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Adoption Experiences of Women and Men and Demand for Children to Adopt by Women 18-44 Years of Age in the United States, 2002



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Health Statistics

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Health Statistics

Hyattsville, Maryland
August 2008
DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 2008–1979

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Objective

This report presents national estimates of the prevalence of adoption for men and women 18–44 years of age, the demand for children to adopt by women, and women's preferences for characteristics of the adopted child.

Methods

Analysis is based on data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth. This survey interviewed a nationally representative sample of women and men 15–44 years of age in their households. Results are weighted to produce national estimates of the characteristics of men and women who have adopted children, lifetime and current demand for adoption by women, and the characteristics of children preferred by women when they are considering adoption.

Results

Adoption remains rare in the United States. Among all women aged 18–44 in 2002, only 1.1% had adopted a child and 1.6% were currently seeking to adopt. Women were more likely to be currently seeking to adopt, to have ever sought to adopt, and to have actually adopted a child if they had used infertility services or had impaired fecundity. Older women and women who were in their second or later marriage were also more likely to have adopted a child. Hispanic and non-Hispanic black women were more likely to be currently seeking to adopt compared with non-Hispanic white women. More men than women have adopted children in their lifetimes. Among adopters, 17% of women and 6% of men were never married.

Conclusions

Adopting a child has been and remains a relatively rare event in the United States. Adoption is a mechanism by which adults legalize their parental relationship to nonbiological children as well as a means to bring children into families. Studies examining adoption should include men as well as women and persons of all marital statuses.

Keywords: adoption • nonbiological children • relinquishment • NSFG

Adoption Experiences of Women and Men and Demand for Children to Adopt by Women 18–44 Years of Age in the United States, 2002

by Jo Jones, Ph.D., Division of Vital Statistics

Highlights

Ever Adopted a Child (Tables 1–4, Figures 1–3)

- Adoption has been and remains rare. Between 1973 and 2002, the percentage of ever-married women 18–44 years of age who had adopted a child fluctuated between 1.3 and 2.2 (Table 1).
- Men were twice as likely as women 18–44 years of age to have adopted a child. Among ever-married persons, men (3.8%) were more than 2.5 times as likely as women (1.4%) to have adopted (Tables 2 and 4).
- One-quarter (26%) of nulliparous women 40–44 years of age who had ever used infertility services had adopted a child (Table 3).
- While never-married adults 18–44 years of age were significantly less likely to have adopted a child compared with those who were currently married, about 100,000 never-married women and 73,000 never-married men had adopted a child (based on Tables 2 and 4).

Lifetime and Current Adoption Consideration and Steps Taken to Adopt (Tables 5–10, Figures 4–7)

- One-third of all women 18–44 years of age had ever considered adopting

a child. Of these, about one of seven had taken steps to adopt. Women who had ever taken steps to adopt were more likely to be 30–44 years of age, to be currently married, to have used infertility services, and to be surgically sterile or with impaired fecundity than women of other characteristics (Tables 5 and 6).

- Overall, 1.6% of all women and 2.0% of ever-married women 18–44 years of age were currently seeking to adopt a child. Of these, approximately two-thirds were currently taking steps to adopt (62 and 67%, respectively; Tables 7 and 8).
- Seven of ten women with impaired fecundity who had ever used infertility services had considered adopting a child at some time in their lives; within each fecundity status group, women who had ever used infertility services were more likely than those who had not used infertility services to have ever considered adopting a child (Figure 4). Similarly, women who had ever used infertility services and women who have impaired fecundity were more likely to be currently seeking to adopt than other women (Tables 7 and 8).
- Higher percentages of Hispanic women and non-Hispanic black women were currently seeking to adopt a child compared with non-Hispanic white women (Tables 7 and 8).

- More than twice as many ever-married women who had ever used infertility services or who had impaired fecundity were currently seeking to adopt a child in 2002 compared with women in the same groups in 1995 (Table 10).

Characteristics of Women Who Seek to Adopt and Take Steps to Adopt (Tables 11–14, Figures 8–9)

- Forty percent of women currently taking steps to adopt were 35–39 years of age, double the percentage of the population of all women in this age group (Table 12, Figure 8).
- Three-quarters of women currently seeking to adopt a child had impaired fecundity or were surgically sterile (Figure 9).

Characteristics of the Child That Women Would Prefer or Accept When Considering Adoption (Table 15)

- Women currently seeking to adopt would prefer to adopt a child younger than 2 years old, without a disability, and a single child rather than two or more siblings. The data suggest that women would prefer to adopt a girl rather than a boy (Table 15).
- Women would accept children with most nonpreferred characteristics (Table 15). Two-thirds of women, however, would not accept a child 13 years of age or older or a child with a severe disability.

Relinquishment of Children (Table 16)

- Relinquishment of infants at birth is extremely rare. Only 1% of children born in the United States in 1996–2002 to women 18–44 years of age as of 2002 were relinquished for adoption within their first month of life (Table 16).

Introduction

Adoption is an institution that fulfills several purposes in contemporary American society. It provides parents for infants who are relinquished by birth parents (1) and for children whose parents have died or had their parental rights legally terminated. It provides individuals and couples a means to bring children into their families when they are unable to conceive or carry a pregnancy to term due to fertility difficulties (2,3). And, it can serve to provide a legal relationship between an adult and a nonbiological child for whom the adult is already caring—a stepchild, a child related by blood or marriage, or a child not related in any manner to the adopter and his or her partner—the adoption occurs to formalize the parent-child relationship, not necessarily to fulfill the adult's desire to raise a child.

In the case of nonrelative infant adoptions, providing a child with a family and providing a couple or individual with a child are complementary purposes; the number of these adoptions are governed by the number of children available for adoption (supply) and the number of individuals and couples seeking children to adopt (demand). In the past 30 years, several societal changes have decreased the number of children placed for adoption. First, keeping and raising their babies has become a more frequent choice of unmarried, pregnant women of all ages so that fewer babies have been relinquished for adoption (4–6). Second, there had been an overall decline in the teen birth rate since 1970 (although preliminary data for 2006 show a 3% increase in the teen birth rate compared with 2005) (7). In 1970, the teen birth rate was 68.3 (births per thousand women 15–19 years of age). It declined to 51.5 in 1978, fluctuated between 50.2 and 53.0 until 1988, rose to 61.8 in 1991, then experienced a steady decline through 2005 where it reached a low of 40.4 (8) rising in 2006 to 41.9 (7). Since teenage mothers historically were most likely to relinquish their infants for adoption, this has had a significant effect on the number of infants available

for adoption. Lastly, legislation requiring that reasonable efforts be made to preserve and reunify families (e.g., The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980), and to give preference to placement of children with relatives who meet state standards for child safety (e.g., The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996) have also limited the number of infants available to nonrelatives for adoption (9). The combined impact of these societal changes and legislative actions has been a decline in the number of native-born infants and young children available for adoption with little expectation that relinquishment rates will rise to meet the current level of demand (10).

Because of the decrease in the domestic supply of infants and children available for adoption, more affluent women and couples have increasingly sought to adopt children from other countries. Between 1990 and 2001, the number of children adopted from other countries has increased from 7,093 to 19,237 (11). Although the total number of adoptions in the United States remained relatively steady over this period, between 118,000 and 127,000 annually, the proportion that were international increased threefold from 5% in 1992 to 15% in 2001 (12). In 2000, of the 65.6 million children under 18 years of age in the United States, about 2.5% (1.6 million) were adopted (13).

It is difficult to assess whether there has been a change in the demand for children to adopt in the last 30 years. There are no national statistics on the number of individuals and couples seeking to adopt children—most adoption data are limited to finalized adoptions (12,14,15). If the percentage of women who have ever adopted is used as a proxy for demand, analysis of data from prior cycles of the NSFG indicate that demand may have declined—the overall percentage of women who have ever adopted a child has declined slightly since 1973 (16).

Adoption is also used to legalize the relationship between a nonbiological, *de facto* parent and a child. Raising and caring for stepchildren, related children, or foster children are situations that can

lead to the adoption of these children by individuals and couples.

Since 1973, the NSFG has been a unique and valuable source of data for studying the individual-level determinants of the adoption experience and for documenting trends in aspects of adoption for which no other national data are available. Data provided by the NSFG includes information on relinquishment of infants for adoption, whether the woman had ever adopted a child (related or not), characteristics of women seeking to adopt children, and the relationship between infertility and adoption. Analyses of previous cycles of the NSFG were restricted to ever-married women because the numbers of never-married women who had adopted a child or who had considered adopting a child were too small to make reliable estimates (16). By 2002, when Cycle 6 data were collected, sufficient numbers of never-married women had adopted a child, had sought to adopt a child, and had taken steps to adopt to calculate reliable national estimates and are, therefore, included in this report. For comparison with Chandra et al (16) and earlier reports, data are presented for ever-married women as well as all women.

For the first time in Cycle 6, men were surveyed in the NSFG and their experience with adopting a child is included here. A future report will focus more broadly on all men and women who are raising nonbiological children, regardless of the adoption status of the children, and will include information on the relationship of the child to the adult.

Methods

The NSFG Cycle 6 was conducted from mid-March 2002 through the end of February 2003. Households and respondents were selected from a nationally representative, multistage area probability sample drawn from 121 areas across the country. The final data file consists of 12,571 interviews—7,643 with females and 4,928 with males who were 15–44 years of age. The overall response rate for the 2002

survey was 79%, the response rate for females was 80%, and for men it was 78%. The interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes on laptop computers. The majority of the questions were asked by an interviewer who recorded the responses into the laptop. For the most sensitive questions, the respondent accessed the computer directly, by reading the question on the screen and/or listening to it through headphones and then entering his or her response directly into the laptop. Detailed information about the methods and procedures of the NSFG is provided in separate reports (17,18).

The numbers, percentages, averages, and other statistics shown in this report are *weighted national estimates*. The weights account for different sampling rates and for nonresponse bias and are adjusted to agree with population control totals provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. (See Lepkowski, et al. (18) for detailed information about sampling and weighting procedures.) In this report, percentages are rounded to one decimal place and numbers are weighted and given in thousands. Numbers calculated from the tables in this report may differ slightly from those in the text because of rounding.

Because adoption remains relatively rare in the United States, many percentages are based on relatively small population groups and differences among subgroups, which may appear to be significant, are not. Analyses based on small numbers of unweighted cases have standard errors that can be relatively large, so that differences between categories should be interpreted with caution. Standard errors are presented in each table for ease of between-group comparisons.

Differences between subgroup percentages were assessed using two-tailed *t*-tests. Because of the rarity of adoption and adoption-seeking behaviors noted previously—creating small cell sizes by subgroup—differences between percentages were evaluated at the .10 level as well as the .05 level. Terms such as “greater than” and “less than” indicate that the difference is statistically significant at the .05 level, while the phrase, “the data suggest,” indicates that the difference

was significant at the .10 level. In this report, percentages are not shown if the denominator is less than 50 cases or the numerator is less than 3 cases. When a percentage is not shown for this reason, the tables contain an asterisk (*) that indicates “Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.” No adjustments were made for multiple comparisons. Additional information regarding the effects of truncating and rounding, statistical testing, and the calculation of standard errors can be found in “Appendix I.”

This report shows findings by demographic and health characteristics of the man or woman at the time of the interview. Demographic characteristics include age, marital status, education, parity, Hispanic origin and race, and household income as a percentage of the poverty level. Health characteristics include fecundity status and ever use of infertility services. Education results are limited to respondents 22–44 years of age so that 4-year college degrees may potentially be reported; many respondents younger than 22 may still be in school. Poverty level of the household is generally shown only for those 20–44 years of age because teenagers are less likely to report household income accurately. The definition of Hispanic origin and race takes into account the reporting of more than one race, in accordance with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines (for additional detail, see Chandra et al. (19) Appendix II).

To examine trends between 1995 and 2002 in current and lifetime adoption demand, the data previously published for 1995 (16) were recomputed for Tables 9 and 10. This was done for a number of reasons. First, this report uses data from more women from the 1995 survey. The variable used to select women 18–44 years of age in the 1995 report measured the woman's age as of April 1, 1995; this report selected women who were 18–44 years of age at the time of interview. Second, in 2002 there were not sufficient numbers of women in the younger ages (18–24) or at higher parities (2 or more) that had ever taken or were currently taking steps to adopt to analyze; therefore, the age variable is grouped

differently and parity is dichotomized. Third, this report displays race and Hispanic origin per the most recent OMB standards (revisions issued October 1997), whereas Chandra et al. (16) reported race according to the 1977 OMB standards. And, lastly, the 1995 report used follow-up questions in constructing “ever took steps” and “currently taking steps” that were not available in 2002; the 1995 “steps” variables in [Tables 9](#) and [10](#) of this report were reconstructed without the follow-up questions to facilitate comparability with 2002 data.

For [Table 1](#), however, the 1995 percentages were NOT recomputed and the 2002 percentages were calculated using the same standards and definitions of prior reports (16) rather than the current standards and categories used in other tables in this report. This was done to maintain the continuity of the reporting of these variables extending back to 1973.

Because adoption is extremely rare among women under 18 and because women under age 18 were not asked about their care of nonbiological children or their adoption experiences, this report focuses on the adoption experiences of women 18–44 years of age among all and ever-married women and men. Additionally, although never-married women are less likely to consider adoption or to adopt than married women, trends in delaying and foregoing marriage among women of childbearing age (20) has led to an increase in adoption and adoption seeking behaviors by never-married women so they, too, are included in these analyses.

Collection of Adoption Information from Women

Although the core question about adopting a child has been asked in each cycle of the NSFG, the series of questions in which adoption information is obtained has grown dramatically from the two questions asked in Cycle 1 (1973) (see [Text boxes 1](#) and [2](#) for the questions asked in each cycle). Earlier cycles asked about a woman’s adoption experience in general. Beginning in

Cycle 5 (1995) and continuing in Cycle 6 (2002), adoption information was collected mainly in the context of nonbiological children that had lived with or were living with the woman, under her care and responsibility. To obtain complete information about women’s adoption seeking, each woman was asked whether she was currently seeking to adopt a child not living in her household. Women who were not currently seeking to adopt were asked whether they had ever considered adopting a child who had not lived with them at any time in the past.

As displayed in [Text box 2](#), there are three sets of questions in the Cycle 6 NSFG that ask a woman about her adoption experiences. The first series asks the woman about any nonbiological children who have lived or are living with her, under her care and responsibility, including children not currently living in her household. The second set of questions determines her current adoption plans and behaviors. And, a third series of questions was asked only of women who were not currently seeking to adopt a child.

Using information from these three series of questions, four measures of the “demand” for adoption were created. These are:

1. *Ever considered adoption.* Coded “yes” if the woman:
 - a. Had ever adopted or was currently trying to adopt a nonbiological child who was living with her,
 - b. Was currently seeking to adopt a/another child (other than those who were living with her), or
 - c. Had ever considered adopting a child.
2. *Ever took steps to adopt.* Coded “yes” if the woman:
 - a. Had ever adopted or was currently trying to adopt a nonbiological child who was living with her,
 - b. Was currently seeking to adopt a/another child (other than those who were living with her) **and** had placed a newspaper ad or contacted

an agency or other source,

c. Had ever considered adopting a child **and** had ever contacted an agency or other source, or

d. Was currently seeking to adopt a/another child (other than those who were living with her), had **not** placed a newspaper ad or contacted an agency, **and** was seeking to adopt a child she knew.

3. *Currently seeking to adopt.* Coded “yes” if the woman:
 - a. Was currently trying to adopt a nonbiological child who was living with her, or
 - b. Was currently seeking to adopt a/another child (other than those who live with her).
4. *Currently taking steps to adopt.* Coded “yes” if the woman:
 - a. Was currently trying to adopt a nonbiological child who was living with her,
 - b. Was currently seeking to adopt a/another child (other than those who were living with her) **and** had placed a newspaper ad or contacted an agency or other source, or
 - c. Was currently seeking to adopt a/another child (other than those who were living with her), had **not** placed a newspaper ad or contacted an agency, **and** was seeking to adopt a child she knew.

[Figure 1](#) traces the number of women who had ever considered adopting a child through those who had adopted a child (category 1 [ever considered] → category 2 [ever took steps] → adopted). It shows increasingly smaller subsets of women at each step—about one-third of all women 18–44 years of age had ever considered adoption; of these, about one-sixth had taken steps to adopt. And, of these, about one-fourth had actually adopted a child. So, although 18.5 million women had ever considered adopting a child, 0.6 million had done so. In a similar fashion, [Figure 2](#) displays the current adoption demand (category 1 [ever considered] → category 3 [currently seeking] → category 4 [currently taking

Text box 1: Questions asked of women regarding adoption in 1973, 1982, 1988, and 1995

Cycle 1 (1973): Asked of all currently or formerly married women

Have you adopted any children?

If “Yes” she was asked:

How many children have you adopted?

Cycle 3 (1982): Asked of all women

(In addition to the child/children born to you), have you adopted any children?

If “Yes” she was asked:

How many children have you adopted?

For each adopted child, the woman was asked:

Thinking now about the (first/second/etc.) child you adopted, what was the child’s date of birth?

What was the child’s age when you took responsibility for him or her?

Before the adoption, what was this child’s relationship to you, if any?

Was he or she born in the United States or a foreign country?

Cycle 4 (1988): Asked of all women

(In addition to the child/children born to you), have you adopted any children?

If “Yes” she was asked:

How many children have you adopted?

For each adopted child, the woman was asked:

Thinking now about the (first/second/etc.) child you adopted, what was the child’s relationship to you, if any, before the adoption?

Was he or she born in the United States or a foreign country?

What was the child’s date of birth?

In what month and year did he or she begin living with you?

Was the adoption arranged through. . .

A public agency

Through a private agency

Or in some other way?

Have you ever contacted an adoption agency or lawyer about adopting a(nother) child?

If “Yes” she was asked:

What steps, if any, have you taken toward adopting a(nother) child.

Have you . . .

A. Formally applied to an adoption agency?

B. Engaged a lawyer to make arrangements for an adoption?

If yes to A or B:

C. Had a home study completed?

D. Had a child come to live with you in preparation for adoption?

At this time, are you still actively seeking to adopt a(nother) child?

steps to adopt]). It shows that the majority of women who are currently seeking to adopt a child have actually taken steps to do so; approximately one-half million women were actively seeking to adopt a child in 2002.

Because fewer questions were asked in Cycle 6 than in Cycle 5 regarding actual steps taken, ever and currently, and whether the woman would consider adopting in the future, comparisons with Figures 2 and 3 in Chandra et al. (16) cannot be made. In both 1995 and 2002,

these two general questions, “Did you ever contact an adoption agency, a lawyer, a doctor, or other source about adopting a child?” and “Have you placed a newspaper ad or contacted an adoption agency, a lawyer, a doctor, or other source about adopting a(nother) child?” were asked. However, in 1995, two series of follow-up questions were asked of women who had answered “yes” to the general questions. These follow-up questions are shown in [Text box 3](#). In the previous report, it was

necessary for a woman to respond “yes” to one or more of these additional questions to be classified as ever taken steps or currently taking steps. Additionally, Chandra et al. (16) did not include women who were seeking to adopt a child they knew in the count of those who were currently seeking to adopt. For this report, these two variables, ever taken steps and currently taking steps, were recomputed for 1995 to make comparisons between the two years meaningful.

Text box 2: Question asked of women in 1995 and 2002 regarding actual and planned adoptions

Series 1: Asked of all women

“Not counting the children born to you, have any children lived with you under your care and responsibility?”

If “Yes,” she was asked:

“How many children?”

In both 1995 and 2002: For each child, the woman was asked to provide the child’s sex; the relationship of the child to the woman when he or she first began to live in the woman’s household; whether the child was placed in her home by a social service agency; whether the woman adopted the child; whether the woman was currently trying to adopt the child; the child’s date of birth; the date the child first started living with the woman; whether the child still lived in the woman’s household; the child’s Hispanic origin and race; whether the child was born in the United States or a foreign country; and whether the child had a disability.

Asked in 1995 only: How the adoption was arranged; whether the child was still alive and, if not, when the child died; and if the child was no longer living with the woman, when he or she stopped living with her.

Asked in 2002 only: Whether the woman became or was currently trying to become the child’s legal guardian.

Series 2: Asked of all women

“The next questions are about any plans you currently have to adopt a child. Not counting children who have lived with you or children who live with you now, are you currently seeking to adopt a child?”

If “Yes,” she was asked:

“Have you placed a newspaper ad or contacted an adoption agency, a lawyer, doctor or other source about adopting a child?”

“How long have you been seeking to adopt a child? Has it been . . .

Less than 1 year

1–2 years

Or longer than 2 years?”

“Are you seeking to adopt a child whom you know?”

Asked in 1995 only: If the woman had contacted an agency, lawyer or doctor, she was asked whether she had specifically contacted an adoption agency, engaged a lawyer to make arrangements, placed a newspaper ad, or taken any other steps toward adopting a child.

Series 3: Asked only of women who were not currently seeking to adopt a child

“Have you ever considered adopting a child?”

If “Yes,” she was asked whether she had ever contacted an adoption agency, lawyer, doctor or other source about adopting a child; whether she had been turned down, had been unable to find a child or decided not to pursue adoption; and, if she had decided not to pursue adoption, the reasons why she decided to stop.

Asked in 1995 only: If the woman had contacted an agency, lawyer or doctor, she was asked whether she had specifically contacted an adoption agency, engaged a lawyer to make arrangements, placed a newspaper ad, or taken any other steps toward adopting a child.

Characteristics of the Adopted Child That Women Would Prefer

Women who were currently seeking to adopt a child *not known to them* were asked a series of questions regarding characteristics of children they would prefer to adopt and, if there was an adoptable child having an alternate characteristic, whether they would adopt

that child. These questions are used to characterize *current demand* for unrelated children. The specific questions and detailed routing is found in [Text box 4](#).

Relinquishment of Infants for Adoption at Birth

Relinquishment data are captured as part of each woman’s pregnancy history.

Women were asked to report on the outcome of each of their pregnancies, including the name of the child or children born. In a few instances, the woman did not provide a name for the baby during the interview, but indicated that the baby had died or had been relinquished for adoption. These babies are considered “unnamed.” Other women “named” the children they relinquished and used these names to refer to the children during the

Text box 3: Follow-up questions asked in 1995, not asked in 2002

Women who had ever contacted an adoption agency, lawyer or doctor, or other source about adopting a child were asked the following series of questions to determine what steps they had taken to adopt:

“What specific steps, if any, have you taken toward adopting a child? Have you . . .”

“formally applied to an adoption agency?”

“engaged a lawyer to make arrangements for an adoption?”

“placed a newspaper ad?”

“Have you taken any (other) steps toward adopting a child?”

“What steps have you taken/did you take?”

“In what month and year did you first take steps toward adopting a child?”

They were also asked:

“Might you still consider adopting in the future?”

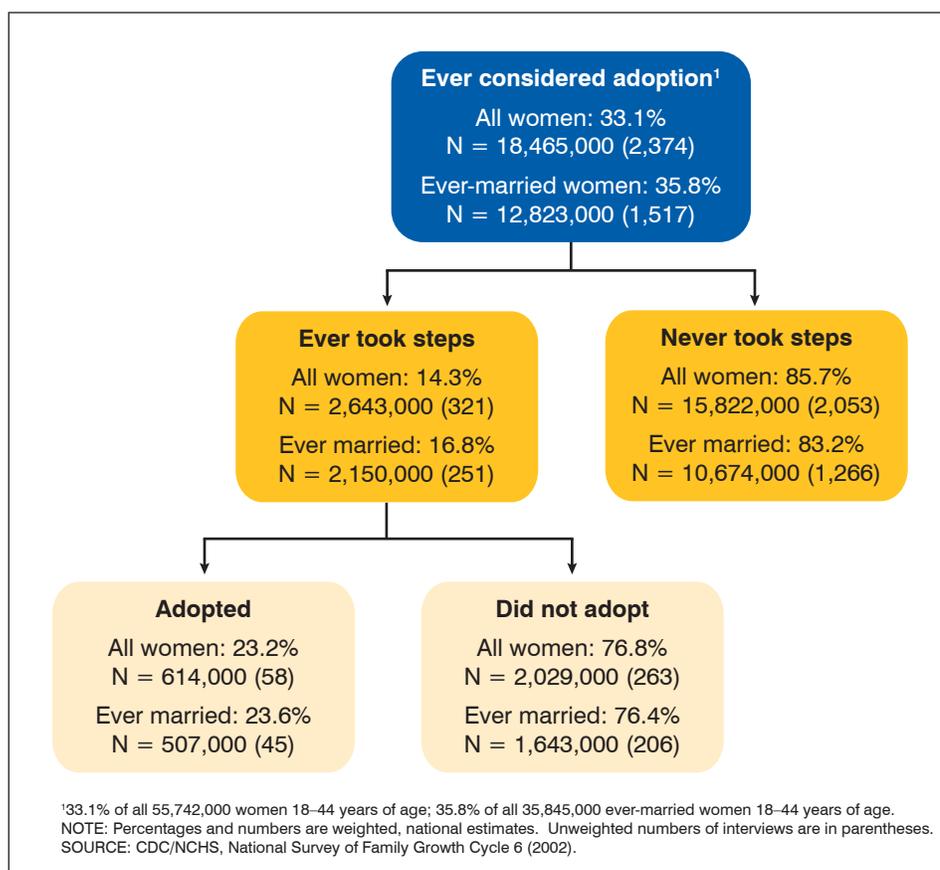


Figure 1. Outcome of ever considering adoption among all women and ever-married women, 18–44 years of age: United States, 2002

interview. Chandra et al (16) defined infant relinquishment as babies who were unnamed by their birth mothers and placed for adoption. For this report, the definition of relinquishment at birth includes infants

who were relinquished within the first month of the baby’s life, in addition to babies who were placed for adoption without being named by the birth mother. This is a slightly broader definition of relinquishment compared

with the earlier report and is based, in part, on recommendations of Testa and Falconnier (21) in a study conducted under contract for the NSFG.

Collection of Adoption Information from Men

Men were asked about their adoption of children in the context of their relationships with women, both marriages and cohabitations. For his relationships with his current wife or cohabiting partner; his first and his three most recent sexual partners, if he had been married to or lived with them; and any former wives and his first cohabiting partner, if not discussed previously, he was asked whether she had brought any children into the relationship and whether there were other nonbiological children that had been under his and her care and responsibility. If she had brought children into the relationship and/or if during the relationship any other nonbiological children had lived with him and this partner under his care and responsibility, he was asked if he had adopted any of them.

Following the partner-specific questions, he was asked whether there were other nonbiological children for whom he had cared and whether he had adopted any of these children. See [Text box 5](#) for the specific questions asked of men.

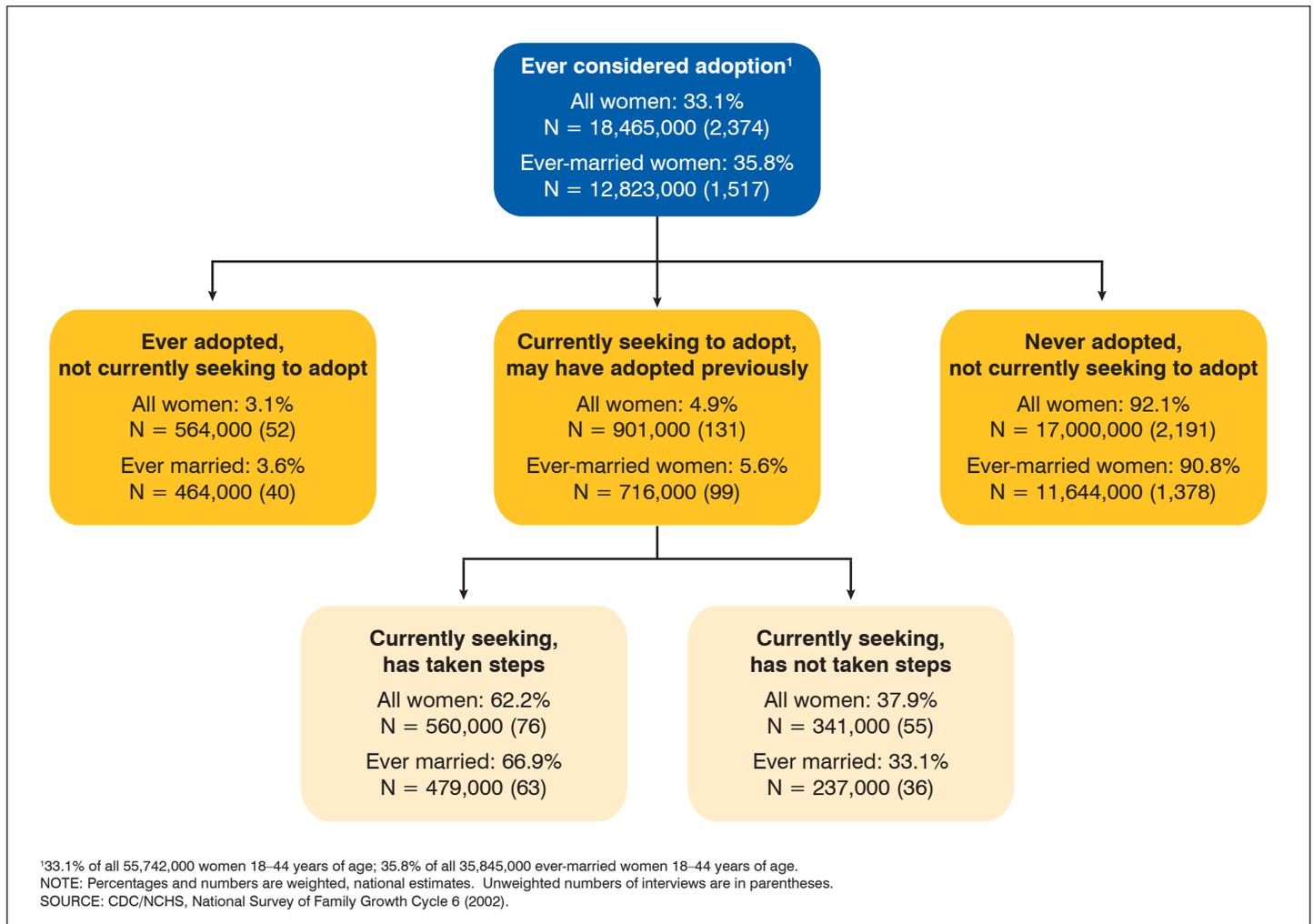


Figure 2. Current adoption demand among all women and ever-married women, 18–44 years of age: United States, 2002

Results

Ever Adopted a Child

Overall, 2.0% of the adult population, 18–44 years of age, had adopted a child as of 2002. Figure 3 shows that, of these 2%, twice as many were men (67%) than women (33%) and most adopters had either fathered a child or had given birth (77%).

Women’s adoption experiences

Table 1 repeats and extends Table 1 from Chandra et al. (16) and reports on the characteristics of ever-married women who had adopted a child at the time of the interview. To maintain continuity with this and other, previous reports (22–24) and in contrast to

subsequent tables that only compare 1995 and 2002 data, this table uses measures of women’s characteristics that were computed to be consistent with the previous reports. For example, Hispanic origin and race were constructed using 1977, rather than the 1997, OMB guidelines. Table 1 shows that the percentage of ever-married women who had ever adopted a child has not significantly changed since 1995: 1.4% of ever-married women had adopted a child in 2002 compared with 1.3% in 1995. The characteristics of women who had adopted in 2002 are similar to the characteristics of women who had adopted in previous cycles: they are more likely to be 40–44 years of age, currently married, nulliparous, to have used infertility services, have impaired fecundity, and have incomes above 150% of the poverty level.

The percentage of all and ever-married women 18–44 years of age in 2002 who had ever adopted a child at the time of their interview by selected characteristics is shown in Table 2. By ages 40–44, 2.9% of all women and 2.9% of ever-married women had adopted a child. Slightly more than 3% of women in their second or later marriage had adopted a child. The proportion of women who had adopted a child increased with age and for higher-order marriages. Table 2 also shows that 0.5% or about 100,000 never-married women had adopted a child.

Among ever-married women, the data suggest that those who had not given birth (3.2%) (nulliparous) were more likely to have adopted than women who had given birth (1.0%). Women who had used infertility services

Text box 4: Characteristics of children women would prefer or accept when seeking to adopt

Women currently seeking to adopt a child not known to them were asked the following series of questions:

“If you could choose exactly the child you wanted, would you prefer to adopt . . .

a boy or a girl?

a black child, a white child, or a child of some other race?

a child younger than 2 years, a child 2 to 5 years old, a child 6 to 12 years old, or a child 13 years old or older?

a child with no disability, a child with a mild disability, or a child with a severe disability?

a single child or 2 or more brothers and sisters at once?”

An allowable response for each of these questions was “Indifferent.” But, if she expressed a preference for a characteristic, she was asked if she would accept a child with an alternate characteristic. These questions took the form:

“Would you accept . . .

a girl? (if preferred a boy)

a boy? (if preferred a girl)

a black child? (if preferred a white child or a child of some other race)

a white child?(if preferred a black child or a child of some other race)

a child of some other race, neither black nor white? (if preferred a black or a white child)

a child younger than 2 years? (if preferred a child 2 to 5 years old, a child 6 to 12 years old, or a child 13 years old or older)

a child 2 to 5 years old?(if preferred a child younger than 2 years, a child 6 to 12 years old, or a child 13 years old or older)

a child 6 to 12 years old? (if preferred a child younger than 2 years, a child 2 to 5 years old, or a child 13 years old or older)

a child 13 years old or older? (if preferred a child younger than 2 years, a child 2 to 5 years old, or a child 6 to 12 years old)

a child with no disability? (if preferred a child with a mild disability or a child with a severe disability)

a child with a mild disability? (if preferred a child with no disability or a child with a severe disability)

a child with a severe disability? (if preferred a child with no disability or a child with a mild disability)

a single child? (if preferred 2 or more brothers and sisters at once)

2 or more brothers and sisters at once? (if preferred a single child)”

were more likely to have adopted a child than those who had not used these services; this was true of all women and ever-married women.

Adoption experience also varies by women’s fecundity status. A larger proportion of women who were surgically sterile or who had impaired fecundity had adopted a child compared with women who were fecund. Although educational attainment was not a factor in whether women had adopted children, a larger percentage of women with incomes between 150 and 299% of the poverty level had adopted compared with women with incomes less than 150% of poverty. Among all women, non-Hispanic white women were more likely to have adopted a child compared with Hispanic women; differences among ever-married women are significant at the .10 level. Although the data suggest that a larger percentage of

all or ever-married, non-Hispanic black women compared with Hispanic women had adopted a child, the differences in percentages are not significant due to the relatively large standard errors.

Table 3 looks at women who had adopted a child by age, parity, and use of infertility services. As would be expected, the group with the highest proportion who had adopted children was women 40–44 years of age, who had used infertility services, and who had never given birth. The smallest percentages were for women under 35 years of age who had not used infertility services.

Men’s experience with adoption

Table 4 presents the percentage of all men and ever-married men who had ever adopted a child by selected characteristics. Overall, 2.3% of all men,

18–44 years of age, and 3.8% of ever-married men had adopted a child. Looking at all men (columns 1–3), men aged 29 and younger (0.6%) and men who have never been married (0.3%) were significantly less likely to have adopted a child compared with men 30 years of age or older (range 3.2% to 3.8%) and men who were currently (4.0%) or formerly married (3.0%). These findings are generally similar to what is shown in **Table 2** for all women. In contrast to all women, however, all men who had fathered one or more biological children were more likely to have adopted a child (3.9%) than men who had not fathered a child (0.6%). The difference between these groups for ever-married men is in the same direction, although not statistically significant.

Text box 5: Questions asked of men regarding adoption of children

Series 1: Asked of men who had married or cohabited for each marriage or cohabiting relationship:

“Now I would like to ask you about any other children, whether biological, adopted, foster or legally guarded children, that (NAME) may have had. Please be sure to include all of her children, even if they never lived with you. When you began living with (NAME), did she have any children?”

If “Yes,” he was asked:

*How many children did she have?
Did you legally adopt this child/any of these children?
How many of these children did you legally adopt?*

For each adopted child, the man was asked the child’s sex, where the child currently lived, and the child’s current age.

Series 2: Asked of men who had married or cohabited for each marriage or cohabiting relationship:

Besides any children that we may have talked about already, have you and your (wife/partner) ever had any other children live with you under your care and responsibility?

If “Yes,” he was asked:

*How many children?
Did you legally adopt this child/any of these children?
How many of these children did you legally adopt?*

For each adopted child, the man was asked the child’s sex, where the child currently lived, and the child’s current age.

Series 3: Asked of all men:

The next question is about children who may have lived with you under your care and responsibility. By this I mean that you served as a formal or informal guardian to the child or that you were chiefly responsible for the child’s care. Have you ever had any children like this under your care and responsibility?

If “Yes,” he was asked:

*How many children have ever lived with you under your care and responsibility?
Did you legally adopt this child/any of these children under your care and responsibility?
How many children did you legally adopt?*

For each identified child, the man was asked the child’s sex, where the child currently lived, and the child’s current age.

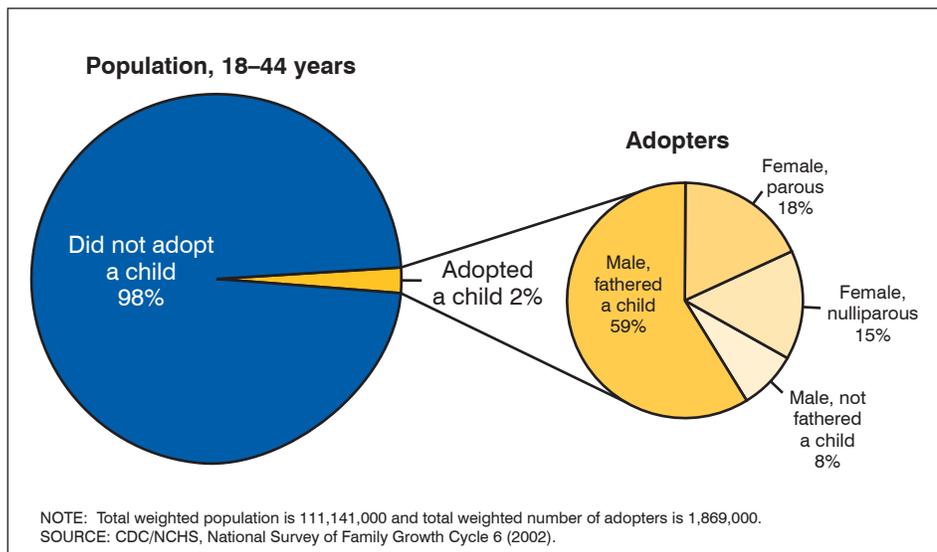


Figure 3. Percent distribution of women and men 18–44 years of age by adoption status and percent distribution of adopters by sex and having given birth to or fathered a child: United States, 2002

Comparing women’s and men’s adoption experiences

Comparing [Tables 2](#) and [4](#), two covariates are seen to have opposite effects for women and men—having borne or fathered a child and having used infertility services. The data in [Table 2](#) suggest that ever-married, nulliparous women were more likely than parous women to have adopted a child (at the .10 level), and that women who had used infertility services (all and ever married) were significantly more likely to have adopted a child than women who had not used these services. In contrast, [Table 4](#) shows that for all men having fathered one or more children was significantly associated with having adopted a child and the data

suggest that ever-married men who had used infertility services were less likely to have adopted a child (significant at the .10 level) than those who had not used infertility services. All of the other covariates are associated in a similar fashion for women and men.

Demand for Adoption

In this report, percentages are calculated on the population “at-risk” of the behavior. For instance, in [Table 5](#) all women are “at risk” of having ever considered adopting a child—that is, any woman, 18–44 years of age, could indicate that she had ever considered adoption—and results for all women are presented in columns 1–3. In columns 4–6, however, only women who indicated that they had ever considered adoption are “at risk” of having taken steps to adopt and only these women are included in the denominator of those who took steps (33.1% of the 55.7 million women, or 18.5 million women 18–44 years of age). The same applies for ever-married women in [Table 6](#): of the 35.8 million ever-married women in 2002 (columns 1–3), 35.8% or 12.8 million were asked whether they had taken steps to adopt (columns 4–6). These sets of columns illustrate the increased selectivity associated with each step in the adoption process.

The proportion of all women who have ever taken steps to adopt, not restricted to those who have ever considered adoption, is 4.7% (derived from [Table 5](#)). This percentage is slightly higher than that published in Chandra et al. (19) [Table 8](#) (3.4%) because a more liberal definition of “taking steps,” was used for this report. The definition used here includes past adoption of and current adoption seeking of a nonbiological child living in the woman’s household and is comparable to that used in earlier reports (1,16).

Lifetime adoption seeking behavior by selected characteristics is shown for all women ([Table 5](#)) and for ever-married women ([Table 6](#)); current adoption seeking behaviors for all and ever-married women, respectively, are shown in [Tables 7](#) and [8](#). These tables provide estimates of the numbers of

U.S. women who have ever been or are currently “in demand” for a child to adopt, and the numbers of women who have ever taken steps or are currently taking steps to find and adopt a child by subgroup within demographic or health categories. [Text box 6](#) provides a reference for distinguishing among the tables.

Ever considered adoption, ever took steps to adopt, and ever adopted

Overall, [Tables 5](#) and [6](#) show that similar proportions of women at all ages had considered adopting a child in their lifetimes. However, women (all and ever married) 30 years and older were more likely to have actually taken steps to adopt than women 18–29 years of age. Slightly more than one-fourth (28%) of never-married women had ever considered adoption; of these, 8.8% (approximately 494,000 women) had taken steps to adopt; and of never-married women who had ever taken steps to adopt, 22% had adopted a child. (See “[Appendix I](#)” for an explanation of how rounding effects replicability of figures from the numbers and percentages presented in the tables.) Women in their second or later marriages who had ever considered adoption were more likely to have taken steps to adopt (26%) than women in other marital status groups.

[Table 5](#) shows that, for all women, there is no significant difference by parity in the percentages who had ever considered adoption (35% for nulliparous and 32% for parous women) although parous women were more likely to have taken steps to adopt. Among ever-married women ([Table 6](#)), nulliparous women were more likely to have considered adoption (49%) compared with parous women (33%), but there is no difference by parity on whether they took steps to adopt (18% for nulliparous and 16% for parous women).

All women who had ever used infertility services (57%) or who had impaired fecundity (52%) were more likely to have considered adoption compared with all women who had not used infertility services (30%), who

were fecund (30%), or who were surgically sterile (33%). Of all women who had ever considered adoption, women who had used infertility services (28%), who had impaired fecundity (24%), or were surgically sterile (23%) are shown to be more likely to have taken steps to adopt compared with women who had not used infertility services (10%) or who were fecund (7%). These patterns are similar for ever-married women as shown in [Table 6](#).

Looking at the combined effect of fecundity status and use of infertility services, [Figure 4](#) shows that 7 out of 10 women who had impaired fecundity and who had ever used infertility services had also considered adopting a child, a significantly higher proportion than women in any other category. This may be explained in part because these women strongly desire a child (biological or unrelated) and, even though they have used infertility services, the difficulty conceiving and/or carrying a pregnancy to full term remains. Relatively similar percentages of women who were surgically sterile or fecund had considered adopting a child by use of infertility services.

Women without a high school diploma and women with incomes below 150% of the poverty level were less likely than women with a high school diploma or GED or more or women whose incomes were over 300% of the poverty level to have considered adoption. For all women who had ever considered adoption, there is no significant difference by education or income as to whether they have ever taken steps to adopt. [Tables 5](#) and [6](#) further show that for all women and for ever-married women there are no significant differences by Hispanic origin or race in the proportion of women who had ever considered adopting a child or who had ever taken steps to adopt. There are differences by income and by Hispanic origin and race in the percentage of women who had ever taken steps to adopt that had ever adopted a child. [Table 5](#) shows that, of all women who had ever taken steps to adopt, women with incomes above 150% of the poverty level and women who are non-Hispanic white are

Text box 6. Guide to tables

	<i>Ever-married women</i>	<i>All women</i>
Lifetime adoption experience	Tables 1, 2, 6, 9, 13	Tables 2, 3, 5, 11
Current adoption behaviors	Tables 8, 10, 14	Tables 7, 12, 15
	<i>Never-married women</i>	
Relinquished baby for adoption	Table 16	
	<i>Ever-married men</i>	<i>All men</i>
Lifetime adoption experience	Table 4	Table 4

significantly more likely to have adopted a child compared with women with incomes below 150% of poverty or women of Hispanic origin.

Figure 5 shows that there are differences by income for Hispanic women and for non-Hispanic black women: Hispanic and non-Hispanic black women with incomes below 149% of poverty were significantly less likely to have ever considered adopting a child compared with women of the same racial or ethnic background with incomes at or above 300% of poverty. There are no differences by income for non-Hispanic white women.

Currently seeking to adopt and currently taking steps

Tables 7 and 8 display information on women's current adoption behaviors. Overall, 1.6% of all women (Table 7) and 2.0% of ever-married women (Table 8) were currently seeking to adopt. Because the number of unweighted cases that these analyses are based on is small and the computed standard errors are large (relative to the percentages), differences between categories in this section should be interpreted cautiously as even large differences in percentages may not be statistically significant. Among women who were currently seeking to adopt, about two-thirds were taking steps (62% of all women and 67% of ever-married women). Looking at all women in Table 7, never-married women (0.9%) were significantly less likely to be

currently seeking to adopt than those who were currently married (2.0%). Because of the large standard error associated with the percentage of women in their second or later marriages who are seeking to adopt (3.5%), the data suggest that these women are more likely to be seeking to adopt a child compared with never-married women (significant at the .10 level).

There is no difference by parity for all women in the percentages currently seeking to adopt (Table 7), but for ever-married women (Table 8) there is a difference by parity: nulliparous women were more likely to be currently seeking to adopt a child (4.1%) than parous women (1.6%). Although parity alone is not a significant indicator of current adoption seeking behavior of all women, in combination with ever use of infertility services, Figure 6 shows that women who had not given birth to a child and had used infertility services were 3.5 times more likely to be currently seeking to adopt a child than women who had given birth and had used infertility services and nearly 10 times as likely as women who had never used infertility services.

All women and ever-married women who had ever used infertility services or who had impaired fecundity were more likely to be currently seeking to adopt than women who had not used infertility services, who were fecund, or who were surgically sterile (Tables 7 and 8). As shown previously, there is a joint effect of fecundity status and

infertility: women with impaired fecundity who had used infertility services were significantly more likely to be currently seeking to adopt a child than women in other categories (Figure 7).

There are no differences by education or income in women's current adoption behaviors. There are, however, differences by Hispanic origin and race. The numbers presented in Table 7 for all women show that Hispanic and non-Hispanic black women were more likely to be currently seeking to adopt compared with non-Hispanic white women. Looking at ever-married women in Table 8, non-Hispanic black women were more likely than non-Hispanic white women to be currently seeking to adopt. The data in Table 8 also suggest that Hispanic women were more likely to be currently seeking to adopt compared with non-Hispanic white women. The number of women who are currently taking steps to adopt is too small to make comparisons among subgroups of all or ever-married women.

Changes in lifetime and current adoption demand by ever-married women between 1995 and 2002 are depicted in Tables 9 and 10. They are modeled after Chandra et al. (16) Table 2, but the percentages for 1995 were recomputed for this report as outlined in the "Methods" section.

Table 9 indicates that, compared with 1995, substantially more ever-married women in 2002 had ever considered adopting a child—36% of ever-married women in 2002 compared with 26% in 1995. However, a smaller percentage of women in 2002 who had considered adoption actually took steps to adopt (17%) compared with women in 1995 (24%). In 1995, there was no group of women where more than one-half had ever considered adopting a child. In 2002, 57% of women who had ever used infertility services and 54% of women with impaired fecundity had considered adoption. Almost one-half of nulliparous women (49%) had also considered adopting a child in 2002. There was a significant decrease in the percentage taking steps to adopt between 1995 and 2002 among currently married women, women 40–44 years of age, nulliparous women, fecund women,

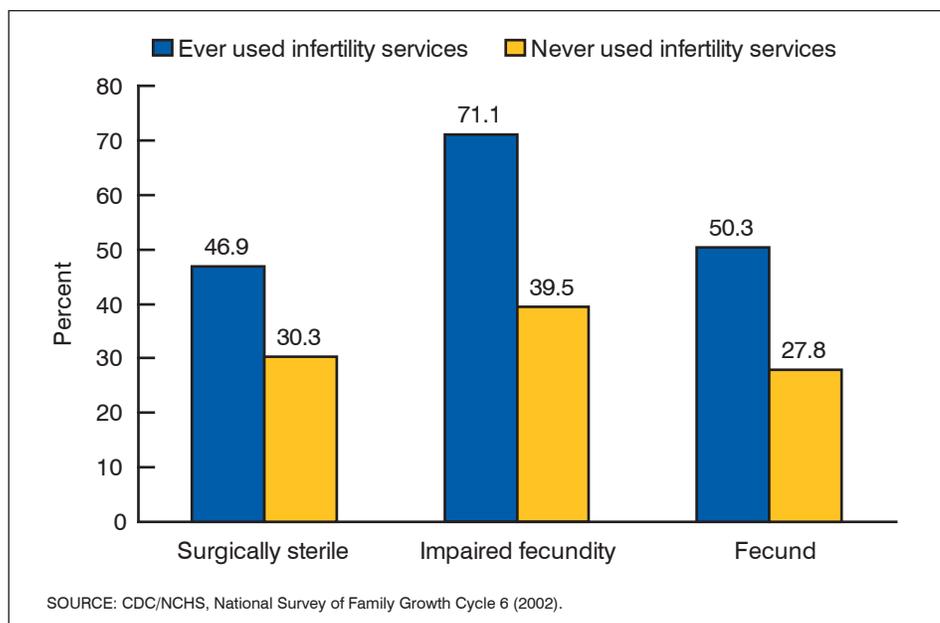


Figure 4. Percentage of all women 18–44 years of age who have ever considered adopting a child by fecundity status and use of infertility services: United States, 2002

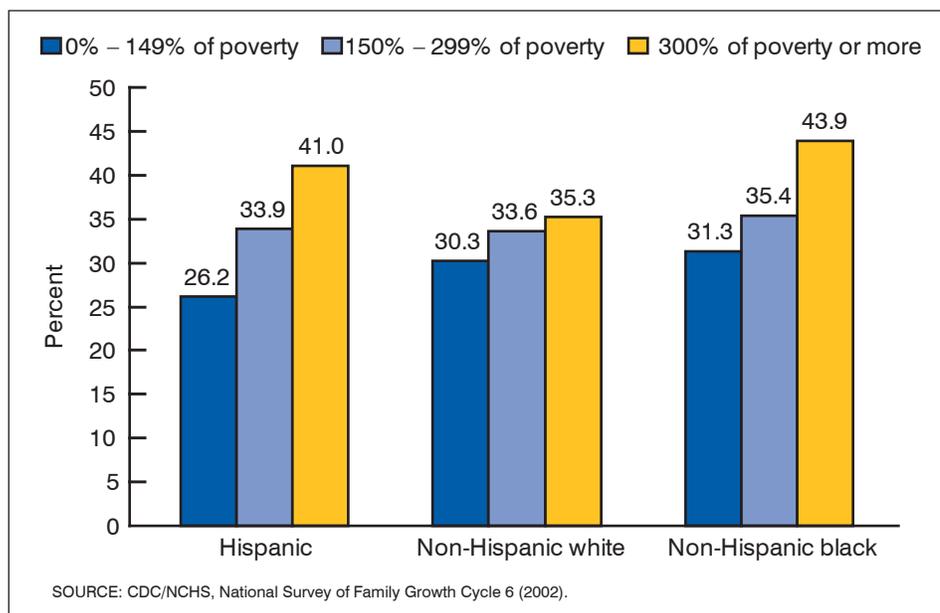


Figure 5. Percentage of all women 20–44 years of age who have ever considered adopting a child by poverty level income and Hispanic origin and race: United States, 2002

women who had attended or completed college, women with incomes of 300% of the poverty level, and non-Hispanic white women.

Turning to current adoption seeking, [Table 10](#) shows that in 2002 significantly more ever-married women 18–29 years of age were currently seeking or planning to adopt a child compared with ever-married women in 1995. More than twice as many

ever-married women who had ever used infertility services or who had impaired fecundity were currently seeking to adopt a child in 2002 compared with the same groups in 1995 ([Table 10](#)). There were too few women currently taking steps to adopt a child in 1995 or in 2002 to produce reliable subgroup percentages on this dimension of adoption seeking.

Characteristics of Women Who Seek To Adopt and Take Steps to Adopt, Ever and Currently

While previous tables give the proportion of women within each adoption behavior category corresponding to a demographic or health characteristic, [Tables 11–14](#) provide profiles of the women who had ever considered or sought to adopt, or were currently considering or seeking adoption. They show the distributions of women in each adoption category by the same demographic and health categories as in previous tables. [Table 11](#) presents lifetime adoption and [Table 12](#) current adoption behavior for all women while [Tables 13](#) and [14](#) look at lifetime and current adoption for ever-married women. Percentages for ever-married women are presented to maintain continuity with previous reports. The first column in each table represents the distribution of the population of women across the characteristic with standard errors in the second column. [Table 11](#) shows, for example, that of the 55.7 million women in the United States between the ages of 18 and 44, 42% were between 18 and 29 years of age in 2002. The next pair of columns is restricted to women who had ever considered adoption and the final pair to those women who had ever taken steps to adopt. Each pair of columns presents distributions for progressively smaller subsets of women (i.e., each pair is based on an increasingly selective group of women). These tables compare the percentages in column 3 with those in column 1 and the percentages in column 5 with those in columns 1 and 3.

Comparing the distribution of women who had ever considered adoption (column 3) to the distribution of all women (column 1), [Table 11](#) shows that, among those who had ever considered adoption, a significantly larger percentage had used infertility services (23% compared with 13%) or had impaired fecundity (20% compared with 13%) than found in the percent distribution of all women 18–44 years of age. Looking at the distribution of all women who had ever considered and

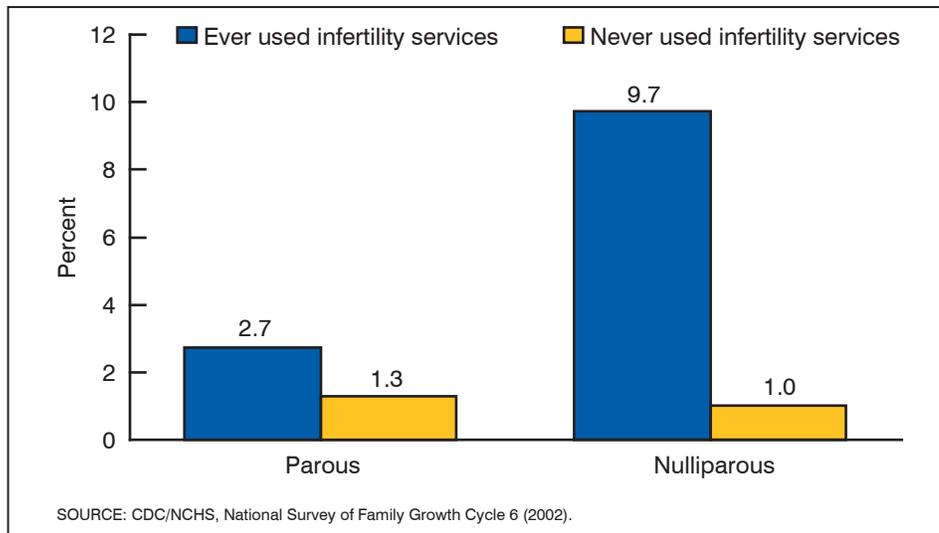


Figure 6. Percentage of all women 18–44 years currently seeking to adopt a child by parity and use of infertility services: United States, 2002

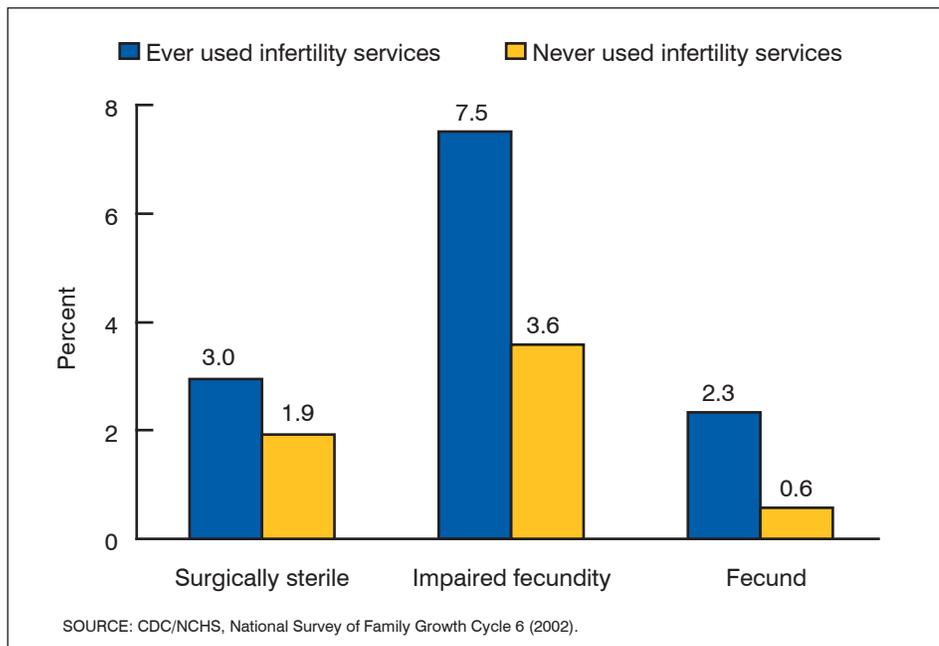


Figure 7. Percentage of all women 18–44 years currently seeking to adopt a child by fecundity status and use of infertility services: United States, 2002

had taken steps to adopt, column 5 shows that the distribution of women who had ever taken steps to adopt differs from both the distribution of all women (column 1) and the distribution of all women who had ever considered adoption (column 3) by age, marital status, parity, use of infertility services, and fecundity status. Significantly larger percentages of women who had ever taken steps to adopt were in the age

categories 35–39 (30%) and 40–44 years (34%) compared with the total population (20% and 21% for the same age groups). This is graphically presented in Figure 8.

Larger proportions of all women who had ever taken steps to adopt (column 5) were currently married, in their second or later marriage, had used infertility services, and were surgically sterile or had impaired fecundity

compared with the percent distribution of all women (column 1). Women who had taken steps were also different from women who had ever considered adoption (column 3) but not taken steps on these dimensions and, additionally, on parity—a larger percentage of women who had taken steps to adopt a child had also given birth to a child compared with women who had only considered adoption (70% compared with 62%, respectively). There are no significant differences by education, income (as a percentage of the poverty level), or Hispanic origin or race between the percent distributions of these two groups of women.

Turning to current adoption behaviors, Table 12 shows that women who were currently seeking to adopt (column 3) and women who were currently taking steps to adopt (column 5) were more likely to have used infertility services (36% and 40%), to have impaired fecundity (40% and 36%), and to be non-Hispanic black (25% and 29%) compared with the distribution of all women (column 1) in these categories. Women currently seeking or currently taking steps were less likely to be fecund (27% and 23%) or non-Hispanic white (45% of both) compared with all women. Figure 9 compares lifetime and current adoption seeking by fecundity status. It shows that, of women who had ever considered adoption, a larger proportion had impaired fecundity compared with all women and this percentage doubles among current adoption seekers.

Although the distributions by age and marital status did not differ between all women and women currently seeking to adopt, there is a difference between all women and women who were currently taking steps to adopt: higher proportions of women who were currently taking steps to adopt were 35–39 years of age (41%) and married (70%) compared with all women. The distributions of all women who were currently taking steps to adopt and all women who were currently seeking to adopt do not differ significantly.

For comparison with Table 3 in Chandra et al. (16), Tables 13 and 14 focus on ever-married women. They

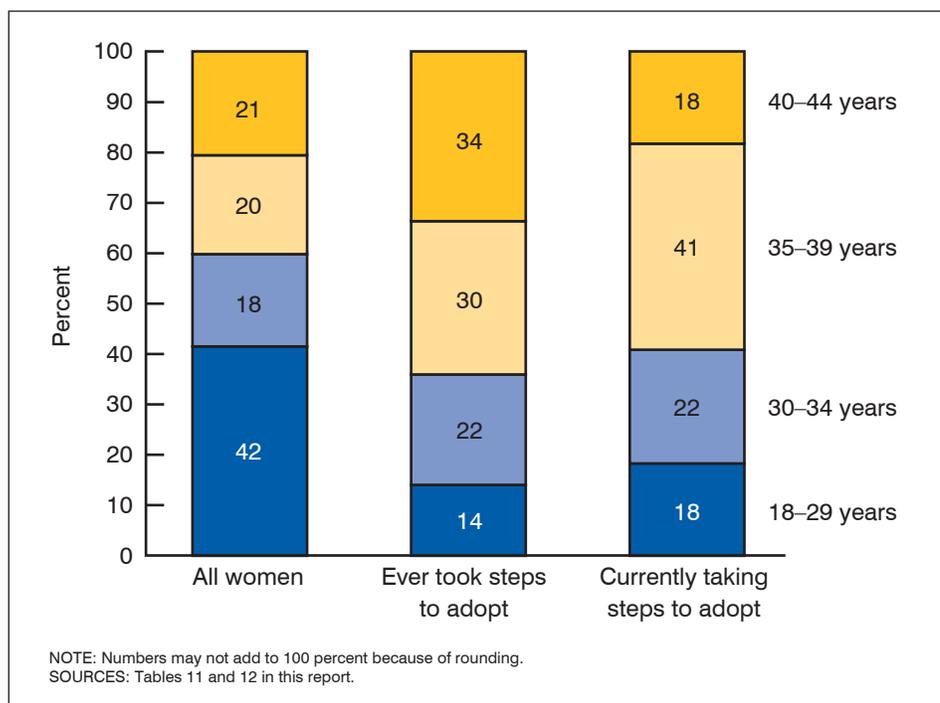


Figure 8. Percent distribution by age of all women, women who have ever taken steps to adopt a child, and women who are currently taking steps to adopt a child, women 18–44 years of age: United States, 2002

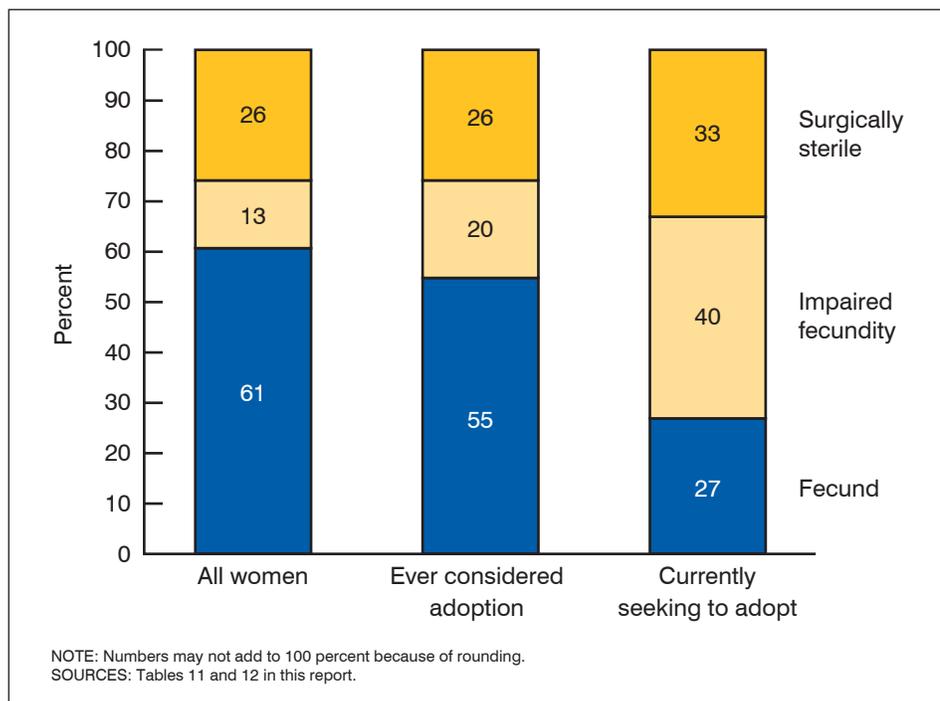


Figure 9. Percent distribution by fecundity status of all women, women who have ever considered adopting a child, and women who are currently seeking to adopt a child, women 18–44 years of age: United States, 2002

show few differences across the columns in the percent distributions by age or marital status. Larger percentages of ever-married women who had ever considered adoption (Table 13) had not given birth to a child (24%), had used

infertility services (29%), and had impaired fecundity (22%) compared with all women (18%, 18%, and 15%, respectively). The distribution of ever-married women who had ever taken steps to adopt a child show larger

proportions of women in their second or later marriage, who had used infertility services, and who had impaired fecundity compared with the distributions of all ever-married women or ever-married women who had ever considered adoption (columns 1 and 3). Also, higher proportions of ever-married women who had ever taken steps to adopt were surgically sterile (compared with those who had ever considered adoption [at the .10 level]) and nulliparous (compared with all ever-married women).

Looking at current adoption seeking behaviors, the distributions of women currently seeking to adopt and currently taking steps to adopt are similar (Table 14). These distributions are significantly different from the distribution of all ever-married women on parity, use of infertility services, and impaired fecundity. Table 14 shows a significant difference by race in the distribution of women currently seeking to adopt and currently taking steps to adopt that was not seen in Table 13 on lifetime adoption behaviors. Of ever-married women currently seeking to adopt, significantly fewer are non-Hispanic white and significantly more are non-Hispanic black women compared with all ever-married women. Non-Hispanic white women are also underrepresented in the group of women currently taking steps to adopt compared with the distribution of ever-married women by race and Hispanic origin, in general. Because of small sample sizes, the percentages have large relative standard errors; therefore differences between the group of ever-married women who are currently taking steps to adopt (column 5) and the group of ever-married women who are currently seeking to adopt (column 3) are not significant.

Characteristics of the Adopted Child That Women Would Prefer

As described in the “Methods” section, women who were currently seeking to adopt a child not known to them were asked what characteristics they would prefer in an adopted child

and whether they would accept a child with characteristics other than what was preferred. (See [Text box 4](#) for the questions asked.) [Table 15](#) presents information on the characteristics of children that women would prefer and would accept. Women currently seeking to adopt would prefer to adopt a child younger than 2 years old, without a disability, and a single child rather than two or more siblings. However, 89% of women currently seeking to adopt would prefer or accept a child with a mild disability, 79% would prefer or accept a child 2–5 years old, and 75% would prefer or accept a set of siblings. With regard to transracial adoption, 84% of white adoption seekers would prefer or accept a black child and 95% would prefer or accept a child of a race other than black or white. Similarly, 75% of black adoption seekers would prefer or accept a white child and 93% would prefer or accept a child of another race.

Relinquishment of Infants for Adoption at Birth

[Table 16](#) reprints the figures on relinquishment of infants by never-married women presented in Chandra et al. (16, Table 5) for years prior to 1996 and adds a column for babies born in the period 1996–2002. It shows that the practice of relinquishing an infant for adoption has remained very low at 1.0% of babies born during this period. As noted in the “Methods” section, relinquishment in this report includes infants relinquished during the first month whereas in previous reports relinquishment was limited to those infants relinquished at birth because, of the estimated 6.8 million babies born to **never-married** women 18–44 years of age between 1996 and 2002, too few infants were relinquished at birth (without being named) by the biological mother to produce statistically reliable results (not shown). Reflecting the very small numbers on which these percentages are based, the percentage relinquished has remained virtually unchanged. The percentage for white, never-married women has decreased slightly, from 1.7 for babies born between 1989 and 1995 to 1.3 for

babies born between 1996 and 2002, not a statistically significant difference.

Conclusion

This report has shown that in 2002 1.1% of women and 2.3% of men 18–44 years of age had adopted a child. This is the first time that national estimates of the adoption experience of all women, not just ever-married women, and the adoption experience of men have been reported. The data described here show that, although never-married women and men account for relatively small numbers of adoptions, because there are significant numbers of never-married persons adopting children it is important for them to be included in future studies of adoption and adoption seeking. This analysis has also shown that nearly 1 million women were seeking to adopt children in 2002 (i.e., they were in demand for a child), whereas the domestic supply of infants relinquished at birth or within the first month of life and available to be adopted had become virtually nonexistent. While adoption continues to be rare, this report has shown that the prevalence of adoption varies by demographic and other characteristics. This study details how adoption continues to be an avenue used by couples (and to a lesser degree, by never-married and formerly married women and never-married men) for family formation.

An important finding of this study is that more men than women 18–44 years of age in 2002 had adopted a child. This may be due, in part, because of the living arrangements of most children following the divorce of their biological parents. When parents divorce, children are more likely to live in households with their biological mothers than with their biological fathers (25,26). When these single parents remarry, the new husbands have greater opportunities to adopt these stepchildren than the new wives. Although the relationship of the child to the adoptive parent could not be examined, this report has shown that three times as many women and men in second or later marriages had adopted a

child compared with those in first marriages. These findings may support the role of adoption as a mechanism by which both stepmothers and stepfathers formalize and solidify their relationships with their stepchildren.

An unexpected but interesting finding of this report is the opposite effect of fathering or giving birth to a child on adoption experiences for men and women—men who have fathered a child but women who have not given birth are significantly more likely to have adopted a child compared with men who have not fathered a child and women who have had one or more births. These patterns are consistent with hypotheses suggesting adoption for men typically formalizes the stepfather-stepchild relationship, whereas adoption for women is a mechanism by which they bring a child into their homes.

Women 30 years of age and over who have ever considered adoption are more likely than younger women to have actually taken steps to adopt. This is to be expected because:

1. Women 30 years of age and older have had more time over their lifetimes to take steps to adopt compared with younger women.
2. Women 30 years of age and older who have delayed childbearing, are at increased risk of having impaired fecundity and, because they are at a time in their lives when they want to raise children, seek to adopt as either an alternative or an adjunct to using infertility services.

Currently taking steps to adopt, however, is highest in the 35–39 year old age group. This suggests that by the time women reach their 40s, their desire to begin caring for and rearing children may be declining.

It is also of note that, given the distribution of women 18–44 years of age in 2002 in the United States by race and Hispanic origin, fewer non-Hispanic white women and more non-Hispanic black women are currently seeking to adopt or currently taking steps to adopt than would be expected. These racial and ethnic differences, not only in adoption but all nonbiological childrearing, will be explored in more depth in a forthcoming report.

Adoption is governed by forces of supply and demand. One source of domestically available children awaiting adoption is the foster care system, and information on the number and characteristics awaiting adoption can be obtained from data provided by the Children's Bureau. In 2002, the same year that data were collected for the NSFG, the Children's Bureau reported there were approximately 124,000 children under the age of 16 waiting to be adopted from the foster care system (27). Children waiting to be adopted are defined by the Children's Bureau as children with [case] goals of adoption and/or children whose parents have had their parental rights terminated. Children 16 years of age and older whose parents have had their parental rights terminated and who have a goal of emancipation are excluded from the waiting-to-be-adopted population. Children waiting to be adopted were 53% male; 42% non-Hispanic black, 13% Hispanic, 36% non-Hispanic white, and 9% other or multiple race; had a mean age of 8.5 years; had been in foster care about 3 years (mean = 3.6 years, median = 2.9 years); and were living in a pre-adoptive home (17%), a relative foster family home (17%), or a nonrelative foster family home (56%). Although absolute numbers of children who have been adopted from the foster care system with public agency involvement had been increasing (37,000 in 1998 to 53,000 in 2002) it has remained at approximately 50,000 annually since 2000 (28–30). Because the characteristics of children that women and couples seek to adopt, as shown in this report, may not correspond to the characteristics of children in the foster care system, women and couples may seek children from outside the foster care system to adopt.

The more affluent women and couples may turn to international adoption in order to obtain children with the characteristics they prefer. The number of international adoptions has generally increased from the 1990s, partially offsetting the decline in the number of infants relinquished at birth and available domestically to be adopted. Data from the U.S. Department of State show that the number of

international adoptions (as measured by the number of Immigrant Visas issued to orphans each fiscal year) more than doubled between 1990 and 2002. In the early 1990s, fewer than 10,000 Immigrant Visas were issued annually. Beginning in 1996 the number of Visas increased annually so that by 2002 slightly more than 20,000 were issued (11). U.S. families have chosen to adopt internationally rather than domestically because the benefits—obtaining an infant, obtaining a baby with a similar ethnic and racial background as the adoptive family, the confidentiality of the adoption, and shorter waiting times—have outweighed the generally higher expense and greater likelihood that the child may have developmental delays or health conditions (9).

The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption became effective on April 1, 2008, in the United States; adoption of children from the more than 124 other Convention member countries is now governed in accordance with the provisions of the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (PL 106–279) (31,32). Under the Hague Convention, persons wishing to adopt must apply to their own country's central authority, which is responsible for implementing all facets of the Convention, thereby eliminating private adoptions between these countries and the United States. The requirements for international adoption, as set forth in the Hague Convention, may limit which individuals or couples are able to adopt internationally. Given the lack of infants available domestically, whether these families choose to adopt from the foster care system or forego childrearing is yet to be determined.

Although the absolute numbers of children being adopted from the foster care system and from other countries are best monitored through the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System and the issuance of Immigrant Visas, the NSFG may be able to answer whether the relative proportion of individuals and families adopting internationally, from the foster care system, or foregoing childrearing altogether changes. The NSFG began

continuous interviewing in 2006 and data files can be combined until sufficient numbers of cases to do such an analysis are accumulated. The size of this data file and, therefore how frequently the relative proportions can be calculated, is dependent upon the number of adoptions that occur within each released data file.

This report has focused solely on adoption and primarily on women. Adoption, however, is only one facet of nonbiological childrearing. A significantly larger percentage of men and women were raising nonbiological children that they had not adopted (and they had no plans to adopt them) than were raising adopted children. A subsequent report will address the broader issue of nonbiological childrearing, but again it will primarily be focused on women as information about non-adopted, nonbiological children was not collected from men. This data limitation led to a revision of the NSFG Cycle 7 instrument so that, beginning in July 2007; data about the majority of nonbiological children are being collected from men.

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Table 1. Number of ever-married women 18–44 years of age and percentage who have ever adopted a child, by selected characteristics: United States, 1973–2002

Characteristic	1973 ¹	1982 ¹	1988 ¹	1995	2002
Ever-married women	30,701	34,632	36,689	37,464	35,845
	Number in thousands				
	Percent who ever adopted				
Total ²	2.1	2.2	1.6	1.3	1.4
Age					
18–24 years	0.4	0.6	–	*	–
25–34 years	1.8	2.0	0.5	0.5	0.6
35–39 years	3.1	2.1	2.2	1.9	1.3
40–44 years	4.0	4.3	4.3	2.5	2.9
Marital status					
Currently married	2.2	2.1	1.8	1.3	1.6
Formerly married	1.5	2.4	0.9	1.2	0.6
Parity					
0 births	5.9	6.6	3.8	3.6	3.2
1 birth	2.7	2.2	1.5	0.8	0.7
2 births	1.1	1.3	0.7	0.9	1.1
3 or more births	0.8	0.6	1.3	0.5	1.2
Ever used infertility services					
Yes	---	7.5	6.6	3.7	5.2
No	---	1.0	0.6	0.6	0.6
Fecundity status ³					
Surgically sterile	3.3	2.1	2.1	1.3	1.8
Impaired fecundity	5.7	9.2	6.1	4.1	4.0
Fecund	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.5	0.4
Education ⁴					
No high school diploma or GED ⁵	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.0	*
High school diploma or GED ⁵	2.4	2.4	1.5	1.3	2.2
Some college, no bachelor's degree	1.6	2.2	1.2	1.5	1.1
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.6	3.1	2.4	1.7	1.6
Percent of poverty level ⁴					
0–149 percent	1.4	1.8	0.7	0.7	0.3
150–299 percent	2.0	2.5	1.9	1.1	2.3
300 percent or higher	3.0	2.4	1.8	1.9	1.5
Race and Hispanic origin ⁶					
Hispanic	1.2	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.5
Non-Hispanic white	2.3	2.4	1.8	1.4	1.6
Non-Hispanic black	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.9	2.0

– Quantity zero.

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

--- Data not available.

¹Percentages for 1973, 1982, and 1988 are from Chandra et al., 1999, Table 1.²Total includes women with missing or inapplicable data on some variables. Also, includes women of other race and ethnic origins, not shown separately.³Fecundity status in 1973 was measured only as surgically sterile, subfecund, and fecund. In 1982, 1988, 1995, and 2002, fecundity status differentiated surgically sterile women based on contraceptive versus noncontraceptive reasons. Fecundity status also included three subcategories of impaired fecundity: nonsurgically sterile, subfecund, and long interval (the woman engaged in unprotected intercourse for 36 months or more without conceiving).⁴Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview.⁵GED is General Educational Development diploma. GED was explicitly asked about in the 1988, 1995, and 2002 surveys.⁶This table uses the 1977 Office of Management and Budget guidelines to report race and ethnicity. See "Methods" section for explanation.

Table 2. Number of all women 18–44 years of age, number of ever-married women 18–44 years of age, and percentage who have ever adopted a child, by selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All women			Ever-married women		
	Number in thousands	Percent	Standard error	Number in thousands	Percent	Standard error
Total ¹	55,742	1.1	0.17	35,845	1.4	0.27
Age						
18–29 years	23,104	0.2	0.06	8,487	*	*
30–34 years	10,272	0.7	0.35	7,971	0.9	0.44
35–39 years	10,853	1.6	0.38	9,041	1.3	0.40
40–44 years	11,512	2.9	0.73	10,345	2.9	0.78
Marital status						
Currently married	28,323	1.6	0.32	28,323	1.6	0.32
First marriage	23,078	1.3	0.22	23,078	1.3	0.22
Second or later marriage	5,245	3.2	1.33	5,245	3.2	1.33
Never married	19,897	0.5	0.16
Formerly married	7,522	0.6	0.35	7,522	0.6	0.35
Parity						
0 births	19,993	1.4	0.36	6,347	3.2	1.04
1 or more births	35,749	0.9	0.21	29,498	1.0	0.24
Ever used infertility services						
Yes	7,306	5.1	1.24	6,563	5.2	1.34
No	48,436	0.5	0.11	29,282	0.6	0.17
Fecundity status						
Surgically sterile	14,439	1.7	0.44	12,933	1.8	0.49
Impaired fecundity	7,063	3.5	1.01	5,269	4.0	1.31
Fecund	34,240	0.4	0.11	17,642	0.4	0.18
Education ²						
No high school diploma or GED	5,627	0.7	0.38	3,816	*	*
High school diploma or GED	14,264	1.8	0.59	10,691	2.2	0.78
Some college, no bachelor's degree	14,279	0.9	0.28	10,728	1.1	0.38
Bachelor's degree or higher	13,551	1.5	0.38	9,728	1.6	0.47
Percent of poverty level ³						
0–149 percent	14,582	0.4	0.14	8,719	0.2	0.14
150–299 percent	14,502	1.7	0.58	10,356	2.3	0.81
300 percent or higher	22,643	1.3	0.30	16,537	1.5	0.39
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latina	8,194	0.3	0.15	5,265	0.5	0.23
Not Hispanic or Latina:						
White, single race	35,936	1.3	0.25	24,817	1.6	0.37
Black or African American, single race	7,399	1.4	0.48	3,242	2.1	0.87

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

... Category not applicable.

¹Includes women of other or multiple race and origin groups, not shown separately.²Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.³Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 3. Number of all women 18–44 years of age and percentage who have ever adopted a child, by use of infertility services, age, and parity: United States, 2002

Characteristic	Number in thousands	Percent who adopted	Standard error
Total	55,742	1.1	0.17
Used infertility services	7,306	5.1	1.24
All ages			
0 children born	1,793	10.7	3.42
1 or more children born	5,512	3.2	1.26
18–34 years of age			
0 children born	1,013	2.6	1.51
1 or more children born	2,207	*	*
35–39 years of age			
0 children born	279	*	*
1 or more children born	1,595	1.8	1.10
40–44 years of age			
0 children born	501	26.3	9.92
1 or more children born	1,711	7.7	3.79
Did not use infertility services	48,436	0.5	0.11
All ages			
0 children born	18,201	0.5	0.17
1 or more children born	30,235	0.5	0.15
18–34 years of age			
0 children born	15,423	0.2	0.10
1 or more children born	14,735	0.3	0.21
35–39 years of age			
0 children born	1,558	2.3	0.77
1 or more children born	7,421	1.0	0.40
40–44 years of age			
0 children born	1,220	*	*
1 or more children born	8,079	0.4	0.20

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

Table 4. Number of all men 18–44 years of age, number of ever-married men 18–44 years of age, and percentage who have ever adopted a child, by selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All men			Ever-married men		
	Number in thousands	Percent	Standard error	Number in thousands	Percent	Standard error
Total ¹	55,399	2.3	0.40	30,950	3.8	0.71
Age						
18–29 years	23,569	0.6	0.23	6,295	1.5	0.65
30–34 years	10,138	3.2	1.10	7,105	4.2	1.64
35–39 years	10,557	3.8	1.35	8,260	4.7	1.70
40–44 years	11,135	3.5	0.98	9,290	4.2	1.17
Marital status						
Currently married	25,795	4.0	0.82	25,795	4.0	0.82
First marriage	21,396	3.0	0.80	21,396	3.0	0.80
Second or later marriage	4,399	8.6	2.51	4,399	8.6	2.51
Never married	24,449	0.3	0.16
Formerly married	5,155	3.0	0.89	5,155	3.0	0.89
Ever had a biological child						
Never had a biological child	26,869	0.6	0.27	6,607	2.3	1.10
One or more biological children	28,530	3.9	0.71	24,343	4.2	0.82
Ever used infertility services ²						
Yes	4,008	1.8	0.60	3,856	1.5	0.55
No	47,435	2.5	0.48	27,094	4.1	0.83
Sterility status						
Not sterile	49,723	2.0	0.39	26,249	3.4	0.71
Surgically sterile	3,851	6.5	2.61	3,750	6.6	2.69
Nonsurgically sterile	1,825	1.8	0.96	951	2.5	1.51
Education ³						
No high school diploma or GED	6,355	2.5	0.68	4,037	3.1	0.74
High school diploma or GED	15,659	4.0	1.05	10,793	5.4	1.45
Some college, no bachelor's degree	13,104	1.8	0.68	7,695	3.1	1.17
Bachelor's degree or higher	11,901	2.0	0.94	8,131	2.9	1.36
Percent of poverty level ⁴						
0–149 percent	11,032	3.1	1.11	6,086	4.4	1.91
150–299 percent	14,451	2.1	0.66	8,842	3.4	1.07
300 percent or higher	25,457	2.4	0.53	15,975	3.8	0.86
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latino	9,336	2.1	0.66	5,064	2.7	1.03
Not Hispanic or Latino:						
White, single race	35,154	2.2	0.48	20,589	3.7	0.84
Black or African American, single race	6,127	2.7	1.06	2,894	5.0	2.17

... Category not applicable.

¹Includes men with missing data on some variables and men of other or multiple race and origin groups, not shown separately.

²Limited to men who have had sex. If a man was currently or formerly married, it was assumed he had had sex. This variable was computed differently for men than it was for women (see Technical Notes for details).

³Limited to men 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.

⁴Limited to men 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 5. Number of all women 18–44 years of age and percentage who have ever considered adoption, number of women who ever considered adoption and percentage who have ever taken steps to adopt, and number of women who ever took steps to adopt and percentage who ever adopted a child, by selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All women			Women who have ever considered adoption			Women who have ever taken steps to adopt		
	Number in thousands	Percent who ever considered adoption ¹	Standard error	Number in thousands ²	Percent who took steps to adopt (Standard error)	Number in thousands ³	Percent who ever adopted a child	Standard error	
Total ⁴	55,742	33.1	0.80	18,465	14.3	1.00	2,643	23.2	3.25
Age									
18–29 years	23,104	29.4	1.00	6,801	5.5	0.73	376	10.6	4.17
30–34 years	10,272	34.1	1.77	3,504	16.4	2.12	574	13.0	5.70
35–39 years	10,853	38.5	1.75	4,180	19.2	2.33	804	21.1	4.49
40–44 years	11,512	34.6	2.28	3,979	22.3	2.78	889	37.0	6.84
Marital or cohabiting status									
Currently married	28,323	35.2	1.16	9,962	18.1	1.56	1,801	25.5	4.34
First marriage	23,078	34.3	1.04	7,915	16.1	1.40	1,272	22.8	4.06
Second or later marriage	5,245	39.0	3.57	2,047	25.8	3.92	529	31.9	10.11
Never married	19,897	28.4	1.03	5,641	8.8	1.18	494	21.7	6.05
Formerly married	7,522	38.0	2.20	2,862	12.2	1.63	349	13.8	6.85
Parity									
0 births	19,993	35.4	1.17	7,070	11.1	1.24	784	36.3	6.89
1 or more births	35,749	31.9	0.98	11,395	16.3	1.32	1,859	17.7	3.62
Ever used infertility services									
Yes	7,306	57.1	1.89	4,173	28.4	2.72	1,186	31.1	5.70
No	48,436	29.5	0.83	14,292	10.2	1.01	1,457	16.8	3.56
Fecundity status									
Surgically sterile	14,439	32.7	1.41	4,720	22.7	2.66	1,070	22.4	5.20
Impaired fecundity	7,063	51.8	2.24	3,657	24.3	2.62	889	27.8	6.63
Fecund	34,240	29.5	0.96	10,088	6.8	0.89	684	18.5	5.35
Education ⁵									
No high school diploma or GED	5,627	23.8	1.79	1,341	16.2	3.26	217	*	*
High school diploma or GED	14,264	32.6	1.75	4,643	18.7	2.53	869	28.9	7.07
Some college, no bachelor's degree	14,279	36.8	1.32	5,252	14.2	1.73	744	17.0	5.34
Bachelor's degree or higher	13,551	37.1	1.47	5,028	14.7	1.80	737	26.7	6.33
Percent of poverty level ⁶									
0–149 percent	14,582	29.0	1.25	4,224	15.3	2.13	646	9.5	3.22
150–299 percent	14,502	33.4	1.82	4,840	14.0	2.14	675	36.8	8.59
300 percent or higher	22,643	36.6	1.01	8,290	15.6	1.55	1,290	23.5	4.60
Hispanic origin and race									
Hispanic or Latina	8,194	30.8	1.84	2,523	12.8	2.08	324	8.4	3.79
Not Hispanic or Latina:									
White, single race	35,936	33.6	1.09	12,058	13.4	1.17	1,613	28.0	4.91
Black or African American, single race	7,399	35.2	1.89	2,605	19.8	2.62	516	20.1	6.00

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes women who have adopted children in the past, women who have ever considered adoption, and women who are currently seeking to adopt.²Due to rounding of percentages and numbers, multiplying the number of women by the percentage who have ever considered adoption may not yield the numbers presented in this column. The numbers presented here were produced using actual (unrounded) figures.³Due to rounding of percentages and numbers, multiplying the number of women who have ever considered adoption by the percentage of women who have ever taken steps to adopt may not yield the numbers presented in this column. The numbers presented here were produced using actual (unrounded) figures.⁴Includes women of other or multiple race and origin groups, not shown separately.⁵Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.⁶Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 6. Number of ever-married women 18–44 years of age and percentage who have ever considered adoption, number of ever-married women who have ever considered adoption and percentage who have ever taken steps to adopt, and number of ever-married women who ever took steps to adopt and percentage who have ever adopted a child, by selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All ever-married women			Ever-married women who have ever considered adoption			Ever-married women who have ever taken steps to adopt		
	Number in thousands	Percent who ever considered adoption ¹	Standard error	Number in thousands ²	Percent who took steps to adopt	(Standard error)	Number in thousands ³	Percent who ever adopted a child	Standard error
Total ⁴	35,845	35.8	1.06	12,823	16.8	1.27	2,150	23.6	3.85
Age									
18–29 years	8,487	34.4	1.66	2,918	7.4	1.36	216	*	*
30–34 years	7,971	36.5	1.94	2,910	16.2	2.21	471	15.1	6.77
35–39 years	9,041	37.7	1.89	3,409	19.1	2.65	651	18.5	4.91
40–44 years	10,345	34.7	2.47	3,587	22.6	2.87	812	37.1	7.19
Marital or cohabiting status									
Currently married	28,323	35.2	1.16	9,962	18.1	1.56	1,801	25.5	4.34
First marriage	23,078	34.3	1.04	7,915	16.1	1.40	1,272	22.8	4.06
Second or later marriage	5,245	39.0	3.57	2,047	25.8	3.92	529	31.9	10.11
Formerly married	7,522	38.0	2.20	2,862	12.2	1.63	349	13.8	6.85
Parity									
0 births	6,347	49.3	1.81	3,130	17.8	2.44	558	36.7	8.61
1 or more births	29,498	32.9	1.11	9,693	16.4	1.40	1,591	19.0	4.10
Ever used infertility services									
Yes	6,563	57.2	2.03	3,757	28.4	2.84	1,069	31.8	6.10
No	29,282	31.0	1.13	9,066	11.9	1.37	1,081	15.4	4.24
Fecundity status									
Surgically sterile	12,933	33.5	1.56	4,334	21.8	2.66	945	23.9	5.78
Impaired fecundity	5,269	53.6	2.72	2,823	28.0	2.93	791	26.3	7.13
Fecund	17,642	32.1	1.45	5,667	7.3	1.24	414	17.6	6.55
Education ⁵									
No high school diploma or GED	3,816	24.7	2.31	942	15.4	3.81	145	*	*
High school diploma or GED	10,691	33.6	2.12	3,587	20.3	2.94	729	31.6	8.16
Some college, no bachelor's degree	10,728	38.9	1.56	4,177	16.2	2.24	675	17.3	5.88
Bachelor's degree or higher	9,728	39.0	1.64	3,795	15.8	2.05	599	25.3	6.72
Percent of poverty level ⁶									
0–149 percent	8,719	31.4	1.69	2,738	15.6	2.59	428	4.8	2.89
150–299 percent	10,356	34.4	2.22	3,566	16.1	2.86	573	40.7	9.39
300 percent or higher	16,537	38.8	1.34	6,420	17.9	1.89	1,149	22.1	4.75
Hispanic origin and race									
Hispanic or Latina	5,265	33.8	2.25	1,780	15.0	2.34	267	*	*
Not Hispanic or Latina:									
White, single race	24,817	35.8	1.35	8,888	16.2	1.49	1,443	27.1	5.39
Black or African American, single race	3,242	41.3	2.81	1,339	22.8	3.90	305	22.0	7.92

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Includes women who have adopted children in the past, women who have ever considered adoption, and women who are currently seeking to adopt.²Due to rounding of percentages and numbers, multiplying the number of women by the percentage who have ever considered adoption may not yield the numbers presented in this column. The numbers presented here were produced using actual (unrounded) figures.³Due to rounding of percentages and numbers, multiplying the number of women who have ever considered adoption by the percentage who have ever taken steps to adopt may not yield the numbers presented in this column. The numbers presented here were produced using actual (unrounded) figures.⁴Includes women of other or multiple race and origin groups, not shown separately.⁵Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.⁶Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 7. Number of all women 18–44 years of age, percentage who are currently seeking to adopt and, of those currently seeking to adopt, percentage who are currently taking steps to adopt, by selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All women			Women who are currently seeking to adopt a child		
	Number in thousands	Percent currently seeking to adopt	Standard error	Number in thousands ¹	Percent currently taking steps to adopt	Standard error
Total ²	55,742	1.6	0.18	901	62.2	6.18
Age						
18–29 years	23,104	1.1	0.25	252	*	*
30–34 years	10,272	1.8	0.30	183	*	*
35–39 years	10,853	2.7	0.62	287	*	*
40–44 years	11,512	1.6	0.33	178	*	*
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	28,323	2.0	0.27	555	70.5	7.17
First marriage	23,078	1.6	0.21	372	71.8	6.74
Second or later marriage	5,245	3.5	1.11	183	*	*
Never married	19,897	0.9	0.25	185	*	*
Formerly married	7,522	2.1	0.48	161	*	*
Parity						
0 births	19,993	1.8	0.32	360	54.8	8.77
1 or more births	35,749	1.5	0.22	541	67.1	7.58
Ever used infertility services						
Yes	7,306	4.5	0.61	325	*	*
No	48,436	1.2	0.19	576	58.4	8.74
Fecundity status						
Surgically sterile	14,439	2.1	0.55	300	*	*
Impaired fecundity	7,063	5.1	0.88	360	*	*
Fecund	34,240	0.7	0.14	241	*	*
Education ³						
No high school diploma or GED	5,627	1.6	0.44	88	*	*
High school diploma or GED	14,264	1.9	0.32	271	*	*
Some college, no bachelor's degree	14,279	1.9	0.41	273	*	*
Bachelor's degree or higher	13,551	1.2	0.30	160	*	*
Percent of poverty level ⁴						
0–149 percent	14,582	1.8	0.30	256	*	*
150–299 percent	14,502	1.4	0.35	197	*	*
300 percent or higher	22,643	1.7	0.32	395	58.3	9.78
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latina	8,194	2.4	0.43	195	*	*
Not Hispanic or Latina:						
White, single race	35,936	1.1	0.21	405	*	*
Black or African American, single race	7,399	3.1	0.63	228	*	*

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Due to rounding of percentages and numbers, multiplying the number of women by the percentage who have ever considered adoption may not yield the numbers presented in this column. The numbers presented here were produced using actual (unrounded) figures.²Includes women of other or multiple race and origin groups, not shown separately.³Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.⁴Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 8. Number of ever-married women 18–44 years of age, percentage who are currently seeking to adopt and, of those currently seeking to adopt, percentage who are currently taking steps to adopt, by selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All ever-married women			Ever-married women who are currently seeking to adopt		
	Number in thousands	Percent currently seeking to adopt	Standard error	Number in thousands ¹	Percent currently taking steps to adopt	Standard error
Total ²	35,845	2.0	0.23	716	66.9	6.16
Age						
18–29 years	8,487	1.8	0.45	153	*	*
30–34 years	7,971	2.0	0.37	159	*	*
35–39 years	9,041	2.7	0.73	248	*	*
40–44 years	10,345	1.5	0.36	155	*	*
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	28,323	2.0	0.27	555	70.5	7.17
First marriage	23,078	1.6	0.21	372	71.8	6.74
Second or later marriage	5,245	3.5	1.11	183	*	*
Formerly married	7,522	2.1	0.48	161	*	*
Parity						
0 births	6,347	4.1	0.69	257	*	*
1 or more births	29,498	1.6	0.24	459	65.0	8.20
Ever used infertility services						
Yes	6,563	4.6	0.69	304	*	*
No	29,282	1.4	0.24	412	65.5	9.21
Fecundity status						
Surgically sterile	12,933	2.2	0.58	279	*	*
Impaired fecundity	5,269	5.8	0.92	303	*	*
Fecund	17,642	0.8	0.18	134	*	*
Education ³						
No high school diploma or GED	3,816	2.0	0.64	78	*	*
High school diploma or GED	10,691	2.2	0.44	231	*	*
Some college, no bachelor's degree	10,728	2.2	0.47	235	*	*
Bachelor's degree or higher	9,728	1.6	0.41	151	*	*
Percent of poverty level ⁴						
0–149 percent	8,719	2.3	0.43	199	*	*
150–299 percent	10,356	1.5	0.37	150	*	*
300 percent or higher	16,537	2.2	0.43	367	*	*
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latina	5,265	3.0	0.61	156	*	*
Not Hispanic or Latina:						
White, single race	24,817	1.4	0.26	347	*	*
Black or African American, single race	3,242	4.5	1.15	147	*	*

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Due to rounding of percentages and numbers, multiplying the number of women by the percentage who have ever considered adoption may not yield the numbers presented in this column. The numbers presented here were produced using actual (unrounded) figures.²Includes women of other or multiple race and origin groups, not shown separately.³Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.⁴Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 9. A comparison of lifetime adoption demand among ever-married women 18–44 years of age, by selected characteristics: United States, 1995–2002

Characteristic	Percent who ever considered adoption				Of those who ever considered adopting, percent who took steps to adopt			
	1995		2002		1995		2002	
	Percent	Standard error	Percent	Standard error	Percent	Standard error	Percent	Standard error
Number of women in denominator in thousands	37,464		35,845		9,893		12,823	
(unweighted number)	(6,835)		(4,125)		(1,856)		(1,517)	
Number of women in numerator in thousands	9,893		12,823		2,332		2,150	
All ever-married women	26.4	0.71	35.8	1.06	23.6	1.09	16.8	1.27
Age								
18–29 years	21.8	1.16	34.4	1.66	11.2	1.82	7.4	1.36
30–34 years	25.5	1.27	36.5	1.94	19.1	1.89	16.2	2.21
35–39 years	28.3	1.36	37.7	1.89	25.3	1.90	19.1	2.65
40–44 years	30.2	1.31	34.7	2.47	35.0	2.52	22.6	2.87
Marital status								
Currently married	26.7	0.79	35.2	1.16	24.8	1.20	18.1	1.56
Formerly married	25.5	1.27	38.0	2.20	18.8	2.28	12.2	1.63
Parity								
0 births	35.4	1.67	49.3	1.81	30.8	2.70	17.8	2.44
1 or more births	24.3	0.77	32.9	1.11	21.1	1.13	16.4	1.40
Ever used infertility services								
Yes	41.1	1.30	57.2	2.03	37.0	1.96	28.4	2.84
No	22.2	0.75	31.0	1.13	16.4	1.08	11.9	1.37
Fecundity status								
Surgically sterile	27.6	1.02	33.5	1.56	27.2	1.79	21.8	2.66
Impaired fecundity	44.9	1.82	53.6	2.72	33.4	2.50	28.0	2.93
Fecund	20.5	0.88	32.1	1.45	13.8	1.41	7.3	1.24
Education ¹								
No high school diploma or GED	21.5	1.77	24.7	2.31	25.4	3.96	15.4	3.81
High school diploma or GED	25.5	0.98	33.6	2.12	21.5	1.73	20.3	2.94
Some college, no bachelor's degree	31.0	1.38	38.9	1.56	25.6	2.10	16.2	2.24
Bachelor's degree or higher	26.5	1.28	39.0	1.64	25.6	2.17	15.8	2.05
Percent of poverty level ²								
0–149 percent	21.8	1.30	31.4	1.69	19.9	2.57	15.6	2.59
150–299 percent	25.0	0.97	34.4	2.22	22.1	1.98	16.1	2.86
300 percent or higher	29.6	0.98	38.8	1.34	25.5	1.58	17.9	1.89
Hispanic origin and race ³								
Hispanic or Latina	26.8	1.99	33.8	2.25	14.6	3.11	15.0	2.34
Not Hispanic or Latina:								
White, single race	25.8	0.77	35.8	1.35	24.4	1.30	16.2	1.49
Black or African American, single race	29.2	1.87	41.3	2.81	25.6	3.02	22.8	3.90

¹Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.²Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.³This table uses the 1997 Office of Management and Budget guidelines to report race and ethnicity. See "Methods" section for explanation.

Table 10. A comparison of current adoption demand among ever-married women 18–44 years of age, by selected characteristics: United States, 1995–2002

Characteristic	Percent who are currently seeking or planning to adopt				Of those who are currently seeking to adopt, percent who are taking steps to adopt			
	1995		2002		1995		2002	
	Percent	Standard error	Percent	Standard error	Percent	Standard error	Percent	Standard error
Number of women in denominator in thousands	37,464		35,845		472		716	
(unweighted number)	(6,835)		(4,125)		(89)		(99)	
Number of women in numerator in thousands	472		716		232		479	
All ever-married women	1.3	0.17	2.0	0.23	60.6	5.50	66.9	6.16
Age								
18–29 years	0.6	0.17	1.8	0.45	*	*	*	*
30–34 years	1.1	0.27	2.0	0.37	*	*	*	*
35–39 years	1.6	0.32	2.7	0.73	*	*	*	*
40–44 years	1.8	0.46	1.5	0.36	*	*	*	*
Marital status								
Currently married	1.3	0.17	2.0	0.27	62.8	6.07	70.5	7.17
Formerly married	1.1	0.34	2.1	0.48	*	*	*	*
Parity								
0 births	2.2	0.45	4.1	0.69	*	*	*	*
1 or more births	1.0	0.18	1.6	0.24	60.5	6.96	65.0	8.20
Ever used infertility services								
Yes	2.0	0.35	4.6	0.69	*	*	*	*
No	1.1	0.18	1.4	0.24	53.9	8.19	65.5	9.21
Fecundity status								
Surgically sterile	1.5	0.30	2.2	0.58	*	*	*	*
Impaired fecundity	2.7	0.54	5.8	0.92	*	*	*	*
Fecund	0.7	0.16	0.8	0.18	*	*	*	*
Education ¹								
No high school diploma or GED	2.7	0.90	2.0	0.64	*	*	*	*
High school diploma or GED	1.0	0.19	2.2	0.44	*	*	*	*
Some college, no bachelor's degree	1.2	0.27	2.2	0.47	*	*	*	*
Bachelor's degree or higher	1.3	0.30	1.6	0.41	*	*	*	*
Percent of poverty level ²								
0–149 percent	1.3	0.46	2.3	0.43	*	*	*	*
150–299 percent	0.9	0.17	1.5	0.37	*	*	*	*
300 percent or higher	1.5	0.24	2.2	0.43	61.1	6.66	*	*
Hispanic origin and race ³								
Hispanic or Latina	2.4	0.74	3.0	0.61	*	*	*	*
Not Hispanic or Latina:								
White, single race	0.9	0.14	1.4	0.26	*	*	*	*
Black or African American, single race	2.6	0.62	4.5	1.15	*	*	*	*

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.²Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.³This table uses the 1997 Office of Management and Budget guidelines to report race and ethnicity. See "Methods" section for explanation.

Table 11. Number and percent distribution of all women 18–44 years of age and all women reporting lifetime adoption-seeking behaviors, according to selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All women		Ever considered adoption		Ever considered adoption and took steps to adopt	
	Percent distribution	Standard error	Percent distribution	Standard error	Percent distribution	Standard error
Number of women in denominator in thousands	55,742		18,465		2,643	
Total	100.0	...	100.0	...	100.0	...
Age						
18–29 years	41.5	1.08	36.8	1.34	†~14.2	2.01
30–34 years	18.4	0.60	19.0	0.97	21.7	2.65
35–39 years	19.5	0.74	22.6	1.19	~30.4	3.02
40–44 years	20.7	0.87	21.6	1.31	†~33.6	3.60
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	50.8	1.14	54.0	1.66	†~68.1	2.90
First marriage	41.4	1.04	42.9	1.45	48.1	2.96
Second or later marriage	9.4	0.70	11.1	0.92	†~20.0	2.56
Never married	35.7	1.02	~30.6	1.32	†~18.7	2.36
Formerly married	13.5	0.54	15.5	0.99	13.2	1.85
Parity						
0 births	35.9	1.05	38.3	1.25	†29.7	2.69
1 or more births	64.1	1.05	61.7	1.25	†70.3	2.69
Ever used infertility services						
Yes	13.1	0.56	~22.6	1.13	†~44.9	3.58
No	86.9	0.56	~77.4	1.13	†~55.1	3.58
Fecundity status						
Surgically sterile	25.9	0.79	25.6	1.06	†~40.5	3.94
Impaired fecundity	12.7	0.52	~19.8	0.97	†~33.6	2.79
Fecund	61.4	0.88	~54.6	1.26	†~25.9	3.08
Education¹						
No high school diploma or GED	11.8	0.63	~8.3	0.77	8.5	1.62
High school diploma or GED	29.9	0.82	28.5	1.42	33.9	3.73
Some college, no bachelor's degree	29.9	0.73	32.3	1.14	29.0	2.97
Bachelor's degree or higher	28.4	1.05	30.9	1.30	28.7	3.22
Percent of poverty level²						
0–149 percent	28.2	0.99	24.3	1.14	24.7	2.87
150–299 percent	28.0	0.80	27.9	1.18	25.9	3.90
300 percent or higher	43.8	0.95	47.8	1.47	49.4	4.05
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latina	14.7	0.70	13.7	0.74	12.3	2.02
Not Hispanic or Latina:						
White, single race	64.5	1.12	65.3	1.41	61.0	3.07
Black or African American, single race	13.3	0.76	14.1	0.95	19.5	2.79
Other or multiple races	7.6	0.46	6.9	0.69	7.2	1.47

... Category not applicable.

† Percentage is significantly different at the .05 level from the percentage in "Ever considered adoption" column. That is, the 95-percent confidence intervals for the two percentage values do not overlap.

~ Percentage is significantly different at the .05 level from the percentage in the "All women" column. That is, the 95-percent confidence intervals for the two percentage values do not overlap.

¹Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.²Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 12. Number and percent distribution of all women 18–44 years of age and all women reporting current adoption-seeking behaviors, according to selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All women		Currently seeking to adopt		Currently seeking to adopt and taking steps to adopt	
	Percent distribution	Standard error	Percent distribution	Standard error	Percent distribution	Standard error
Number of women in denominator in thousands	55,742		901		560	
Total	100.0	...	100.0	...	100.0	...
Age						
18–29 years	41.5	1.08	28.0	5.82	~18.4	5.67
30–34 years	18.4	0.60	20.4	3.53	22.3	5.12
35–39 years	19.5	0.74	31.9	5.74	~41.0	7.20
40–44 years	20.7	0.87	19.8	3.86	18.3	4.77
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	50.8	1.14	61.6	5.24	~69.9	5.90
First marriage	41.4	1.04	41.3	4.97	47.7	5.60
Second or later marriage	9.4	0.70	20.3	5.34	22.2	6.89
Never married	35.7	1.02	20.5	4.71	14.4	4.35
Formerly married	13.5	0.54	17.9	3.76	15.7	4.29
Parity						
0 births	35.9	1.05	40.0	5.54	35.2	6.21
1 or more births	64.1	1.05	60.0	5.54	64.8	6.21
Ever used infertility services						
Yes	13.1	0.56	~36.1	4.94	~39.9	6.40
No	86.9	0.56	~63.9	4.94	~60.1	6.40
Fecundity status						
Surgically sterile	25.9	0.79	33.3	7.15	41.8	9.21
Impaired fecundity	12.7	0.52	~40.0	6.49	~35.5	7.58
Fecund	61.4	0.88	~26.7	4.28	~22.8	5.51
Education¹						
No high school diploma or GED	11.8	0.63	11.1	3.23	12.3	4.18
High school diploma or GED	29.9	0.82	34.2	5.14	37.2	6.01
Some college, no bachelor's degree	29.9	0.73	34.5	5.36	34.0	5.57
Bachelor's degree or higher	28.4	1.05	20.2	4.50	16.6	5.51
Percent of poverty level²						
0–149 percent	28.2	0.99	30.2	4.66	33.8	6.29
150–299 percent	28.0	0.80	23.3	5.67	24.6	8.33
300 percent or higher	43.8	0.95	46.5	5.60	41.6	7.78
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latina	14.7	0.70	21.6	4.13	21.3	5.15
Not Hispanic or Latina:						
White, single race	64.5	1.12	~45.0	5.77	~45.1	6.90
Black or African American, single race	13.3	0.76	~25.4	4.52	~29.4	6.36
Other or multiple races	7.6	0.46	8.1	2.88	4.2	2.25

... Category not applicable.

~ Percentage is significantly different at the .05 level from the percentage in the "All women" column. That is, the 95-percent confidence intervals for the two percentage values do not overlap.

¹Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.²Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 13. Number and percent distribution of ever-married women 18–44 years of age and ever-married women reporting lifetime adoption-seeking behaviors, according to selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All ever-married women		Ever considered adoption		Ever considered adoption and took steps to adopt	
	Percent distribution	Standard error	Percent distribution	Standard error	Percent distribution	Standard error
Number of women in denominator in thousands	35,845		12,823		2,150	
Total	100.0	...	100.0	...	100.0	...
Age						
18–29 years	23.7	1.06	22.8	1.53	†~10.0	2.01
30–34 years	22.2	0.80	22.7	1.30	21.9	2.96
35–39 years	25.2	0.99	26.6	1.54	30.3	3.36
40–44 years	28.9	1.17	28.0	1.74	37.8	4.11
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	79.0	0.90	77.7	1.49	83.8	2.30
First marriage	64.4	1.20	61.7	1.63	59.2	3.18
Second or later marriage	14.6	1.01	16.0	1.22	†~24.6	3.01
Formerly married	21.0	0.90	22.3	1.49	16.2	2.30
Parity						
0 births	17.7	0.83	~24.4	1.14	~26.0	2.92
1 or more births	82.3	0.83	~75.6	1.14	~74.0	2.92
Ever used infertility services						
Yes	18.3	0.82	~29.3	1.52	†~49.7	4.14
No	81.7	0.82	~70.7	1.52	†~50.3	4.14
Fecundity status						
Surgically sterile	36.1	1.19	33.8	1.58	43.9	4.43
Impaired fecundity	14.7	0.77	~22.0	1.32	†~36.8	3.39
Fecund	49.2	1.24	44.2	1.66	†~19.3	3.04
Education ¹						
No high school diploma or GED	10.9	0.69	~7.5	0.83	6.8	1.55
High school diploma or GED	30.6	1.04	28.7	1.66	33.9	4.31
Some college, no bachelor's degree	30.7	0.95	33.4	1.40	31.4	3.62
Bachelor's degree or higher	27.8	1.14	30.4	1.49	27.9	3.59
Percent of poverty level ²						
0–149 percent	24.5	1.09	21.5	1.41	19.9	2.94
150–299 percent	29.1	0.99	28.0	1.44	26.6	4.56
300 percent or higher	46.4	1.12	50.5	1.77	53.4	4.69
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latina	14.7	0.73	13.9	0.88	12.4	2.03
Not Hispanic or Latina:						
White, single race	69.2	1.08	69.3	1.35	67.1	3.05
Black or African American, single race	9.1	0.69	10.4	0.92	14.2	2.73
Other or multiple races	7.0	0.58	6.4	0.77	6.3	1.46

... Category not applicable.

† Percentage is significantly different at the .05 level from the percentage in the "Ever considered adoption" column. That is, the 95-percent confidence intervals for the two percentage values do not overlap.

~ Percentage is significantly different at the .05 level from the percentage in the "All ever-married women" column. That is, the 95-percent confidence intervals for the two percentage values do not overlap.

¹Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.

²Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 14. Number and percent distribution of ever-married women 18–44 years of age and ever-married women reporting current adoption-seeking behaviors, according to selected characteristics: United States, 2002

Characteristic	All ever-married women		Currently seeking to adopt		Currently seeking to adopt and taking steps to adopt	
	Percent distribution	Standard error	Percent distribution	Standard error	Percent distribution	Standard error
Number of women in denominator in thousands	35,845		716		479	
Total	100.0	...	100.0	...	100.0	...
Age						
18–29 years	23.7	1.06	21.4	5.57	16.1	6.04
30–34 years	22.2	0.80	22.3	4.28	22.8	5.86
35–39 years	25.2	0.99	34.6	6.92	40.8	8.12
40–44 years	28.9	1.17	21.7	4.63	20.3	5.52
Marital or cohabiting status						
Currently married	79.0	0.90	77.5	4.58	81.7	5.04
First marriage	64.4	1.20	52.0	5.39	55.8	6.07
Second or later marriage	14.6	1.01	25.6	6.53	25.9	7.78
Formerly married	21.0	0.90	22.5	4.58	18.3	5.04
Parity						
0 births	17.7	0.83	~35.9	5.35	~37.8	6.56
1 or more births	82.3	0.83	~64.1	5.35	~62.2	6.56
Ever used infertility services						
Yes	18.3	0.82	~42.5	5.75	~43.7	7.15
No	81.7	0.82	~57.5	5.75	~56.3	7.15
Fecundity status						
Surgically sterile	36.1	1.19	39.0	8.11	46.2	9.59
Impaired fecundity	14.7	0.77	~42.3	7.31	~40.9	9.00
Fecund	49.2	1.24	~18.7	3.83	~12.9	3.93
Education¹						
No high school diploma or GED	10.9	0.69	11.2	3.62	12.4	4.65
High school diploma or GED	30.6	1.04	33.3	5.78	37.1	6.57
Some college, no bachelor's degree	30.7	0.95	33.9	5.58	32.4	5.38
Bachelor's degree or higher	27.8	1.14	21.7	4.97	18.1	6.09
Percent of poverty level²						
0–149 percent	24.5	1.09	27.8	4.66	30.9	6.18
150–299 percent	29.1	0.99	21.0	5.58	21.5	7.91
300 percent or higher	46.4	1.12	51.2	6.11	47.6	8.26
Hispanic origin and race						
Hispanic or Latina	14.7	0.73	21.8	4.75	21.4	5.48
Not Hispanic or Latina:						
White, single race	69.2	1.08	~48.6	6.43	~51.2	7.90
Black or African American, single race	9.1	0.69	~20.5	4.91	22.5	6.63
Other or multiple races	7.0	0.58	9.2	3.48	5.0	2.62

... Category not applicable.

~ Percentage is significantly different at the .05 level from the percentage in the "All ever-married women" column. That is, the 95-percent confidence intervals for the two percentage values do not overlap.

¹Limited to women 22–44 years of age at time of interview. GED is General Educational Development diploma.²Limited to women 20–44 years of age at time of interview.

Table 16. Among children born to never-married women under 45 years of age, percentage who were relinquished for adoption, by race, according to year of child's birth: United States, before 1973–2002

Race	Year of child's birth				
	Before 1973 ¹	1973–1981 ¹	1982–1988 ¹	1989–1995 (standard error) ¹	1996–2002 (standard error) ²
All women ³	8.7	4.1	2.0	0.9 (0.03)	1.0 (0.33)
Black or African American women ⁴	1.5	0.2	1.1	–	*
White women ⁴	19.3	7.5	3.2	1.7 (0.55)	1.3 (0.54)

– Quantity zero.

* Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.

¹Infants relinquished at birth only (figures replicated from Chandra et al., 1999, Table 5).

²Infants relinquished at birth or within the first month of life.

³Includes women of other races, not shown separately.

⁴Includes women of Hispanic origin and women of multiple races who choose this as the single race that best describes them.

Appendix I

Sample Design and Fieldwork Procedures

The 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, or NSFG, was based on 12,571 interviews with persons 15–44 years of age (4,928 men and 7,643 women) in the household population of the United States. Over 200 female interviewers were hired and trained by the survey contractor, the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research, under the supervision of NCHS. Interviewing occurred from March 2002 until the end of February 2003. The interviews were administered in person in the selected persons’ homes. The 2002 sample is a nationally representative multistage area probability sample drawn from 121 areas across the country. The sample is designed to produce national, not state, estimates.

Persons were selected for the NSFG in five major steps:

- Large areas (counties and cities) were chosen first.
- Within each large area or “Primary Sampling Unit,” groups of adjacent blocks, called segments, were chosen at random.
- Within segments, addresses were listed and some addresses were selected at random.
- The selected addresses were visited in person, and a short “screener” interview was conducted to see if anyone 15–44 years of age lived there.
- If so, one person was chosen at random for the interview and was offered a chance to participate.

To protect the respondent’s privacy, only one person was interviewed in each selected household. In the 2002 survey, teenagers and black and Hispanic adults were sampled at higher rates than others.

The NSFG questionnaires and materials were reviewed and approved by the CDC/NCHS Research Ethics Review Board (formerly known as the Institutional Review Board or IRB), and

by a similar board at the University of Michigan. The female questionnaire lasted an average of about 85 minutes. All respondents were given written and oral information about the survey and were informed that participation was voluntary. Adult respondents 18–44 years of age were asked to sign a consent form but were not required to do so. For minors 15–17 years of age, signed consent was required first from a parent or guardian, and then signed assent was required from the minor. Respondents in the 2002 survey were offered \$40 as a “token of appreciation” for their participation. The response rate for the survey was about 79%. For women, the response rate was 80%.

More detailed information about the methods and procedures of the 2002 NSFG, including imputation of recodes and variance estimation, is available elsewhere (17,18).

Statistical Analysis

Statistics for this report were produced using SAS software, version 9.1 (www.sas.com). Standard errors were calculated, and tests of significance performed, for selected comparisons in this report. The statistical package SUDAAN (www.rti.org/sudaan) was used for the calculation of standard errors, since it takes into account complex sample designs such as that of the NSFG. Significance of differences between subgroups was determined by two-tailed *t*-tests at the 5- and 10-percent level. No adjustments were made for multiple comparisons. Terms such as “greater than” and “less than” indicate that a statistically significant difference at the 5-percent level was found. Statements using the phrase “the data suggest” indicate that the difference was significant at the 10-percent level. Terms such as “similar” or “no difference” indicate that the statistics being compared were not significantly different. Lack of comment regarding the difference between any two statistics does not mean that significance was tested and ruled out; the significance of all possible pairs of statistics was not tested.

Percentages are not shown if the denominator is less than 50 cases, or the numerator is less than 3 cases. When a percentage or other statistic is not shown for this reason, the table contains an asterisk (*) that indicates “Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision.” For most statistics, the numerators and denominators are much larger.

Effect of Rounding on Reported Figures

It is standard procedure to round percentages to one decimal place and present weighted numbers in thousands in NCHS reports. This causes a few instances where the figures presented in the text or tables cannot be reproduced because the derived statistics in this report are based on unrounded figures that are weighted to produce national estimates. For example, [Table 7](#) lists the total number of women currently seeking to adopt a child as 901,000. The result obtained by multiplying the total number of women (55,742,000) by the percent currently seeking to adopt (1.6) is 891,872. The 9,000 difference is caused by rounding the total number of women down from 55,742,070, truncating the more precise percentage of women currently seeking to adopt, 1.6158705, and rounding the calculated number up from 900,720.

Definition of Terms

This section provides brief definitions of the variables used in this report. More extensive definitions are available elsewhere (19,33).

Age—A calculated variable based on the respondent’s birth date (or age, if birth date not given) at the time of the interview.

Education—Reflects the respondent’s educational attainment measured at the time of the interview. Results shown by education are limited to those 22–44 years of age in order to allow all respondents to report attending college. But because this measure includes respondents in their early twenties who may still be attending college, the percentage with a bachelor’s

degree is smaller and the percentage with some college is larger than if only older respondents were analyzed.

Ever had a biological child—A dichotomous variable that indicates whether a man has ever fathered a child. See *Parity* for women.

Ever used infertility services—Although similar for women and men, is slightly different. It is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the respondent or a spouse or partner had ever sought medical help to have a baby. Women were asked two separate questions—one asked about “help to get pregnant” and the other asked about “help to prevent miscarriage.” Men were asked, “Did you or your wife ever go to a doctor or other medical care provider to talk about ways to help you have a baby together?” This variable was computed for all women but only for men who had sexual intercourse.

Fecundity status—Based on the woman’s self-report of her physical capacity to conceive or bear a child at the time of the interview. There were six categories of fecundity status created in the interview. These were collapsed into three groups for this report as follows:

- *Surgically sterile*—The woman indicated that she was surgically sterile for either (a) contraceptive reasons or (b) noncontraceptive reasons.
- *Impaired fecundity*—The woman indicated that she was (a) nonsurgically sterile, (b) subfecund, or (c) had a long interval of unprotected sexual intercourse without conceiving.
- *Fecund*—Residual category of women who were not classified as surgically sterile or with impaired fecundity.

Hispanic origin and race—Defined using multiple questions. First, respondents of Hispanic or Spanish ancestry are classified as “Hispanic or Latino,” regardless of reported race. Then, Non-Hispanic respondents who are only white or only black are classified as either “Non-Hispanic white” or “Non-Hispanic black or African American.” The residual respondents (i.e., those of other single races and those of multiple races), were

classified as “Non-Hispanic other.”

Marital status—Measured at the time of the interview, indicates the respondent’s formal or legal marital status. The formerly married category includes those respondents who report their formal marital status as widowed, separated, or divorced.

Parity—Parity is the total number of **live births** a woman has ever had as distinguished from gravidity, which is her total number of **pregnancies**.

“Nulliparous” refers to women who have not had a live birth; women who have given birth to one or more babies are defined as “parous.” Nulliparous is used in this report rather than the more ambiguous term, childless. For example, a woman may be childless even though she has given birth to a baby (i.e., she is parous) because the child died or because she relinquished it for adoption. Similarly, a nulliparous woman may have children through adoption or step-parenting.

Percent of poverty level—A measure of the total family income, adjusted for the number of persons in the family, relative to the annual definition of poverty provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. It is measured at the time of the interview.

Sterility status—Based on men’s self-reported ability to father children. Men were not asked the same questions women were that comprise the “fecundity status” variable for women, but this variable is roughly equivalent. The categories are:

- Not sterile—The man had not had an unreversed vasectomy or other sterilizing operation and was physically able to father a child.
- Surgically sterile—The man reported having an unreversed vasectomy or another operation that made it impossible for him to father a child.
- Nonsurgically sterile—The man was not surgically sterile, but he indicated that it was physically impossible for him to father a child.

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