Induced Termination of Pregnancy

Current trends

During 2011, 9,567 induced terminations of pregnancy occurred in Oregon. This total represents a 4.2 percent decrease from 2010 and a decrease of 39.2 percent from the record high of 15,735 abortions reported in 1980. (See Figure 3-1.)

This chapter reports occurrence data for all abortions occurring in Oregon whether obtained by Oregon residents or residents of another state. The percentage of out-of-state residents terminating pregnancies in Oregon has been between 9.8 percent and 12.6 percent from 1992 to the present. In 2011, 935 patients (9.8 %) were out-of-state residents. (See Table 3-6.) Oregonians who obtained out-of-state abortions are not included in this data. Because rate calculations use Oregon population numbers, these calculations substitute out-of-state residents for the unknown number of Oregonians who obtained an abortion in another state. (See Appendix B, Technical Notes section for a more extensive discussion of the completeness of abortion data.)

Behavioral changes are revealed more by shifts in rates (which account for population change) than changes in the number of events. The U.S. abortion rate has been declining since 1980 from approximately 25 per 1,000 women aged
15–44 to 16.0 per 1,000 in 2008, the most recent data available. In 2011, the Oregon rate decreased to 12.5 per 1,000 women aged 15–44, a 4.6 percent decrease from 2010, and a 50.2 percent decrease from the record high seen in 1980 (25.1 per 1,000). During the past 20 years, Oregon’s abortion rate has generally declined — from a high of 21.4 in 1991, to the current low of 12.5 per 1,000 women aged 15–44.

Pregnancy outcomes

Figure 3-2 shows the ratio of abortions to births occurring in Oregon indicating the prevalence of unwanted pregnancies that occurred in the state. Both the highest abortion rate (number of abortions per 1,000 female population) and the highest ratio of abortions (number of abortions per 1,000 births) occurred in 1980. Between 1980 and 1987, the ratio of abortions to births declined, although an increased level of reporting beginning in 1984 (as a requirement of new legislation) obscures this fact.

In 2011, there were 212.0 abortions per 1,000 occurrence births. This represents a 2.6 percent decrease from 2010 and a 40.4 percent decrease from 1980 when this ratio was 355.8 per 1,000 births. (See Table 3-2.)

Oregon’s abortion ratio was about one-fifth higher than that of the U.S. in 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court’s
Induced termination of pregnancy

Induced termination of pregnancy

In the mid-1980s and early 1990s this changed: The rate at which Oregonians terminated pregnancy with an induced abortion was less than the U.S. as a whole. Since 1995 however, Oregon’s abortion ratio has fluctuated around the U.S. ratio. The 2008 abortion ratio in Oregon was slightly lower than the 2008 U.S. ratio (214.4 to 234), however, this difference is likely higher, due in part to some states not reporting (California, Maryland and New Hampshire).

Abortion patients

Similar to birth rates, abortion rates differ by age group, race, ethnicity, marital status and prior pregnancy. Nearly three-fourths of abortion patients have never been married (see Table 3-3), and more than half have previously given birth. (See Table 3-5.)

Age

There is wide variation in abortion rates among age groups (see sidebar 3-B): The highest rate in 2011 occurred among women aged 20–24 (24.4 per 1,000). The lowest rates were among women 45–49, (0.2 per 1,000) and women under age 15 (0.2 per 1,000). (See Figure 3-3, sidebar 3-B.)

The 2011 abortion rate among teens aged 10–17 was 82.5 percent lower than the rate in 1980 (when the statewide 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.

Table 3-B. Abortion Rates by Age and Percentage Distribution, Oregon Occurrence1, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Rate *</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;15</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
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<td>35-39</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-44</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>99.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rate per 1,000 females in age group

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.

2 Per 1,000 females in age group
abortion rate was highest); the rate for 18- to 19-year-olds was 70.4 percent lower. (See Figure 3-4.) The absence of a corresponding increase in the birth rates among teens suggests success in avoiding unwanted pregnancy, rather than an increase in decisions to carry unwanted pregnancies to term. In contrast, among women age 35 and older, both abortion rates and birth rates were markedly higher in 2011 than in 1980.

**Race and ethnicity**

Beginning in 2008, collection of race and ethnicity data on Oregon birth certificates changed to obtain more precise information about an individual’s race and Hispanic ethnicity. In prior years, only one race category could be selected. Now multiple race and ethnicity categories may be chosen. For this reason, current pregnancy data (births and abortions) by race/ethnicity are not directly comparable to previous years.

The frequency with which abortion procedures were used to terminate pregnancies varied among ethnic and racial groups. African American and Asian/Pacific Islander women had the highest percentages of terminated pregnancies in 2011 with 32.2 and 20.0 percent respectively. Because Oregon’s demographic composition is predominantly White, White women obtained the majority of abortions by count in 2011, but had only the fourth highest percentage
of terminations overall, 46.9 percent lower than African American women. American Indian women accounted for the smallest abortion count; however, 18.3 percent of their pregnancies were terminated. Non-Hispanic White women followed at 17.1 percent. The lowest percentage of terminated pregnancies was women of Hispanic ethnicity who terminated 11.0 percent of pregnancies in 2011. (See Figure 3-5.)

![Figure 3-5. Percentage of Pregnancies Terminated by Induced Abortion by Race/Ethnicity, Oregon Occurrence, 2011](image)

**Contraceptive use**

In the majority of abortions that occur in Oregon, the pregnancy is not a result of contraceptive failure. In 2011, based upon data obtained from abortion reports, 28.7 percent of women used some method of contraception to avoid pregnancy. (See Table 3-5.) Of the 71.3 percent of abortion patients who did not report using contraceptives, 40.5 percent had previously obtained an abortion.

**Medical procedures**

More than 87.7 percent of abortions with known gestation were performed prior to the 13th week of pregnancy. About one in nearly 20 (5.4%) induced terminations where gestation was known were performed after 16 weeks. Suction curettage was the procedure used in 51.7 percent of terminations prior to the 13th week where method was reported. Dilation and evacuation was the procedure in 86.1
percent of terminations occurring after 16 weeks gestation. Women less than 20 obtained 18.3 percent more abortions after 16 weeks gestation than women aged 20 and older. (See Table 3-4.) The percentage of abortions occurring after 16 weeks gestation increased slightly for women in all age groups in 2011. (See Figure 3-6)

Complications at the time of the induced termination procedure were reported for 268 terminations (3.9 % of abortion patients). Retained products (116 patients) and failure of first method (39 patients) were the most common complications. In Oregon, no woman has died as the result of a legally induced termination.

**Figure 3-6.** Percentage of Abortions After 16 Weeks Gestation by Five-Year Age Group, Oregon Occurrence, 1990-2011

*WARNING: Rates based on less than five events are unreliable.*

**Geographic distribution**

Abortion rates varied widely within Oregon with 35 of 36 counties reporting at least one resident who obtained an abortion in 2011. Service providers, conversely, were geographically concentrated. In 2011, abortions were reported in eight counties. The concentration was evident in the fact that 94.9 percent of all abortions were obtained in the five counties of highest occurrence: Jackson, Lane, Marion, Multnomah and Washington. (See Table 3-7.) Although abortions often may be sought outside a patient’s community to help ensure anonymity, this degree of
concentration suggests that access to abortion services may be limited for some Oregon women.

**Endnote**