

Induced Terminations of Pregnancy

CURRENT TRENDS

There were 14,079 induced terminations of pregnancy reported in Oregon during 1995. This figure includes out-of-state residents who obtained abortion services in Oregon, but does not include Oregonians who may have obtained abortions elsewhere. It represents a 5 percent increase from 1994. However, the 1995 figure is 11 percent below the 15,735 abortions reported in the peak year of 1980. [Figure 3-1].

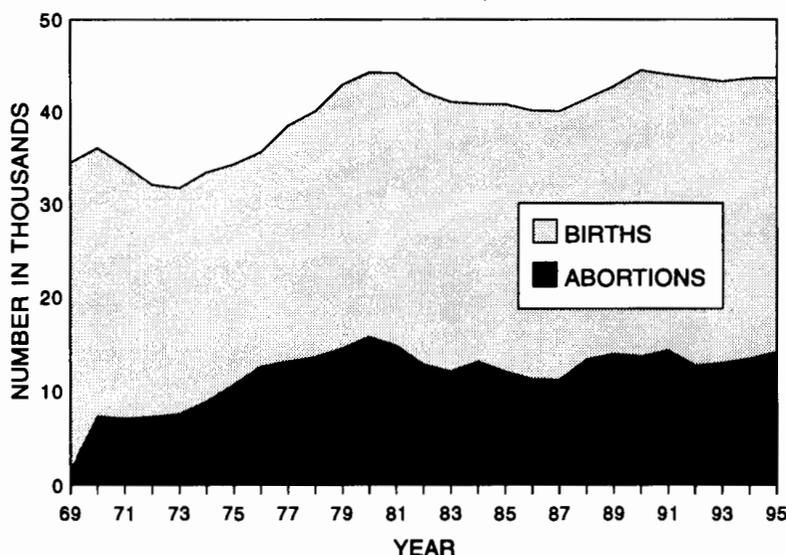
Changes in behavior are revealed by shifts in *rate* more than by changes in the number of events. Although the U.S. abortion rate has remained relatively stable since 1980, at approximately 24 per 1,000¹ women of childbearing age, Oregon's rate declined by nearly one-third between 1980 and 1987—to 17.5 per 1,000. From 1988-1995, Oregon's rate has fluctuated around 20 per 1,000. [Table 3-1]. In 1994, the Oregon rate was 19.5 per 1,000; in 1995 it increased 5 percent to 20.4 per 1,000. The 1995 rate was still 19 percent lower than the record high of 1980 (25.1 per 1,000).

Abortion patients in Oregon were typically non-Hispanic white women, who were single and in their early 20s. Half had previously given birth. Out-of-state residents accounted for 11.4 percent (1,608) of abortions in 1995—a 2 percent decrease from the previous year.

The accuracy of abortion estimates is generally less than that for births and deaths, in part because some providers may fail to report all abortions even though it is required by state law. In addition, the total number of women who travel to another state

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

FIGURE 3-1.
NUMBER OF ABORTIONS AND BIRTHS
OCCURRING IN OREGON, 1969-1995



to obtain abortions is unknown. (See Appendix B, Technical Notes section, for a more extensive discussion of the completeness of abortion data.)

AGE

Abortion rates vary greatly by age group. The highest occur among younger women. [Figure 3-2]. In 1995 the rate for women age 20-24 was 42.7 per 1,000, with older teens and women in their late 20s also showing high rates (see sidebar). Among women 30-44, 9.1 per 1,000 obtained an abortion.

During 1995, abortion rates increased for all age groups, except for women over 45, whose rate remained the same. The largest increase was among women age 25-29 with the rate increasing by 14 percent to 31.9 per 1,000.

The 1995 abortion rate among young teens (age 10-17) was 52 percent lower than the rate in 1980—the year the statewide abortion rate was highest. [Figure 3-3]. The rate among 18- to 19-year-olds was 36 percent below that of 1980. The birth and abortion rates among teens indicate 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. Among women 30 and older, by contrast, birth rates were markedly higher than they were in 1980.

PREGNANCY OUTCOMES

Figure 3-4 shows the relationship between the number of abortions and births in Oregon, giving an indication of the number of unwanted pregnancies that occurred in the state. The highest ratio of abortions to births was in 1980. Between 1980

ABORTION RATES BY AGE AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION, OREGON OCCURRENCE ¹ , 1995		
AGE	RATE ²	PERCENT
< 15	0.9	0.7
15-19	28.8	21.3
20-24	42.7	30.8
25-29	31.9	22.3
30-34	17.0	14.0
35-39	8.7	8.1
40-44	2.7	2.5
45+	0.2	0.2
15-44	20.4	99.0

¹ 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. AS A RESULT, THE RATES MAY BE INFLATED BY AS MUCH AS 10 PERCENT. HOWEVER, THE PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION IS ESSENTIALLY UNAFFECTED. DOES NOT INCLUDE ABORTIONS WHERE PATIENT'S AGE IS UNKNOWN.

² PER 1,000 FEMALES.

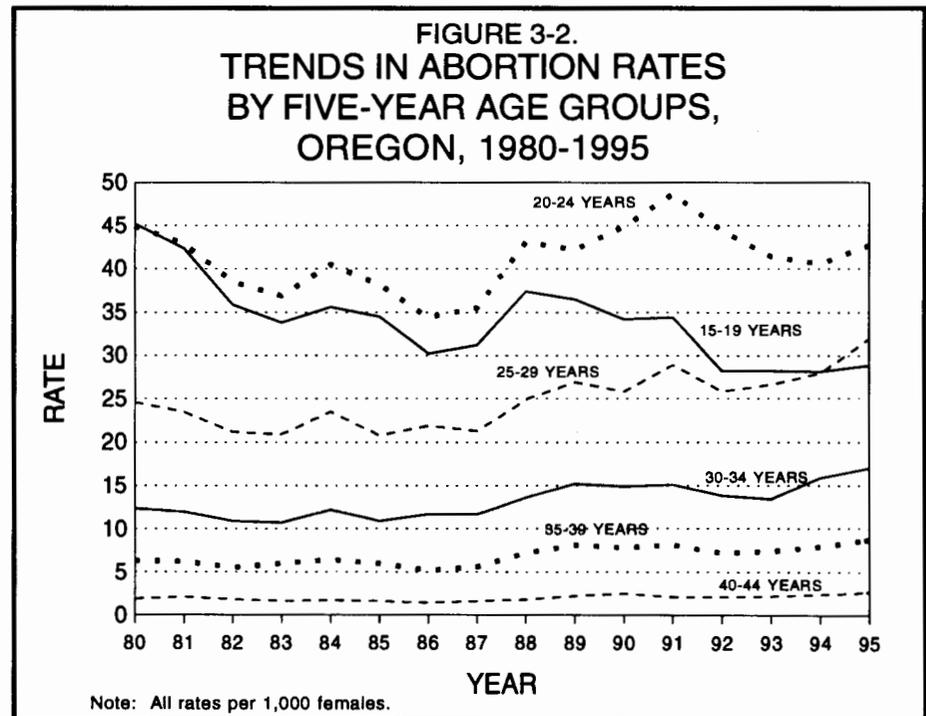
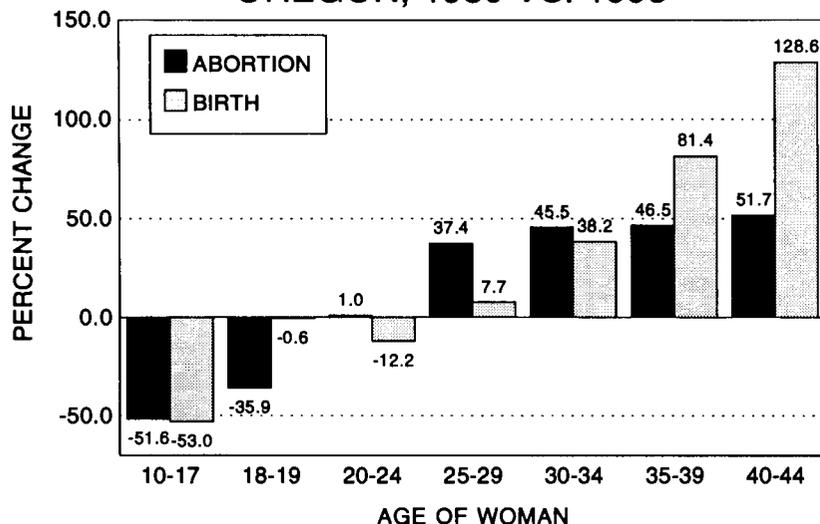


FIGURE 3-3.
COMPARISON OF BIRTH AND ABORTION RATES,
OREGON, 1980 VS. 1995



Note: All rates per 1,000 females.

and 1987, the ratio of abortions to births declined—although this fact is obscured by the increased level of reporting begun in 1984 as a requirement of new legislation. In 1995, there were 315.6 abortions per 1,000 births. Since 1992, the ratio of abortions to births has displayed an upward trend.

In 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion with *Roe v. Wade*, Oregon's abortion ratio was about one-fifth higher than that of the nation. By the mid-1980s, however, this had changed: Oregonians were less likely than residents of other states to terminate pregnancy by abortion (see sidebar). The most recent comparison available (1993) indicates that the abortion ratio in Oregon was 3.0 percent below that of the nation.¹

CONTRACEPTIVE USE

In the majority of abortions that occur in Oregon, an unwanted pregnancy is not a result of contraceptive failure. In 1995, based upon data obtained from abortion reports, 58.8 percent of abortion patients had engaged in sexual intercourse without using any method of contraception. Furthermore, failure to use a contraceptive was nearly as likely among those who had previously obtained an abortion as among those having one for the first time. Sixty percent of first-time abortion patients reported using no contraceptive; the figure was 59.1 percent among those with at least three previous abortions. [Table 3-5].

RACE/ETHNICITY

The frequency with which abortion procedures were used to terminate a pregnancy varied among ethnic and racial groups. Non-Hispanic African American, and Chinese and Japanese

COMPARISON OF OREGON AND U.S. ABORTION RATIOS, 1972-1993

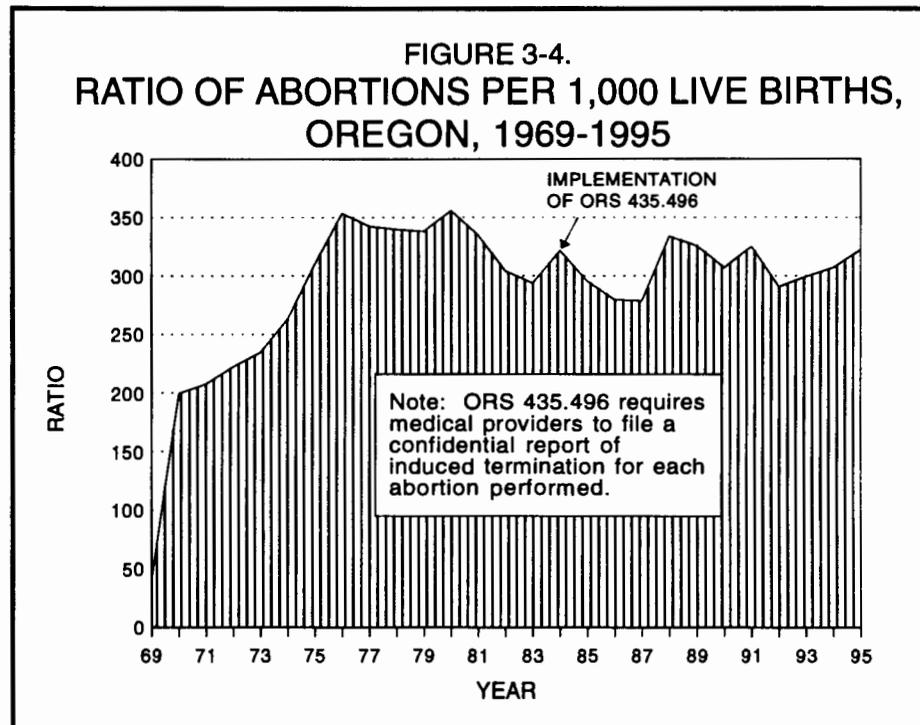
YEAR	U.S. ABORTION RATIO ¹	OREGON'S ABORTION RATIO ² AS PERCENT DIFFERENCE OF U.S.
1972	180	+23%
1973	196	+19%
1974	242	+9%
1975	**	**
1976	312	+13%
1977	**	**
1978	347	-2%
1979	**	**
1980	359	-1%
1981	**	**
1982	354	-14%
1983	**	**
1984	364	-12%
1985	354	-16%
1986	354	-21%
1987	356	-21%
1988	352	-9%
1989	346	-6%
1990	345	-11%
1991	339	-4%
1992	335	-13%
1993*	334	-3%

¹ ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ABORTIONS PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS.

² SEE TABLE 3-2.

* PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE.

** DATA NOT AVAILABLE.



women were most likely to have an abortion; Hispanic women (15.3%) were least likely. [Figure 3-5].

In 1995, non-Hispanic African American, Chinese and Japanese women terminated more than 40 percent of their pregnancies -- a total of 943 cases. However, these cases represented only about 6.8 percent of abortions performed in the state where race and ethnicity were known. Because of Oregon's demographic composition the great majority of the state's abortions are obtained by non-Hispanic whites. In 1995, this group accounted for 11,438, or four in five of the abortions performed in Oregon. Hispanic ethnicity was unknown in 123 cases and race was unknown in 212 cases.

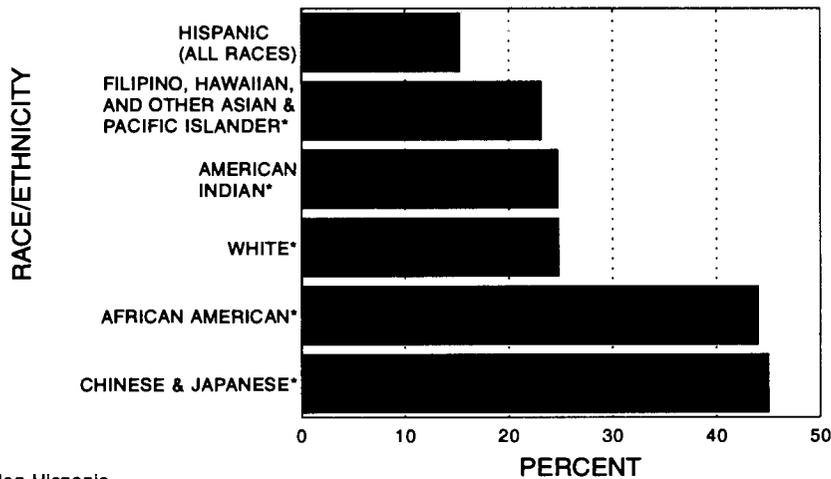
MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Eighty-eight percent of known gestation abortions were performed prior to the 13th week of pregnancy. Suction curettage was the procedure used in 92.5 percent of these terminations (where method was reported). Just one in twenty (5.2%) of induced terminations were performed after 16 weeks gestation: 81.2 percent of these used dilation and evacuation. [Table 3-4]. Teenage women were more likely to obtain an abortion after 16 weeks gestation than women 20 or older. [Figure 3-6]. Complications at the time of the procedure were rare--in fact, less than 1 percent (0.3%) of the 1995 abortion reports indicated any medical complication. There have been no deaths reported in which a woman died as the result of an induced termination in Oregon since 1971, before the *Roe v. Wade* decision.

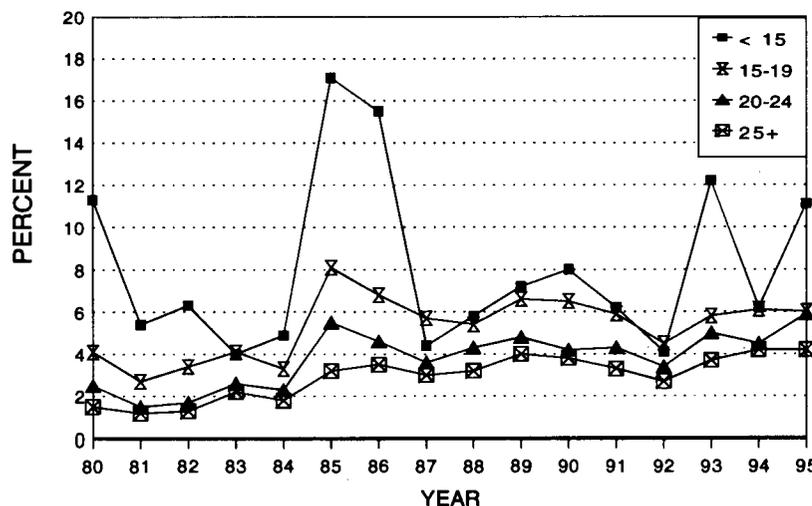
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Abortion rates vary widely within the state, yet all 36 counties had at least one resident who sought an abortion in 1995. The providers of such services, however, are geographically concentrated. In 1995, abortions were reported in only nine of Oregon's 36 counties, compared to 10 in 1994. The degree of concentration is evident in the fact that 91.1 percent of all abortions were obtained in the three counties of highest occurrence. [Table 3-7].

**FIGURE 3-5.
PERCENTAGE OF PREGNANCIES TERMINATED
BY INDUCED ABORTIONS BY RACE/ETHNICITY,
OREGON, 1995**



**FIGURE 3-6.
PERCENTAGE OF ABORTIONS AFTER 16 WEEKS GESTATION
BY FIVE-YEAR AGE GROUPS,
OREGON, 1980-1995**



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 Data -- United States, 1993. *MMWR* 1996; 45:235-238.