

NCHS Dataline

The 27th annual report on the nation's health, *Health, United States, 2003*,¹ shows steady gains in life expectancy and advances in preventive care, but amid the good news is evidence that diabetes is of growing concern. Registration is open for the 2004 Data Users Conference to be held in Washington, DC, July 12–14. A new report presents the latest available pregnancy rates for the United States.

HEALTH, UNITED STATES, 2003

Health United States, 2003 is a comprehensive report with the latest statistics from federal health agencies, the U.S. Census Bureau, population surveys, and other definitive data. The 400-page book, prepared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), is the latest in a series of annual reports to the President and Congress, as required by the Public Health Service Act.

The report contains more than 150 detailed tables as well as a book of charts on trends in Americans' health. In a special section on diabetes, it noted that the percentage of American adults diagnosed with diabetes has risen 23% from 1997 to 2002, to 6.5%. Recent data have shown that about 18 million adults have diabetes, including about five million for whom the condition is undiagnosed. An additional 12 million adults have impaired fasting glucose tolerance, and many of these will go on to develop diabetes unless they successfully adopt changes in weight management and physical activity.

The rate of visits to physician's offices or hospital outpatient departments for diabetes has increased dramatically—up 35% for those 45–54 years of age, and 43% for those ages 55–64 from 1995–96 to 1999–2000. Over a fifth of patients 45 years of age and older discharged from hospitals in 2000–2001 had a diagnosis of diabetes and this number has been growing. Most people with diabetes visit their doctors to become better educated about diabetes, discuss lifestyle changes, get medications to control blood sugar levels, or to be monitored and treated for complications.

Diabetes was the fifth leading cause of death among women and sixth among men in 2001. People with diabetes run the risk of severe complications, including heart disease, chronic kidney disease, blindness, and amputations. Diabetes is associated with obesity

and is more common with advancing age. In the NCHS survey, more than 15% of those ages 65 and older had been diagnosed with the disease.

Health, US noted these milestones:

Life and death

- Life expectancy at birth reached a record high of 77.2 years in 2001, up nearly two years since 1990. It was 79.8 years for women, and 74.4 years for men. Men have gained more than two years' life expectancy since 1990, while women's longer life expectancy rose by a single year.
- The racial gap in life expectancy between whites and blacks has narrowed significantly since 1990, when whites on average lived seven years longer. The gap in 2001 was 5.5 years, down from 5.7 in 2000.
- Infant mortality reached a record low in 2001 of 6.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, down from 6.9 in 2000.
- The birth rate for teenagers was the lowest in more than six decades: 45 births per 1,000 women ages 15–19.

Workplace injuries

- The rate at which people missed work in 2001 because of occupational injuries was the lowest in three decades (2.6 injuries per 100 workers).
- The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks swelled the number killed on the job to 8,786 in 2001. Excluding those fatalities, the occupational injury death rate was unchanged from 2000, at 4.3 deaths per 100,000 workers. Some 1,225 construction workers died from workplace injuries in 2001.

Preventive care

- Seventy-seven percent of all toddlers (19 to 35 months of age) completed a series of childhood vaccinations against infectious diseases in 2002, but vaccination rates varied from 72% for children in poor families to 79% for those in families at or above the poverty level.
- Eighty-three percent of mothers received prenatal care in the first trimester in 2001, up from 76% in 1990.

- Two-thirds of the elderly got flu shots in 2002, matching the previous high in 1999.
- Eighty-one percent of women 18 and older in 2001 had a recent Pap smear (within three years). In 1987, the rate was 74%.

Behavior and risk factors

- The percentage of adults who smoke has declined only slightly since 1990. Twenty-five percent of men and 21% of women were smokers in 2001.
- Twenty-nine percent of high school students reported smoking cigarettes in the past month in 2001, down from 36% in 1997. That reverses an upward trend from the early 1990s.
- Twelve percent of mothers smoked during pregnancy in 2001, down from 20% in 1989.
- Thirty-eight percent of female high school students and 24% of male students did not engage in recommended amounts of moderate or vigorous physical exercise in 2001.
- Sixty-five percent of adults ages 20 to 74 were overweight or obese in 1999–2000. Overweight has remained at the same level—about a third of the population—over the past two decades, but obesity has more than doubled, from 15% in 1976–80 to 31% in 1999–2000.

Health care providers

- The number of beds in community hospitals dropped by 101,000 over the past decade. There were 826,000 hospital beds in 2001. Sixty-three percent of surgeries were performed on an outpatient basis in 2001.
- Forty-nine percent of physician office visits were made to specialists in 2000.
- Enrollment in HMOs totaled 76 million individuals or 26% of the U.S. population in 2002. HMO enrollment increased steadily through 1999 but declined by more than five million from 1999 to 2002. The number of HMO plans decreased by 22% to 500 plans during those three years.

Access to health care

- Thirteen percent of children younger than 18 years of age did not visit a doctor or clinic in the past 12 months; 6% had no usual source of medical care in 2000–01. Hispanic and black children were more likely to be without a usual source of care.

- Health insurance coverage increased for children from 1997 to 2002, especially for children with family income just above the poverty level. However, children in poor families as well as Hispanic and black children are still more likely to be without insurance.

In addition to the printed volume, *Health, United States, 2003* is available online at the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs> in an electronic edition that NCHS regularly updates with the latest data.

2004 DATA USERS CONFERENCE

The 2004 Data Users Conference, with the theme of Data for the Public, will be held July 12–14, at the Omni Shoreham hotel in Washington, DC. The conference is held every two years, is open to all current and potential data users, and serves as a resource to help data users learn more about the availability and use of the public use files from NCHS. There are plenary sessions which address global analytical issues and workshops devoted to specific data files or sources of data. Other sessions highlight NCHS data on various topics such as child health or aging. Still other sessions are organized around specific analytical techniques or tools. An exhibit area combines exhibits on NCHS programs, demonstrations on the key features of the files, and opportunities to meet the “experts.” For more information or to request a registration packet, contact NCHS at 301-348-4636.

U.S. PREGNANCY RATE DOWN FROM PEAK; BIRTHS AND ABORTIONS ON THE DECLINE

The 1999 total of 6.28 million pregnancies in the United States is down 7% from the 1990 peak of 6.78 million pregnancies. The pregnancy rate declined 12% from the peak to 102.1 pregnancies per 1,000 women ages 15–44 years in 1999, reflecting a downturn of about 10% in the fertility rate and an even larger drop (22%) in the abortion rate. These and other trends are reported in a new CDC report that updates and revises pregnancy rates from 1990 to 1999 to include the latest abortion data for 1999.

The 1999 total pregnancy count includes about 3.96 million live births, 1.31 million induced abortions, and one million fetal losses (miscarriages and stillbirths). The study documents significant differences in pregnancy patterns by age, race, ethnicity, and marital status.

Women ages 20–24 had the highest pregnancy rate, followed by women ages 25–29. About one in six

women in their twenties was pregnant in 1999. Pregnancy rates for teenagers have fallen during the 1990s to reach historic lows. The teen pregnancy rate dropped by 25% from 1990 to 1999, driven by a 19% drop in the birth rate and a 39% drop in the rate of abortions. More recent data are available on births, which show that the teen birth rate has continued to decline—down 28% through 2002. Pregnancy rates for women in their thirties and older have been increasing modestly since the mid-1990s.

Examining patterns by race and ethnicity shows that 1999 pregnancy rates for black and Hispanic teenagers were more than double the rates for non-Hispanic white teens, with differences narrowing for women in their twenties, and virtually disappearing by age 35. Non-Hispanic white women averaged about 2.7 lifetime pregnancies compared with 4.5 pregnancies for black women and 4.1 for Hispanic women. The lifetime pregnancy rate is calculated by projecting pregnancy rates by age over the course of a woman's childbearing years.

The pregnancy rate for married women declined 12% from 1990 through 1996–97, but has increased slightly since then. In contrast, the pregnancy rate for unmarried women has declined continuously throughout the 1990s. The abortion rate dropped for both married and unmarried women by about 25% during that time. The birth rate for unmarried women is about half the rate for married women, but the abortion rate is more than four times higher.

Among married women, three out of four pregnan-

cies ended in a live birth in 1999 and just 7% in abortion. For unmarried women, about half of pregnancies ended in live birth, while 39% ended in abortion. In 1990, pregnancies among unmarried women were more likely to end in abortion than a live birth.

The report, *Revised pregnancy rates, 1990–97, and new rates for 1998–99: United States*,² uses complete counts of births as reported to the National Center for Health Statistics through the National Vital Statistics System. Estimates of abortions are from abortion surveillance information collected from most States by the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, adjusted to national totals by the Alan Guttmacher Institute. Fetal loss estimates are from the CDC's National Survey of Family Growth. The pregnancy rates in this report are based on population estimates from the 2000 Census. The report is available to view or download from the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>.

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REFERENCES

1. National Center for Health Statistics (US). Health, United States, 2003. Hyattsville (MD): National Center for Health Statistics; 2003 Sep.
2. Ventura S, Abma J, Mosher W. Revised pregnancy rates, 1990–97 and new rates, 1998–99: United States. *Natl Vital Stat Rep* 2003 Oct 31;52:1-16.