

UNINTENDED PREGNANCY AND CONTRACEPTION

Unintended pregnancies are associated with many negative health outcomes for both mother and child, including delayed prenatal care, poor maternal mental health, reduced mother-child relationship quality, and poor developmental outcomes for children.⁵⁵ Unintended pregnancies are defined as being mistimed or unwanted at the time of conception. It is difficult to estimate the total rate of unintended pregnancy due to known reporting issues, specifically related to the underreporting of pregnancies ending in abortion. However, in 2006–2008, 42.0 percent of women reported that their last pregnancy ending in a live birth was unintended at the time of conception. This includes 18.3

percent of women reporting an unwanted pregnancy and 23.7 percent reporting a mistimed pregnancy. Pregnancies that are unwanted rather than mistimed tend to have poorer outcomes.

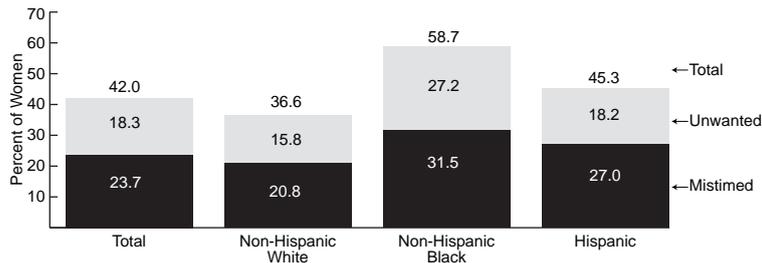
Unintended pregnancy varies by race and ethnicity. In 2006–2008, 58.7 percent of non-Hispanic Black women reported that their last pregnancy ending in a live birth was unintended, followed by 45.3 percent of Hispanic women and 36.6 percent of non-Hispanic White women. Both non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic women were more likely than non-Hispanic White women to report a mistimed pregnancy (31.5 and 27.0 versus 20.8 percent, respectively). Non-Hispanic Black women were more likely than non-Hispanic White and Hispanic women to report an unwanted pregnancy (27.2

versus 15.8 and 18.2 percent, respectively).

Unintended pregnancies can be averted with proper use of effective contraceptives. In 2006–2008, 4.5 million or 10.6 percent of women at risk of unintended pregnancy—who were having intercourse and not sterile, pregnant, or trying to get pregnant—reported that they were not using contraception. Non-Hispanic Black women were more likely than non-Hispanic White and Hispanic women to not be using contraception while at risk of unintended pregnancy (16.3 versus 9.4 and 9.0 percent, respectively). Differences in contraceptive use, as well as method choice and contraceptive effectiveness, may contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in unintended pregnancy.⁵⁶

Unintended Pregnancy* Among Last Live Births to Women Aged 15–44, by Race/Ethnicity,** 2006–2008

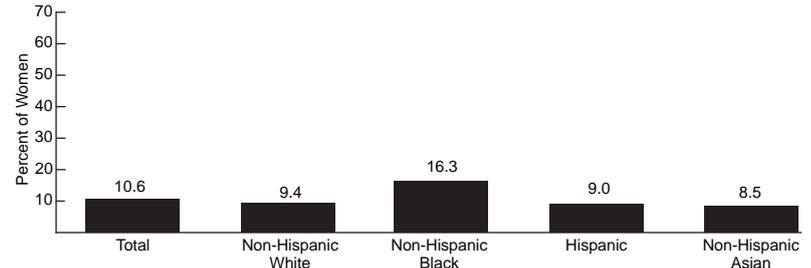
Source II.18: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Family Growth



*Reported to be unwanted or mistimed at the time of conception among the most recent pregnancy that ended in a live birth. Percentages may not add to totals due to rounding. **The samples of American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and persons of multiple race were too small to produce reliable results.

No Contraceptive Use Among Women Aged 15–44 Years at Risk of Unintended Pregnancy,* by Race/Ethnicity,** 2006–2008

Source II.19: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Family Growth



*At risk of unintended pregnancy is defined as having had intercourse in the last 3 months among those who were not currently pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or sterile for health reasons. **The samples of American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and persons of multiple race were too small to produce reliable results.