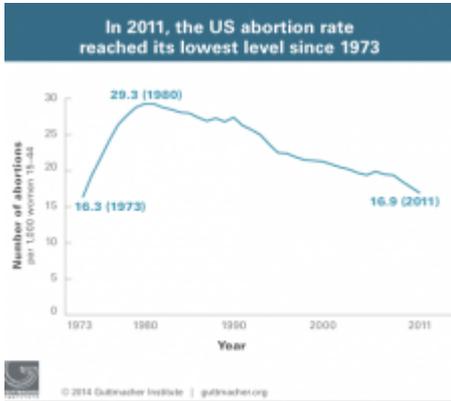


U.S. abortion rate on the decline

By ACSH Staff — February 3, 2014



The U.S. abortion rate is the lowest it's been since 1973,

according to [a report](#) ^[1] from The Guttmacher Institute, a private research group that supports abortion rights. The rate is now at about 17 abortions per 1000 women ages 15 to 44, representing a 13 percent decline since 2008. A decline was also seen in pregnancy rates. This decline in pregnancy and abortion shows the return to the downward trend which had stalled between 2005 and 2008. However, with these declines, researchers observed an increase in medication abortions in which drugs are used to induce abortion within the first nine weeks of pregnancy. Medication abortions do not include LARC [long acting reversible contraception] or plan B type pills.

Using questionnaires, researchers collected data from all known clinics, hospitals, and independent physicians performing abortions. Although the report did not specifically look into the reasons for this downward trend, study authors Rachel K. Jones and Jenna Jerman believe that the decline is [due to](#) ^[2] the use of long-term contraceptives such as intrauterine devices and hormonal injections and implants by younger women. They also state that this decline may be due to the economy, citing the fact that economic uncertainty may result in lower rates of pregnancy, birth and abortion. They add, With abortion rates falling in almost all states, our study did not find evidence that the national decline in abortions during this period was the result of new state abortion restrictions. We also found no evidence that the decline was linked to a drop in the number of abortion providers during this period.

Along the same lines they added that abortion rates remained higher among black and Hispanic women and the poor compared to white women, which may be because long-term, reliable contraception methods have high up-front costs. The authors say that more needs to be done to ensure that low-income women are provided with insurance that covers these costs.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross adds, It's encouraging to see more young people taking control of their reproductive health by using these long-term, reliable contraception methods which help to reduce

abortion rates. However, it is important that all women have access to these forms of contraception and that they are provided with the educational tools necessary to be able to make informed decisions with regards to reproductive health. While abstinence is surely the most effective birth control method, demanding ideal behavior among young people is a self-defeating policy, and abstinence-only sex education is a sure path to resurgent teen pregnancy, prematurity, and abortion rates.

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Links

[1] <http://www.guttmacher.org/media/nr/2014/02/03/index.html>

[2] <http://acsh.org/2012/08/iuds-and-implants-most-effective-birth-control-method/>