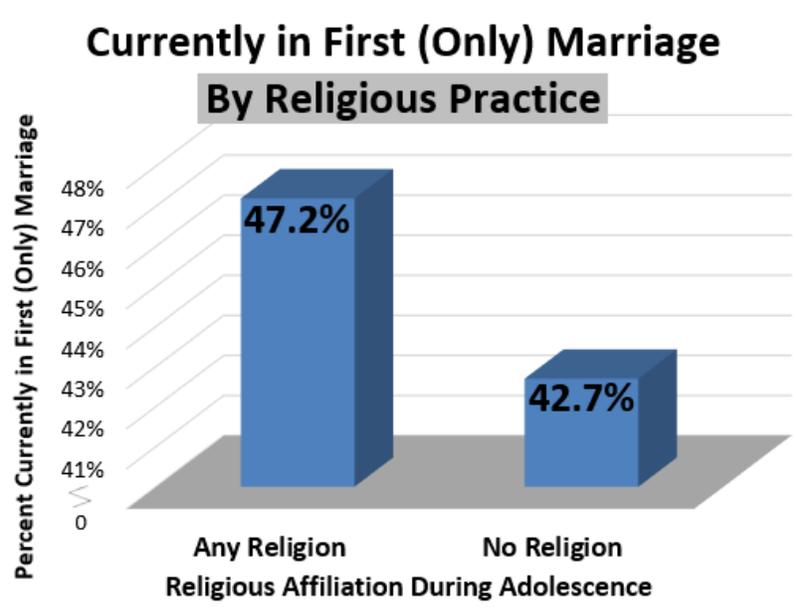
² David Atkins, Donald Baucom, and Neil Jacobson, "Understanding Infidelity: Correlates in a National Sample," *Journal of Family Psychology* 15, no. 4 (December 2001): 742.

³ Judith Treas and Deirdre Giesen, "Sexual Infidelity Among Married and Cohabiting Americans," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62, no.1 (February 2000): 48-60.

Currently in First (Only) Marriage By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2002



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2002

Currently in First (Only) Marriage by Family Structure and Religious Practice

The 2002 cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth showed that, among adults aged 38 to 44,¹ those raised in an intact married family were most likely to be in their first (only) marriage.

Family Structure: Fifty-three percent of ever-married women aged 38 to 44 who grew up in an intact married family were still in their first and only marriage at the time of the survey. They were followed by those raised by an always single parent (40.7 percent), those raised by a single divorced parent (36 percent), those in a married stepfamily (33.2 percent), and those in an intact cohabiting family (31.9 percent). Women raised in a cohabiting stepfamily were least likely (24 percent) to be in their first marriage.

Religious Practice: At the time of the survey, more women raised in any religious tradition were in their first (only) marriage (47.2 percent) than women who were raised with no religion (42.7 percent). However this is a particularly weak measure of religion and the small difference between the two is not surprising.

Related Insights from Other Studies: One 1992 analysis found that respondents from non-divorced parent families and from intact families (with both their biological mother and father) were more likely than those from divorced-parent families to “agree that it is better to marry, that marriage is for a lifetime, and that children are better off with their biological parents.”²

Another study from the nineties analyzing married couples found that “[r]eligiosity inheritance is enhanced if offspring are raised by both biological parents who have high marital happiness,” whereas children raised in stepfamilies tended as adults to be less religious.³ A 1992 analysis of a longitudinal study of white mothers in the Detroit area and their children indicated that having only cohabited over the previous five years had a pronounced negative effect on religious attendance, whereas marriage without prior cohabitation had a positive effect on religious attendance.

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¹ This age band was selected because tracking family structure is difficult, but the arrangement of the family is more settled (in aggregate, on a national level) around ages 38 to 44.

² Katherine Trent and Scott J. South, "Sociodemographic Status, Parental Background, Childhood Family Structure, and Attitudes toward Family Formation," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 54, no. 2 (1992): 427-439.

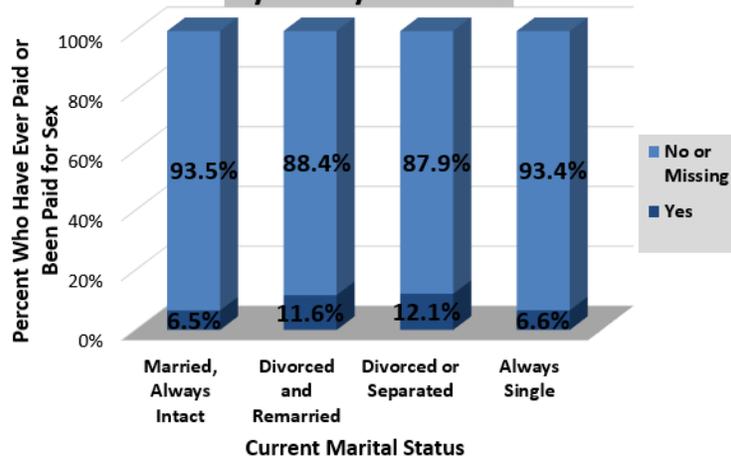
³ S.M. Myers, "An interactive model of religiosity inheritance: The importance of family context," *American Sociological Review* 61 (1996): 858-866.



Sexual Risks

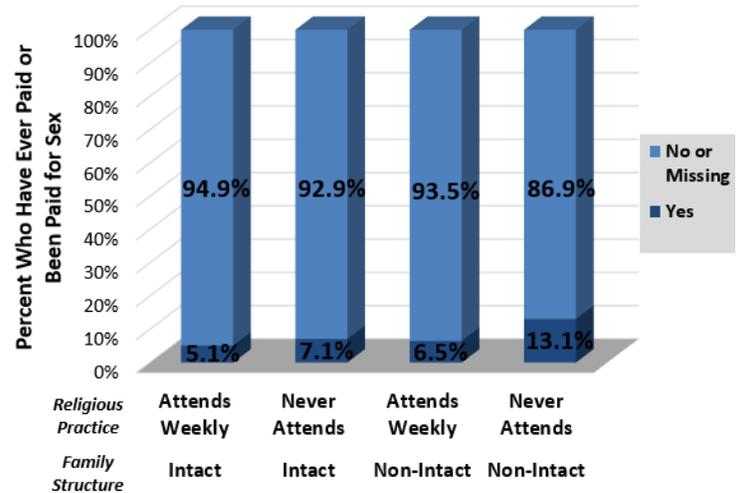
Has Ever Paid or Been Paid for Sex By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Ever Paid or Been Paid for Sex
By Family Structure**



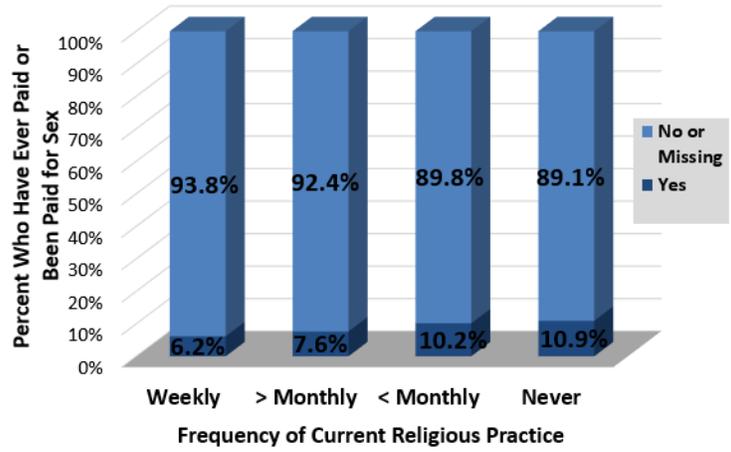
National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

**Ever Paid or Been Paid for Sex
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

**Ever Paid or Been Paid for Sex
By Religious Practice**



National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at adults who have ever paid or been paid for sex at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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 (weekly vs. never).*

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.)*

Has Ever Paid or Been Paid for Sex 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 were least likely to have ever paid or been paid for sex.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were least likely to have ever paid or been paid for sex (6.5 percent), followed by those who were always single (6.6 percent), those who were divorced and remarried (11.6 percent), and those who were divorced or separated (12.1 percent).

Religious Practice: Those who worshipped weekly at the time of the survey were least likely to have ever paid or been paid for sex (6.2 percent), followed by those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly (7.6 percent), those who worshipped less than monthly (10.2 percent), and those who never worshipped (10.9 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly were the least likely to have ever paid or been paid for sex (5.1 percent). Those in non-intact family structures and singles who worshipped weekly (6.5 percent) and those in intact marriages who never worshipped (7.1 percent) were slightly more likely to have ever paid or been paid for sex; however, those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped were much more likely to have done so (13.1 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Of a sample of over 400 Hispanic migrant workers in North Carolina, most of whom were Mexican, Honduran, and Salvadorian, those who were married and lived with their spouses were significantly less likely to have relations with a prostitute (5 percent) than single men (46 percent) or married men whose wives had remained in their country of origin (40 percent).¹

A study of HIV-1 prevalence among east African trucking company workers found that, of the cohort, a smaller percentage of Muslims had ever had relations with a prostitute (48 percent) than adherents to other religions (58 percent).²

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

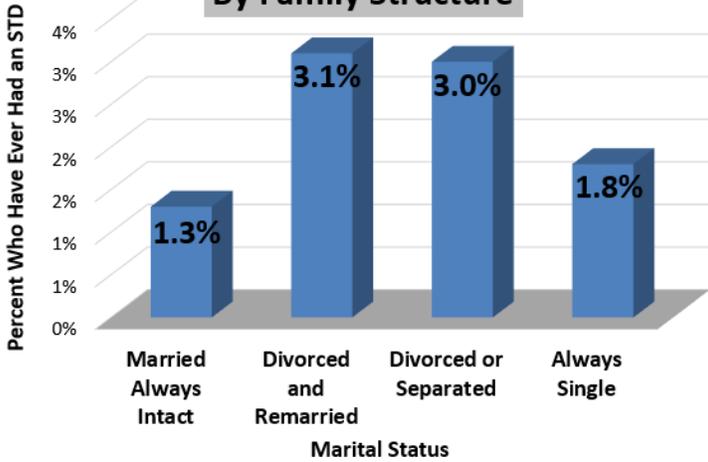
¹ Emilio A. Parrado, Chenoa A. Flippen, and Chris McQuiston, "Use of Commercial Sex Workers Among Hispanic Migrants In North Carolina: Implications for the Spread of HIV," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 36, no. 4 (2004): 153.

² Joel Rakwar, Ludo Lavreys, Mary Lou Thompson, Denis Jackson, Job Bwayo, Salim Hassanali, Kishorchandra Mandaliya, Jeckoniah Ndinya-Achola, and Joan Kreiss, "Cofactors for the acquisition of HIV-1 among heterosexual men: prospective cohort study of trucking company workers in Kenya," *AIDS* 13 (1999): 609.

Frequency of a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Frequency of a Sexually Transmitted Disease

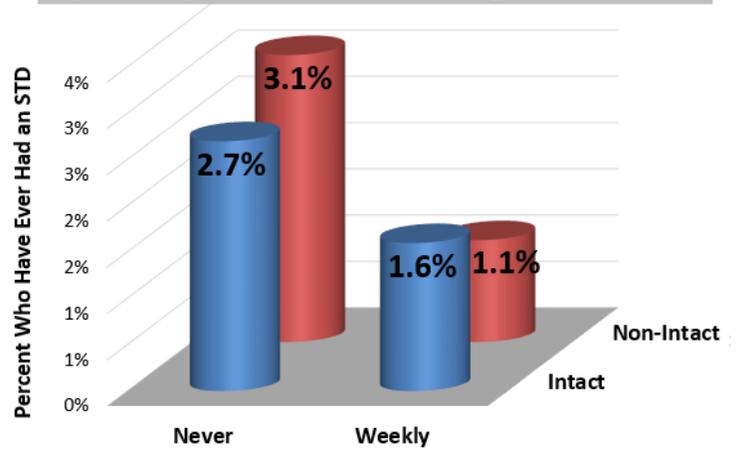
By Family Structure



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

Frequency of a Sexually Transmitted Disease

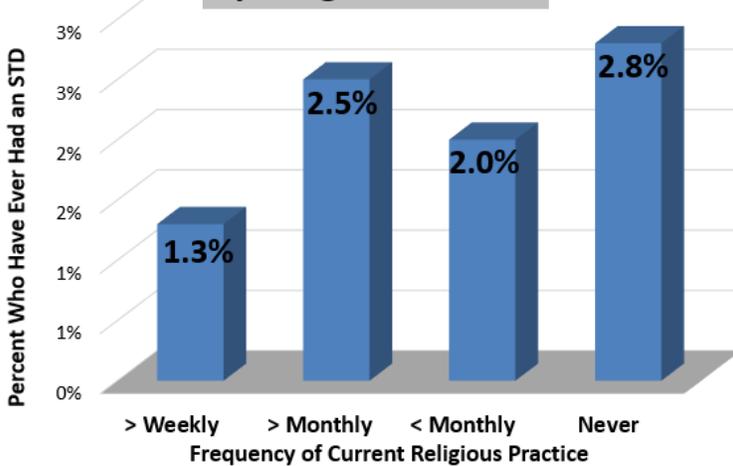
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

Frequency of a Sexually Transmitted Disease

By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

This chart looks at the number of adults, aged 18 to 59, who have ever had a sexually transmitted disease at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)

Frequency of a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages and adults who worshipped weekly were least likely to have ever had a sexually transmitted disease, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were least likely to have ever had a sexually transmitted disease (1.3 percent). Sexually transmitted disease was more prevalent in non-intact family structures and among singles: 1.8 percent of those who were always single had ever had a sexually transmitted disease; 3 percent of those who were divorced or separated had ever had a sexually transmitted disease; and 3.1 percent of those who were divorced and remarried had ever had a sexually transmitted disease.

Religious Practice: Those who worshiped weekly were least likely to have ever had an STD (1.3 percent). The likelihood of having an STD increased as regularity of worship decreased: 2 percent of those who worshiped less than monthly had ever had an STD; 2.5 percent of those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly had ever had an STD; and 2.8 percent of those who never worshipped had ever had an STD.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in non-intact family structures or who were single who worshiped weekly were less likely to have ever had an STD (1.1 percent), followed by those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly (1.6 percent). Those in intact marriages who never worshiped (2.7 percent) and those in non-intact family structures or who were single who never worshiped (3.1 percent) were more likely to have ever had an STD. The lowest score reported here is noteworthy. (The healthiest score reported here is unusual.)

Related Insights from Other Studies: Analysis of Wave One of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) found that STD reports were generally higher among adolescents who were not living in two-parent homes.¹ Data from the 1992 Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Supplement to the National Health Interview Survey found that living in a two-parent family was protective against adolescent sexual intercourse as well as STD transmission.² Another study shows that a history of STDs tends to coincide with a history of drinking problems.³

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

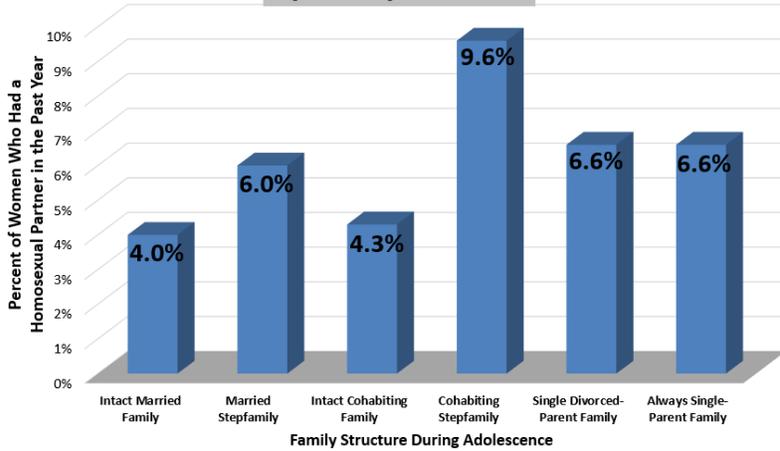
¹ E.C. Newbern, W.C. Miller, V.J. Schoenback, and J.S. Kaufman, "Family Socioeconomic Status and Self-Reported Sexually Transmitted Diseases among Black and White American Adolescents," *Journal of Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 31, no. 9 (September 2004): 533-541.

² J.S. Santelli, R. Lowry, N.D. Brener and L. Robin, "The Association of Sexual Behaviors with Socioeconomic Status, Family Structure, and Race/Ethnicity among US Adolescents," *Journal of Public Health* 90, no. 10 (October 2000): 1582-1588.

³ Karen Paige Ericksen and Karen F. Trocki, "Sex, Alcohol and Sexually Transmitted Diseases: A National Survey," *Journal of Family Planning Perspectives* 26, no. 6 (November 1994): 257-263.

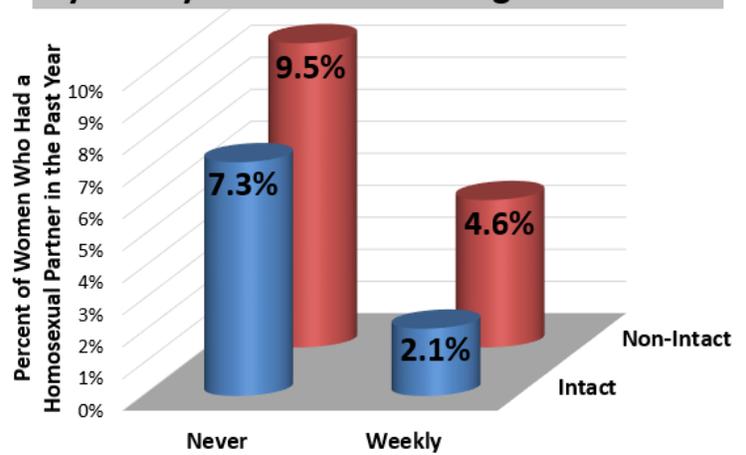
Women Who Had a Homosexual Sexual Partner By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Women Who Had a Homosexual Partner
By Family Structure**



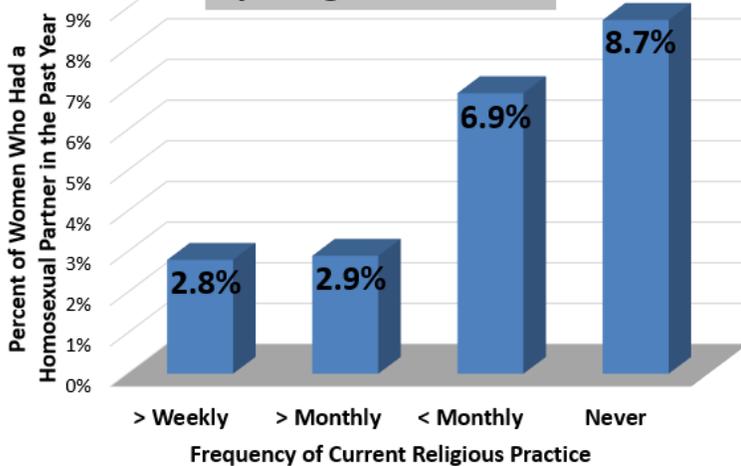
Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

**Women Who Had a Homosexual Partner
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

**Women Who Had a Homosexual Partner
By Religious Practice**



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

This chart looks at women who had a homosexual sexual partner in the past year at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- The non-intact family* that worships weekly;*
- The non-intact family* that never worships.*

(The non-intact group consists of women in the following categories: married stepfamily, intact cohabiting partners, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent.)*

Women Who Had a Homosexual Sexual Partner by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the National Survey of Family Growth, four percent of women who grew up in intact married families have had a homosexual sexual partner in the year prior to being asked, followed by women who grew up in intact cohabiting families (4.3 percent), those from married stepfamilies (6 percent), single divorced parent families (6.6 percent), always single parent families (6.6 percent), and cohabiting stepparent families (9.6 percent).¹

Religious Practice: According to the National Survey of Family Growth, 2.8 percent of women who worshiped at least weekly had a homosexual sexual partner in the year prior to being surveyed, followed by women who worshiped between one and three times a month (2.9 percent), those who worshiped less than once a month (6.9 percent), and those who never attended religious services (8.7 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Women (aged 14-44) who had not had a homosexual sexual partner in the past year were more likely to have worshiped at least weekly and to have grown up in intact families than those who had a homosexual sexual partner in the past year. According to the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), 2.1 percent of women who grew up in intact married families and attended religious services at least weekly had a homosexual sexual partner in the year prior to being asked, followed by women who grew up in other family structures and worshiped at least weekly (4.6 percent), those who grew up in intact married families and never worshiped (7.3 percent), and those who grew up in other family structures and never worshiped (9.5 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies throw some light on why this might be so. Michele Dillon of Yale University reported that 44 percent of frequent Catholic church attendees "said that sexual relations between two adults of the same sex were wrong," compared to 10 percent "of those who attended occasionally or never."²

Darren Sherkat of Southern Illinois University also found that heterosexual women have much higher rates of church attendance than homosexual women.³

Examining the *current* family structure of homosexual men, Daryl Higgins of Deakin University reported that homosexual men who married women usually did so because "it seemed natural"

¹ These charts draw on data collected by the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002). The sample consists of women between the ages of 14 and 44 and numbers 7,643.

² Michele Dillon, "The Persistence of Religious Identity among College Catholics," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35 (1996): 165-70.

³ Darren E. Sherkat, "Sexuality and Religious Commitment in the United States : An Empirical Examination," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41 (2002): 313-23.

or they "wanted children or family life." Separation or divorce from their spouses often "led to an increase in the range of sexual behaviors engaged in with other men."⁴

As the evidence indicates, more family brokenness in family of origin and less frequent worship correlate positively with homosexual activity.

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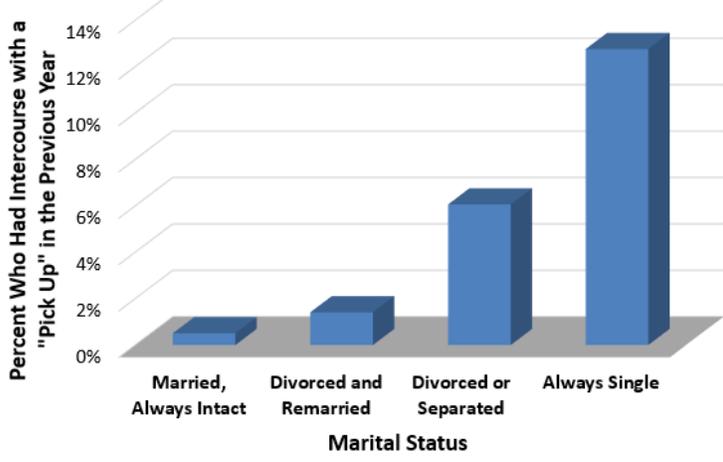
D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

Dr. Sullins is an associate professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America.

⁴ Daryl J. Higgins, "Gay Men from Heterosexual Marriages: Attitudes, Behaviors, Childhood Experiences, and Reasons for Marriage," *Journal of Homosexuality* 42 (2002): 15-34.

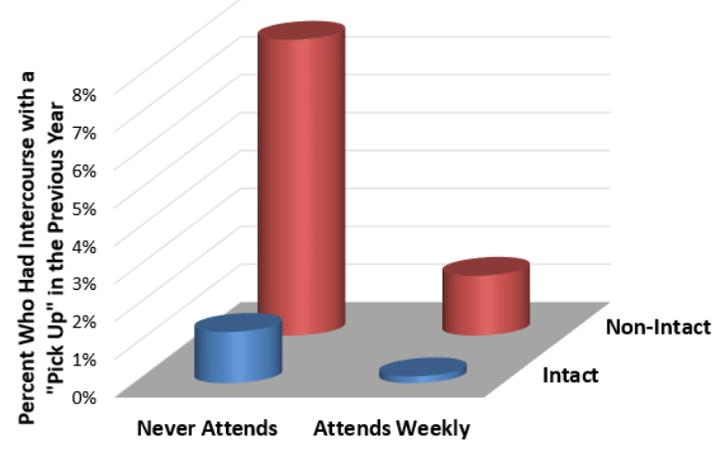
Had Sexual Intercourse with a "Pick-Up" By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Had Sexual Intercourse with a "Pick Up"
By Family Structure



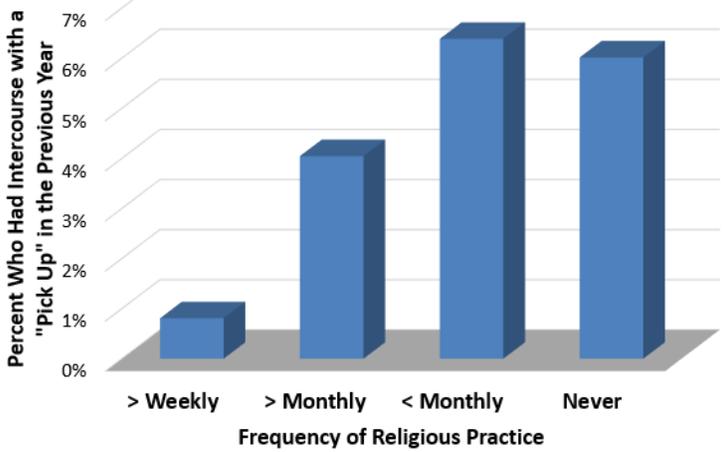
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Had Sexual Intercourse with a "Pick Up"
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Had Sexual Intercourse with a "Pick Up"
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at adults who have had sexual intercourse with a "pick-up" at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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 (weekly vs. never).

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.)

Had Sexual Intercourse with a “Pick-Up” 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 were least likely to have had intercourse with a “pick-up” in the previous year.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were least likely to have had intercourse with a “pick-up” in the previous year (.5 percent), followed by those who were divorced and remarried (1.4 percent), those who were divorced or separated (6.1 percent), and those who were always single (12.8 percent).

Religious Practice: Those who worshipped weekly at the time of the survey were far less likely to have had intercourse with a “pick-up” in the previous year (.8 percent) than those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly (4 percent), those who never worshipped (6 percent), and those who worshipped less than monthly (6.4 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly were, by far, the least likely to have had intercourse with a “pick-up” in the previous year (.2 percent). Those in intact marriages who never worshipped (1.4 percent) and those who worshipped weekly in non-intact family structures or who were single (1.6 percent) were somewhat more likely to have had intercourse with a “pick-up.” Those in non-intact family structures or who were single who never worshipped were dramatically more likely to have had intercourse with a “pick-up” (7.8 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: An analysis of 919 undergraduate university women found that those who identified as conservative Protestants were less likely to “hook up” (defined as “a physical encounter” without the expectation of “anything further”), but their reduced likelihood was mediated by their self-rated religiosity and frequency of religious attendance. Catholic women were more likely to “hook up.”¹ However, in its bivariate analysis, the study showed that though a larger proportion of Catholic women who attended church infrequently and did not rate themselves as particularly religious had “hooked up” than those who were religiously nonaffiliated, a smaller proportion of Catholic women who worshiped weekly and reported being very religious had done so.² It would appear that religious attendance, and not only reported religious affiliation, contributes to one’s likelihood to “hook up.”

Analysis of a sample of 459 undergraduate students at a large southeastern public university found that students who reported worshipping less frequently and students who reported little

¹ Amy M. Burdette, Christopher G. Ellison, Terrence D. Hill, and Norval D. Glenn, “Hooking Up” at College: Does Religion Make a Difference? *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 3 (2009): 544.

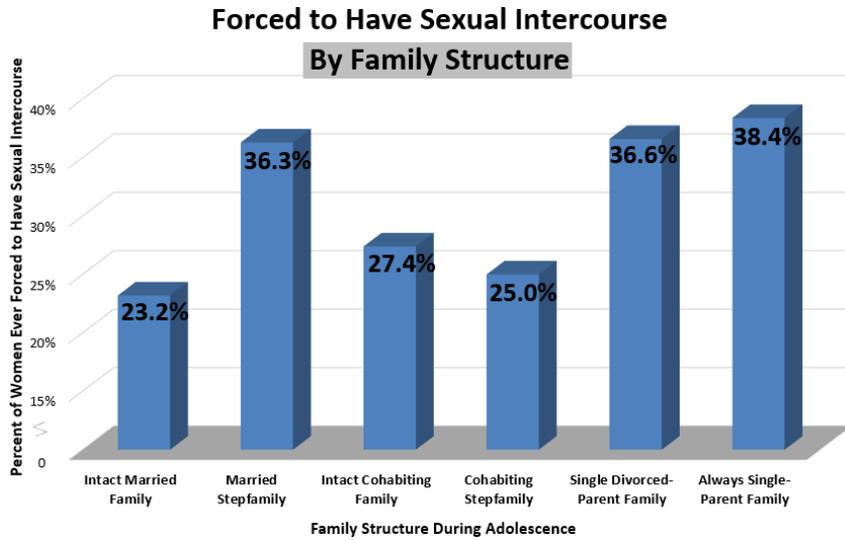
² Amy M. Burdette, Christopher G. Ellison, Terrence D. Hill, and Norval D. Glenn, “Hooking Up” at College: Does Religion Make a Difference? *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 3 (2009): 545.

religious feeling were more likely to participate in sexual activities, such as intercourse and oral sex, within the context of a “hook up.” (A “hook up” was simply defined as “[a] sexual encounter between people who are strangers or brief acquaintances. This encounter may be limited to behaviors other than intercourse. There is no expectation of any relationship with this person beyond this sexual encounter.”)³

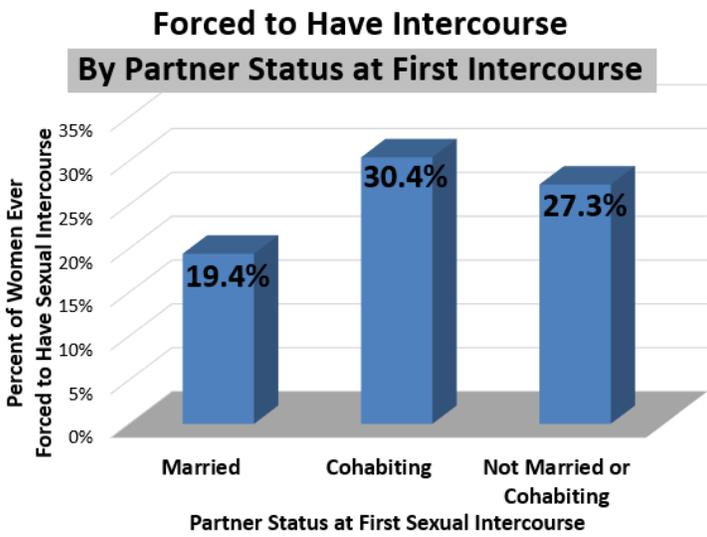
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

³ Tina Penhollow, Michael Young, and William Bailey, “Relationship between Religiosity and ‘Hooking Up’ Behavior,” *American Journal of Health Education* 38, no. 6 (2007): 341.

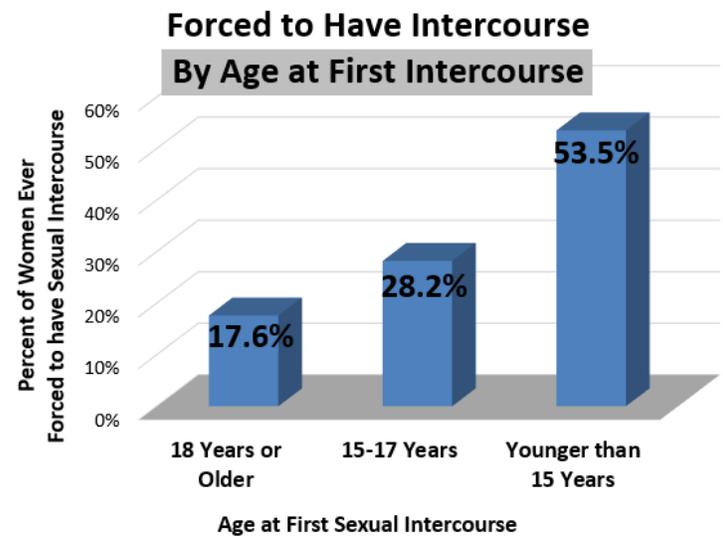
Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and First Intercourse



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)

Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure, Age at First Intercourse, and Partner Status at First Intercourse

The 2002 cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth showed that, among women aged 38 to 44,¹ ever being forced to have sexual intercourse was least common among those raised in an intact married family and among those who save sex for marriage.

Family Structure: At the time of the survey, fewer women raised in an intact family had ever been forced to have sexual intercourse than those raised in a non-intact family. Thirty eight percent of those raised in an always single parent family had been forced to have intercourse, followed by those raised in a single divorced-parent family (36.6 percent), those raised in a married stepfamily (36.3 percent), those raised in an intact cohabiting family (27.4 percent), and those raised in a cohabiting stepfamily (25 percent). Women aged 38 to 44 raised in an intact married family were least likely to have been forced to have sexual intercourse (23.2 percent).

Age at First Intercourse: The National Survey of Family Growth showed that fifty three percent of those who had their first intercourse before age 15 were ever forced to have sexual intercourse, dropping to twenty-eight percent of those who had their first intercourse between ages 15 and 17, and seventeen percent of those who had their first intercourse at age 18 or older.

Partner Status at First Intercourse: Nineteen percent of women who were married at their first intercourse had ever experienced forced sexual intercourse. This figure rose to thirty percent for those cohabiting at their first intercourse and twenty-seven percent for those who were neither cohabiting nor married at their first intercourse.

Related Insights from Other Studies: A 1989 analysis showed that among white girls, having lived apart from one's parents for more than four months prior to age 16 was associated with an increased likelihood of having been sexually abused, even after controlling for other factors. Parental drug use, heavy drinking, and smoking (during the teenage years) were other factors associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing sexual abuse. Poverty was found to be marginally associated with the risk of experiencing sexual abuse.²

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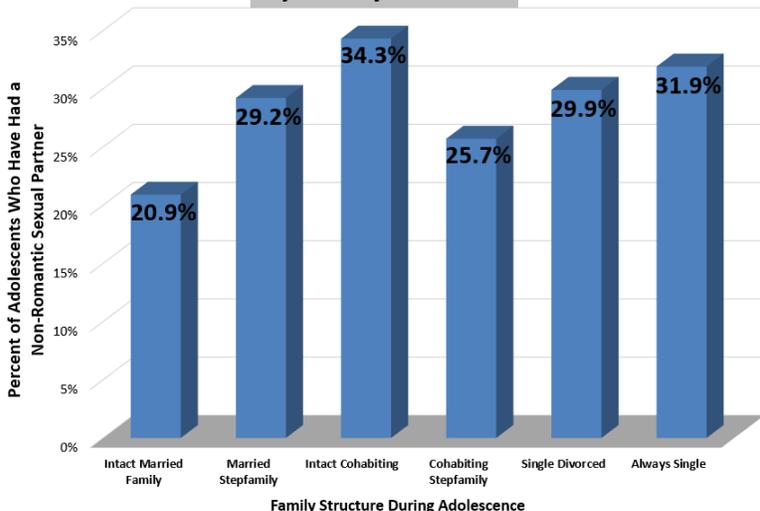
Dr. Sullins is an associate professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America.

¹ NSFG only surveys women up to age 44. The oldest group of women was selected in order to capture the most complete range of outcomes for sexual experience.

² Kristin Anderson Moore, Christine Winquist Nord, and James L. Peterson, "Nonvoluntary Sexual Activity Among Adolescents," *Family Planning Perspectives* 21, no. 3 (1989): 110-114.

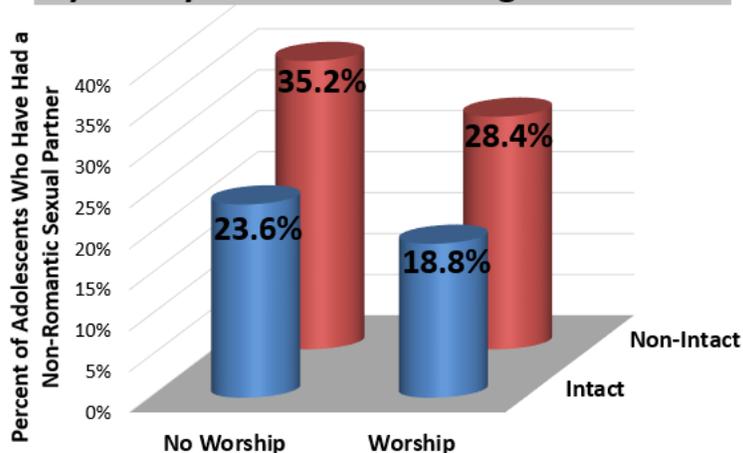
Non-Romantic Sexual Relationships By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Non-Romantic Sexual Relationship
By Family Structure



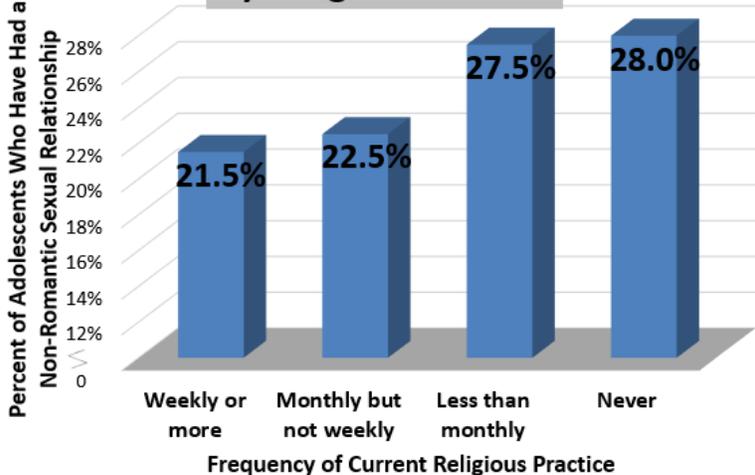
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Wave I

Non-Romantic Sexual Relationship
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Wave I

Non-Romantic Sexual Relationship
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Wave I

This chart looks at the number of children who have had non-romantic sexual relationships at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (intact versus non-intact)* and two sets of religious attendance (worship vs. no worship).**

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The children from intact families that worship.
- The children from intact families that do not worship.
- The children from non-intact families that worship.
- The children from non-intact families that do not worship.

*The intact married family consists of children who live with their two biological parents who are married. Non-intact includes all other family types.

**Those who worship report attending religious services once a week or more often in the past year. Those who do not worship never attended religious services in the past year.

Non-Romantic Sexual Relationships by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Wave 1 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health)¹ found that adolescents aged 13 to 19 in intact families that worshipped weekly or more were least likely to have had a non-romantic sexual relationship.²

Family Structure: Fewer teens in intact married families ever had a non-romantic sexual partner than those in other family types (20.9 percent versus 30.7 percent, respectively). At the time of the survey, 20.9 percent of 13- to 19-year olds in intact married families had engaged in non-romantic sexual intercourse, versus 29.2 percent of teens in married stepfamilies, 34.3 percent of teens in intact cohabiting families, 25.7 percent of teens in cohabiting stepfamilies, 29.9 percent of teens in single divorced families, and 31.9 percent of teens in always-single families.

Religious Practice: The likelihood that an adolescent had a non-romantic sexual relationship decreased as the adolescent's religious involvement increased. Teens who attended religious services weekly or more within the past year were less likely to have had non-romantic sexual intercourse (21.5 percent) than those who attended monthly but not weekly (22.5 percent), less than monthly (27.5 percent), or never (28.0 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Thirteen to nineteen-year-olds in intact worshipping families were least likely to have ever had a non-romantic sexual relationship (18.8 percent). Teens in intact non-worshipping families (23.6 percent) and non-intact worshipping families (28.4 percent) were more likely to have ever had non-romantic sexual intercourse. Teens in non-intact families that did not worship were most likely to have had non-romantic sexual relationships (35.2 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Research suggests that non-romantic sexual relationships or 'hook-ups' "may present greater risks for teens regarding unplanned pregnancy and exposure to sexually transmitted infections ... [and] may be a potential springboard for longer-term problems associated with relationship patterns that lack commitment."³ Wendy Manning and colleagues also found that "teen's normative beliefs have significant effects on teenage non-romantic sexual activity."⁴ An adolescent's family structure impacts the stability and

¹ The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health) is a congressionally-mandated longitudinal survey of American adolescents. Add Health drew a random sample of adolescents aged 13-19 in 1995 from junior high and high schools (Wave I) and has followed them in successive waves in 2001 (Wave III) and 2009 (Wave IV).

² Respondents were asked: "Not counting romantic relationships, have you ever had a sexual relationship with anyone?"

³ Wendy D. Manning, Monica A. Longmore, and Peggy C. Giordano, "Adolescents' involvement in non-romantic sexual activity," *Social Science Research* 34 (2005): 385.

⁴ Wendy D. Manning, Monica A. Longmore, and Peggy C. Giordano, "Adolescents' involvement in non-romantic sexual activity," *Social Science Research* 34 (2005): 385.

durability of the adolescent's romantic relationships.⁵ Heidi Lyons et al. concluded that teens raised by single parents or stepparents were more likely to partake in casual sexual relationships, and were more likely to continue this behavior into adulthood.⁶ Examining retrospective data for 10,847 U.S. women, Robert Quinlan found that divorce/separation between birth and age 5 predicted early first sexual intercourse and first pregnancy, and shorter duration of first marriage.⁷ Teens from non-intact families were more likely to have sexual intercourse earlier and more frequently than teens in intact families.⁸

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⁵ Shannon Cavanagh, "Family Structure History and Adolescent Romance," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 70 (2008): 698-714.

⁶ Heidi Lyons, Wendy Manning, Peggy Giordano, and Monica Longmore, "Predictors of Heterosexual Casual Sex Among Young Adults," *National Institute of Health* 42(2013) available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3888028/pdf/nihms498099.pdf>.

⁷ Robert J. Quinlin, "Father Absence, Parental Care, and Female Reproductive Development," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 24 (2003): 376-390.

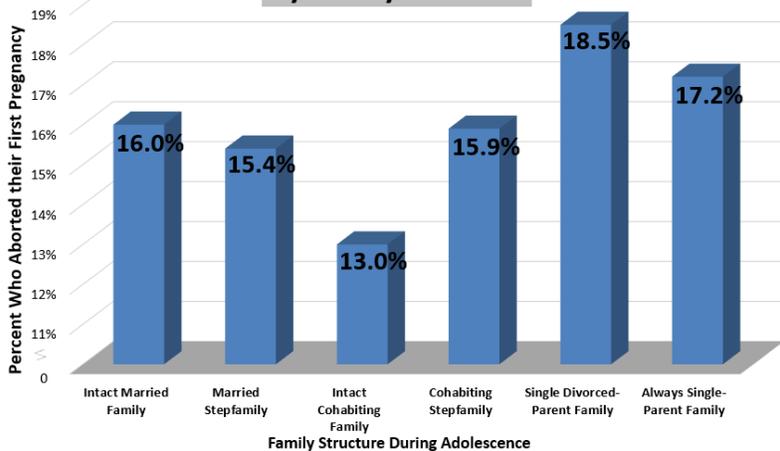
⁸ Samuel W. Sturgeon, "The Relationship Between Family Structure and Adolescent Sexual Activity," (November 2008) available at http://www.familyfacts.org/featuredfinding/ff_01.pdf.



Pregnancy and Abortion

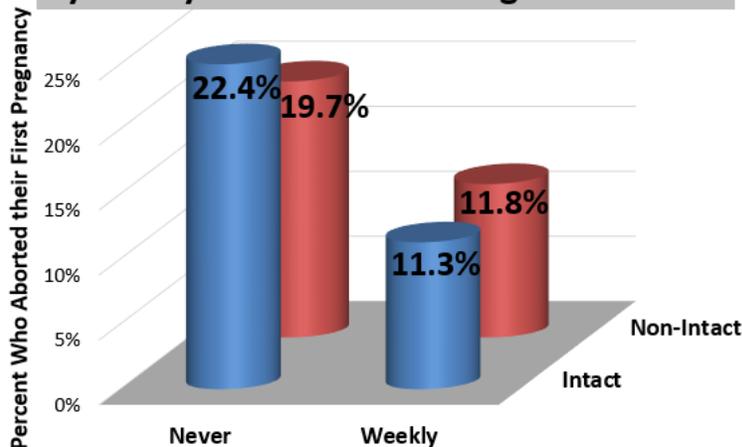
Women Who Aborted First Pregnancy By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Women Who Aborted First Pregnancy
By Family Structure



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

Women Who Aborted First Pregnancy
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

This chart looks at women who aborted their first pregnancy at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

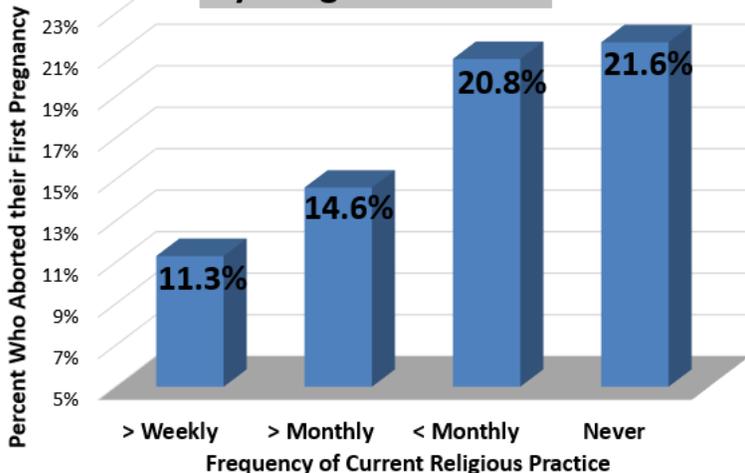
These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. non-intact) and two sets of religious attendance (high vs. low).*

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- The non-intact family* that worships weekly;*
- The non-intact family* that never worships.*

(The non-intact group consists of women in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)*

Women Who Aborted First Pregnancy
By Religious Practice



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

Women Who Aborted First Pregnancy by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the National Survey of Family Growth Cycle 6, 13 percent of women who grew up in intact cohabiting families aborted their first pregnancy, followed by women who grew up in married stepfamilies (15.4 percent), those from cohabiting stepfamilies (15.9 percent), intact married families (16 percent), always single parent families (17.2 percent), and single divorced parent families (18.5 percent). It is to be noted that the typical pattern of the intact married family being the strongest is broken here.¹

Religious Practice: According to the National Survey of Family Growth, 11.3 percent of women who worshiped at least weekly aborted their first pregnancy, followed by those who attended religious services between one and three times a month (14.6 percent), those who attended religious services less than once a month (20.8 percent), and those who never attended religious services (21.6 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Women who worshiped at least weekly and grew up in intact married families were the least likely to abort their first baby. According to the National Survey of Family Growth, 11.3 percent of women who grew up in intact married families and worshiped at least weekly at the time of the survey aborted their first pregnancy, followed by women who grew up in other family structures and worshiped at least weekly (11.8 percent), those who grew up in other family structures and never worshiped (19.7 percent), and those who grew up in intact married families and never worshiped (22.4 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Stanley Henshaw and Kathryn Kost of the Alan Guttmacher Institute reported that “being a born-again or Evangelical Christian” reduced the risk of an “unintended pregnancy leading to abortion.”²

Lisa Pearce of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Arland Thornton of the University of Michigan found that the more frequently eighteen-year-olds attend religious services, the more antiabortion they are.³

No other significant studies investigated a correlation between abortion and structure of family of origin.

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

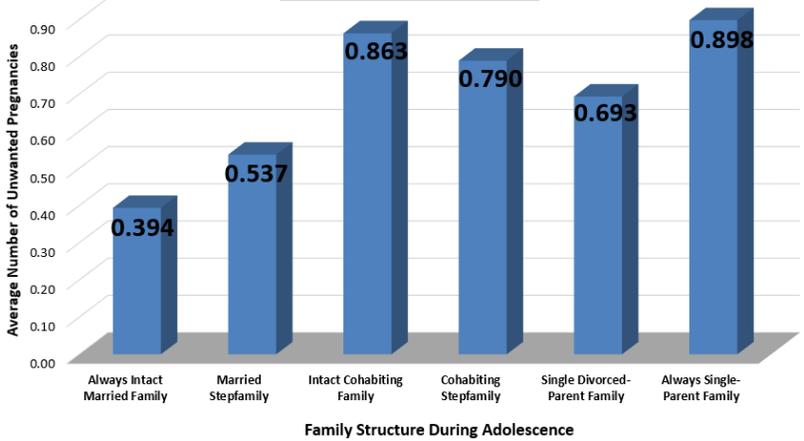
¹ These charts draw on data collected by the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002). The sample consists of women between the ages of 14 and 44 and numbers 7,643.

² Stanley K. Henshaw and Kathryn Kost, “Abortion Patients in 1994-1995: Characteristics and Contraceptive Use,” *Family Planning Perspectives* 28 (1996): 140-47, 158.

³ Lisa Pearce and Arland Thornton, “Religious Identity and Family Ideologies in the Transition to Adulthood,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 69 (2007): 1227-43.

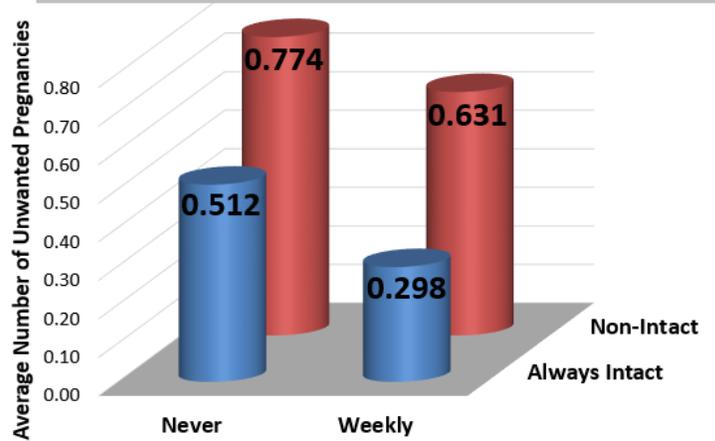
"Average Number of Unwanted Pregnancies" By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**"Average Number of Unwanted Pregnancies"
By Family Structure**



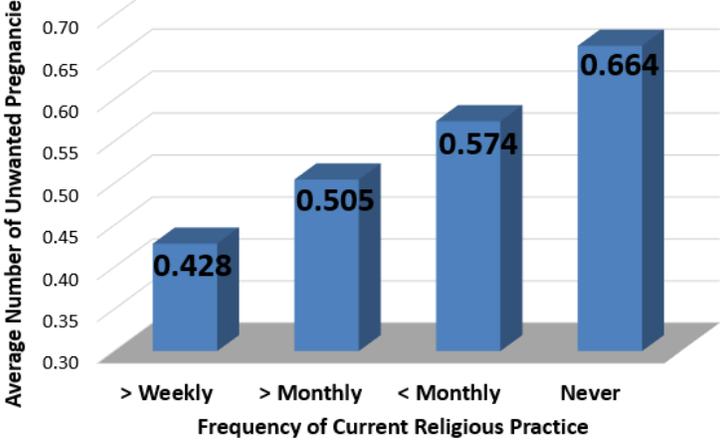
Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

**"Average Number of Unwanted Pregnancies"
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

**"Average Number of Unwanted Pregnancies"
By Religious Practice**



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

This chart looks at women who have had an unwanted pregnancy in their lifetime at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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

- The women occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:*
- Women who grew up in an always-intact married family and who now worship weekly;*
 - Women who grew up in an always-intact married family and who now never worship;*
 - Women who grew up in a non-intact family* and who now worship weekly;*
 - Women who grew up in a non-intact family* and who now never worship.*

(The non-intact group consists of women who grew up in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)*

“Average Number of Unwanted Pregnancies” by Family Structure and Religious Practice¹

Family Structure: According to the National Survey of Family Growth, women who grew up in an intact married family had an average of 0.39 unwanted pregnancies in their lifetime, followed by women from married stepfamilies (0.54), single divorced parent families (0.69), cohabiting stepfamilies (0.79), intact cohabiting families (0.86), and always single parent families (0.9).

Religious Practice: The National Survey of Family Growth shows that women who worshipped at least weekly at the time of the survey had an average of 0.43 unwanted pregnancies in their lifetime, followed by women who attended religious services between one and three times a month (0.50), those who attended religious services less than once a month (0.57), and those who never attended religious services (0.66).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: The number of unwanted pregnancies was lowest for women who grew up in an intact married family and who worshipped at least weekly at the time of the survey. According to the National Survey of Family Growth, women who grew up in an intact married family and worshipped at least weekly had an average of 0.3 unwanted pregnancies in their lifetimes, followed by women who grew up in an intact married family and never worshipped (0.51), those who grew up in other family structures and worshipped at least weekly (0.63), and those who grew up in other family structures and never worshipped (0.77).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. James Nonnemaker of Research Triangle Institute and colleagues found a positive association between adolescent public religiosity and a lower likelihood of pregnancy.²

Scott South of the State University of New York at Albany also found that “growing up in a family headed by a single mother increases the risk of a premarital birth.”³

In a study of black adolescent females in high-poverty neighborhoods, Mignon Moore of Columbia University and P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale of Northwestern University reported that “[l]iving in married households is associated with a reduced risk of pregnancy” and that “teenagers in single-mother families have higher odds of experiencing” pregnancy, though

¹ These charts draw on data collected by the National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002). The sample consists of women between the ages of 14 and 44 and numbers 7,643.

² James M. Nonnemaker, Clea A. McNeely, and Robert Wm. Blum, “Public and Private Domains of Religiosity and Adolescent Health Risk Behaviors: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health,” *Social Science & Medicine* 57 (2003): 2049-54.

³ Scott J. South, “Historical Changes and Life Course Variation in the Determinants of Premarital Childbearing,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61 (1999): 752-63.

“adolescents in cohabiting households were not found to have...significantly higher odds of pregnancy.”⁴

As the evidence shows, women who grew up in an intact married family and who now worship weekly are likely to have fewer unwanted pregnancies in their lifetimes.

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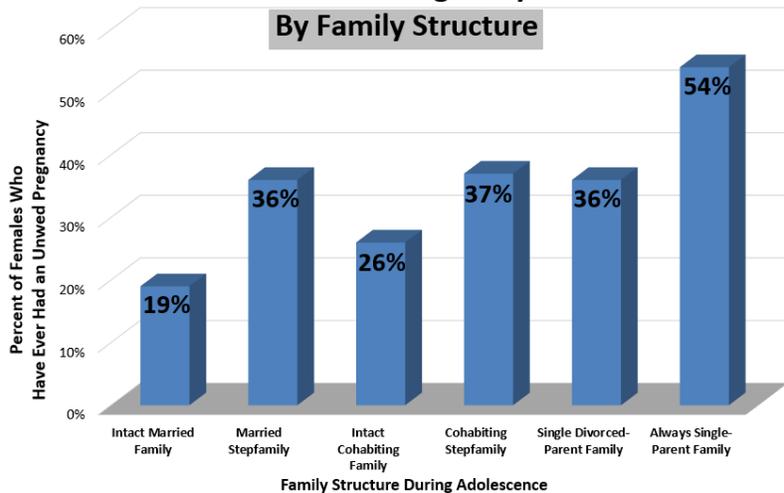
D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

Dr. Sullins is an associate professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America.

⁴ Mignon R. Moore and P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, “Sexual Intercourse and Pregnancy among African American Girls in High-Poverty Neighborhoods: The Role of Family and Perceived Community Environment,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63 (2001): 1146-57.

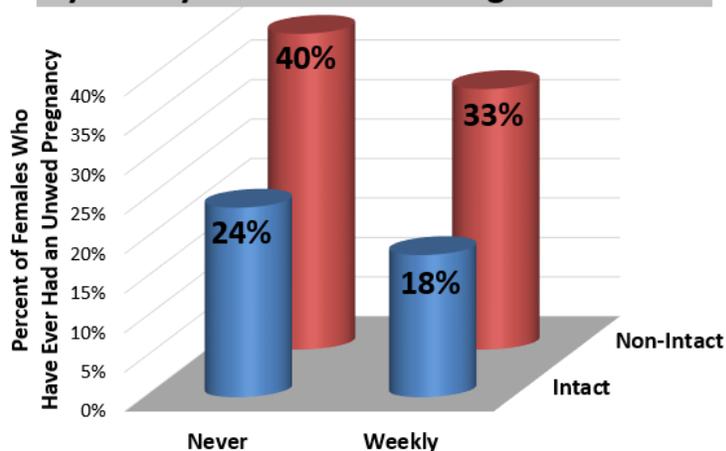
Unwed Pregnancy By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Unwed Pregnancy
By Family Structure**



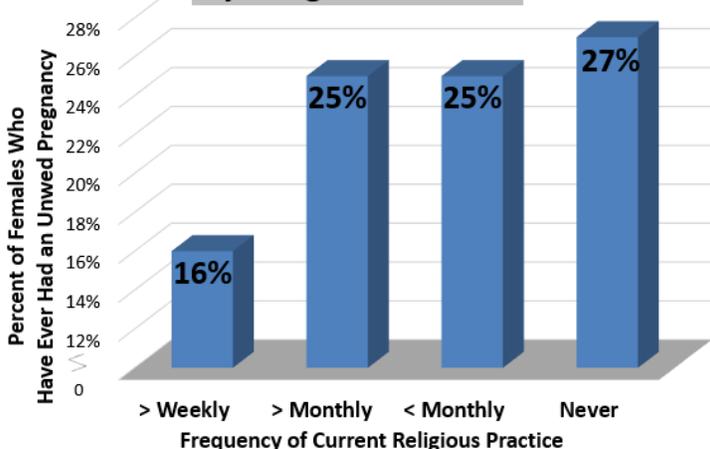
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

**Unwed Pregnancy
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

**Unwed Pregnancy
By Religious Practice**



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

This chart looks at females who have had an unwed pregnancy at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- The non-intact family* that worships weekly;*
- The non-intact family* that never worships.*

(The non-intact group consists of women in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)*

Unwed Pregnancy by Family Structure and Religious Practice

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth showed that females who grew up in intact families who frequently attended religious services were least likely to have had an unwed pregnancy.

Family Structure: Nineteen percent of females who grew up in an intact married family have had an unwed pregnancy, followed by females from intact cohabiting families (26 percent), single divorced parent families (36 percent) and married stepfamilies (36 percent), cohabiting stepfamilies (37 percent), and always single parent families (54 percent).

Religious Practice: Sixteen percent of females who worshiped at least weekly have had unwed pregnancy, followed by those who attended religious services between one and three times a month (25 percent) and those who attended religious services less than once monthly (25 percent), and those who never attended religious services (27 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Eighteen percent of females who worshiped weekly and grew up in intact families have had an unwed pregnancy. By contrast, 40 percent of females who never attended religious services and come from non-intact family backgrounds have, at some point, become pregnant out of wedlock. Between these two extremes were those who never worshiped and grew up in intact families (24 percent) and those who attended religious services weekly but grew up in non-intact families (33 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Studies based on the 1995 General Social Survey show that family structure affects the unwed pregnancy rate. According to Valerie Martin of McGill University, when compared with peers from intact families, adolescent and young adult women who experienced parental divorce were significantly more likely to give birth out of wedlock.¹

Using this same survey, Jay Teachman of Western Washington University also found intact families to be protective in many ways: Compared with peers from other family structures, women who grew up in intact families were less likely to form high-risk marriages, to cohabit before marriage, or to have a premarital birth or conception.²

Another study demonstrated the protective nature of the family's religion: When compared with peers whose mothers had not attended religious services frequently, 18-year-olds whose mothers attended religious services often were more likely to have attitudes about premarital sex, cohabitation, abortion, and divorce.³

¹ Martin, Valerie, "The Consequences of Parental Divorce on the Life Course Outcomes of Canadian Children." *Canadian Studies in Population*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2005) pp. 29-51.

² Teachman, Jay D. "The Childhood Living Arrangements of Children and the Characteristics of Their Marriages." *Journal of Family Issues* Vol. 25, No. 1 (January 2004) pp. 86-111.

³ Pearce, L.D. & Thornton, A. "Religious Identity and Family Ideologies in the Transition to Adulthood" *Journal of Marriage and Family* Vol. 69 (2007) pp. 1227-1243.

The Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Survey also showed the impact of religion on urban mothers, finding that urban mothers who attend church frequently are at least 70 percent more likely to be married when they give birth or to get married within one year of a nonmarital birth than are urban mothers who do not attend church frequently.⁴

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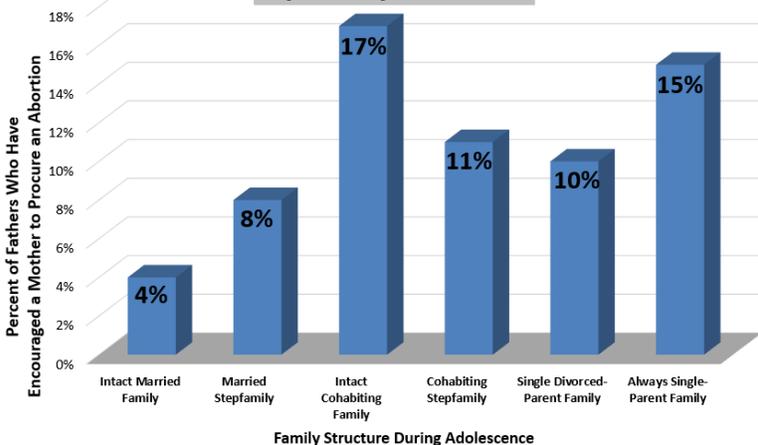
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Scott Talkington has been Research Director for the National Association of Scholars and Senior Research Fellow at George Mason University School of Public Policy since 1998.

⁴ "Religion and Marriage in Urban America" Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, Princeton University Social Indicators Survey Center, Columbia University, *Fragile Families Research Brief* No. 24 (June 2004) pp. 1-4.

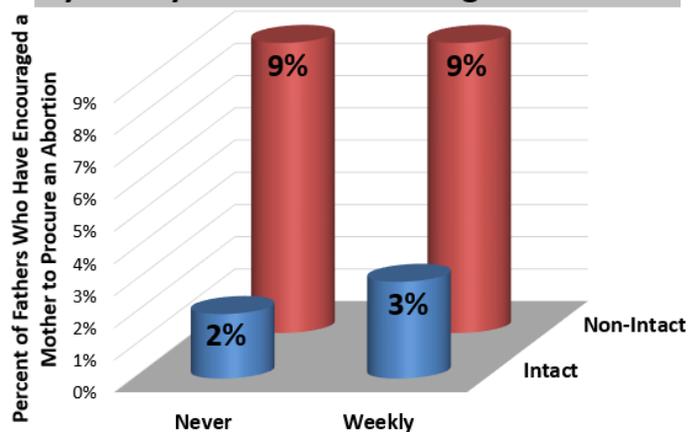
Fathers Who Have Encouraged an Abortion By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Fathers Who Have Encouraged an Abortion
By Family Structure



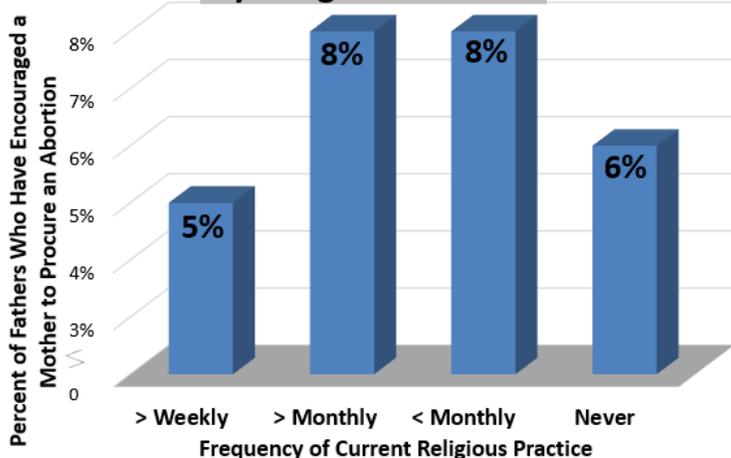
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

Fathers Who Have Encouraged an Abortion
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

Fathers Who Have Encouraged an Abortion
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

This chart looks at men who have encouraged a Mother to procure an abortion at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. all other family structures*) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;
- The always-intact married family that never worships;
- All other family structures* that worship weekly;
- All other family structures* that never worship.

(*“All other family structures” includes men in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always-single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)

Fathers Who Have Ever Encouraged a Mother to Procure an Abortion by Family Structure and Religious Practice

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that men who grew up in intact married families and attended religious services at least weekly were less likely to encourage a Mother to obtain an abortion.

Family Structure: Four percent of fathers from intact married families ever encouraged a Mother to have an abortion. They were followed by fathers from married stepfamilies, who were twice as likely to have encouraged a woman to have an abortion (8 percent), fathers from single divorced-parent families (10 percent), fathers from cohabiting stepfamilies (11 percent), and fathers from always-single parent families (15 percent). Fathers from intact cohabiting families were most likely to have encouraged a Mother to have an abortion (17 percent).

Religious Practice: Five percent of fathers who attended religious services at least weekly at the time of the survey encouraged a woman to procure an abortion. Six percent of fathers who never attended religious services, 8 percent of fathers who attended religious services at least monthly, and 8 percent of fathers who attended less than once a month encouraged a Mother to abort her child.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Three percent of fathers who grew up in intact married families and who worshipped at least weekly at the time of the survey encouraged a woman to abort her child. Two percent of fathers who grew up in intact married families but never attended religious services encouraged a woman to procure an abortion, compared to fathers who grew up in all other family structures and never attended religious services (9 percent), and fathers who grew up in all other family structures but attended weekly religious services (9 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: According to the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children, a 31-year-long study, 18-year-olds who said religion played an important role in their lives tended to be less supportive of abortion (as well as premarital sex, cohabitation, and divorce) than were their peers who said religion was less important to them.¹

Another study found the responses of men who father a child out of wedlock vary according to the characteristics of their own family of origin. Fathers who had grown up in a family that received welfare were less likely to marry their baby's mother than their peers whose families had not received welfare. White men were 39 percent less likely to marry their baby's mother and Black men were 6 percent less likely to marry their baby's mother.² Additionally, according to the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Men and the National Longitudinal Survey of

¹ L.D. Pearce and A. Thornton, "Religious Identity and Family Ideologies in the Transition to Adulthood," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 69 (2007): 1227-1243.

² Madeline Zavodny, "Do Men's Characteristics Affect Whether a Nonmarital Pregnancy Results in Marriage?" *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 61 (August 1999): 764-773.

Youth, Black men who live in the South are more likely to marry the mother of their baby than Black men who live in other regions, in the event of a non-marital pregnancy.³ Broken families are exceptionally likely to be impoverished or rely on welfare.⁴ Additionally, the South has a lower index of belonging than any other region in the country.⁵ It may be that welfare and region are, in this case, proxies for family structure, and that broken families of origin contribute to the decreased likelihood that a father will marry the mother of his out-of-wedlock child. This finding dovetails with the fact that broken families of origin contribute to the *increased* likelihood that a father will encourage the mother of his child to abort it.

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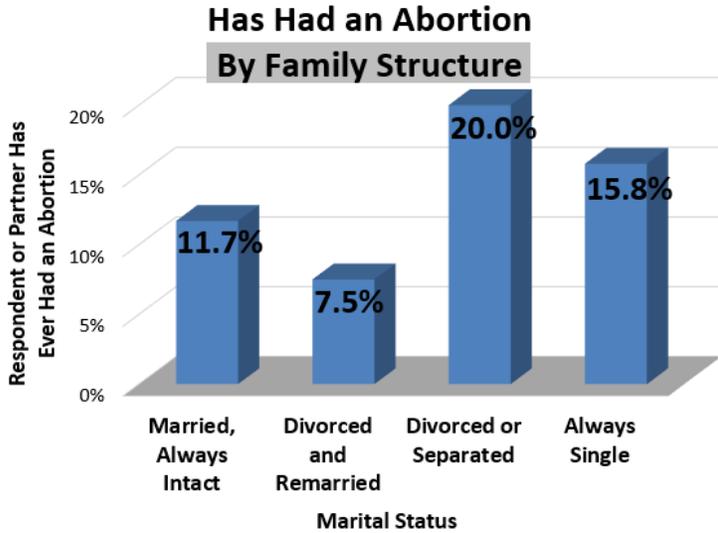
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³ Madeline Zavodny, "Do Men's Characteristics Affect Whether a Nonmarital Pregnancy Results in Marriage?" *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 61 (August 1999): 764-773.

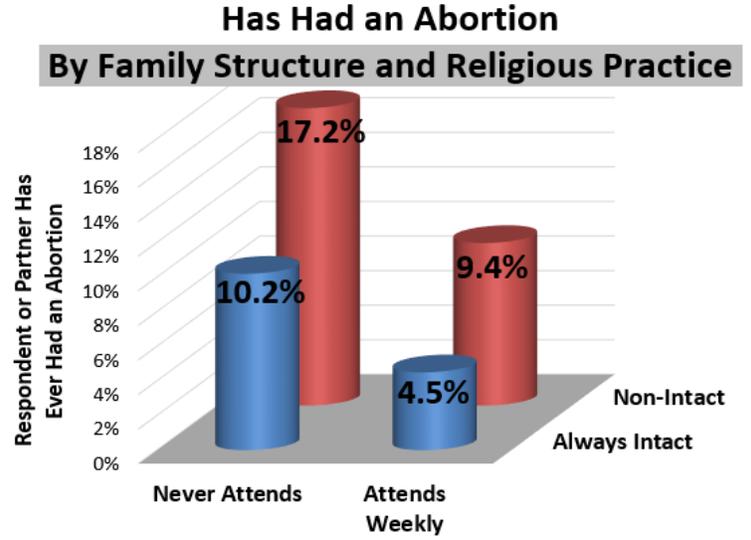
⁴ Patrick F. Fagan, Andrew J. Kidd, and Henry Potrykus, Marriage and Economic Well-Being: The Economy of the Family Rises or Falls with Marriage (Washington, D.C.: Marriage and Religion Research Institute, a project of the Family Research Council, 2011) [database online]; available from <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF11E70.pdf>: 16-20.

⁵ Patrick F. Fagan, The US Index of Belonging and Rejection (Washington, D.C.: Marriage and Religion Research Institute, a project of the Family Research Council, 2010) [database online]; available from <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF10L25.pdf>: 17, Chart 4.

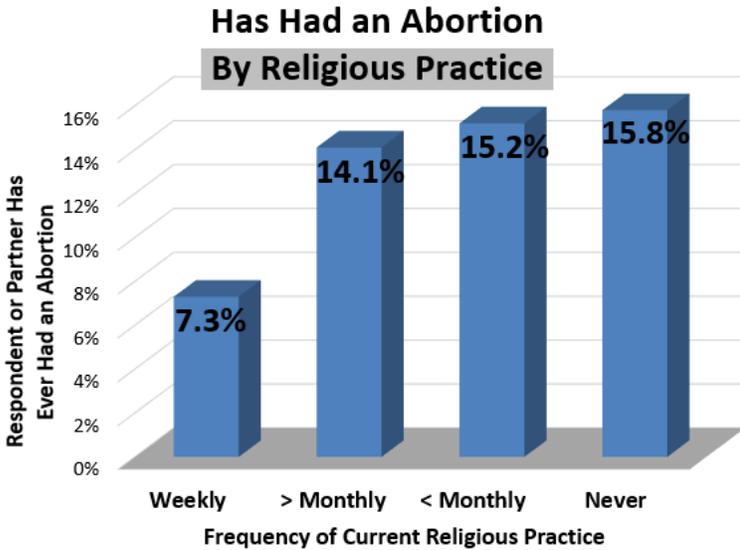
Has Ever Had an Abortion By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey (1992)

This chart looks at the number of adults and their partners who have ever had an abortion at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)

Respondent or Partner Has Ever Had an Abortion by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages (and their partners) who worshiped weekly were least likely to have ever had an abortion, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

Family Structure: Individuals in always-intact marriages were least likely to have ever had an abortion or had a partner who had an abortion (7.5 percent). Abortion is more prevalent among non-intact family structures and among singles: 11.7 percent of those (or their partner) who were always single procured an abortion, followed by 15.8 percent of those (or their partner) who were divorced or separated, and 20 percent of those (or their partner) who were divorced and remarried.

Religious Practice: Individuals (or their partner) who worshiped weekly were least likely to have procured an abortion (7.3 percent). Of those (or their partner) who worshiped less than weekly, 14.1 percent have procured an abortion, followed by those (or their partner) who worshiped less than monthly (15.2 percent) and those (or their partner) who never worshiped (15.8 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: A smaller proportion of those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly had ever procured an abortion or had a partner who procured an abortion (4.5 percent), followed by those (or their partner) in non-intact family structures or who were single and who worshiped weekly (9.4 percent) and those (or their partner) in intact marriages who never worshiped (10.2 percent). Those in non-intact family structures or who were single who never worshiped (or their partner) were most likely to have ever had an abortion (17.2 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: A study of over 500,000 pregnancies showed that a woman's likelihood to choose abortion increases as her education increases, but this is only the case only for unmarried women. Women with a high school education or less and no prior children are least likely to abort, compared with college-educated women with no prior children, who are most likely to abort.¹

Data from the 1990 Latino National Political Survey (a sample of over 2,700 U.S. Hispanics) found that Hispanic Protestants who regularly attend church are more strongly pro-life than any other part of the Latino population and tended to support a total ban on abortion.²

¹ Katherine Trent and Eve Powell-Griner, "Differences in Race, Marital Status, and Education Among Women Obtaining Abortions," *Journal of Social Forces* 69, no. 4 (1991): 1121-1141.

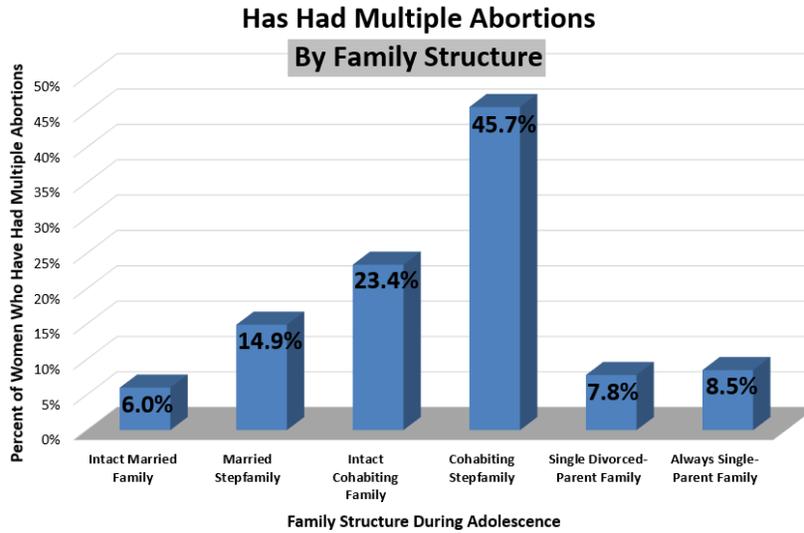
² Christopher Ellison, Samuel Echevarria, and Brad Smith, "Religion and Abortion Attitudes Among U.S. Hispanics: Findings from the 1990 Latino National Political Survey," *Social Science Quarterly* 86, no. 1 (March 2005): 192-208.

A study of Catholic Mexican-American women from Los Angeles County found that among survey respondents raised in Mexico, education had a “liberalizing effect on their attitudes” toward abortion. This trend persisted among U.S.-raised respondents, with the exception of the most devout Catholics. Among this group, education had the opposite effect: it made Catholic Mexican-American women’s attitudes toward abortion more conservative.³

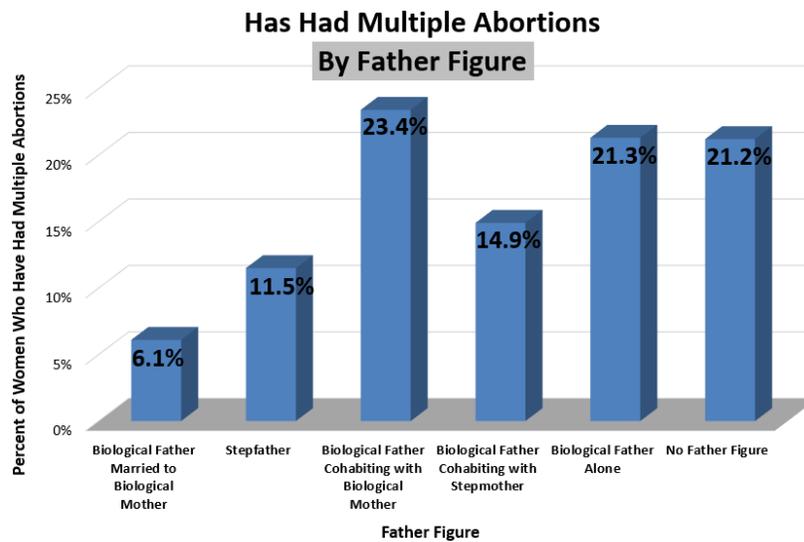
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

³ Sandra Rosenhouse-Persson and Georges Sabagh, “Attitudes Toward Abortion Among Catholic Mexican-American Women: The Effects of Religiosity and Education,” *Journal of Demography* 20, no.1 (1983): 87-98.
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Has Had Multiple Abortions By Family Structure and Father Figure



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)

Has Had Multiple Abortions by Family Structure and Father Figure

The 2002 cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth showed that among women aged 38 to 44,¹ having had two or more abortions was least common among those raised in an intact family with two married biological parents.

Family Structure: Fewer women raised in an intact married family had two or more abortions than those raised in a non-intact family. According to the National Survey of Family Growth, 45.7 percent of women raised in a cohabiting stepfamily had had two or more abortions, followed by those raised in an intact cohabiting family (23.4 percent), those raised in a married stepfamily (14.9 percent), those raised in an always-single parent family (8.5 percent), and those raised in a single-divorced parent family (7.8 percent). Women aged 38 to 44 who were raised in an intact married family were least likely to have had two or more abortions (6.0 percent).

Father Figure: Having had multiple abortions was least common among women raised by their biological father *married* to their biological mother (6.1 percent), and most common among women raised by their biological father *cohabiting* with their biological mother (23.4 percent). Around the same number of women raised by their biological father alone and with no father figure at all had had two or more abortions (21.3 percent and 21.2 percent, respectively).

Related Insights from Other Studies: According to the National Center for Health Statistics, unmarried white women of childbearing age abort at a rate of just over 20 per thousand; unmarried Hispanic women do so at a rate of just under 40 per thousand, and unmarried black women at just over 60 per thousand. Married white women abort at a rate of around 5 per thousand, married Hispanic women abort at a rate of just under 10 per thousand, and married black women abort at a rate of around 15 per thousand.²

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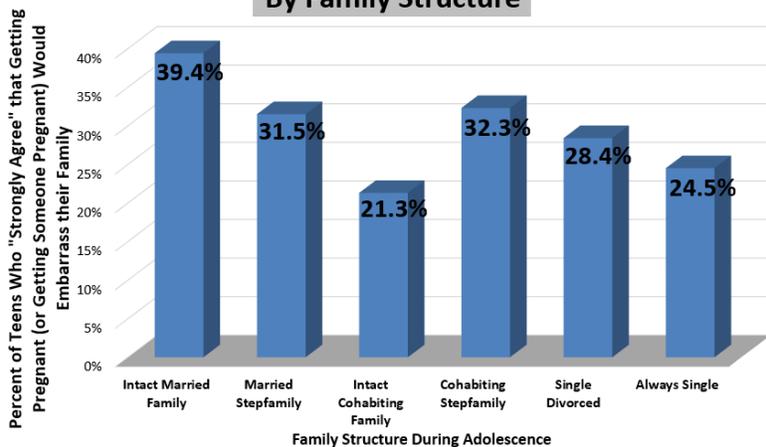
Dr. Sullins is an associate professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America.

¹ NSFG only surveys women up to age 44. The oldest group of women was selected in order to capture the most complete range of outcomes for sexual experience.

² Patrick Fagan, "Family and Social Trendlines 2014: The Behaviors of the American Family in the Five Major Institutions of Society," (Washington, D.C.: Marriage and Religion Research Institute, 2014). Available at <http://marri.us/publications/family-trends>.

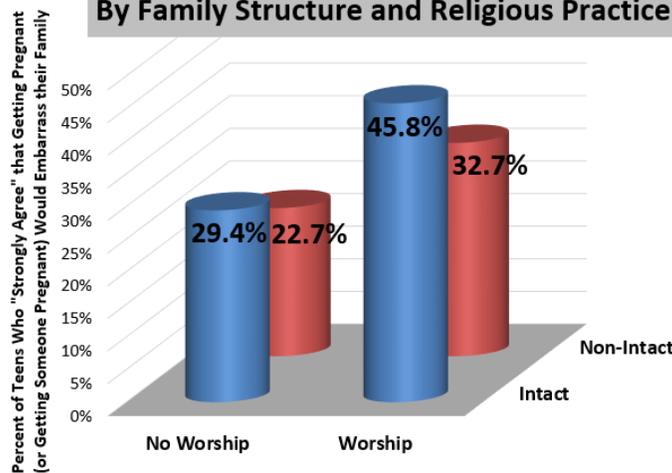
Teen Pregnancy and Family Response By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Teen Pregnancy Would Embarrass Family
By Family Structure**



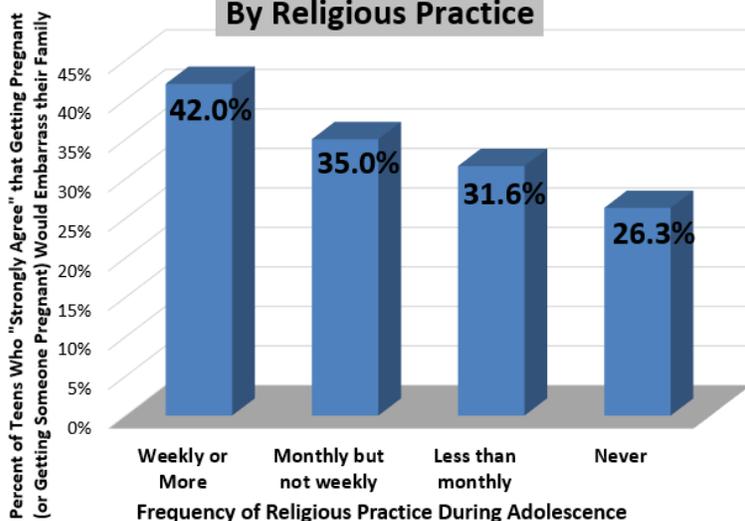
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave I

**Teen Pregnancy Would Embarrass Family
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave I

**Teen Pregnancy Would Embarrass Family
By Religious Practice**



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave I

This chart looks at the number of children who strongly agree that getting pregnant or getting someone else pregnant would embarrass their family at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (intact versus non-intact)* and two sets of religious attendance (worship vs. no worship).**

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The children from intact families that worship.
- The children from intact families that do not worship.
- The children from non-intact families that worship.
- The children from non-intact families that do not worship.

*The intact married family consists of children who live with their two biological parents who are married. Non-intact includes all other family types.

**Those who worship report attending religious services once a week or more often in the past year. Those who do not worship never attended religious services in the past year.

Teen Pregnancy and Family Response by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Wave 1 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health)¹ found that adolescents aged 13 to 19 in intact families that worshipped weekly or more were most likely to strongly agree that a pregnancy would embarrass their family.²

Family Structure: Teens in intact married families were most likely to report that getting pregnant (or getting someone pregnant) would embarrass their family (39.4 percent). They were followed by adolescents in cohabiting stepfamilies (32.3 percent), married stepfamilies (31.5 percent), single divorced parent families (28.4 percent), always-single-parent families (24.5 percent), and intact cohabiting families (21.3 percent).

Religious Practice: Teens who frequently worshipped were more likely to strongly agree that getting pregnant (or getting someone pregnant) would embarrass their family. Thirteen- to nineteen-year-olds who attended religious services weekly or more often within the past year were more likely to believe that a pregnancy would embarrass their family (42.0 percent) than those who attended monthly but not weekly (35.0 percent), less than monthly (31.6 percent), or never (26.3 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Thirteen- to nineteen-year-olds in intact worshipping families were most likely to strongly agree that getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant would embarrass their family (45.8 percent). Teens in intact non-worshipping families (29.4 percent) and non-intact worshipping families (32.7 percent) were less likely to believe that a pregnancy would embarrass their family. Teens in non-intact families that did not worship were least likely to think a pregnancy would bring embarrassment (22.7 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Family disapproval and embarrassment is an important sanction to discourage people from violating social norms.³ Research shows that both family structure and religious attendance form these norms. For instance, Les B. Whitbeck, Ronald L Simons, and Meei-Ying Kao found that sexual permissiveness of divorced parents significantly increases permissive attitudes in their children.⁴ On the other hand, family rules and parental

¹ The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health) is a congressionally-mandated longitudinal survey of American adolescents. Add Health drew a random sample of adolescents aged 13-19 in 1995 from junior high and high schools (Wave I) and has followed them in successive waves in 2001 (Wave III) and 2009 (Wave IV).

² Respondents were asked to react to the statement "If you got pregnant [males: if you got someone pregnant], it would be embarrassing for your family." Their options included: "strongly agree," "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," "disagree," "strongly disagree," "refused," "don't know," or "not applicable."

³ Alexander Staller and Paolo Petta, "Introducing Emotions into the Computational Study of Social Norms: A First Evaluation," *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulations* 4 (2001).

⁴ Les B. Whitbeck, Ronald L Simons, and Meei-Ying Kao, "The Effects of Divorced Mother's Dating Behaviors and Sexual Attitudes on the Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors of Their Adolescent Children," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 56 (1994): 615-621.

supervision of dating are associated with teens not having sexual intercourse, a later sexual debut, and fewer sexual partners.⁵

Likewise, religiosity establishes stricter sexual norms. Amy Burdette and Terrence Hill found that an increase in private religiosity is associated with a 93 percent reduction in the odds of sexual intercourse among 13-year-olds, and a 97 percent reduction in the odds of sexual debut for 17-year-olds.⁶

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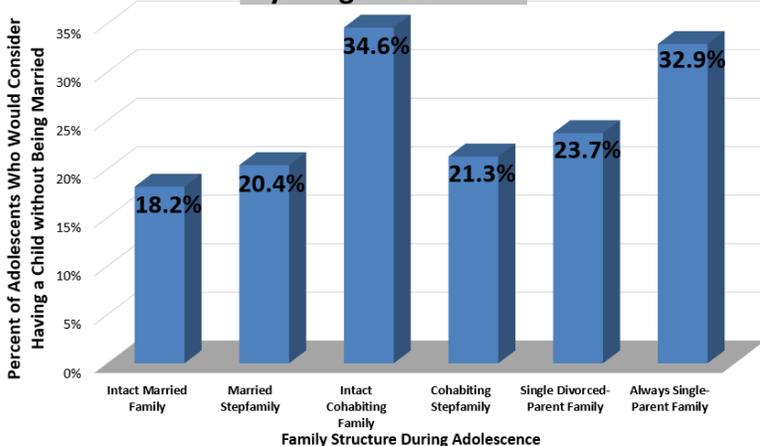
Dr. Sullins is an associate professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America.

⁵ Brent C. Miller, "Family influences on adolescent sexual and contraceptive behavior," *The Journal of Sex Research* (2002): 22-26.

⁶ Amy M. Burdette and Terrence D. Hill, "Religious Involvement and Transitions into Adolescent Sexual Activities," (2009): 16.

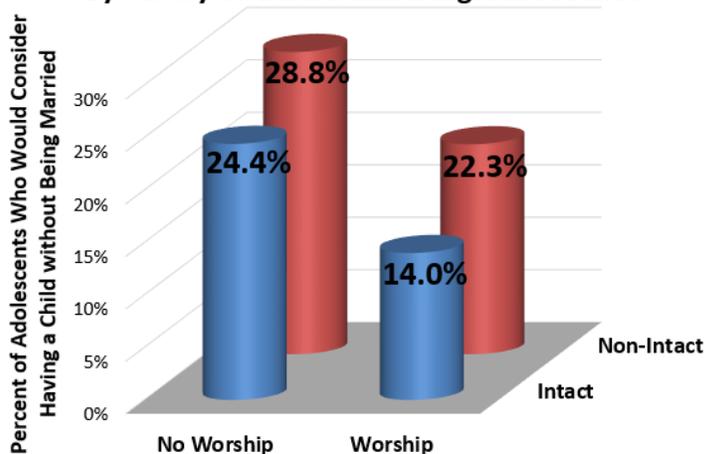
Adolescents OK with Having a Child Out-of-Wedlock By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adolescents OK with Having a Child Out-of-Wedlock
By Religious Practice



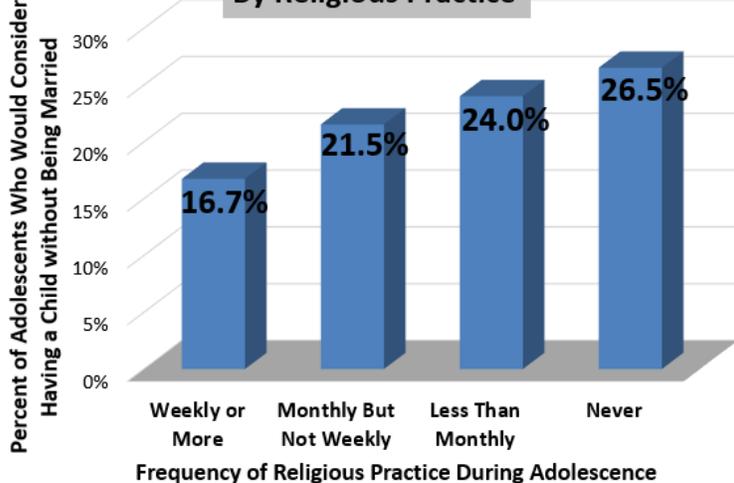
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave 1

Adolescents OK with Having a Child Out-of-Wedlock
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave 1

Adolescents OK with Having a Child Out-of-Wedlock
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave 1

This chart looks at the number of adolescents who would consider having a child outside of marriage, at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (intact versus non-intact)* and two sets of religious attendance (worship vs. no worship).**

The individuals occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The children from intact families that worship.
- The children from intact families that do not worship.
- The children from non-intact families that worship.
- The children from non-intact families that do not worship.

*The intact married family consists of children who live with their two biological parents who are married. Non-intact includes all other family types.

**Those who worship report attending religious services once a week or more often in the past year. Those who do not worship never attended religious services in the past year.

Adolescents OK with Having a Child Out-of-Wedlock by Family Structure and Religious Practice

The percentage of adolescents (aged 13 to 19) who would consider having a child outside of marriage was lowest among those who were raised in intact families that attended religious services weekly or more.¹

Family Structure: For teenagers aged 13 to 19, the likelihood that they would consider having a child out of wedlock differed significantly from one family structure to another as the following illustrates:

- **Intact Married Family (18.2 percent): Least likely**
- **Married Step Families (20.4 percent).**
- **Cohabiting Stepfamilies (21.3 percent).**
- **Single-Divorced-Parent Families (23.7 percent).**
- **Always Single Families (32.9 percent).**
- **Biologically Intact Cohabiting Families (34.6 percent): Most likely**

Adolescents raised in biologically intact cohabiting families were almost twice as likely as those raised in intact married families to be ok with having a child out-of-wedlock (34.6 percent versus 18.2 percent, respectively).

Religious Practice: For teenagers aged 13 to 19, the likelihood that they would consider having a child out of wedlock differed significantly from one level of worship to another as the following illustrates:

- **Attend Religious Service Weekly or More (16.7 percent): Least likely**
- **Attend Religious Service Monthly but Not Weekly (21.5 percent).**
- **Attend Religious Service Less Than Monthly (24 percent).**
- **Never Attend Religious Service (26.5 percent): Most likely**

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: For teenagers aged 13 to 19, the likelihood that they would consider having a child out of wedlock differed significantly among the different combinations of family intactness and levels of religious worship as the following illustrates:

- **Intact Worshipping Families (14 percent): Least likely**
- **Non-Intact Worshipping Families (22.3 percent).**
- **Intact Non-Worshipping Families (24.4 percent).**
- **Non-intact non-worshipping families (28.8 percent): Most likely**

Those from non-intact non-worshipping families were twice as likely to consider having a child out-of-wedlock as those raised in an intact worshipping family (28.8 percent versus 14 percent respectively).

¹The data come from Wave 1 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health). Respondents were asked to respond to the question "Since January 1, with how many people in total have you had a sexual relationship?" Their answers choices were to give a specific number or to answer "refused," "legitimate skip," "don't know," or "not applicable."

Related Insights from Other Studies: MARRI has previously [shown](#) that females who grew up in intact families who worshiped weekly were least likely to have an unwed pregnancy (18 percent), and females from non-intact families were most likely (40 percent).²

Using the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, Jay Teachman of Western Washington University found that women who grew up in intact families were less likely to cohabit before marriage, or to have a premarital birth or conception. Women who were most likely to have premarital conceptions were those who experienced parental divorce or remarriage.³

According to data from the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children, (which looked at white mothers and their children over a 31 year period) the more frequently 18-year-olds attended religious services, the more likely they were to disapprove of premarital sex, cohabitation, abortion, and divorce.⁴

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² "Ever had an unwed pregnancy' by current religious attendance and structure of family origin," Marriage and Religious Research, Mapping America 101 <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF11C38.pdf>.

³ Teachman, Jay D. "The Childhood Living Arrangements of Children and the Characteristics of Their Marriages." Journal of Family Issues Vol. 25, No. 1 (January 2004) pp. 86-111.

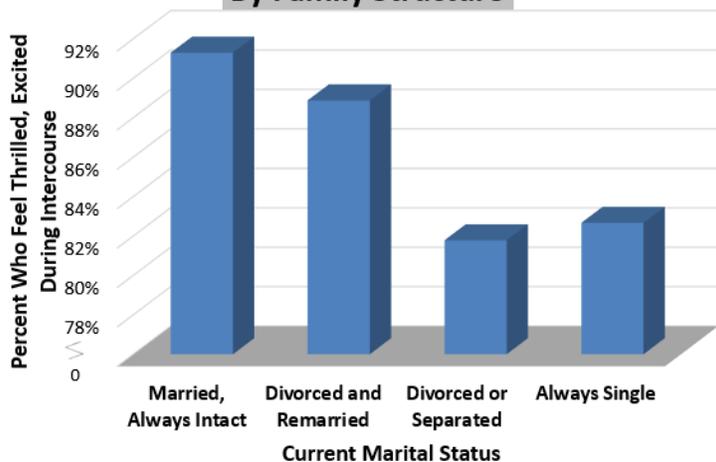
⁴ Pearce, L.D. & Thronton, A. "Religious Identity and Family Ideologies in the Transition to Adulthood." Journal of Marriage and Family Vol. 69 (2007) pp. 1227-1243.



Sexual Satisfaction

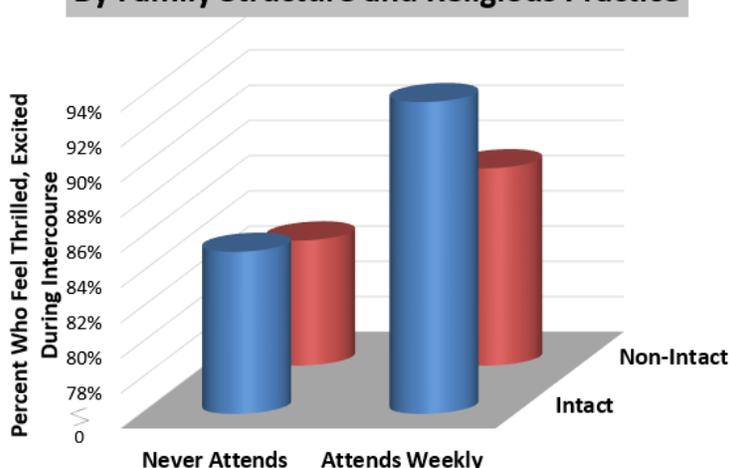
Feels Thrilled, Excited During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Feels Thrilled, Excited During Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure



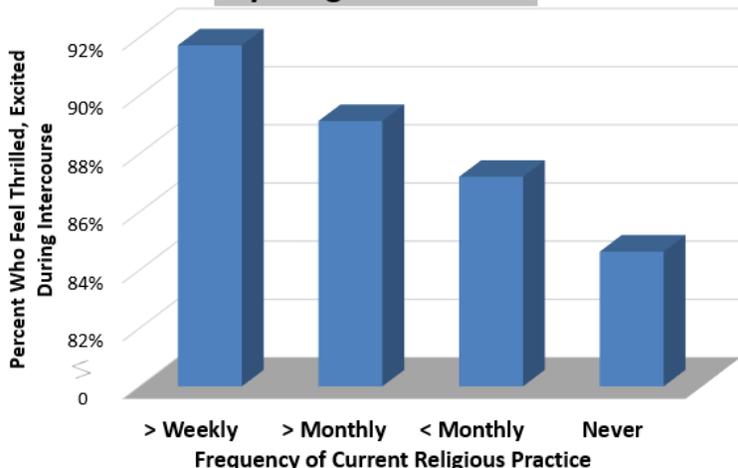
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Thrilled, Excited During Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Thrilled, Excited During Sexual Intercourse
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at adults who feel thrilled or excited during intercourse with their current sexual partner at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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 (never vs. weekly).

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.)

Feels Thrilled, Excited During Sexual Intercourse 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 were most likely to report feeling thrilled and excited during intercourse with their current sexual partner.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were most likely (91.3 percent) to report feeling thrilled and excited during intercourse with their current sexual partner, followed by those who were divorced and remarried (88.9 percent), those who were always single (82.7 percent), and those who were divorced or separated (81.8 percent).

Religious Practice: Those who worshipped weekly at the time of the survey were most likely to report feeling thrilled and excited during intercourse with their current sexual partner (91.7 percent), followed by those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly (89.1 percent), those who worshipped less than monthly (87.2 percent), and those who never worshipped (84.6 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly (93.7 percent) were most likely to report feeling thrilled and excited during intercourse with their current sexual partner. Those in non-intact family structures and singles who worshipped weekly (87.2 percent), those in intact marriages who never worshipped (85.2 percent), and those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped (83.1 percent) were less likely to feel thrilled and excited.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Married men and women report the most sexual pleasure and fulfillment¹ and have more enjoyable sexual intercourse more often.² Among healthy senior citizens aged 80 to 102, married men and women are more likely to engage in and enjoy sexual activity and intercourse.³ Very religious women report greater satisfaction in sexual intercourse with their husbands than do moderately religious or non-religious women.⁴

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

¹ Robert T. Michael et al., *Sex in America: A Definitive Survey* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1994), 124-129; Edward O. Laumann et al., *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 364, table 10.5; Andrew Greeley, *Faithful Attraction: Discovering Intimacy, Love and Fidelity in American Marriage* (New York: Tom Doherty Association, 1991), see chapter 6. As cited in Glenn T. Stanton, "Why Marriage Matters." Available at <http://www.ampartnership.org/resourcecenter/news/89-why-marriage-matters.html> (accessed July 27, 2011).

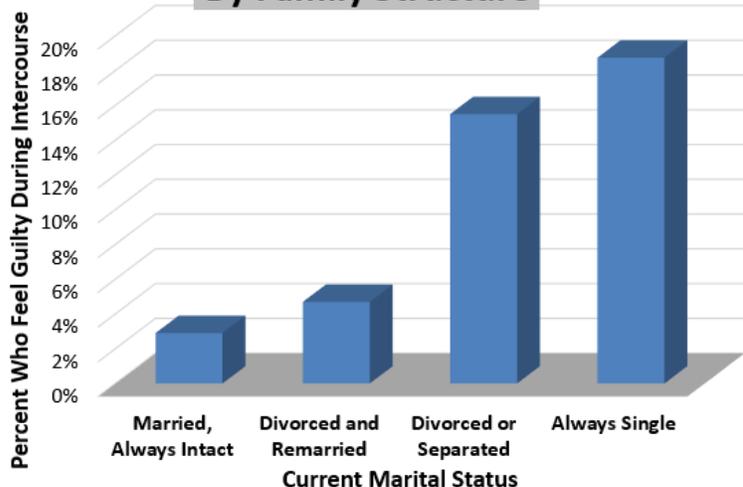
² Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better off Financially*. As cited by Richard Niolon. Available at http://successfulesingles.com/media_articles_files/The%20Case%20for%20Marriage:%20Why%20Married%20People%20Are%20Happier,%20Healthier,%20and%20Better%20off%20Financially.pdf (accessed 27 July 2011).

³ Judy G. Bretschneider and Norma L. McCoy, "Sexual Interest and Behavior in Healthy 80- to 102-Year-Olds," *Archives of Sexual Behaviors* 17, no. 2 (1988): 125.

⁴ Carol Tavris and Susan Sadd, *The Redbook Report on Female Sexuality* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1977).

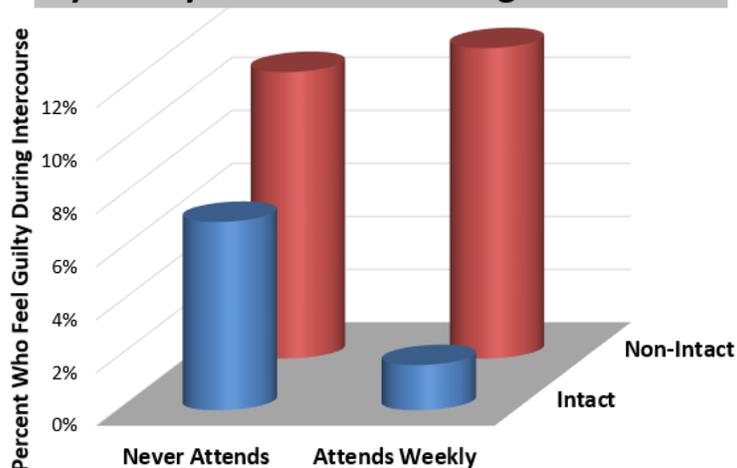
Feels Guilty During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Feels Guilty During Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Guilty During Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at adults who feel guilty during intercourse with their current sexual partner at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

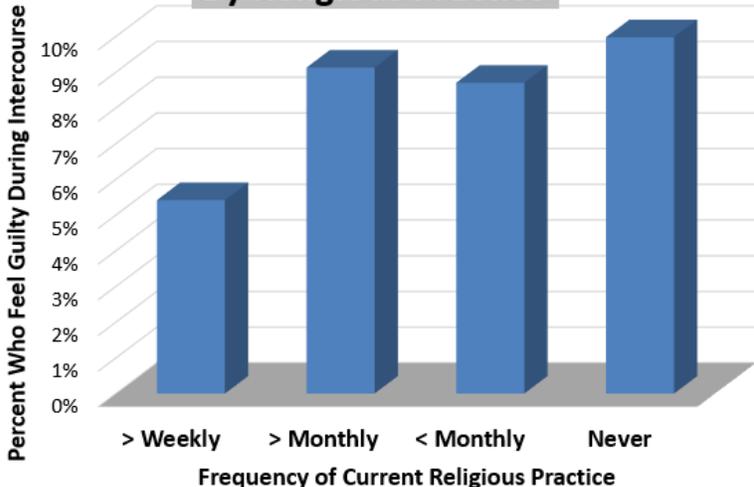
These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of marital statuses (always-intact vs. non-intact and singles) and two sets of religious attendance (never vs. weekly).*

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.)*

Feels Guilty During Sexual Intercourse
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Guilty During Sexual Intercourse 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 at the time of the survey were least likely to feel guilty during intercourse with their current sexual partner.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were least likely (2.9 percent) to feel guilty during intercourse with their current sexual partner, followed by those who were divorced and remarried (4.7 percent), those who were divorced or separated (15.5 percent), and those who were always single (18.7 percent).

Religious Practice: Those who worshipped weekly at the time of the survey were least likely to feel guilty during intercourse with their current sexual partner (5.4 percent), followed by those who worshipped less than monthly (8.7 percent), those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly (9.1 percent), and those who never worshipped (10 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly were much less likely to feel guilty during intercourse with their current sexual partner (1.7 percent), followed by those in intact marriages who never worshipped (7.1 percent). Those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped (10.8 percent) and those in non-intact family structures and singles who worshipped weekly (11.7 percent) were most likely to feel guilty.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Couples in intact marriages were least likely to have committed adultery.¹ This may contribute to the fact that they were the least likely to feel guilty during intercourse with their current partners. Furthermore, the incidence of adultery was lowest among those who worship weekly (12.4 percent), compared to those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly (17.1 percent), less than monthly (20.6 percent), or never (24.8 percent).²

Analysis of always-single undergraduate males and females found that those “predisposed to respond with guilt over sex” (those it classified as “high-guilt”) were less likely to participate in more intimate sexual activity.³ High-guilt undergraduate men cited moral beliefs (among other reasons) as their rationale for not participating in intercourse more than “low-guilt” undergraduate men, and moral belief was the reason for nonparticipation that primarily divided high-guilt and low-guilt undergraduate women (high-guilt women were reported far more often that they believed various sexual behaviors to be wrong than low-guilt women).⁴

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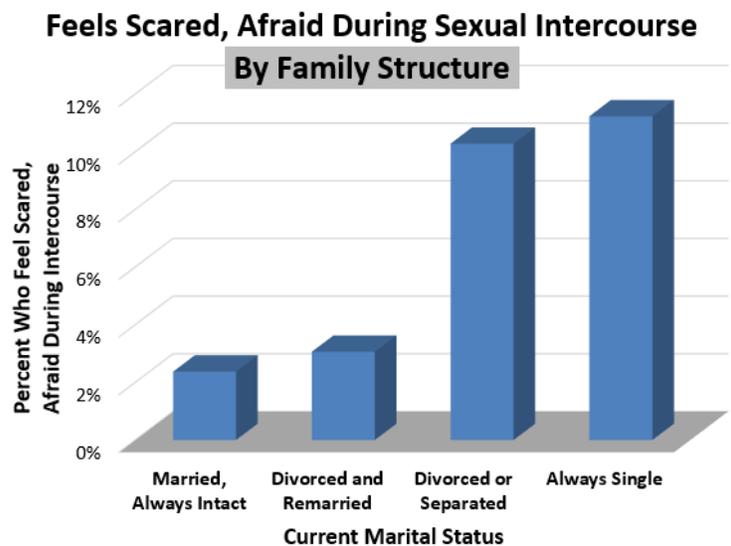
¹ Patrick F. Fagan and Althea Nagai, “Adultery by Marital Status.” Available at <http://www.frc.org/mappingamerica/mapping-america-74-adultery-by-marital-status>. Accessed August 26, 2011.

² Marriage and Religion Research Institute, “The Benefits of Religious Worship: Positive Outcomes Associated with Weekly Worship,” (2011): 8. Available at www.marri.us/benefits-religious-worship. Accessed July 3, 2012.

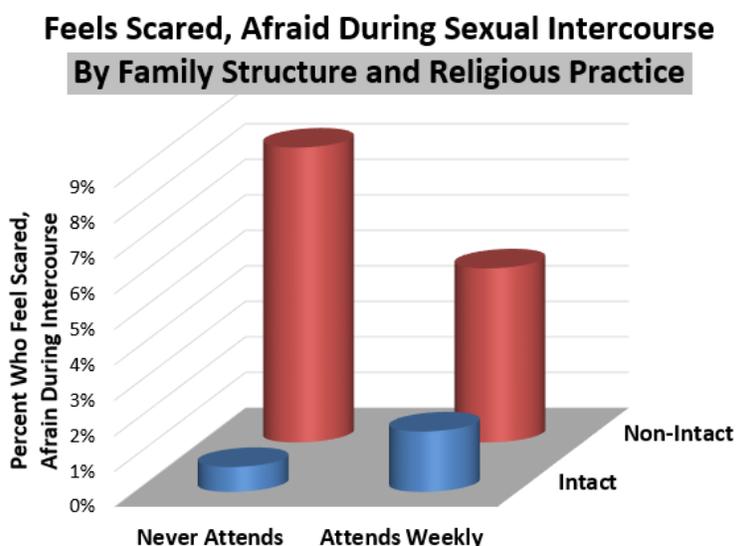
³ Donald L. Mosher and Herbert J. Cross, “Sex Guilt and Premarital Sexual Experiences of College Students,” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 36, no. 1 (1971): 30.

⁴ Donald L. Mosher and Herbert J. Cross, “Sex Guilt and Premarital Sexual Experiences of College Students,” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 36, no. 1 (1971): 31.

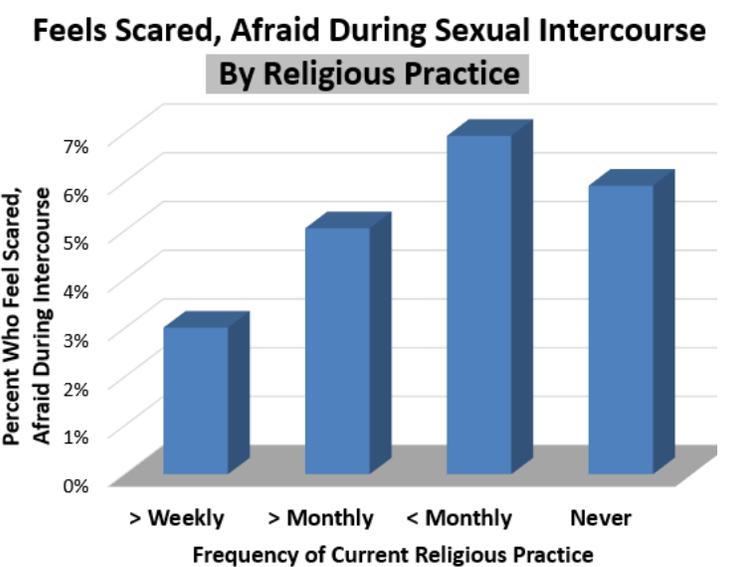
Feels Scared, Afraid During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at adults who feel scared or afraid during intercourse with their current sexual partner at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)*

Feels Scared, Afraid During Sexual Intercourse 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 and those who worshipped weekly were least likely to report feeling scared or afraid during intercourse with their current sexual partner.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were least likely to feel scared or afraid during intercourse with their current sexual partner (2.4 percent), followed by those who were divorced and remarried (3.1 percent). Those who were divorced or separated (10.3 percent) and those who were always single (11.2 percent) were much more likely to feel scared or afraid.

Religious Practice: Those who worshipped weekly (3 percent) were least likely to feel scared or afraid during intercourse with their current sexual partner, followed by those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly (5 percent), those who never worshipped (5.9 percent), and those who worshipped less than monthly (6.9 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who never worshipped were least likely to feel scared or afraid during intercourse with their current sexual partner (.7 percent)¹, followed closely by those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly (1.7 percent). Those in non-intact family structures and singles who worshipped weekly (4.9 percent) were more likely to feel scared or afraid, and those in non-intact family structures and singles who never worshipped (8.3 percent) were even more so.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Though the National Health and Social Life Survey included only adults, data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows those who worship weekly are least likely (14 percent) to have intercourse at or before age 14. Those who worship less than weekly but at least monthly (20 percent), those who worship less than monthly (24 percent), and those who never worship (26 percent) were much more likely to have had intercourse at or before age 14.² Sexual debut at such an early age may contribute to fear during intercourse.

Among unmarried girls who have never had intercourse, those who were adamant about their unlikelihood to engage in premarital intercourse (“adamant virgins”) were very likely (50 percent) to report that religious or moral reservations were their primary reason for abstaining, compared to a very small proportion (2 percent) of virgin girls who did not report that they were very unlikely to engage in premarital sex (“potential nonvirgins”). However, 15 percent of these potential nonvirgins reported that their primary reason for abstaining was fear of pregnancy, compared to only 7 percent of adamant virgins.

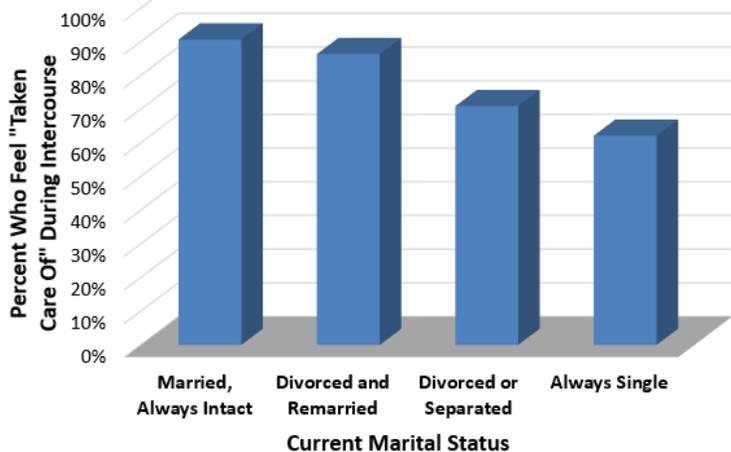
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

¹ This group being the “best” situation is unusual and worth noting because it breaks the standard pattern.

² Marriage and Religion Research Institute, “The Benefits of Religious Worship: Positive Outcomes Associated with Weekly Worship,” (2011): 12. Available at www.marri.us/benefits-religious-worship. Accessed July 3, 2012.

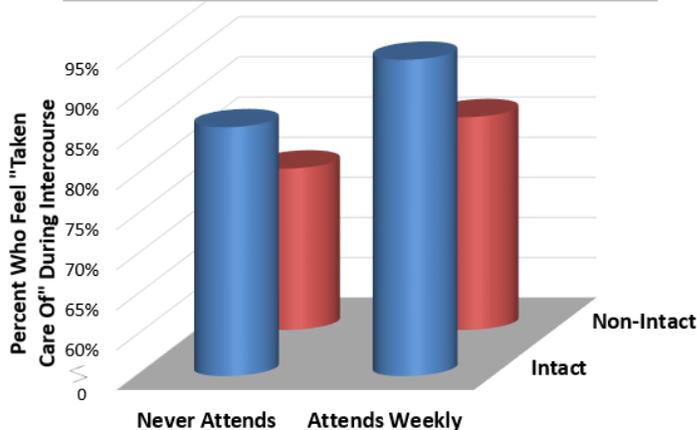
Feels "Taken Care Of" During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Feels "Taken Care Of" During Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure



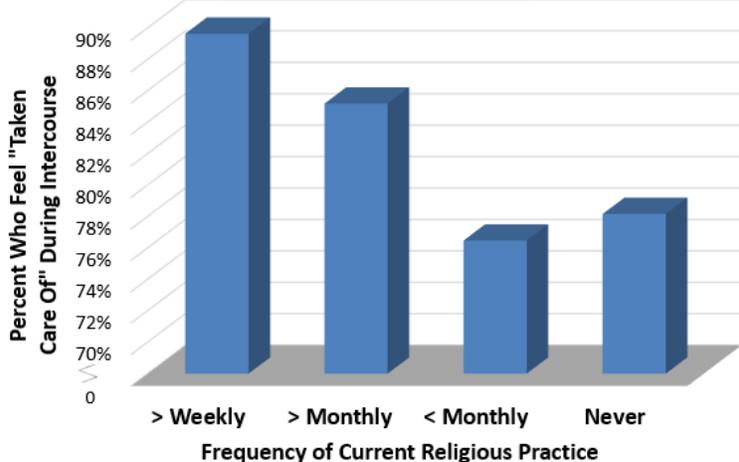
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels "Taken Care Of" During Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels "Taken Care Of" During Sexual Intercourse
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at adults who feel taken care of during sexual intercourse with their current sexual partner at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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 (weekly vs. never).

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.)

Feels "Taken Care Of" During Sexual Intercourse 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 were most likely to report feeling "taken care of" during intercourse with their current sexual partner.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were most likely to report feeling "taken care of" during intercourse with their current sexual partner (90.7 percent), followed by those who were divorced and remarried (86.3 percent), those who were divorced or separated (70.9 percent), and those who were always single (62.1 percent).

Religious Practice: Those who worshipped weekly at the time of the survey were most likely to report feeling "taken care of" during intercourse with their current sexual partner (89.6 percent), followed by those who worshipped less than weekly but at least monthly (85.2 percent), those who never worshipped (78.2 percent), and those who worshipped less than monthly (76.5 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshipped weekly (94.4 percent) were most likely to report feeling "taken care of" during intercourse with their current sexual partner. Those in intact marriages who never worshipped (83.3 percent) and those in non-intact family structures who worshipped weekly (81.5 percent) were less likely to feel "taken care of"; those in non-intact family structures who never worshipped were least likely to feel "taken care of" (75.1 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: The period after childbirth is a relatively uncomfortable and vulnerable period for many women; between one quarter and one half feel less physically attractive postpartum.¹ Marital quality is associated with tenderness between spouses and with intercourse during this postpartum period as well as during the pregnancy itself.²

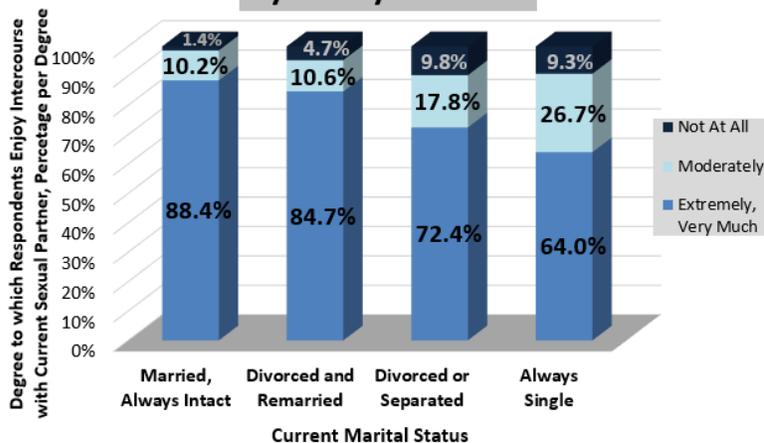
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

¹ L.C. Holtzman, "Sexual Practices during Pregnancy," *The Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health* 21 (1976): 29-38; R.P. Perkins, "Sexuality in Pregnancy: What Determines Behaviour?" *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 9 (1982): 189-198; C.P. Cowan and P.A. Cowan, *When Partners become Parents* (New York, Basic: 1992), all as cited in Kirsten von Sydow, "Sexuality during Pregnancy and after Childbirth: A Metacontent Analysis of 59 Studies," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 47, no. 1 (1999): 38.

² S.A. Elliott and J.P. Watson, "Sex during Pregnancy and the First Postnatal Year," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 29 (1985): 541-548; Wendy Ellen Miller and Steven Friedman, "Male and Female Sexuality During Pregnancy: Behavior and Attitudes," *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality* 1, no. 2 (1988): 17-37; B. Reichle, *Die Geburt des ersten Kindes—eine Herausforderung für die Partnerschaft* (Bielefeld: Kleine, 1994); G. Gloger-Tippelt and M. Huerkamp, "Parental relationship and security of infant-mother attachment," manuscript submitted for publication, all as cited in Kirsten von Sydow, "Sexuality during Pregnancy and after Childbirth: A Metacontent Analysis of 59 Studies," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 47, no. 1 (1999): 41.

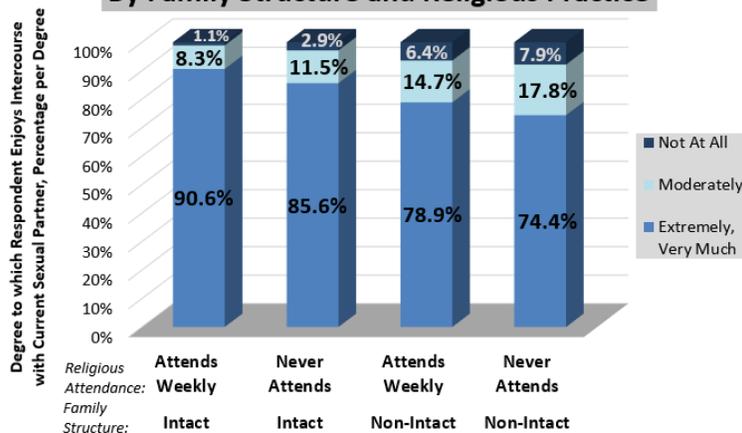
Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure



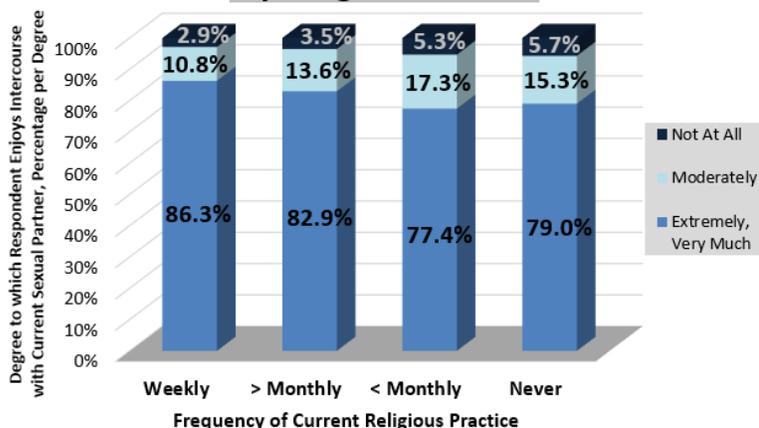
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at the degree to which adults enjoyed intercourse with their current sexual partner, based on the percentage reporting a given degree of enjoyment, at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)

Enjoyment of Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were most likely to report enjoying intercourse “extremely” or “very” much with their current sexual partner, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages had the largest percentage of persons reporting that they “extremely” or “very” much enjoyed intercourse with their current sexual partner (88.4 percent). This enjoyment decreased in non-intact structures and among singles: 84.7 percent of those who were divorced and remarried; 72.4 percent of those who were divorced or separated; 64 percent of those who were always single report “extremely” or “very” much enjoying intercourse with their current sexual partner.

Religious Practice: Those who worshiped weekly were most likely to report that they “extremely” or “very” much enjoyed intercourse with their current sexual partner (86.3 percent). As worship decreased, so did a couple’s enjoyment of intercourse: 82.9 percent of those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly; 79 percent of those who never worshiped; 77.4 percent of those who worshiped less than monthly reported enjoying “extremely” or “very” much enjoying intercourse with their current partner.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those who were in intact marriages and worshiped weekly were most likely to report that they “extremely” or “very” much enjoyed intercourse with their current sexual partner (90.6 percent), followed by those in intact marriages who never worshiped (85.6 percent), those in non-intact family structures or who were single and who worshiped weekly (78.9 percent), and those in non-intact family structures or who were single and who never worshiped (74.4 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: One survey of 797 married men and women found that sexual satisfaction within their marriages was not linked just to their sexual interactions but was strongly associated with the other nonsexual aspects of their relationship as well. These included the couple’s religious life, mutual participation in recreational activities, and the sharing of thoughts, dreams and feelings.¹

Another study examined the link between religiosity and sexual gratification in the middle years of marriage and found that even where sexual gratification may be lacking, religiosity reduced the impact of the lack of sexual gratification on overall marital satisfaction.²

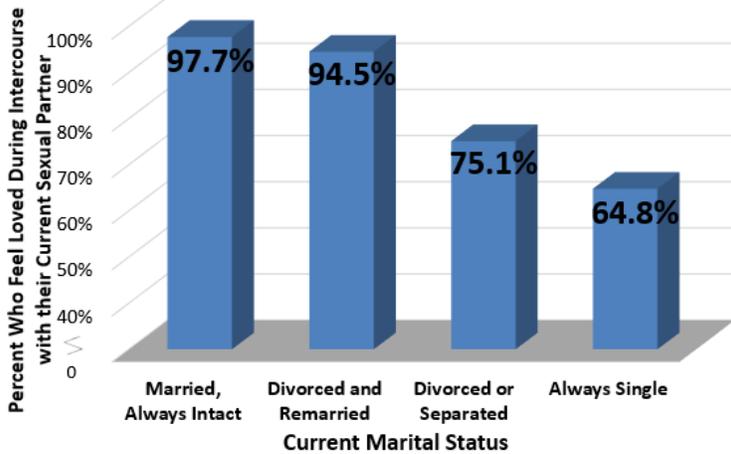
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

¹ Michael Young, George Denny, Raffy Luquis, and Tamera Young, “Correlates of Sexual Satisfaction in Marriage,” *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 7, no. 2 (1998): 116, 120.

² Paul Wallin, “Religiosity, Sexual Gratification, and Marital Satisfaction in the Middle Years of Marriage,” *Journal of Social Forces* 42, no. 3 (1964): 303-309.

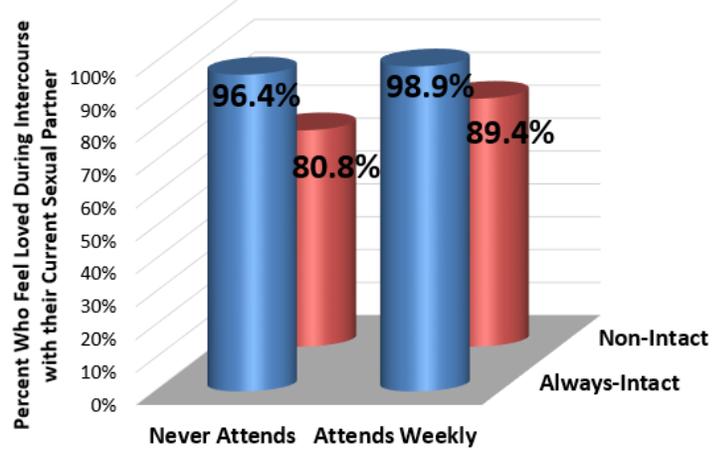
Feels Loved During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Feels Loved During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure



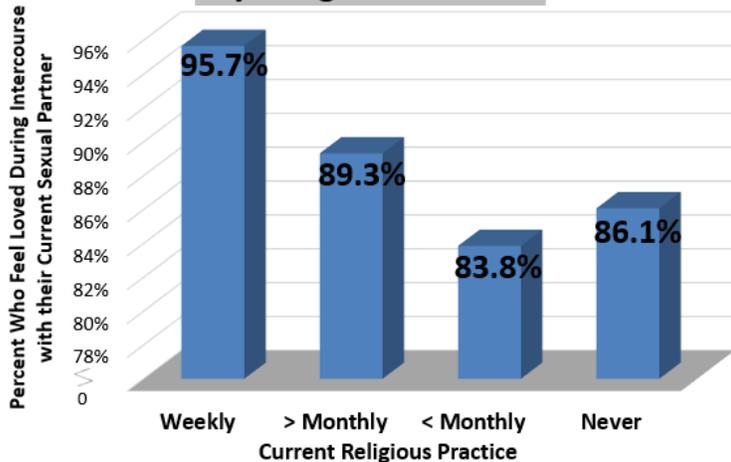
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Loved During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Loved During Sexual Intercourse By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at the number of adults who feel loved during intercourse with their current sexual partner at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)*

Feels Loved During Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages who worshiped weekly at the time of the survey were most likely to report feeling loved during intercourse with their current sexual partner, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were most likely to report feeling loved during intercourse (97.7 percent). Feeling loved decreases among those in non-intact family structures and singles: 94.5 percent of those who were divorced and remarried reported feeling loved during intercourse; 75.1 percent of those who were divorced or separated reported feeling loved; and 64.8 percent of those who were always single reported feeling loved during intercourse.

Religious Practice: Those who worshiped weekly at the time of the survey were most likely to report feeling loved during intercourse with their current sexual partner (95.7 percent), followed by those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly (89.3 percent), those who never worshiped (86.1 percent), and those who worshiped less than monthly (83.8 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were most likely to report feeling loved during intercourse (98.9 percent). Those in intact marriages who never worshiped (96.4 percent), those in non-intact family structures or who were single who worshiped weekly (89.4 percent), and those in non-intact family structures or who were single who never worshiped (80.8 percent) were less likely to feel loved during intercourse with their current sexual partner.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Even individuals engaged in premarital sex place high value on the importance of feeling loved and needed by their partner, as one survey of 249 college students found.¹ A study that examined the proposition that love promotes commitment in relationships found that the experience and display of love was correlated with actions taken to build commitment within a relationship, such as constructive conflict resolution during times when the relationship was threatened.² Delaying commencement of sexual relations until marriage further promoted feelings of commitment for couples. Another study of 2,035 married participants found that only 16 percent of couples waited until marriage to have sex. However, of those participants who did wait, 22 percent rated the stability of their marriage higher and their satisfaction with the relationship was 20 percent higher than the couples who did not wait.³

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

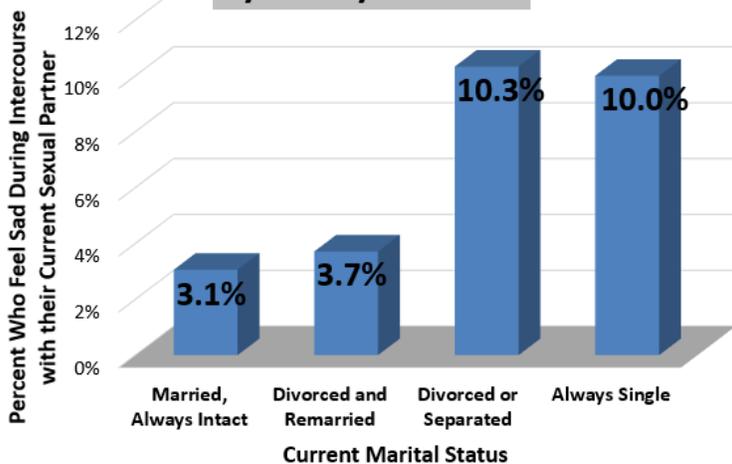
¹ Janell Lucille Carroll, Kari Doray Volk, and Janet Shibley Hyde, "Differences Between Males and Females in Motives for Engaging in Sexual Intercourse," *Journal of Sexual Behavior* 14, no. 2 (1985): 131-139.

² Gian Gonzaga, Dacher Keltner, Esme Londahl, and Michael Smith, "Love and the Commitment Problem in Romantic Relations and Friendship," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 18, no. 2 (August 2001): 247-262.

³ Dean Busby, Jason Carroll, and Brian Willoughby, "Compatibility or Restraint? The Effects of Sexual Timing on Marriage Relationships," *Journal of Family Psychology* 24, no. 6 (December 2010): 766-774.

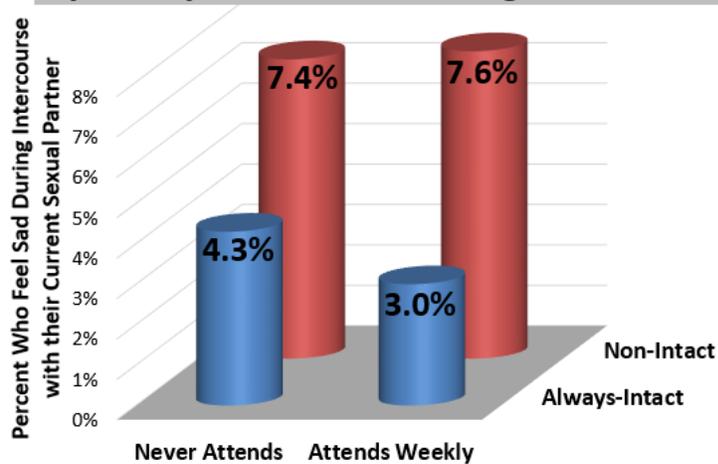
Feels Sad During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Feels Sad During Intercourse
By Family Structure



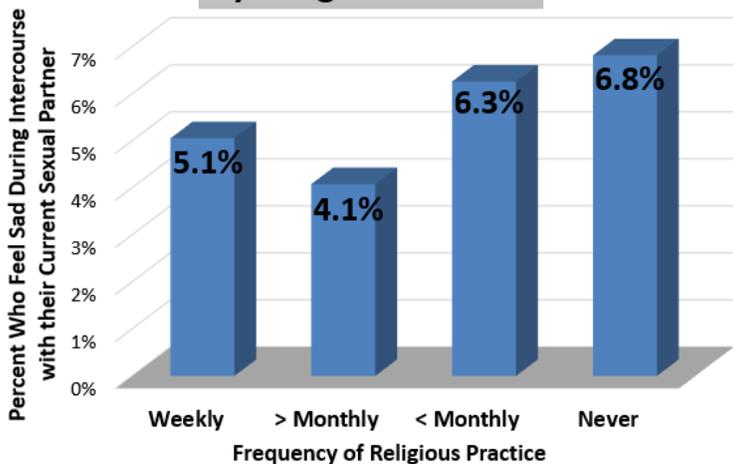
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Sad During Intercourse
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Sad During Intercourse
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at the number of adults who have ever felt sad during sexual intercourse with their current sexual partner at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)*

Feels Sad During Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were least likely to feel sad during intercourse, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were least likely to feel sad during intercourse (3.1 percent). This is more prevalent in non-intact family structures and among singles: 3.7 percent of those who were divorced and remarried felt sad during intercourse; 10 percent of those who were always single felt sad; and 10.3 percent of those who were divorced or separated felt sad.

Religious Practice: Those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly were least likely to feel sad during intercourse with their current sexual partner (4.1 percent). As regular worship decreased, sadness increased: 5.1 percent of those who worshiped weekly felt sad during intercourse with their current partner; 6.3 percent of those who worshiped less than monthly felt sad during intercourse; 6.8 percent of those who never worshiped felt sad during intercourse.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were the least likely to feel sad during intercourse (3 percent), followed by those in intact marriages who never worshiped (4.3 percent). Those in non-intact family structures or who were single who never worshiped (7.4 percent) and those in non-intact family structures or who were single who worshiped weekly (7.6 percent) were most likely to feel sad during intercourse with their current sexual partner.

Related Insights from Other Studies: One study examined the hypothesis that adults who were sexually abused either as children or as adults were more likely to develop depression later on. Sexual victimization was found to lead to depression when an individual developed a tendency to think about their sadness continuously.¹

The 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 13,601 high school students found that for both males and females, feeling sad and hopeless were correlated with a history of forced sex.²

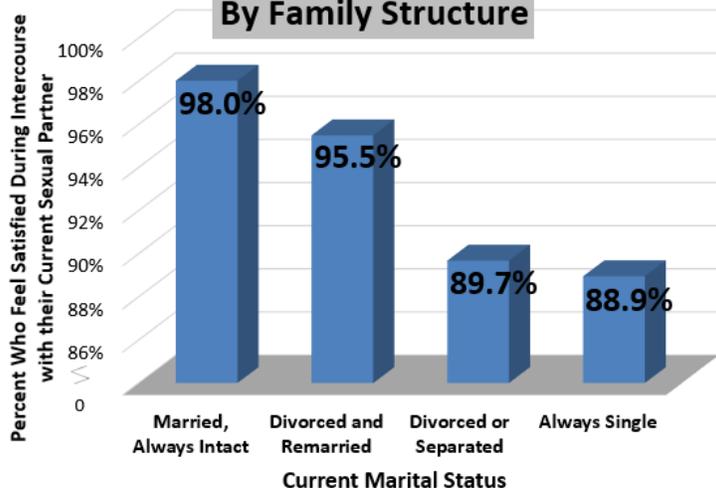
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai

¹ Michael Conway, Morris Mendelson, Constantina Giannopoulos, Patricia A.R. Csank, Susan L. Holm, "Childhood and Adult Sexual Abuse, Rumination on Sadness and Dysphoria," *Journal of Child and Abuse and Neglect* 28, no. 4 (April 2004): 393-410.

² Donna E. Howard and Min Qi Wang, "Psychosocial correlates of U.S. adolescents who report a history of forced sexual intercourse," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36, no. 5 (May 2005): 372-379.

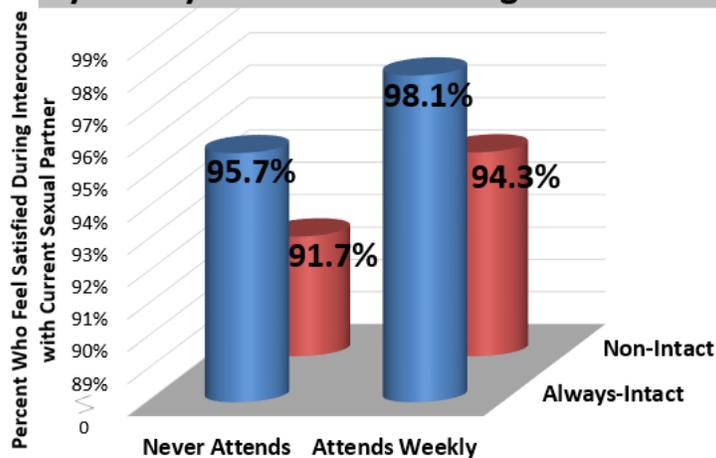
Feels Satisfied During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Feels Satisfied During Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure**



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

**Feels Satisfied During Sexual Intercourse
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

**Feels Satisfied During Sexual Intercourse
By Religious Practice**



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at the number of adults who have ever felt satisfied in the previous year at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)*

Feels Satisfied During Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages and who worshipped weekly were most likely to report feeling satisfied during intercourse with their current sexual partner, according to the 1992 National Health and Social Life Survey.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were most likely to report feeling satisfied during intercourse (98 percent). Satisfaction was less common among non-intact family structures and those who were single: 95.9 percent of those who were divorced and remarried reported feeling satisfied; 89.7 percent of those who were divorced or separated reported feeling satisfied during intercourse with their current sexual partner, and 88.9 percent of those who were always single reported feeling satisfied.

Religious Practice: Those who worshiped weekly were most likely to report feeling satisfied during intercourse with their current sexual partner (97 percent). This satisfaction decreased as regular worship decreased: 96.5 percent of those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly, 93.7 percent of those who worshiped less than monthly, and 92 percent of those who never worshiped reported feeling satisfied during intercourse.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were most likely to report feeling satisfied during intercourse (98.1 percent). Those in intact marriages who never worshiped (95.7 percent), those in non-intact family structures or who were single who worshiped weekly (94.3 percent), and those in non-intact family structures or those who were single who never worshiped (91.7 percent) were less likely to feel satisfied during intercourse with their current sexual partner.

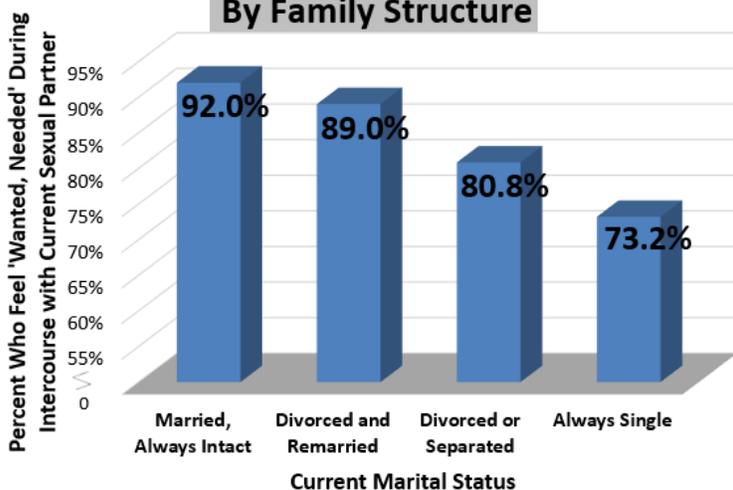
Related Insights from Other Studies: Communication within a relationship and sexual satisfaction independently predict overall marital satisfaction. When couples communicate successfully, sexual satisfaction does not greatly increase marital satisfaction. Conversely, if couples do not communicate well but are sexually satisfied, they will experience greater marital satisfaction than if they had a less satisfying sexual relationship. Thus, sexual satisfaction in a relationship may compensate for the negative effects of poor communication on overall satisfaction in a marriage relationship.¹

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

¹ Samantha Litzinger and Kristina Coop Gordon, "Exploring Relationships Among Communication, Sexual Satisfaction, and Marital Satisfaction," *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 31, no. 5 (2005): 409-424.

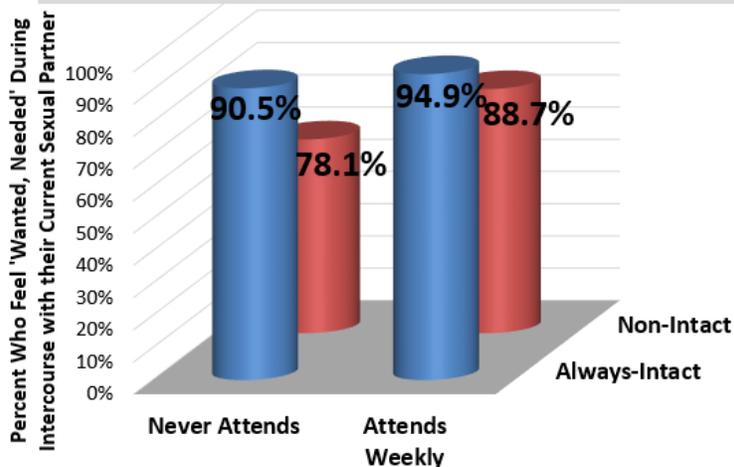
Feels Wanted, Needed During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

**Feels 'Wanted, Needed' During Intercourse
By Family Structure**



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

**Feels 'Wanted, Needed' During Intercourse
By Family Structure and Religious Practice**



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

**Feels 'Wanted, Needed' During Intercourse
By Religious Practice**



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at the number of adults who have felt wanted or needed during intercourse with their current sexual partner at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)*

Feels Wanted, Needed During Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were most likely to report feeling wanted and needed during intercourse with their current sexual partner, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992), the most detailed analysis of sexual behavior in America.

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were most likely to report feeling wanted and needed during intercourse (92 percent). These feelings were less prevalent in non-intact family structures and among singles: 89 percent of those who were divorced and remarried report feeling wanted and needed; 80.8 percent of those who were divorced or separated report feeling wanted and needed and 73.2 percent of those who were always single reported feeling wanted and needed during intercourse with their current sexual partner.

Religious Practice: Those who worshiped weekly were most likely to report feeling wanted and needed during intercourse with their current sexual partner (93 percent), followed by those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly (86.4 percent), those who worshiped less than monthly (83.8 percent), and those who never worshiped (82.4 percent).

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were most likely to report feeling wanted and needed during intercourse (94.9 percent). Those in intact marriages who never worshiped (90.5 percent) and those in non-intact family structures or who were single who worshiped weekly (88.7 percent) were less likely to feel wanted and needed by their current sexual partner, and those in non-intact family structures or who were single who never worshiped (78.1 percent) were even less so.

Related Insights from Other Studies: A Chinese study of 4,769 female university students found that, of the students who had had sexual intercourse, at their first intercourse 19.8 percent experienced sex under emotional pressure and 4.3 percent were violently coerced. However, religion may be protective against unwanted intercourse, as religious students were less likely to experience coercion at first sexual intercourse.¹

Forced sexual intercourse can cause or exacerbate various psychological problems. Analysis of data from the 1987 National Survey of Children found that white females 18 to 22 years of age who reported being forced to have sexual intercourse were found to have a lower internal locus of control, have higher depression scores, and need more psychological attention than those who did not report forced intercourse.²

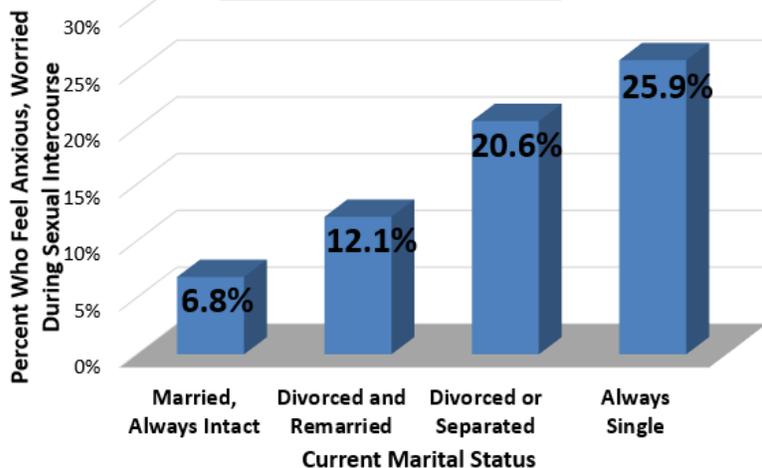
Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Althea Nagai, Ph.D.

¹ Yan Hong, et al., "Coerced First Sexual Intercourse Among Female Chinese College Students," *Chinese Journal of Public Health*, January 2007.

² Brent C. Miller, Bruce H. Monson and Maria C. Norton, "The Effects of Forced Sexual Intercourse on White Female Adolescents," *Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect* 19, no. 10 (October 1995): 1289-1301.

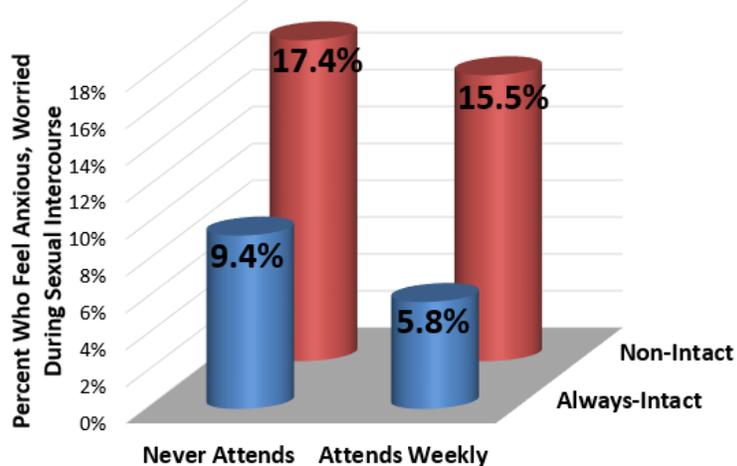
Feels Anxious, Worried During Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Feels Anxious, Worried During Intercourse
By Family Structure



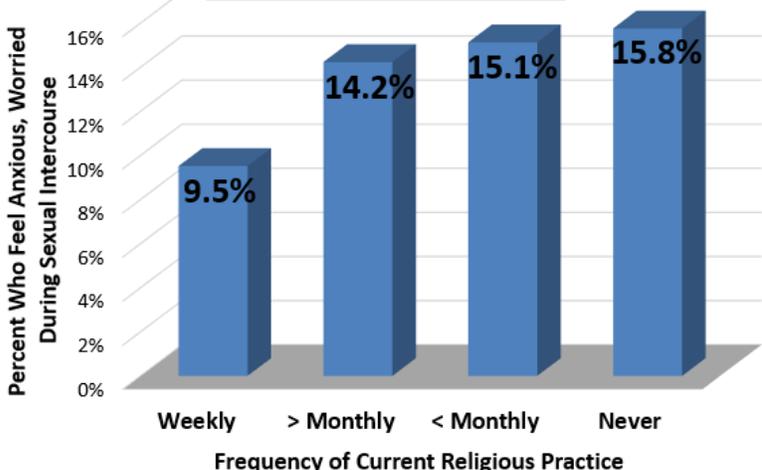
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Anxious, Worried During Intercourse
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Feels Anxious, Worried During Intercourse
By Religious Practice



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

This chart looks at the number of adults who have ever felt anxious, worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

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.)

Feels Anxious, Worried During Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adults aged 18 to 59 in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were least likely to report feeling anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner, according to the National Health and Social Life Survey (1992).

Family Structure: Those in always-intact marriages were the least likely to feel anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner (6.8 percent). Feeling anxious or worried during intercourse was more prevalent among those in non-intact structures and among singles: 12.1 percent of those who were divorced and remarried, 20.6 percent of those who were divorced or separated, 25.9 percent of those who were always single felt anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner.

Religious Practice: Those who worshiped weekly were the least likely to feel anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner (9.5 percent). Anxiety during intercourse increased alongside decreased religious attendance: 14.2 percent of those who worshiped less than weekly but at least monthly felt anxious or worried during intercourse; 15.1 percent of those who worshiped less than monthly felt negative or anxious, and 15.8 percent of those who never worshiped felt anxious or worried during intercourse with their partner.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Those in intact marriages who worshiped weekly were least likely to feel anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner (5.8 percent), followed by those in intact marriages who never worshiped (9.4 percent). Those in non-intact family structures or who were single and who worshiped weekly were more likely to feel anxious or worried (15.5 percent), and those in non-intact family structures or who were single who never worshiped were even more likely to report feeling anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner (17.4 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: A study of the differences in emotional response during sexual activity among sexually functional and dysfunctional men and women found that both men and women with sexual dysfunction experienced less positive emotional reactions during sexual activity. For men, sexual dysfunction led to significantly more negative emotions, including sadness and fear, compared to men without sexual problems. The results were similar among women with sexual dysfunction, who also experienced many negative emotions, including sadness, guilt, and anger.¹ Findings from the Survey of Adolescent Health indicated that, in addition to demographic factors, being religious reduced the likelihood of early first intercourse for both males and females. The anticipation of negative emotions after intercourse further decreased the probability of sexual debut for both males and females. Among girls only, those who anticipated positive emotions after intercourse had an increased likelihood of sexual debut.²

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

¹ Pedro J. Nobre and Jose Pinto-Gouveia, "Emotions During Sexual Activity: Differences Between Sexually Functional and Dysfunctional Men and Women," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 35, no. 4 (2006): 491-499.

² Sharon Scales Rostosky, Mark D. Regnerus and Margaret Laurie Comer Wright, "Coital Debut: The Role of Religiosity and Sex Attitudes in the Add Health Survey," *Journal of Sex Research* 40, no. 4 (2003): 358-367.

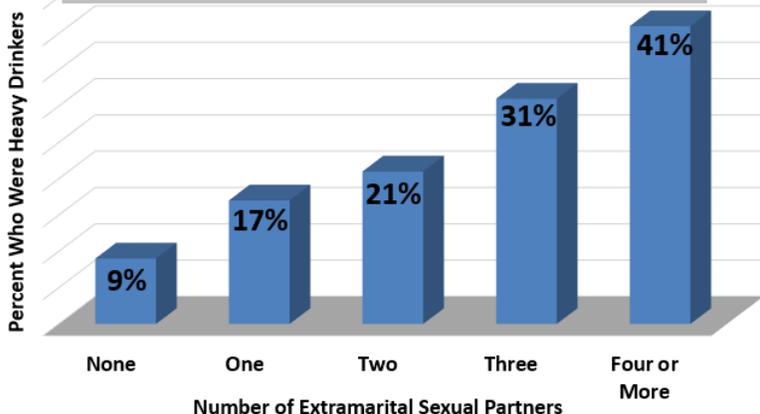


Outcomes by Number of Sexual Partners

Heavy Drinking Among Adults By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice

Heavy Drinking Among Adults

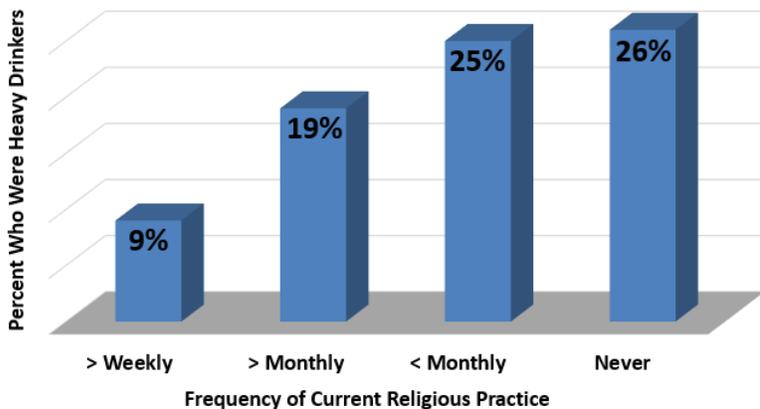
By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and Child and Young Adult Survey 1994-2008 (Ages 18+)

Heavy Drinking Among Adults

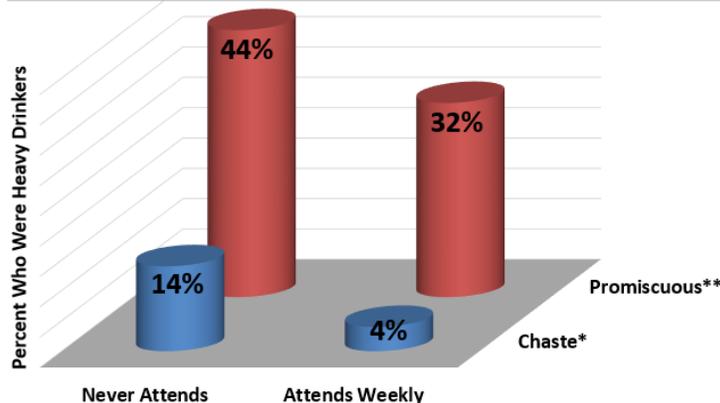
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and Child and Young Adult Survey 1994-2008 (Ages 18+)

Heavy Drinking Among Adults

By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and Child and Young Adult Survey 1994-2008 (Ages 18+)

This chart looks at likelihood to drink heavily at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of sexual habits (chaste vs. promiscuous**) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).*

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The chaste* person that worships weekly;*
- The chaste* person that never worships;*
- The promiscuous* person that worships weekly;*
- The promiscuous* person that never worships.*

*(*No non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)
(**Four or more non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)*

Heavy Drinking Among Adults by Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice

Heavy drinking, multiple sexual partners and avoidance of worship tend to go together: the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that adults who have had no extramarital sexual partners in the previous year and worshipped at least weekly at the time of the survey were less likely to be heavy drinkers.

Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners: Only 9 percent of adults who had no extramarital sexual partners (were chaste) were heavy drinkers, compared with 17 percent of adults who had one extramarital sexual partner. These adults were followed by 21 percent of adults who had 2 extramarital sexual partners, 31 percent who had three extramarital sexual partners, and 41 percent of adults who had four or more extramarital sexual partners.

Religious Practice: Only 9 percent of adults who attended weekly religious services were heavy drinkers, compared with 19 percent of adults who attended church at least monthly. Among adults who attended church less than once a month, 25 percent were heavy drinkers, followed by adults who had no religious attendance (26 percent).

Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice Combined: Only 4 percent of chaste adults who worshipped weekly were heavy drinkers, followed by 14 percent of individuals who never attended church, but had no extramarital sexual partners. Thirty-two percent of adults who attended church but were promiscuous were heavy drinkers, followed by adults who were not chaste and who never attended church (44 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Other studies show relationships between sexual activity and drinking. A 1990 random digit-dial telephone survey done of 16- to 19-year-olds in Massachusetts found that 64 percent of teenagers who reported having sexual intercourse did so after drinking and 15 percent did so after other drug use. Forty-nine percent of teenagers were more likely to have sex if they and their partner had been drinking.¹

Additionally, another study found that drinking at an early age was associated with alcohol and sexual risks through mid-adolescence; early drinkers were more likely to report later alcohol problems, as well as multiple sexual partners and being drunk or high during sexual intercourse. Among females, early drinking was also related to sexual initiation and recent sexual intercourse.²

Religious practice also affects alcohol use. One study found that among college students those, who were from “Gentile” religious traditions (as opposed to “Jewish” religious traditions), those

¹Lee Strunin and Ralph Hingson, “Alcohol, Drugs, and Adolescent Sexual Behavior,” *Substance Use & Misuse* 27, no. 2 (1992): 129-146.

²Ann Stueve and Lydia N. O’Donnell, “Early Alcohol Initiation and Subsequent Sexual and Alcohol Risk Behaviors Among Urban Youths,” *American Journal of Public Health* 95, no. 5 (May 2005): 887-893.

who were not strongly attached to a particular faith, and those who had parents who were alcohol abusers were more likely to abuse alcohol. This same study found that parental religious affiliation influenced the alcohol choices made by their children, with greater parental religiosity leading to less alcohol abuse by the children.³ Another study of college students also found that students with no religious affiliation drank significantly more and more frequently, got drunk more, drank more for celebration purposes, and had greater perceived drinking norms.⁴

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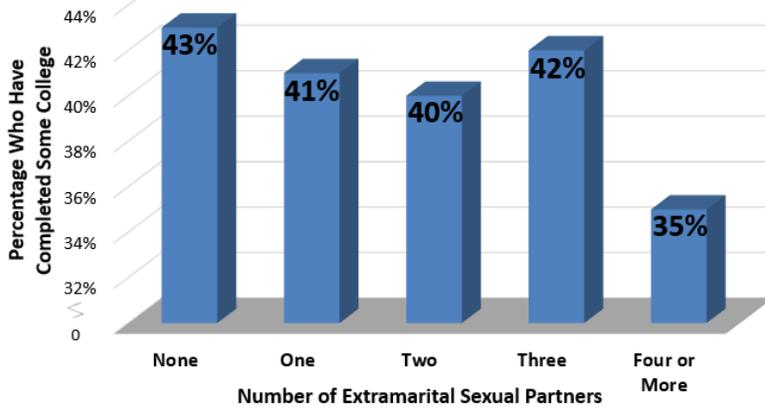
³ H. Wesley Perkins, "Parental Religion and Alcohol Use Problems as Intergenerational Predictors of Problem Drinking among College Youth," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26, no. 3 (September 1987): 340-357.

⁴ Julie A. Patock-Peckham, Geoffrey T. Hutchinson, Jeewon Cheong, and Craig T. Nagoshi, "Effect of religion and religiosity on alcohol use in a college student sample," *Journal of Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 49, no. 2 (January 1998): 81-88.

Completed Some College By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice

Completed Some College

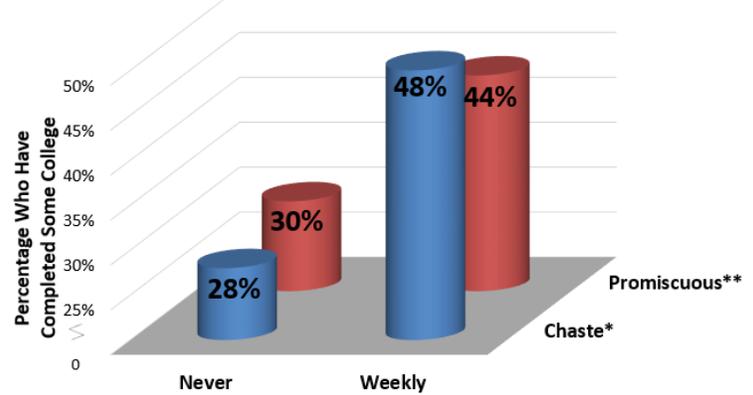
By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners



Source: 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Child and Young Adult (1994-2008)

Completed Some College

By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice



Source: 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Child and Young Adult (1994-2008)

This chart looks at likelihood to complete some college at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of sexual habits (chaste vs. promiscuous**) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).*

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

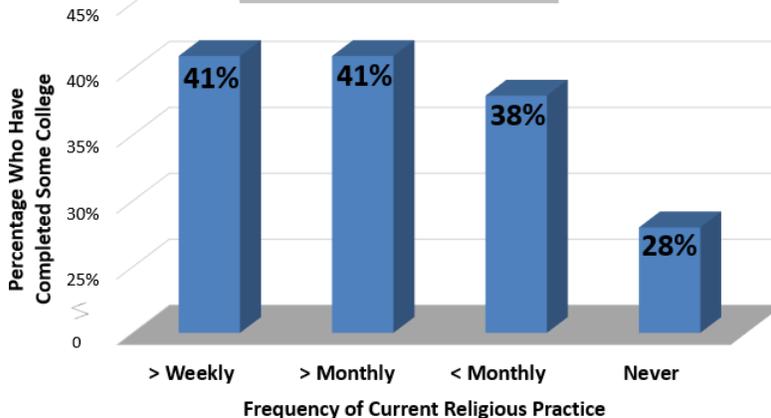
- The chaste* person that worships weekly;*
- The chaste* person that never worships;*
- The promiscuous** person that worships weekly;*
- The promiscuous** person that never worships.*

*(*No non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)*

*(**Four or more non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)*

Completed Some College

By Religious Practice



Source: 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Child and Young Adult (1994-2008)

Completed Some College by Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice

The 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Child and Young Adult Survey shows that adults who had no extramarital sexual partners and worshipped at least weekly at the time of the survey were more likely to have completed some college.

Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners: Forty-three percent of individuals who had no extramarital sexual partners had completed some college, compared with 41 percent of those who had one extramarital sexual partner. Forty percent of those who had two or more extramarital sexual partners had completed college, while 42 percent of those who had three or more extramarital sexual partners had completed some college. Only 35 percent of those with four or more extramarital sexual partners had completed some college.

Religious Practice: Forty-one percent of those who attended church weekly had completed some college, as well as 41 percent of those who attended at least once a month. Only 38 percent of those who attended church less than once a month had completed some college, followed by 28 percent of those who never attended church.

Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice Combined: Those who worshipped at least weekly and were chaste (had no extramarital sexual partners) were most likely to have completed some college (48 percent), compared to 44 percent of those who attended church weekly but were promiscuous (had four or more extramarital sexual partners). Thirty percent of those who were promiscuous and had never attended church had completed some college, followed by 28 percent who were chaste but who did not ever attend church.

Related Insights from Other Studies: One study of 330 college students at a southeastern university found that students who hold core spiritual beliefs, such as a belief that having a spiritual life is important, and those who have had spiritual experiences that changed their life are likely to have more conservative, traditional views about sexual practices (e.g., the purpose of sex) and possess less sexually permissive attitudes.¹

Another study of undergraduates at a small secular liberal arts college found an association between an increase in religious practice and an increase in academic performance among college-aged students: more than 75 percent of students who become more religious during their college years achieved above-average college performance.²

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

¹ Henry D. Beckwith and Jennifer Ann Morrow, "Sexual attitudes of college students: the impact of religiosity and spirituality," *College Student Journal* 39, no.2 (June 2005).

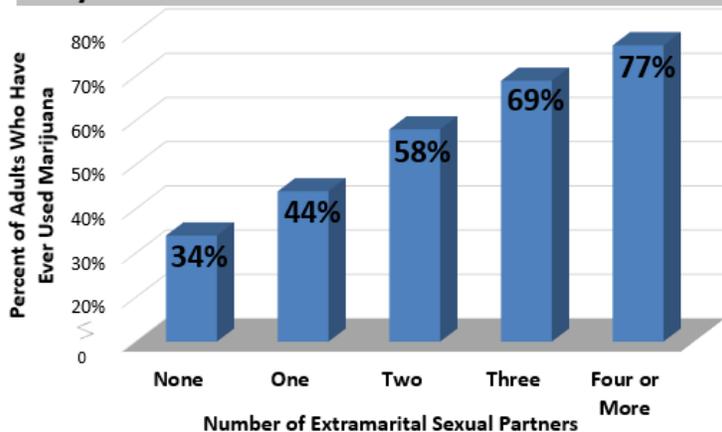
² David S. Zern, "Some Connections Between Increasing Religiousness and Academic Accomplishment in a College Population," *Adolescence* 24, no. 93 (1989): 152. This study's sample size was 251. Zern also found that neither past nor present religious practice was related to grade point average in college.

Adult Marijuana Use

By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice

Adult Marijuana Use

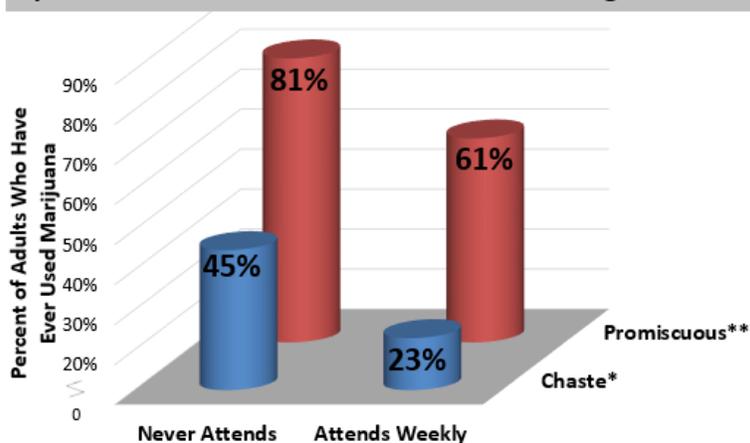
By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners



Source: 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Child and Young Adult Survey (1994-2008)

Adult Marijuana Use

By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice



Source: 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Child and Young Adult Survey (1994-2008)

This chart looks at likelihood to ever use marijuana at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of sexual habits (chaste vs. promiscuous**) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).*

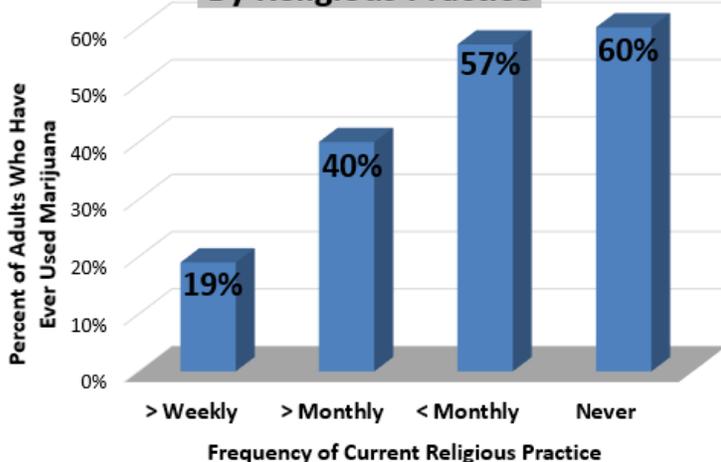
The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The chaste* person that worships weekly;*
- The chaste* person that never worships;*
- The promiscuous** person that worships weekly;*
- The promiscuous** person that never worships.*

*(*No non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)
(**Four or more non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)*

Adult Marijuana Use

By Religious Practice



Source: 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Child and Young Adult Survey (1994-2008)

Marijuana Use by Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice

The 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Child and Young Adult Survey shows that adults who had no extramarital sexual partners and worshipped at least weekly in the survey year were less likely to use marijuana.

Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners: Thirty-four percent of individuals who had no extramarital sexual partners in the survey year had ever used marijuana, compared with 44 percent of individuals who had one extramarital sexual partner. Fifty-eight percent of individuals who had two extramarital sexual partners had ever used marijuana, followed by 69 percent who had three extramarital sexual partners, and 77 percent who had four or more extramarital sexual partners.

Religious Practice: Only 19 percent of individuals who attended church at least weekly at the time of the survey had ever used marijuana, compared to 40 percent who attended at least monthly. Fifty-seven percent of individuals who attended church less than monthly had ever used marijuana, compared with 60 percent who never attended church.

Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice Combined: Those who worshipped at least weekly and were chaste (had no extramarital sexual partners) in the survey year were least likely to heavily use marijuana (23 percent), followed by those who were chaste but did not attend church (45 percent), those who attended church weekly but were promiscuous (had four or more extramarital sexual partners) in the survey year (61 percent), and those who were promiscuous and never attended church (81 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: A study of a sample of Americans reaching maturity in the late '70s and early '80s showed that “[b]oys and girls who become sexually active are much more likely than those who abstain to begin using alcohol or marijuana within a year, although the linkage is stronger for girls than for boys...the link between sexual activity and marijuana use appears stronger than the link between sexual activity and alcohol use.”¹

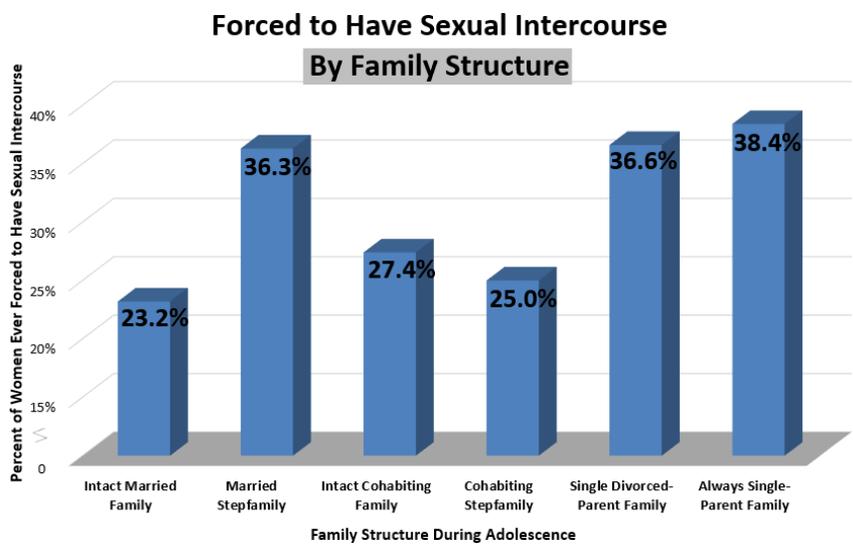
One study of adolescents in the Midwest found that religiosity and the importance placed on participating in church activities reduced adolescent likelihood to use marijuana. Furthermore, the difference in likelihood to use marijuana between strongly religious and weakly religious adolescents was the largest observed; strongly religious adolescents were less likely to use marijuana. (Other differences, such the likelihood to use stimulants, to steal, or to drink beer, were also examined.)²

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

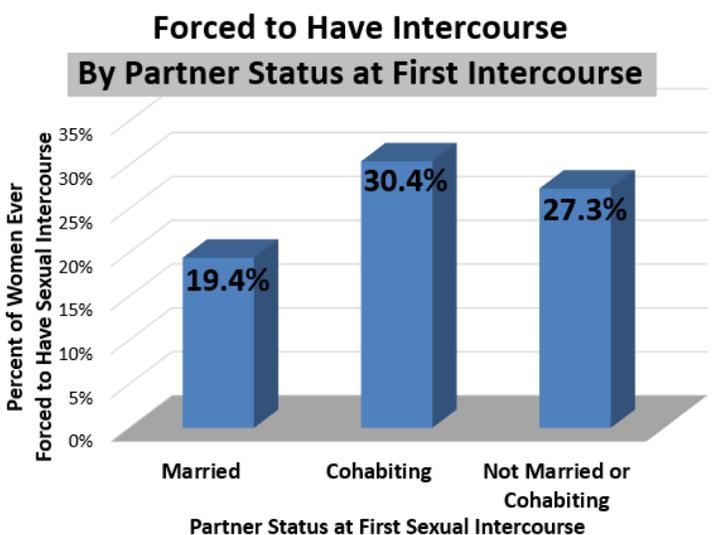
¹ Frank L. Mott and R. Jean Haurin, “Linkages Between Sexual Activity and Alcohol and Drug Use Among Adolescents,” *Family Planning Perspectives* 20, no. 3 (1988): 128.

² John K. Cochran, “Another Look at Delinquency and Religiosity,” *Sociological Spectrum* 9 (1989): 153, 157.

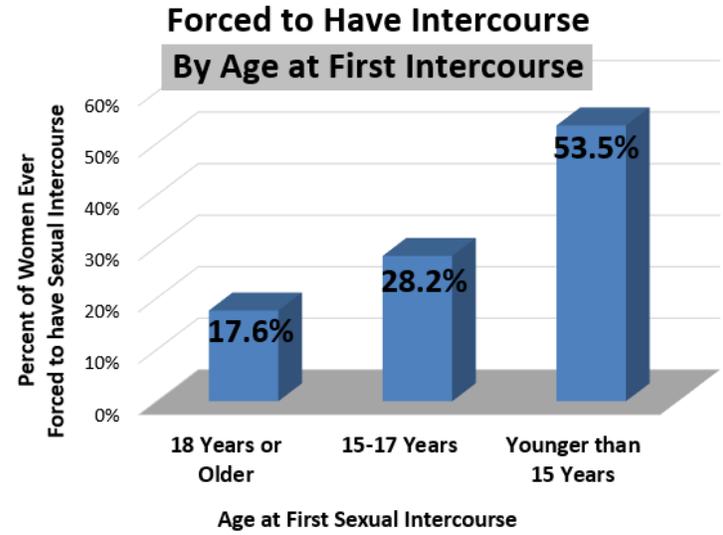
Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse By Family Structure and First Intercourse



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (2002)

Forced to Have Sexual Intercourse by Family Structure, Age at First Intercourse, and Partner Status at First Intercourse

The 2002 cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth showed that, among women aged 38 to 44,¹ ever being forced to have sexual intercourse was least common among those raised in an intact married family and among those who save sex for marriage.

Family Structure: At the time of the survey, fewer women raised in an intact family had ever been forced to have sexual intercourse than those raised in a non-intact family. Thirty eight percent of those raised in an always single parent family had been forced to have intercourse, followed by those raised in a single divorced-parent family (36.6 percent), those raised in a married stepfamily (36.3 percent), those raised in an intact cohabiting family (27.4 percent), and those raised in a cohabiting stepfamily (25 percent). Women aged 38 to 44 raised in an intact married family were least likely to have been forced to have sexual intercourse (23.2 percent).

Age at First Intercourse: The National Survey of Family Growth showed that fifty three percent of those who had their first intercourse before age 15 were ever forced to have sexual intercourse, dropping to twenty-eight percent of those who had their first intercourse between ages 15 and 17, and seventeen percent of those who had their first intercourse at age 18 or older.

Partner Status at First Intercourse: Nineteen percent of women who were married at their first intercourse had ever experienced forced sexual intercourse. This figure rose to thirty percent for those cohabiting at their first intercourse and twenty-seven percent for those who were neither cohabiting nor married at their first intercourse.

Related Insights from Other Studies: A 1989 analysis showed that among white girls, having lived apart from one's parents for more than four months prior to age 16 was associated with an increased likelihood of having been sexually abused, even after controlling for other factors. Parental drug use, heavy drinking, and smoking (during the teenage years) were other factors associated with an increased likelihood of experiencing sexual abuse. Poverty was found to be marginally associated with the risk of experiencing sexual abuse.²

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D.

Patrick Fagan is the Director of the Marriage and Religion Research Institute

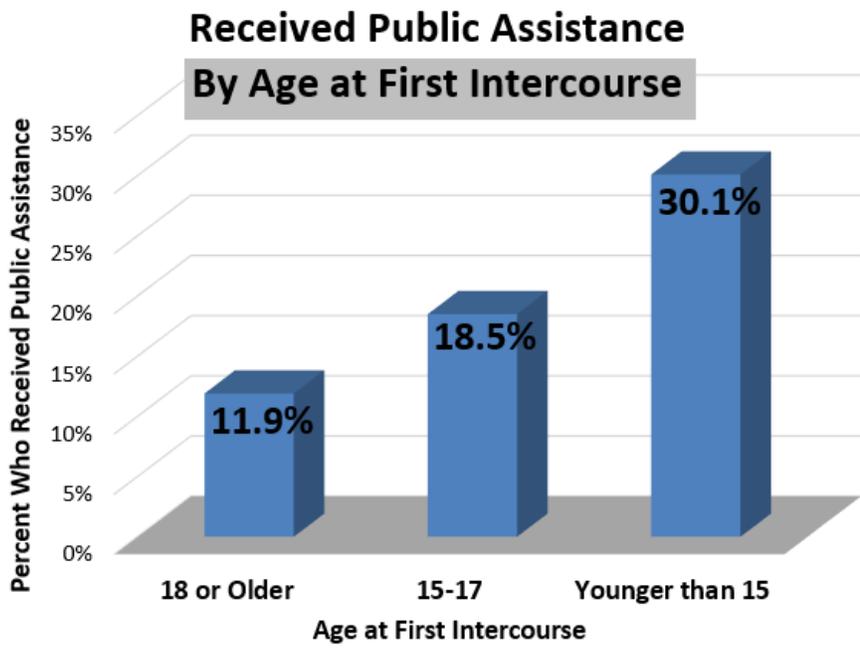
D. Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

Dr. Sullins is an associate professor of sociology at The Catholic University of America.

¹ NSFG only surveys women up to age 44. The oldest group of women was selected in order to capture the most complete range of outcomes for sexual experience.

² Kristin Anderson Moore, Christine Winquist Nord, and James L. Peterson, "Nonvoluntary Sexual Activity Among Adolescents," *Family Planning Perspectives* 21, no. 3 (1989): 110-114.

Received Public Assistance By Age at First Intercourse



Source: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 6 (2002)

The *National Survey of Family Growth* showed that women who had been sexually active as younger teens were more likely to be on public assistance decades later.

Age at First Intercourse: Among women aged 38 to 44,¹ those who had postponed sexual activity until adulthood, defined as age 18 or older, were least likely to have recently received public assistance. 11.9 percent of those aged 38 to 44 who had their first intercourse at age 18 or older received public assistance in the year 2001. By

contrast, 18.5 percent of those who had their first intercourse between ages 15 and 17 received aid, and 30.1 percent of those who had their first intercourse before age 15 received aid.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Age of sexual debut (first intercourse) is correlated with and likely modifies a number of outcomes later in life ranging from educational achievement, to income, to marital stability.² One study found that beginning sexual activity at an older age is linked to greater happiness, lower rates of maternal and child poverty, and higher relationship stability.³ Moreover, postponing sexual intercourse until marriage tends to produce the best outcomes: relationship quality is higher and sexual satisfaction stronger.

Patrick Fagan, Ph.D. and Paul Sullins, Ph.D.

¹ NSFG only surveys women up to age 44. The oldest group of women was selected in order to capture the most complete range of outcomes for sexual experience.

² Paige Harden, "True love waits? A sibling-comparison study of age at first sexual intercourse and romantic relationships in young adulthood," *Psychological science* (2012): 0956797612442550.

³ Robert Rector, Kirk Johnson, Shannan Martin, and Lauren Noyes, "Harmful Effects of Early Sexual Activity and Multiple Sexual Partners Among Women: A Book of Charts," *The Heritage Foundation*, June 2003. Available at <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2003/06/harmful-effects-of-early-sexual-activity-and-multiple-sexual-partners-among-women-a-book-of-charts>