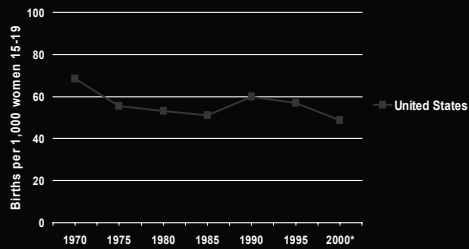


Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries: Can More Progress Be Made?

The Alan Guttmacher Institute
120 Wall St., NY, NY 10005
www.guttmacher.org

Teenage birthrates declined in the United States between 1970 and 2000.



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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001

% Births to Unmarried Teens

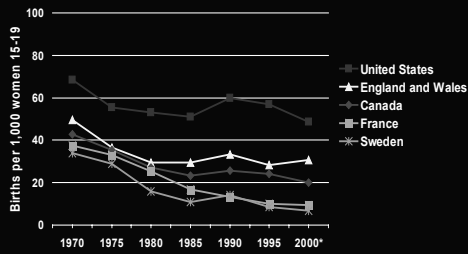
1950

2000

13%

79%

Teenage birthrates declined less steeply in the United States than in other developed countries between 1970 and 2000.

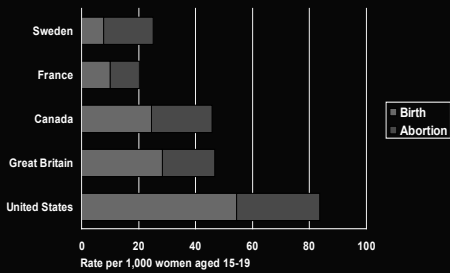


*Data are for 1997 in Canada, 1998 in France and 1999 in England and Wales and Sweden.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001.

U.S. teenagers have higher pregnancy, birth and abortion rates than adolescents in other developed countries.

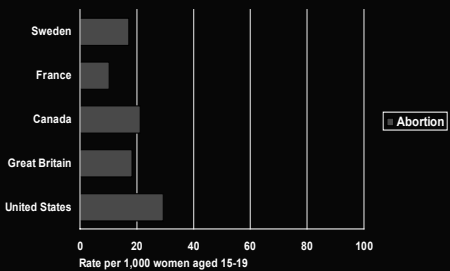


Note: Data are for mid-1990s.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001.

Because U.S. teenagers are much more likely to become pregnant unintentionally than adolescents in other developed countries, they also have a higher abortion rate than their peers in other countries.

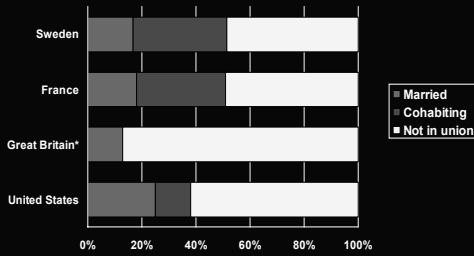


Note: Data are for mid-1990s.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001.

Most teenage births are to unmarried teenagers, but many teenage mothers in Sweden and France are in cohabiting unions.

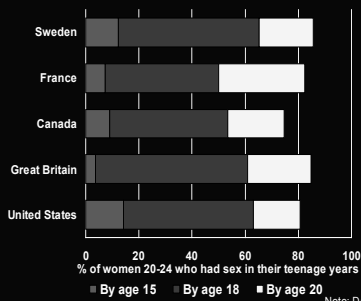


*Cohabiting grouped with not in union.
Note: Data are for mid-1990s.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries.

Differences in levels of teenage sexual activity across developed countries are small.

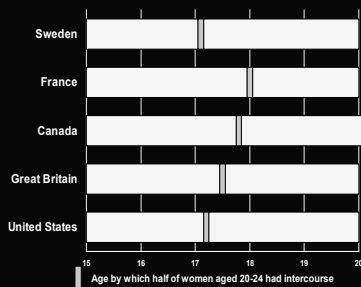


Note: Data are for mid-1990s.

AGI

Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001.

Half of young women in all study countries begin intercourse between ages 17 and 18.

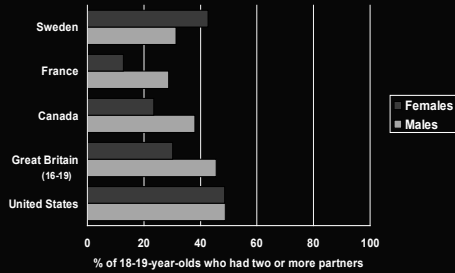


Note: Data are for mid-1990s.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001.

Teenagers in the United States who had sex in the last year are more likely than those in other developed countries to have had two or more partners.

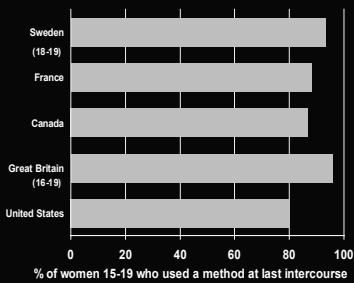


Note: Data for mid-1990s.

AGI

Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001

U.S. teenagers are less likely to use a contraceptive method than teenagers in other developed countries.

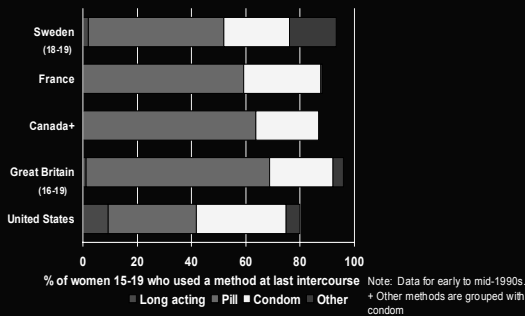


Note: Data for early to mid-1990s.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001

U.S. teenagers are less likely to use a contraceptive method and to use a hormonal method than teenagers in other developed countries



Note: Data for early to mid-1990s. + Other methods are grouped with condom

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001

Summary

- Higher teenage pregnancy, birth and abortion rates in the United States compared with the other countries reflect:
 - Less contraceptive use;
 - Less use of hormonal methods;
 - And, probably, less effective method use.

Summary

- Higher teenage STD rates in the United States compared with the other countries reflect:
 - More sexual partners;
 - Higher prevalence of infection;
 - And, probably, less condom use.

Section 2: Societal Influences on Teenagers' Sexual and Reproductive Behavior

Social and economic well-being and equality are linked to lower teenage pregnancy rates and birthrates.

- In all study countries, youth growing up in conditions of social, familial and economic disadvantage are most likely to have a child during their teenage years.
- U.S. teenagers are more likely than those in the other countries to grow up in disadvantaged circumstances, and those who do are more likely to have a child during their teenage years.
- At all socioeconomic levels, however, U.S. teenagers have lower levels of contraceptive use and higher levels of childbearing than their peers in the other study countries.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001

Strong and widespread governmental support for young people's transition to adulthood, and for parents, may contribute to low teenage birthrates.

- Education and employment assistance help young people become established as adults.
- Support for working parents and families signifies the high value of children and parenting, and gives youth the incentive to delay childbearing.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001

Positive attitudes about sexuality and clear expectations for behavior in sexual relationships contribute to responsible teenage behavior (1).

- Countries other than the United States have greater openness and more supportive attitudes about sexuality.
- There is a strong consensus in countries other than the United States that childbearing belongs in adulthood.
- Countries other than the United States give clearer and more consistent messages about appropriate sexual behavior.

AGI

Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001

Positive attitudes about sexuality and clear expectations for behavior in sexual relationships contribute to responsible teenage behavior (2).

- Comprehensive sexuality education, not abstinence promotion, is emphasized in countries with lower teenage pregnancy levels.
- Media is used less in the United States than elsewhere to promote positive sexual behavior.
 - Government media campaigns in the other countries promote condom use, contraceptive use and awareness of where to get methods.
 - Media campaigns in other countries offer more positive views of sexually active teenagers as worthwhile, responsible people.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001

Easy access to contraceptives and other reproductive health services contributes to better contraceptive use and lower teenage pregnancy and STD rates (1)

- Only in the United States do substantial proportions of adolescents lack health insurance and therefore have poor access to health care.
- Contraceptive services and other reproductive health care are generally more integrated into regular medical care in countries other than the United States.
- U.S. teenagers have greater difficulty obtaining contraceptive services than do adolescents in the other study countries.

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Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001

Easy access to contraceptives and other reproductive health services contributes to better contraceptive use and lower teenage pregnancy and STD rates (2)

- Types of service provision vary across and within countries.
- Easy access means adolescents
 - Know where to obtain information and services,
 - Can reach a provider easily,
 - Are assured of receiving confidential, nonjudgmental care, and
 - Can obtain services and contraceptive supplies at little or no cost.

AGI

Teenage Sexual and Reproductive Behavior in Developed Countries, 2001
