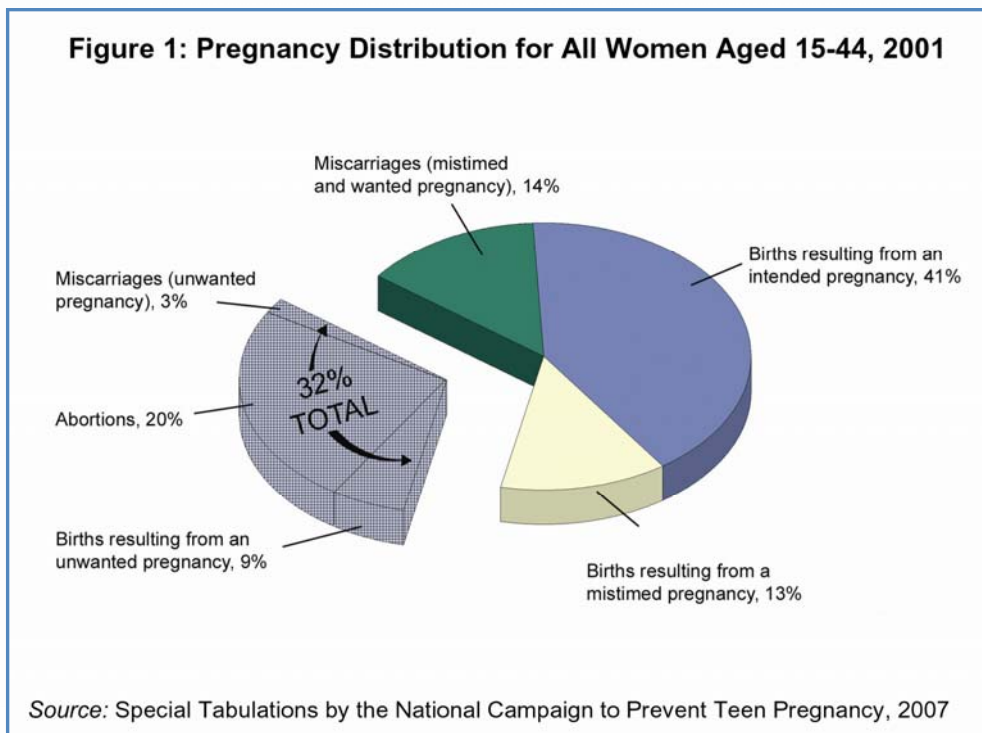


UNWANTED pregnancy

One-third of pregnancies in the United States are unwanted.

Approximately one-third of the 6.4 million pregnancies in 2001 (the most recent year for which adequate data are available) in the United States were unwanted. That is, almost 1 in 3 pregnancies—about 2 million—were unwanted. The 2 million figure includes 1.3 million pregnancies that ended in abortion;¹ 567,000 live births that women reported were unwanted at time of conception or *ever* in the future;² and 179,000 miscarriages of unwanted pregnancies as well. The remaining pregnancies (over 4 million) were distributed among births resulting from a mistimed pregnancy, births resulting from an intended pregnancy, and miscarriages of both intended and mistimed pregnancies.

Figure 1 below shows these distributions graphically. The area that is cross-hatched shows those pregnancies that are unwanted.



¹ A small number of women who planned their pregnancy make the difficult decision to terminate it after learning that it poses a serious maternal health risk or that the fetus has severe abnormalities. Other reasons may arise as well. Even so, abortion itself is a clear indication that a pregnancy was or became unwanted.

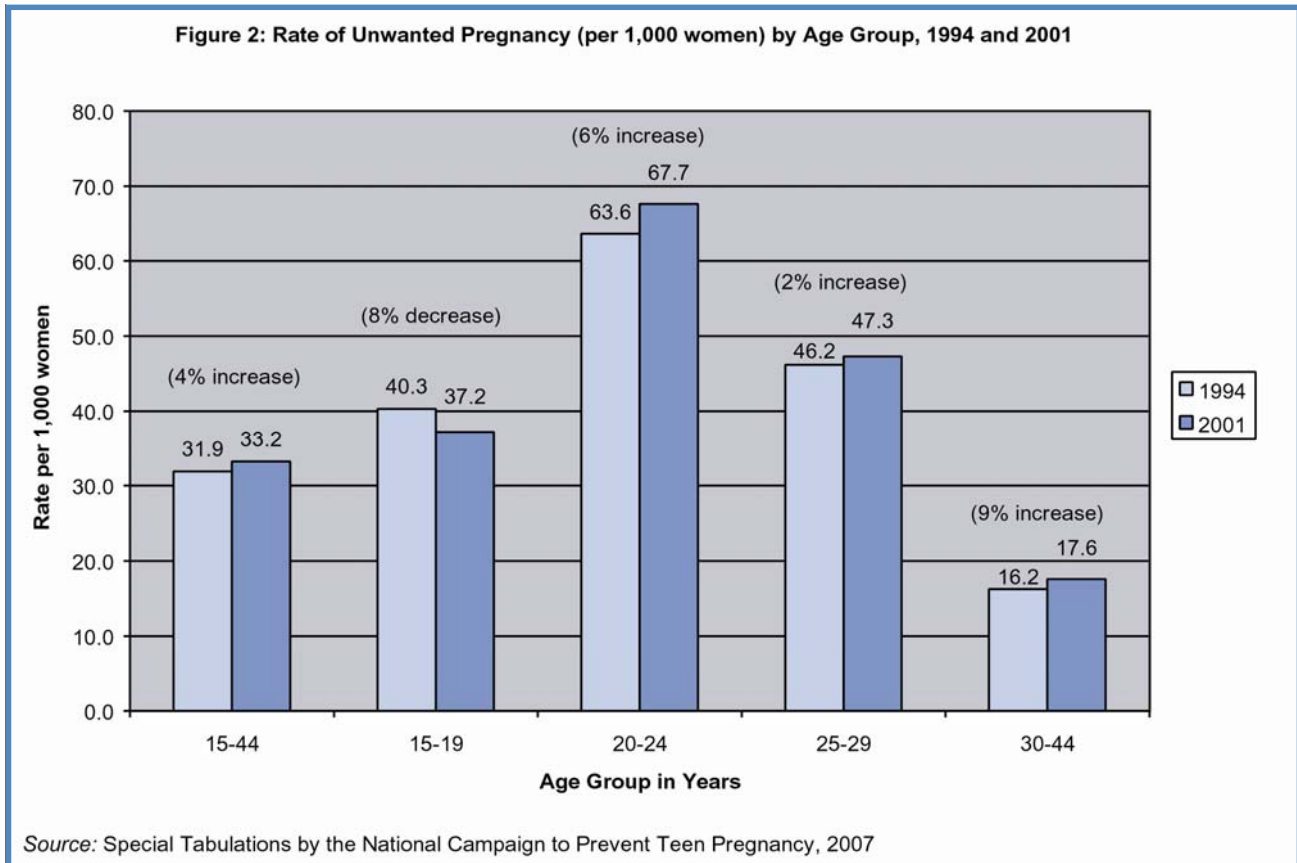
² The primary source of information on unwanted pregnancy is the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), a periodic survey of women aged 15-44 conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics. The NSFG defines a pregnancy as unwanted if the respondent reports that she did not want to become pregnant now or in the future.



The rate of unwanted pregnancy increased slightly between 1994 and 2001.

Not only is unwanted pregnancy common, but it also appears that the rate of unwanted pregnancy increased slightly (4 percent) between 1994 and 2001. More specifically, the rate increased from 31.9 to 33.2 unwanted pregnancies per 1,000 women age 15-44 over that time interval.

Only teens made progress in reducing rates of unwanted pregnancy between 1994 and 2001 (8 percent decrease). In large part, the decrease in the rate of unwanted pregnancy among teens reflects a significant decrease in the overall pregnancy rate among teens between 1994 and 2001. Overall pregnancy rates among adults remained relatively stable during the same time period.

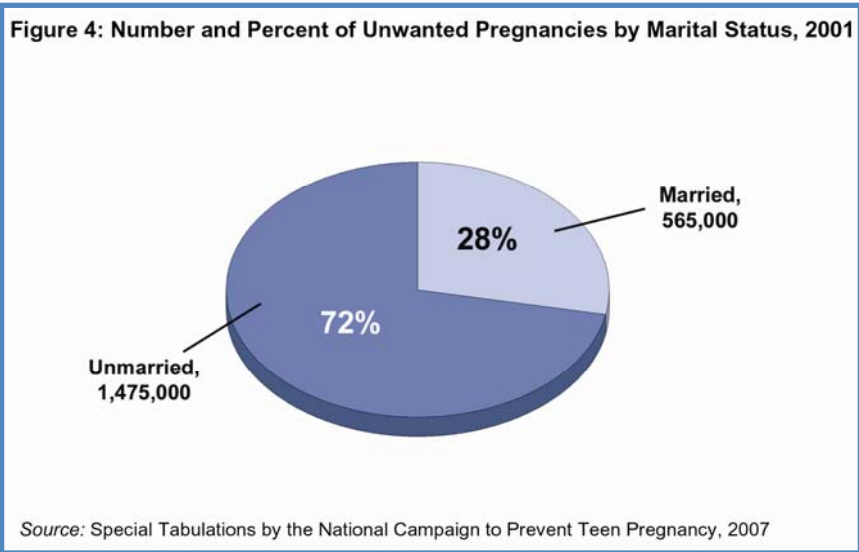
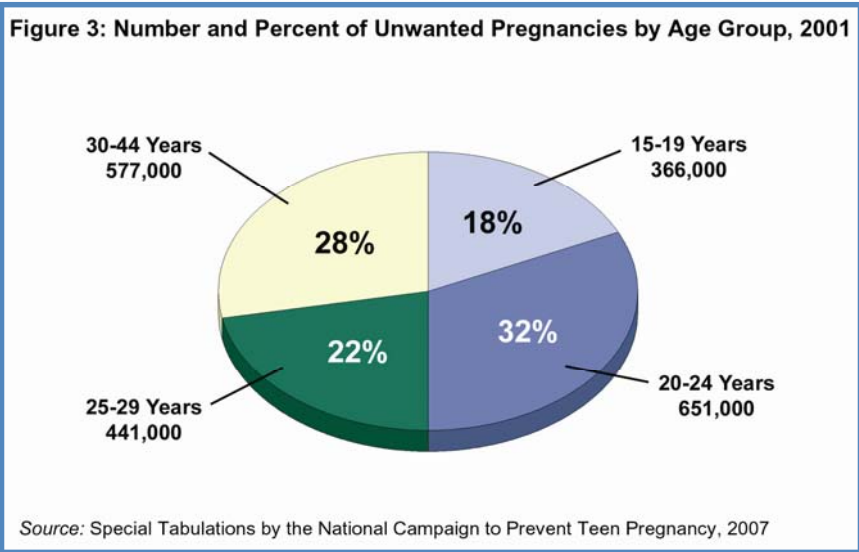


Most unwanted pregnancies are to women 20 and older and to unmarried women.

Figure 2 above shows how common unwanted pregnancy is. Figures 3 and 4 below develop this picture further by showing more about who experiences unwanted pregnancy.

Figure 3 clearly demonstrates that unwanted pregnancy is not just a teen problem; in fact, only 18 percent of all unwanted pregnancies occur to teen girls. Over half (54 percent) of all unwanted pregnancies occur to women in their twenties. In part, this concentration of unwanted pregnancy among women in their twenties reflects the fact that this same cohort also accounts for the majority of pregnancies overall.

It is also the case that nearly three-quarters of all unwanted pregnancies—about 1.5 million—occur to unmarried women (Figure 4). That is, unwanted pregnancy is closely associated with being unmarried.



Women of every age experience high levels of unwanted pregnancies.

Figure 3 above shows that when one looks at all unwanted pregnancies, adult women account for a much larger share of unwanted pregnancies than do teens. However, it is also true that the risk of a pregnancy being unwanted is high within all age groups—that is, within each age group, the proportion of *all* pregnancies that are unwanted is significant. The following two figures (5 and 6) show the proportion of all pregnancies that are unwanted by age and how these unwanted pregnancies are resolved.

Figure 5 shows that, in general, unwanted pregnancy is common across all age groups. For example, with regard to teens, 45 percent of all pregnancies are unwanted; among women in their early twenties, almost 40 percent of pregnancies are unwanted; and almost 30 percent of pregnancies to women aged 25-29 are unwanted.

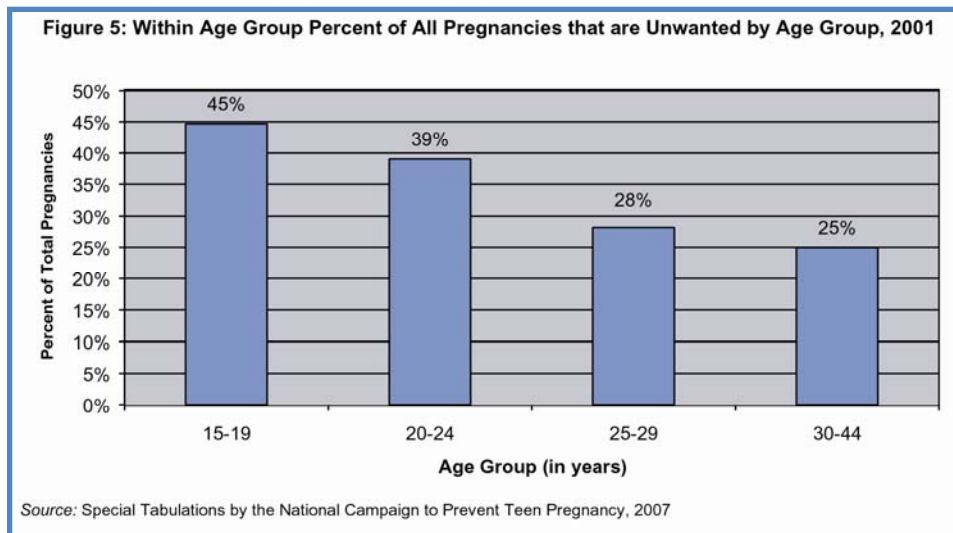
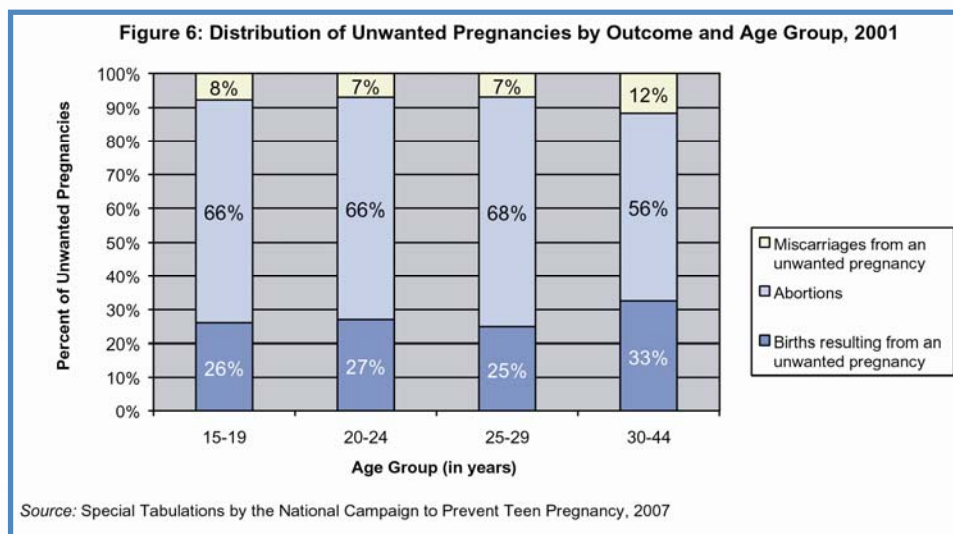


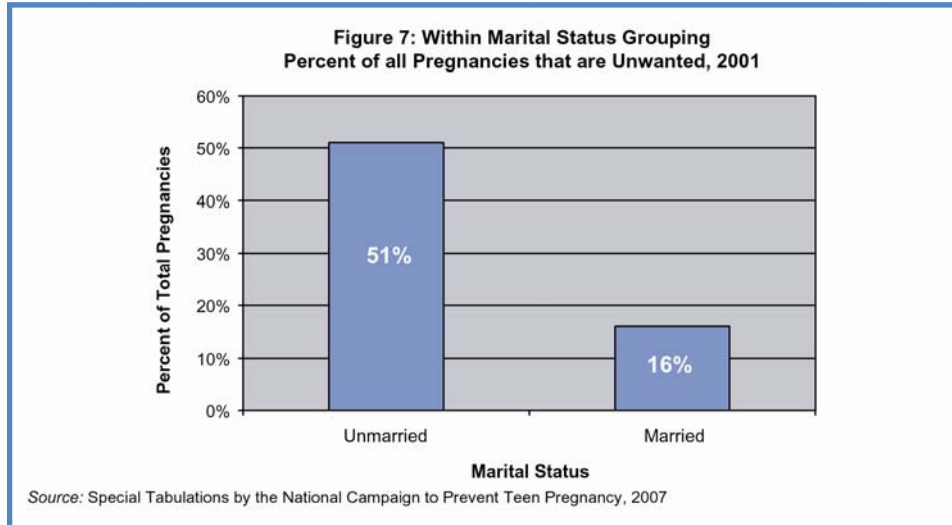
Figure 6 shows differences by age in how unwanted pregnancies are resolved. For example, roughly two-thirds of unwanted pregnancies among teens end in abortion and the remainder end in either birth or miscarriage. It is important to add that while a large share of teen pregnancies are reported as unwanted and end in abortion, teen pregnancies and abortions have *both* declined dramatically. The teen pregnancy rate declined 36 percent between 1990 and 2002; and the teen abortion rate decreased 50 percent between 1988 and 2002, reaching an all-time low. Among women in their twenties, approximately two-thirds of unwanted pregnancies end in abortion.



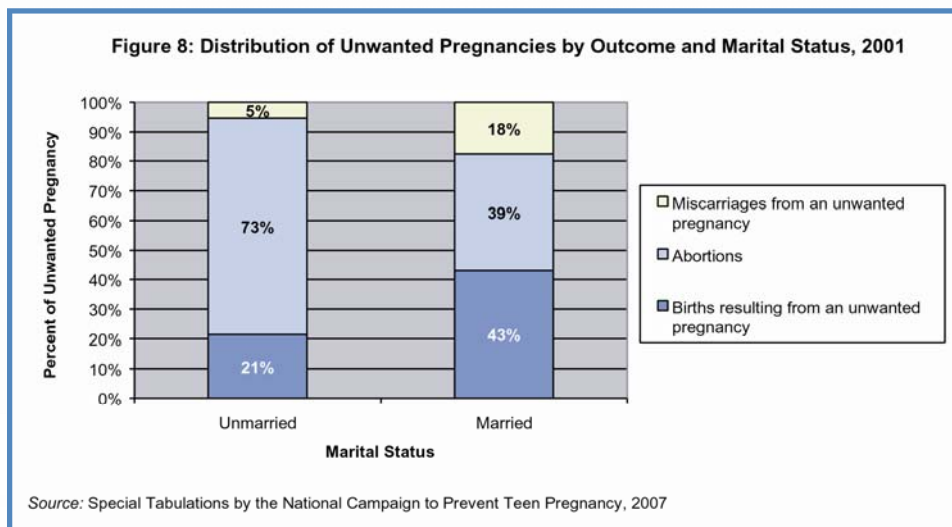
These numbers show clearly that women in their twenties and even their thirties are struggling with pregnancy planning. Once again, it's not just teens.

The majority of all pregnancies among unmarried women are unwanted.

Figure 4 above shows that when one considers *all unwanted pregnancies*, unmarried women account for a much larger share of such pregnancies (72 percent) than do married women (28 percent). As shown in Figure 7, it is also true that when one looks only at *unmarried women*, the share of their pregnancies that is unwanted is very high—51 percent. This compares to roughly 1 in 6 pregnancies among married women that are unwanted (16 percent).



Furthermore, unwanted pregnancies among unmarried women are more likely to end in abortion, as shown in Figure 8 below (73 percent of unwanted pregnancies among unmarried women compared to 39 percent of unwanted pregnancies among married women). Nonetheless, as noted earlier, married women still account for over half a million unwanted pregnancies each year.



Sources

All numbers presented in this document are special tabulations of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

In computing the rate of unwanted pregnancies for 1994-2001, the following sources were used:

- 1) Abma, J.C, Chandra, A., Mosher, W.D., Peterson, L., and Piccinino, L. (1997). Fertility, family planning, and reproductive health of U.S. women: Data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, *Vital and Health Statistics*, 23(19);
- 2) Chandra, A., Martinez, G.M., Mosher, W.D., Abma, J.C., and Jones, J. (2005). Fertility, family planning, and reproductive health of U.S. women: Data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, *Vital and Health Statistics*, 23(25);
- 3) Special tabulations of data from Finer and Henshaw (2006). Disparities in Rates of Unintended Pregnancy in the United States, 1994 and 2001, *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 38(2):90-96;
- 4) Finer, L., Henshaw, S. (2006). Estimates of U.S. Abortion Incidence 2001-2003. Guttmacher Institute: New York, NY;
- 5) Martin, J.A., Hamilton, B.E., Ventura, S.J., Menacker, F., Park, M. M., and Sutton, P.D. (2002). Births: Final Data for 2001. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 51(2);
- 6) Special tabulations of Vital and Health Statistics, 1994 Natality Data Set, CD-ROM Series 21, Number 4, Issued May 1997;
- 7) "Table 1. Total population and female population by age, bridged race and Hispanic origin: United States, 2001" As accessed from Vital and Health Statistics, 2001 Natality Data Set, CD-ROM Series 21, Number 15, Reissued September 2003; and
- 8) Ventura, S.J., Mosher, W.D., Curtin, S.C., Abma, J.C. and Henshaw, S. (2000). Trends in pregnancies and pregnancy rates by outcome: Estimates for the United States, 1976-96. *Vital Health Statistics*, 21(56).

For all other data referring to unwanted pregnancy in 2001, the following sources were used:

- 1) Chandra, A., Martinez, G.M., Mosher, W.D., Abma, J.C., and Jones, J. (2005). Fertility, family planning, and reproductive health of U.S. women: Data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, *Vital and Health Statistics*, 23(25);
- 2) Finer, L., Henshaw, S. (2006). Estimates of U.S. Abortion Incidence 2001-2003. Guttmacher Institute: New York, NY;
- 3) Special tabulations of data from Finer and Henshaw (2006). Disparities in Rates of Unintended Pregnancy in the United States, 1994 and 2001, *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 38(2):90-96; and
- 4) Martin, J.A., Hamilton, B.E., Ventura, S.J., Menacker, F., Park, M. M., and Sutton, P.D. (2002). Births: Final Data for 2001. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 51(2).