NCHS Dataline

The latest annual report on the health of the Nation, Health, United States, 2006, has been published by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition to a comprehensive profile of Americans' health, the special focus of this year's report is on the prevalence of pain. The 2005 preliminary birth report presents current data on key demographic and maternal and infant health indicators, and a series of reports published annually by NCHS provides a wide range of summary statistics on the health of America's children and adults.

HEALTH, UNITED STATES, 2006

Low back pain is among the most common pain complaints, along with migraine or severe headache, and joint pain, aching, or stiffness. The knee is the joint that causes the most pain. Hospitalization rates for knee replacement procedures rose nearly 90% from 1992 to 1993 and from 2003 to 2004 among those aged 65 and older. These findings and others are in the 30th edition of the annual *Health*, *United States* report, which this year has a special focus on the prevalence of pain. The report found that one in four U.S. adults say they suffered a day-long bout of pain in the past month, and one in 10 say the pain lasted a year or more. The special feature on pain focused on the condition itself, not pain as a byproduct of another condition. Pain is associated with rising costs, which are posing a burden on the health care system. The report also noted significant disparities among different population groups in terms of who suffers from pain.

Other statistics on pain include:

- More than one-quarter of adults interviewed said they had experienced low back pain in the past three months.
- Fifteen percent of adults experienced migraine or severe headache in the past three months. Adults aged 18-44 were almost three times as likely as adults 65 and older to report migraines or severe headaches.
- Reports of severe joint pain increased with age, and women reported severely painful joints more often than men (10% vs. 7%).
- Between the periods 1988–94 and 1999–2002, the percentage of adults who took a narcotic drug to alleviate pain in the past month rose from 3.2 to

The report consists of two main sections: a chartbook containing text and figures that illustrate major trends in the health of Americans; and a trend tables section that contains 147 detailed data tables on health status and determinants; health care utilization and resources; expenditures and health insurance; and disparities in risk factors, access, and utilization. The two main components are supplemented by an executive summary, a highlights section, an extensive appendix (with descriptions of the data sources) and reference section, and an index.

Other key findings in the report show:

- The United States spent an average of \$6,280 per person on health care in 2004. Seven percent of adults younger than age 65 said they passed up getting needed care in the past 12 months due to costs.
- Life expectancy at birth reached a record 77.9 years in 2004, up from 77.5 in 2003 and from 75.4 in 1990. Since 1990, the gap in life expectancy between men and women has narrowed from seven to just over five (5.2) years. At birth, life expectancy for females is just over 80 years and nearly 75 years for males. The gap in life expectancy between white and black Americans also has narrowed from seven years in 1990 to five years in 2004.
- Infant mortality fell to 6.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2004, down from 6.9 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003.
- · Heart disease remains the leading killer, but deaths from heart disease fell 16% from 2000 to 2004, and deaths from cancer—the No. 2 killer—dropped 8%. The age-adjusted death rate for heart disease was 217 deaths per 100,000 in 2004; for cancer the rate was 186 per 100,000.
- Diabetes poses a growing threat, especially among older adults. Eleven percent of adults aged 40–59 years and 23% of those aged 60 and older have diabetes.

Health United States, 2006 was prepared by NCHS to be submitted by DHHS Secretary to the President and the Congress of the United States. It is available at www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm. The report's website provides guides to the use of the report and a number of electronic products that allow the user to search and analyze the data.

2005 BIRTH DATA

The teen birth rate in the United States fell to its lowest level ever in 2005, but the number of births to unmarried women of all ages reached a record high and has risen 12% in the past three years, according to the latest birth statistics for the nation.

The report, *Births: Preliminary Data for 2005*, shows that, from 2004 to 2005, the birth rate for teenagers aged 15–19 fell 2%, to 40.4 births per 1,000—a 35% decrease from the peak of 61.8 births per 1,000 in 1991. The decline was especially pronounced for non-Hispanic black teens aged 15–17; the birth rate for this group fell 6% in 2005 compared to 2004 and 59% since 1991. While teen birth rates continued to drop, there was another increase in unmarried childbearing in 2005. The number of births to unmarried mothers of all ages rose 4%, from 1,470,189 in 2004 to 1,524,345 in 2005. The percentage of births to unmarried mothers also increased in 2005, from 35.8% to 36.8%.

Other key findings:

- The total number of U.S. births increased by 1% in 2005, to 4,140,419. The general fertility rate (number of births per 1,000 women aged 15–44) also increased slightly to 66.7.
- Childbearing by women in their early 20s increased slightly in 2005, and also continued to increase among women in their 30s and 40s. Birth rates for women aged 20–24 and 30–34 rose less than 1% from 2004 to 2005, while rates for women aged 35–44 years rose by 2%.
- The preliminary cesarean delivery rate rose 4% in 2005 to 30.2% of all births, a record high for the nation. The cesarean rate has risen 46% since 1996
- The preterm birth rate (percentage of infants delivered at less than 37 completed weeks of gestation) rose from 12.5% to 12.7% from 2004 to 2005. This rate has increased 20% since 1990.
- The percentage of babies born at low birth weight also increased in 2005 to 8.2% of all births (up from 8.1% in 2004). The percentage of low birthweight babies has increased more than 20% since the mid 1980's.

Births: Preliminary Data for 2005 is available at www.cdc.gov/nchs.

SUMMARY REPORTS PRESENT CURRENT HEALTH STATISTICS

An annual set of reports based on data from the National Health Interview Survey presents summary statistics separately on the health of the general population, adults, and children. In general, the three reports cover health status, incidence and prevalence of selected health conditions, and use of health services. The 2005 provisional edition of the summary reports have been published and are available on the NCHS website at www.cdc.gov/nchs. Data in these provisional summary reports are based on in-person household interviews with a sample of the nation's civilian non-institutionalized population.

The children's report has the latest data on asthma prevalence—some nine million U.S. children younger than 18 year of age have ever been diagnosed with asthma.3 Allergies affect 12 million children who have suffered from allergy attacks in the past 12 months. Almost five million children aged 3-17 have a learning disability. Over one-quarter of school-aged children missed no school in the past 12 months due to illness or injury. In the adult report, the prevalence of chronic conditions and pain, hearing and vision trouble, and loss of natural teeth are covered.4 Overall, 12% of adults 18 years of age and older had ever been told by a health professional that they had ever had coronary heart disease, 7% had been told that they had some form of cancer, and 21% that they had some form of arthritis. The report on the U.S. population presents data on disability and injuries for all ages.⁵ In 2005, there were 33.2 million medically consulted injury and poisoning episodes among the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Almost half of all injuries occurred in or around the home. Falls were the most common source of injury. This report also analyzes the health insurance coverage experienced by the population in 2005.

NCHS Dataline was prepared by Sandra S. Smith, MPH, for the National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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