

# Induced Terminations of Pregnancy

## CURRENT TRENDS

During 1998, 14,344 induced terminations of pregnancy occurred in Oregon. This figure includes out-of-state residents who obtained abortion services in Oregon, but does not include Oregonians who obtained abortions elsewhere. It represents a 1.8 percent decrease from 1997 and a decrease of 8.8 percent from the 15,735 abortions reported in the peak year of 1980. [Figure 3-1].

Changes in behavior are revealed by shifts in rate more than by changes in the number of events. The U.S. abortion rate has been declining since 1980 from approximately 25 per 1,000 women of childbearing age to 20 per 1,000 in 1997.<sup>1</sup> From 1988 to 1998, Oregon's rate has fluctuated around 20 per 1,000. [Table 3-1]. In 1997, the Oregon rate was 20.9 per 1,000; in 1998, it decreased 2.9 percent to 20.3 per 1,000. The 1998 rate was 19.1 percent lower than the record high of 1980 (25.1 per 1,000).

Abortion patients in Oregon are typically non-Hispanic white women who are not married. Almost half have previously given birth. Out-of-state residents accounted for 12.5 percent (1,791) of abortions in 1998, approximately the same number as the previous year. [Table 3-6].

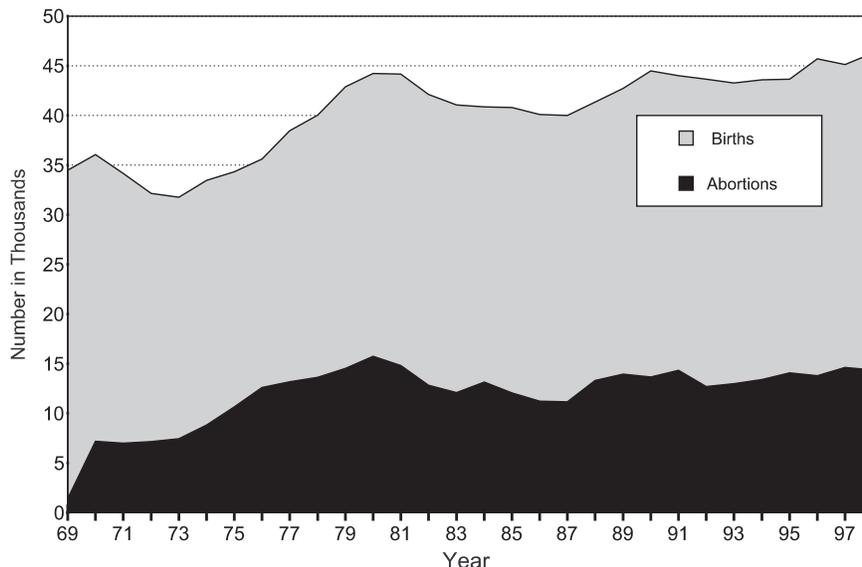
Abortion counts are generally less accurate than those for births and deaths. In particular, the total number of women who travel to another state to obtain an abortion is unknown. (See Appendix B, Technical Notes section, for a more extensive discussion of the completeness of abortion data.)

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***Oregon's abortion  
rate drops  
19 percent  
below its 1980 peak.***

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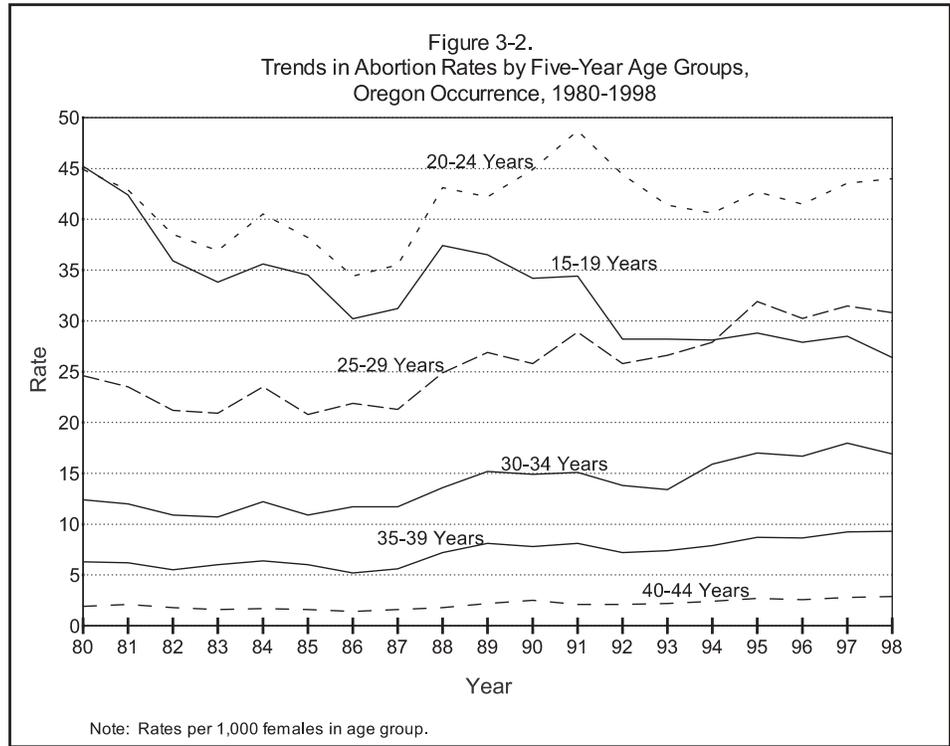
Figure 3-1.  
Number of Abortions and Births  
Occurring in Oregon, 1969-1998



Abortion Rates by Age and Percentage Distribution, Oregon Occurrence <sup>1</sup> , 1998		
Age	Rate <sup>2</sup>	%
< 15	0.9	0.7
15-19	26.4	21.2
20-24	44.0	30.5
25-29	30.8	22.2
30-34	16.9	13.5
35-39	9.3	8.5
40-44	2.9	2.8
45-49	0.2	0.2
15-44	20.2	98.7

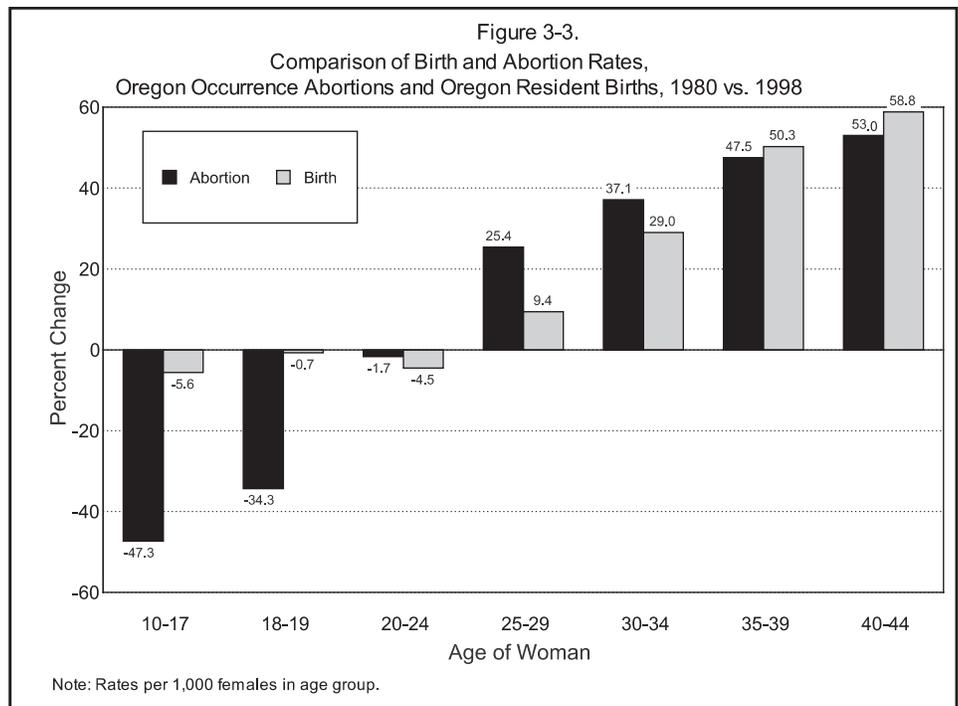
<sup>1</sup> Occurrence data include all abortions reported by providers located in Oregon, regardless of the patient's residence. Because rate calculations employ Oregon population figures, these calculations, in effect, substitute out-of-state residents for Oregonians who may have obtained an abortion in another state.

<sup>2</sup> Per 1,000 females in age group.



**AGE**

Abortion rates vary greatly by age group. The highest rate in 1998 occurred among women age 20-24 (44.0 per 1,000), with older teens and women in their late 20s also showing high rates (see sidebar). The lowest rate was among women 45-49: 0.2 per 1,000 obtained an abortion. [Figure 3-2].



The 1998 abortion rate among teens age 10-17 was 47.3 percent lower than the rate in 1980, when the statewide abortion rate was highest. [Figure 3-3]. The rate for 18- to 19-year-olds was 34 percent below that of 1980. The absence of a corresponding increase in the birth rates among teens indicates that the reduction in abortions is associated with success in avoiding unwanted pregnancy, rather than an increase in decisions to carry unwanted pregnancies to term. In contrast, among women 25 and older, both abortion rates and birth rates were markedly higher than in 1980.

## PREGNANCY OUTCOMES

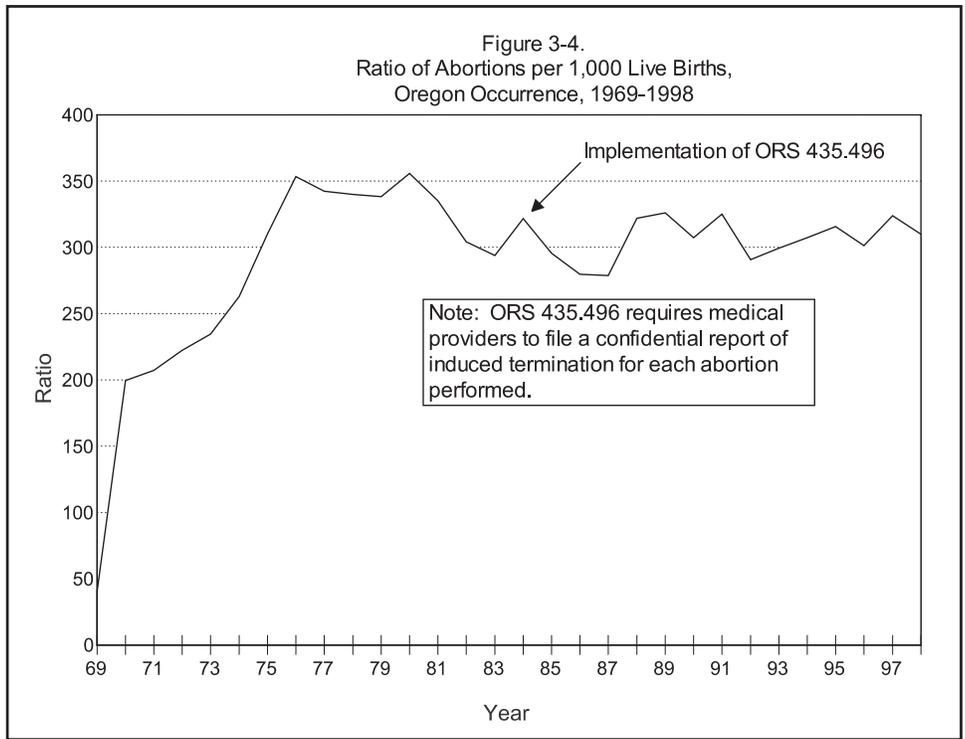
Figure 3-4 shows the ratio of abortions to births occurring in Oregon, indicating the prevalence of unwanted pregnancies that occurred in the state. The highest ratio of abortions to births was in 1980. Between 1980 and 1987, the ratio of abortions to births declined, although this fact is obscured by the increased level of reporting that began in 1984 as a requirement of new legislation. In 1998, there were 310.0 abortions per 1,000 occurrence births. This represents a 4.3 percent decrease from 1997, and a 12.9 percent decrease from 1980, when this ratio was 355.8 per 1,000 births. [Table 3-2].

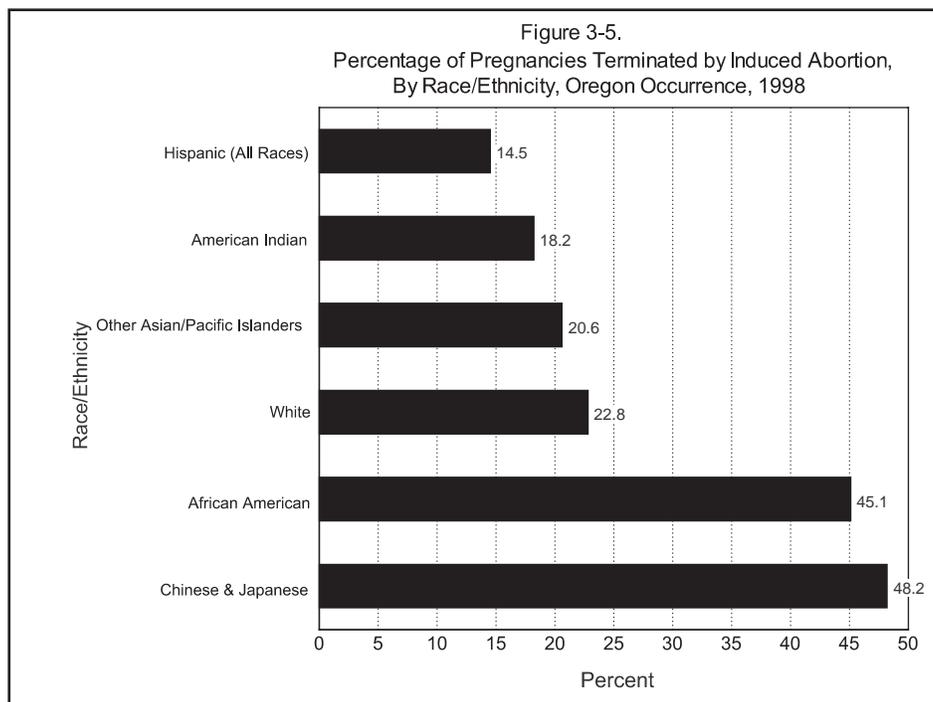
In 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion with the Roe v. Wade decision, Oregon's abortion ratio was about one-fifth higher than that of the U.S. [Table 3-2]. During the mid-1980s this changed: Oregonians were less likely than residents of other states to terminate pregnancy by abortion (see sidebar). The most recent comparison available (1997) indicates that the abortion ratio in Oregon was 6.2 percent above that of the nation.

**Comparison of Oregon and U.S. Abortion Ratios, 1972-1997**

Year	U.S. Abortion Ratio <sup>1</sup>	Oregon's Abortion Ratio <sup>2</sup> as Percent Difference from U.S.
1972	180	+23%
1973	196	+19%
1974	242	+9%
1975	**	**
1976	312	+13%
1977	**	**
1978	347	-2%
1979	**	**
1980	359	-1%
1981	**	**
1982	354	-14%
1983	**	**
1984	364	-12%
1985	354	-16%
1986	354	-21%
1987	356	-21%
1988	352	-9%
1989	346	-6%
1990	345	-11%
1991	339	-4%
1992	335	-13%
1993	334	-10%
1994	321	-4%
1995	311	+2%
1996	314	-4%
*1997	305	+6%

1 Estimated Number of Abortions per 1,000 Live Births.  
 2 See Table 3-2.  
 \* Preliminary Estimate.  
 \*\* Data not available.





## CONTRACEPTIVE USE

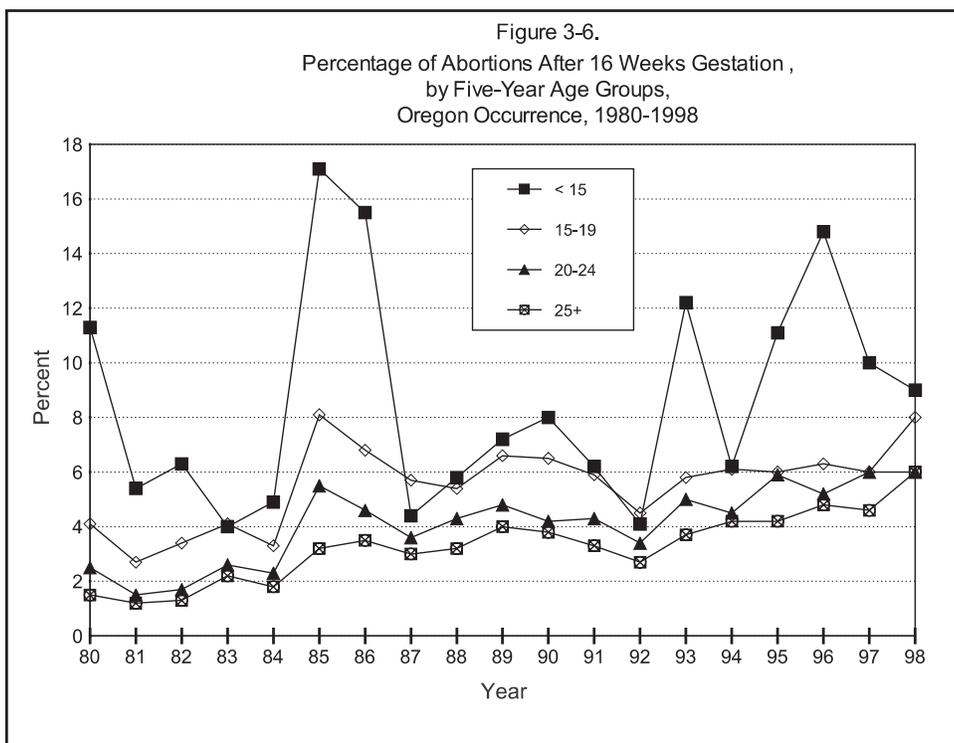
In the majority of abortions that occur in Oregon, the pregnancy is not a result of contraceptive failure. In 1998, based upon data obtained from abortion reports, 33 percent of women having abortions had tried to avoid pregnancy by using some method of contraception. [Table 3-5].

## RACE/ETHNICITY

The frequency with which abortion procedures were used to terminate a pregnancy varied among ethnic and racial groups. African American women and women of Chinese and Japanese origin were most likely to have an abortion. In 1998, African American women terminated 45 percent of their pregnancies, Chinese women terminated 50 percent, and Japanese women terminated 45 percent. Because of Oregon's demographic composition, white women obtain the majority of abortions. In 1998, this group had 12,555, or nearly 90 percent of the abortions performed in Oregon. Hispanic women were least likely to terminate a pregnancy (15%). [Figure 3-5].

## MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Eighty-six percent of abortions with known gestation were performed prior to the 13th week of pregnancy. Suction curettage was the procedure used in 98 percent of terminations prior to the 13th week where method was reported. Just one in sixteen (6.3%) induced terminations were performed after 16 weeks gestation. Eighty percent (79.5%) of the procedures performed after 16 weeks gestation were dilation and evacuation. [Table 3-4]. Teenage women were more likely to obtain an abortion after 16 weeks gestation than were women over 20. [Figure 3-6]. Complications at the time of the



procedure were reported for 147 termination: infection (44 patients) and retained products (38 patients) were the most common complications. In Oregon, there have been no deaths in which a woman died as the result of a legally induced termination.

### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Abortion rates vary widely within the state, yet all 36 counties had at least one resident who sought an abortion in 1998. The providers of such services, however, were geographically concentrated. In 1998, abortions were reported in 10 of Oregon’s 36 counties, compared to 9 in 1997. The degree of concentration is evident in the fact that 98 percent of all abortions were obtained in the five counties of highest occurrence: Jackson, Lane, Marion, Multnomah, and Washington. [Table 3-7].

Although abortions may often be sought outside a patient’s community to help ensure anonymity, this degree of concentration suggests that access to abortion may be limited for some Oregon women.

### References

1. CDC. Abortion Surveillance: Preliminary Analysis – United States, 1997. *MMWR* Jan 07, 2000; v48, n51:1171-1174; 1191 preliminary data.