

Induced Terminations of Pregnancy

CURRENT TRENDS

There were 14,612 induced terminations of pregnancy reported in Oregon during 1997. 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 6 percent increase from 1996. However, the 1997 figure remains 7 percent below the 15,735 abortions reported in the peak year of 1980. [Figure 3-1].

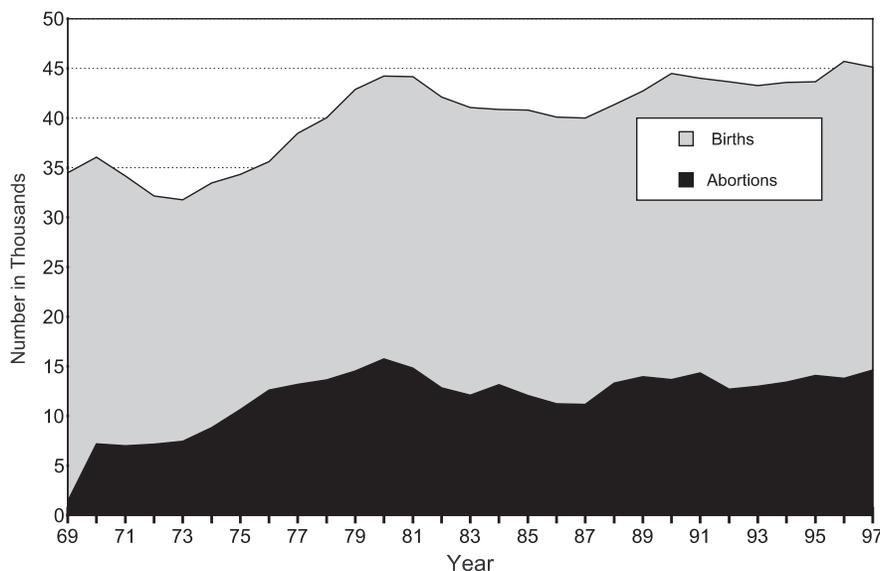
Changes in behavior are revealed by shifts in rate more than by changes in the number of events. The U.S. abortion rate has been declining since 1980 from approximately 25 per 1,000 women of childbearing age to 20 per 1,000 in 1996. From 1988 to 1997, Oregon's rate has fluctuated around 20 per 1,000. [Table 3-1]. In 1996, the Oregon rate was 19.9 per 1,000; in 1997, it increased 5.0 percent to 20.9 per 1,000. Despite the increase, the 1997 rate was 17 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 single and in their early 20s. Almost half have previously given birth. Out-of-state residents accounted for 12 percent (1,788) of abortions in 1997, a 6.2 percent increase from 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 abortions is unknown. (See Appendix B, Technical Notes section, for a more extensive discussion of the completeness of abortion data.)

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

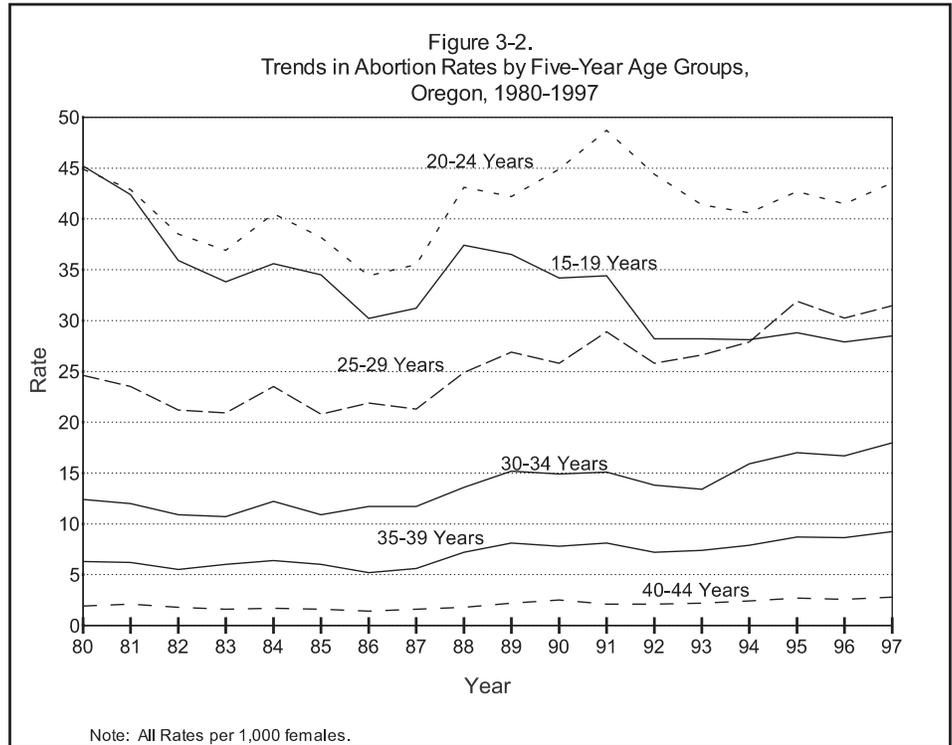
Figure 3-1.
Number of Abortions and Births
Occurring in Oregon, 1969-1997



| Abortion Rates by Age and Percentage Distribution, Oregon Occurrence ¹ , 1997 | | |
|--|-------------------|------|
| Age | Rate ² | % |
| < 15 | 0.9 | 0.6 |
| 15-19 | 28.5 | 21.8 |
| 20-24 | 43.6 | 31.3 |
| 25-29 | 31.5 | 21.9 |
| 30-34 | 18.0 | 13.4 |
| 35-39 | 9.2 | 8.1 |
| 40-44 | 2.8 | 2.6 |
| 45+ | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| 15-44 | 21.0 | 99.2 |

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 patients's age is unknown.

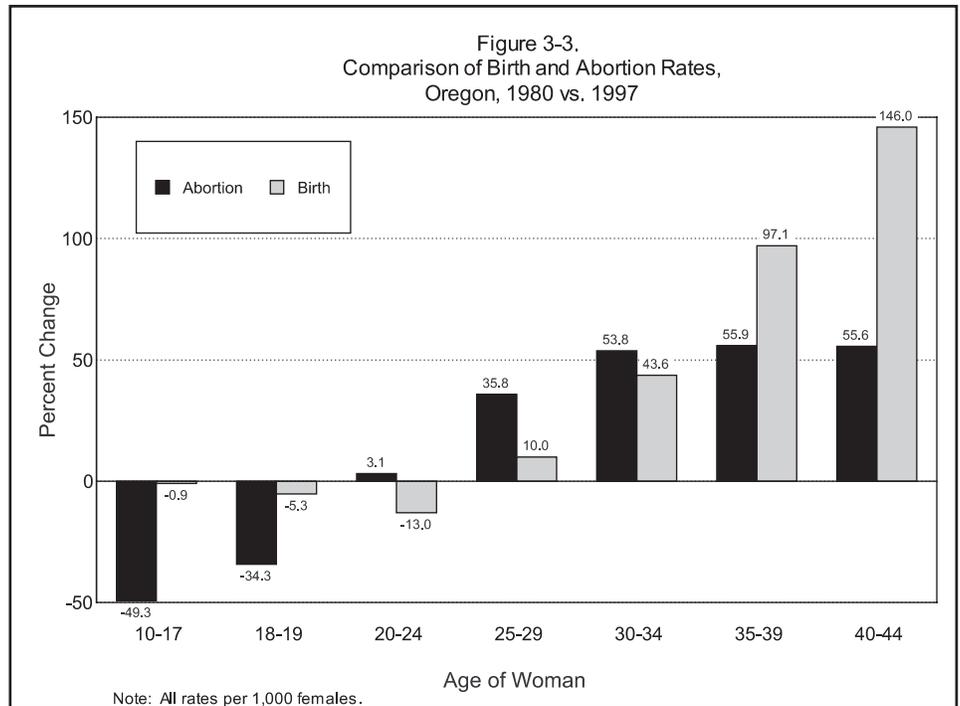
² Per 1,000 females.



AGE

Abortion rates vary greatly by age group. The highest rate in 1997 occurred among women age 20-24 (43.6 per 1,000), with older teens and women in their late 20s also showing high rates (see sidebar). The lowest rate was among women 30-44: 7.1 per 1,000 obtained an abortion. [Figure 3-2].

From 1996 to 1997, abortion rates increased for all age groups, except for women over age 45, whose rates remained the same.



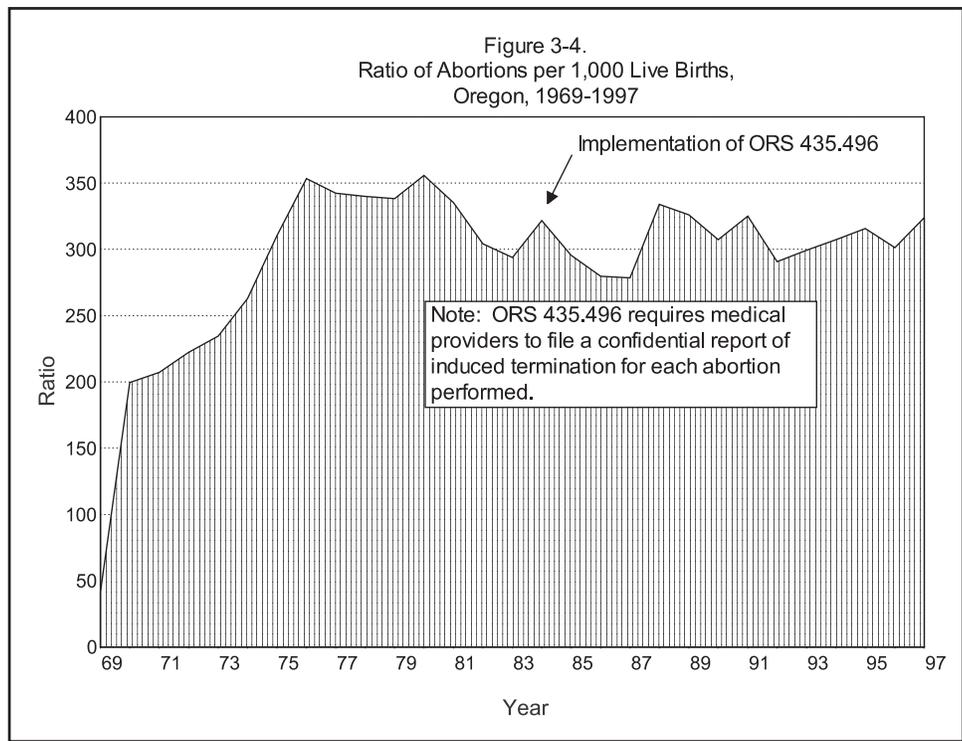
The largest increase in abortion rates was recorded for 30- to 34-year-olds (up 7.8%).

The 1997 abortion rate among young teens (age 10-17) was 49 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 lack 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 30 and older, lower abortion rates were accompanied by birth rates that were markedly higher than in 1980.

PREGNANCY OUTCOMES

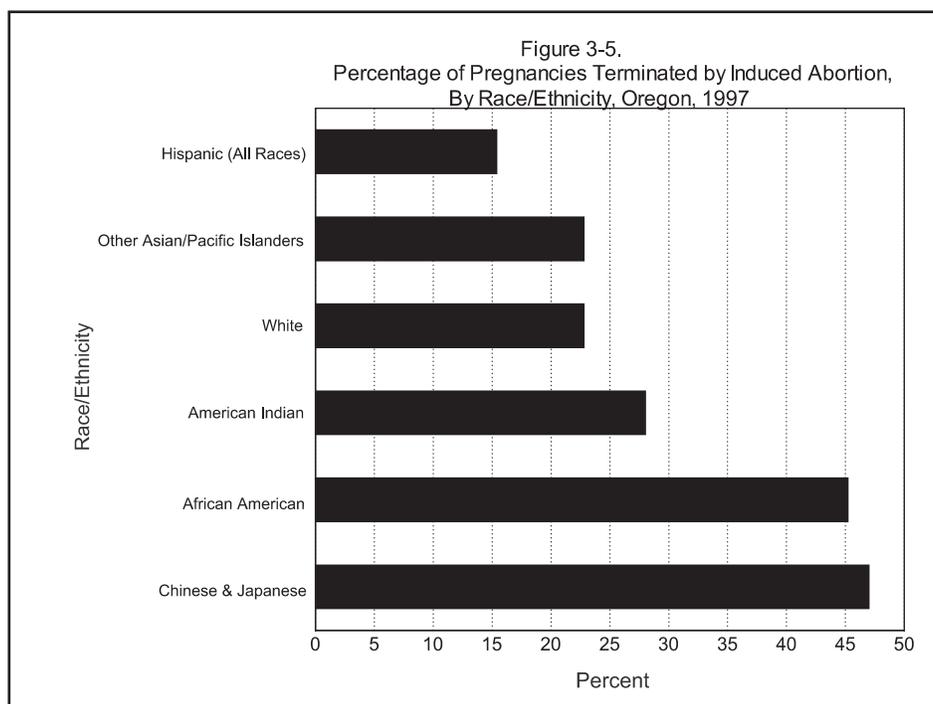
Figure 3-4 shows the relationship between the number of abortions and births in Oregon, indicating the number of unwanted pregnancies that occurred in the state. The highest ratio of abortions to births was in 1980. Between 1980 and 1987, the ratio of abortions to births declined, although this fact is obscured by the increased level of reporting that began in 1984 as a requirement of new legislation. In 1997, there were 323.9 abortions per 1,000 occurrence births. This represents a 7.5 percent increase over 1996, as well as a 11.4 percent increase over 1992, when this ratio was 290.8 per 1,000.

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]. By the mid-1980s, however, this had changed: Oregonians were less likely than residents of other states to terminate pregnancy by abortion (see



| Year | U.S. Abortion Ratio ¹ | Oregon's Abortion Ratio ² 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% |

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



sidebar). The most recent comparison available (1996) indicates that the abortion ratio in Oregon was 4.0 percent below that of the nation.

CONTRACEPTIVE USE

In the majority of abortions that occur in Oregon, an unwanted pregnancy is not a result of contraceptive failure. In 1997, based upon data obtained from abortion reports, 63 percent of abortion patients had engaged in sexual intercourse without using any method of contraception. [Table 3-5].

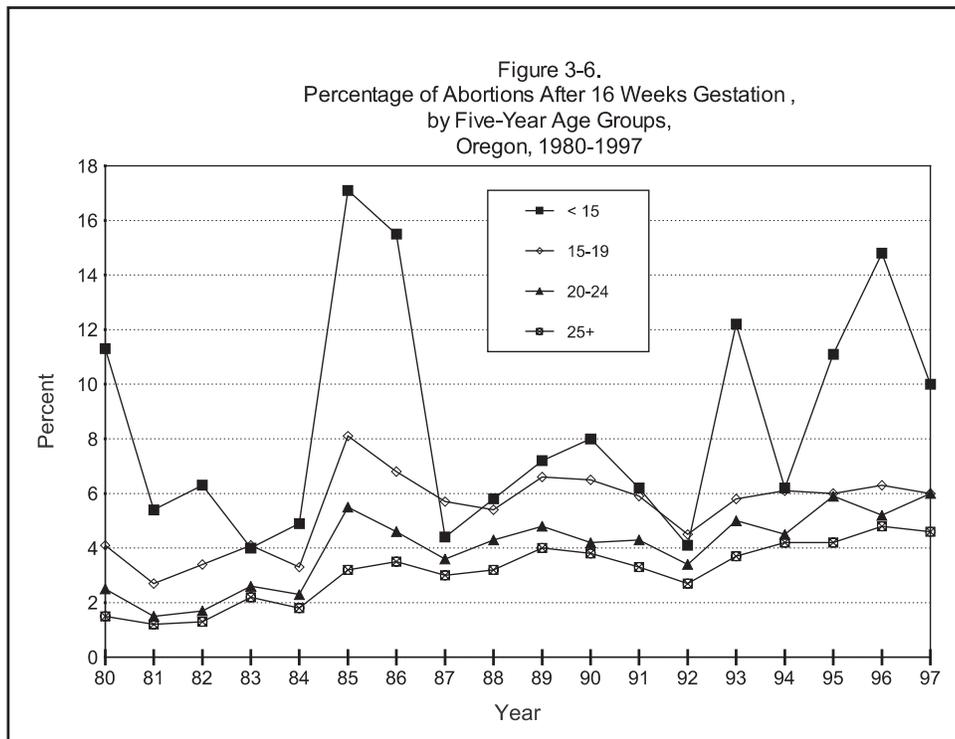
RACE/ETHNICITY

The frequency with which abortion procedures were used to terminate a pregnancy varied among ethnic and racial groups. African American, Chinese, and Japanese women were most likely to have an abortion. In 1997, African American women terminated 45 percent of their pregnancies, Chinese women terminated 48 percent, and Japanese women terminated 45 percent. Hispanic women were least likely to terminate a pregnancy (15%). [Figure 3-5].

Because of Oregon's demographic composition, non-Hispanic whites obtain the majority of abortions. In 1997, this group had 11,655, or four in five of the abortions performed in Oregon. Hispanic ethnicity was not known for 35 cases, and race was unknown for 45.

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Eighty-eight percent of abortions with known gestation were performed prior to the 13th week of pregnancy. Suction curettage was the procedure used in 99 percent of these terminations where



method was reported. Just one in twenty (5.3%) of induced terminations were performed after 16 weeks gestation. Eighty-one percent of these used dilation and evacuation. [Table 3-4]. Teenage women were more likely to obtain an abortion after 16 weeks gestation than were women 20 or older. [Figure 3-6]. Complications at the time of the procedure were rare; in fact, less than 1 percent (0.2%) of the 1997 abortion reports indicated any medical complication. In Oregon, there have been no deaths reported 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 1997. The providers of such services, however, are geographically concentrated. In 1997, abortions were reported in nine of Oregon’s 36 counties, compared to 10 in 1996. The degree of concentration is evident in the fact that 90 percent of all abortions were obtained in the three counties of highest occurrence: Lane, 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, 1996. *MMWR* 1998; v47, n47:1025-1028; 1035.

