

PROPERTY OF THE
PUBLICATIONS BRANCH
EDITORIAL LIBRARY

Wanted and Unwanted Childbearing: United States, 1973–82

by William F. Pratt, Ph.D. and Marjorie C. Horn, M.A., Division of Vital Statistics

A substantial decline in births that were unwanted at conception occurred between 1973 and 1982, according to results from the National Survey of Family Growth, conducted in both years by the National Center for Health Statistics. In 1982, fewer than 10 percent of all births to ever married women in the childbearing years had been unwanted at conception compared with 14 percent in 1973. Although black women in 1982 continued to report larger proportions of unwanted births (22 percent) than white women (8 percent), they experienced a greater percentage-point decline in unwanted births over the decade. Of the 4.3 million children in 1982 who had been born to never married women, 25 percent had been unwanted at conception; among the 75 percent that had been wanted, more than half had been wanted at a later time. Only 21 percent had been deliberately conceived by stopping, or not using, contraception for that purpose.

The statistics on wantedness and the timing status of births presented in this report for 1982 are preliminary results from Cycle III of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). Data were collected from a multistage area probability sample of 7,969 women aged 15–44 years, regardless of marital status, in the noninstitutionalized population of the conterminous United States. Between August 1982 and February 1983, interviews were conducted with 3,201 black women and 4,768 women of other races. Comparative data for 1973 are from Cycle I of the NSFG which also was based on a multistage area probability sample of women 15–44 years of age, but which excluded most never married women.¹ Because the estimates of statistics in this report are based on samples, they are subject to sampling variability. Sampling variability, the design of the survey, and definitions of terms used in this report are discussed in the Technical notes.

The Concept of “Wantedness”

The terms “wanted” and “unwanted births” as used in this report are abbreviations for “wanted and unwanted pregnancies ending in live births”; whether a birth was wanted or unwanted refers to the mother’s attitude at the time of conception. It is important to emphasize that an “unwanted birth” is not necessarily an “unwanted child”; many children whose conceptions were not wanted nonetheless become cherished members of their families.

The wantedness of each birth was determined from a series of questions that asked whether the woman had wanted the pregnancy at the time conception occurred. If contraception had not been used or had been stopped prior to the pregnancy, the woman was asked: “Was the reason you (had stopped/were not) using any method because you yourself wanted to become pregnant?” Women who had avoided or discontinued use of contraception for some other reason or had become pregnant while using contraception were asked: “At the time you became pregnant . . . , did you, yourself, actually want to have a(nother) baby at *some* time?” Women who answered neither “yes” nor “no” also were asked: “. . . , as you look back to just before that pregnancy began, would you say you probably wanted a(nother) baby at *some* time or probably not?”

The pregnancy was classified as wanted at conception if the woman had stopped or was not using contraception because she wanted to become pregnant, or if she had wanted or probably had wanted a(nother) child at some time. The pregnancy was classified as unwanted if she had not wanted, or probably had not wanted a(nother) child. If the respondent did not know whether she had wanted a(nother) baby, or did not care, the wantedness of the pregnancy was classified as undetermined.

However, the percents of pregnancies ending in live births classified as "undetermined" were very small (0.3 and 0.2 percent in 1982 and 1973, respectively); percents of births that were wanted and unwanted at conception, therefore, are virtually complementary, increasing and decreasing by the same magnitude.

Statistics on the proportions of births that were mistimed also are presented in this report. Women whose pregnancies were classified as wanted were asked, "Did you become pregnant sooner than you wanted, later than you wanted, or at about the right time?" Births resulting from pregnancies that occurred sooner than wanted by the mother were classified as mistimed. Births that occurred later than wanted are not included with the mistimed births here because their delay was not subject to choice or planning control.

Trend in the "Wantedness" of Births: Ever Married Women

As shown in table 1, between 1973 and 1982 the proportion of all births to ever married women that resulted from unwanted pregnancies declined significantly (from 14 to 10 percent) and, of course, the proportion of births that were wanted rose correspondingly (from 86 to 90 percent). Over this period the data suggest that the proportion of births that occurred sooner than they were wanted (that is, mistimed births) increased slightly.

In 1982, the proportion of all births that were unwanted at conception increased steadily with age among ever married women from 5 percent for 15–19 year olds to 13 percent for women aged 40–44. A similar increase in unwanted births with increasing age was found in 1973. Not all of the increases between adjacent age groups were statistically significant, but the general pattern seems clear.

The changes observed among all ever married women, between 1973 and 1982, largely were due to significant increases in the proportions of wanted births and declines in unwanted births among women in the ages 25 to 39 years. Among women

20–24 and 40–44 years of age, similar but not statistically significant increases were observed in the proportions of wanted births. Minor changes observed over this period in the proportion of births that were wanted but mistimed were not statistically significant for any of the age groups between 20 and 44 years. However, in both years, mistimed births accounted for about two in every five births to women 20–24 years of age.

Ever married teenage women in 1982 had the highest proportion of wanted births (95 percent) and the lowest proportion of unwanted births (5 percent) of any age group shown in table 1; these proportions had not changed since 1973. However, the proportion of mistimed births to these teenaged women rose sharply from an already high 55 percent in 1973 to 75 percent in 1982. It is quite likely that this high and rising prevalence of mistimed births among ever married teenagers reflects the greater exposure to premarital intercourse at these ages and the large number of pregnancies precipitating an early marriage.²

Couples continue to have far less success with contraception in planning when their children will be born than in planning how many they will have. In 1982, mistimed births (28 percent) were almost three times more frequent than unwanted births (10 percent) but only two times more frequent in 1973. The apparent small rise in mistimed births for all ever married women and their more significant increase among younger women may be due in large measure to the trend toward greater use of barrier methods of contraception, which are generally less effective than the pill or IUD.^{3,4}

The proportion of unwanted births was twice as high among formerly married women compared with currently married women in both 1973 and 1982, but declined significantly in both groups over the decade (table 2). The proportion of births that were mistimed was practically unchanged among currently married women between 1973 and 1982, but it increased sharply among formerly married women. Among formerly married women in 1982, at least one-third of their births had been wanted but mistimed.

The notably higher proportions of unwanted and mistimed births to formerly married women suggest the possibility that

Table 1. Number of children ever born to ever married women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by whether the birth was wanted, wanted but mistimed, or unwanted at conception, according to age of the mother: United States, 1973 and 1982

[Statistics are based on samples of the female population of the conterminous United States; see Technical notes for estimates of sampling variability and definitions of terms; data for 1982 are preliminary]

Age	Children ever born		Wanted at conception				Unwanted at conception	
	1982	1973	Total		Mistimed		1982	1973
			1982	1973	1982	1973		
	Number in thousands		Percent distribution ¹					
All ages	65,878	66,239	90.1	85.8	28.2	25.7	9.6	14.0
15–19 years	445	548	95.3	94.9	74.8	54.7	*4.7	*5.1
20–24 years	4,398	5,215	93.5	91.5	44.0	40.3	*6.5	8.7
25–29 years	11,304	11,102	93.1	89.5	28.0	28.3	6.3	10.1
30–34 years	15,346	15,160	91.7	86.6	26.8	27.3	8.2	13.2
35–39 years	16,983	16,307	89.3	83.0	26.4	23.7	10.4	16.8
40–44 years	17,401	17,907	86.7	83.4	26.0	19.4	13.0	16.4

¹ Percents of live births wanted and unwanted at conception may not add to 100 due to the exclusion of births for which the wantedness of the pregnancy was classified as "undetermined."

Table 2. Number of children ever born to ever married women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by whether the birth was wanted, wanted but mistimed, or unwanted at conception, according to race and marital status of the mother: United States, 1973 and 1982

Statistics are based on samples of the female population of the conterminous United States; see Technical notes for estimates of sampling variability and definitions of terms; data for 1982 are preliminary]

(terms, data for 1992 are preliminary)

Race and marital status	Children ever born		Wanted at conception				Unwanted at conception	
			Total		Mistimed			
	1982	1973	1982	1973	1982	1973	1982	1973
	Number in thousands		Percent distribution					
All races ¹	65,878	66,239	90.1	85.8	28.2	25.7	9.6	14.0
Currently married	52,873	57,158	92.0	87.6	26.6	25.6	7.8	12.3
Formerly married.	13,005	9,081	82.6	74.5	34.7	26.5	16.8	25.2
White.	55,497	57,012	92.1	88.4	27.7	25.5	7.7	11.4
Currently married	46,546	51,179	93.0	89.2	26.0	25.4	6.8	10.6
Formerly married.	8,952	5,834	87.4	81.3	36.7	26.3	12.2	18.5
Black	8,467	8,634	77.5	68.0	32.2	27.4	21.8	31.5
Currently married	4,769	5,448	82.6	71.3	33.1	27.6	17.2	28.3
Formerly married.	3,698	3,186	70.9	62.3	31.1	27.2	27.8	37.1

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

unplanned childbearing is a factor in the instability of some marriages. Formerly married women as a group appear to be slightly older and to have borne more children on average than currently married women, and both age and parity are associated with increases in unwanted births. Nevertheless, at each parity shown in table 3, the data suggest that the proportion of births classified as unwanted by formerly married women was greater compared with currently married women.

The differences observed in the proportions of wanted and unwanted births between white and black women are even greater than the differences by marital status (table 2). In 1973, ever married black women reported 32 percent of births had

been unwanted at conception compared with 11 percent reported by white women. By 1982, the proportions of unwanted births had declined 10 percentage points among black women and 3 percentage points among white women, to 22 percent and 8 percent, respectively. In both race groups, formerly married women had notably higher proportions of unwanted births than currently married women in 1973 and 1982, despite the substantial reductions in unwanted births across the board.

The proportions of mistimed births increased for both black and white women between 1973 and 1982; in both years black women experienced a higher proportion mistimed compared with white women, although the difference was significant only

Table 3. Number of children ever born to ever married women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by whether the birth was wanted, wanted but mistimed, or unwanted at conception, according to race and parity of the mother: United States, 1973 and 1982

[Statistics are based on samples of the female population of the conterminous United States; see Technical notes for estimates of sampling variability and definitions of terms; data for 1982 are preliminary]

or terms; data for 1982 are preliminary]

Race and parity	Children ever born		Wanted at conception				Unwanted at conception	
			Total		Mistimed			
	1982	1973	1982	1973	1982	1973	1982	1973
All races ¹	Number in thousands		Percent distribution					
All parities.....	65,878	66,239	90.1	85.8	28.2	25.7	9.6	14.0
1-2.....	29,549	21,571	96.3	95.3	27.9	27.7	3.6	4.6
3-4.....	27,734	26,924	88.1	85.7	28.5	25.0	11.7	14.1
5 or more.....	8,594	17,744	75.6	74.2	28.2	24.4	23.3	25.5
White								
All parities.....	55,497	57,012	92.1	88.4	27.7	25.5	7.7	11.4
1-2.....	26,031	19,379	97.2	96.5	27.6	26.7	2.7	3.4
3-4.....	23,486	24,094	89.6	87.2	28.0	24.7	10.3	12.6
5 or more.....	5,980	13,539	79.6	79.0	27.3	24.9	19.5	20.8
Black								
All parities.....	8,467	8,634	77.5	68.0	32.2	27.4	21.8	31.5
1-2.....	2,655	1,955	87.4	83.0	32.1	37.4	12.4	16.2
3-4.....	3,290	2,596	78.7	72.2	33.5	27.8	20.9	27.4
5 or more.....	2,522	4,083	65.6	58.0	30.6	22.4	33.0	41.5

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

at the .10 level in 1982. However, among black women, the increases in the proportion of mistimed births for currently married and formerly married women were not significant, while formerly married white women experienced a steep increase (10 percentage points) in mistimed births over the decade.

The proportion of unwanted births increased with the number of births a woman had had (that is, with her parity), as may be seen in table 3. For instance, in 1982, among ever married white women with only 1–2 births, less than 1 in 30 births had been unwanted at conception, while those with 5 or more births reported 1 in 5 had been unwanted. Similarly, among black women at parity 5 or more, 1 in 3 births had been unwanted at conception.

Although there appeared to be a reduction in the proportion of unwanted births in each parity category for both white and black women between 1973 and 1982, few of these declines were statistically significant; there is, however, some evidence of a reduction among black women with 3 or more births. None of these declines within the parity groups was as great as the overall decline for the respective race groups. For instance, between 1973 and 1982, the overall proportion of unwanted births to white women declined by nearly 4 percentage points, but the largest decline among the parity groups was about 2 percentage points among those with 3–4 births; similarly for black women, an overall decline of close to 10 percentage points exceeded the largest parity group decline of nearly 9 percentage points among those with 5 or more births.

The overall decline in the proportion of unwanted births between 1973 and 1982 was greater than the declines in the separate parity groups because, not only were women interviewed in 1982 more successful in avoiding unwanted births, but the number of births they wanted also was smaller. Over this decade, women were postponing marriage for longer periods of time, and delaying childbearing within marriage.^{5–7} As a result, we observe that in 1982 a larger proportion of births occurred to women who were parity 1–2 (45 percent) and a smaller proportion to women who were parity 5 or more (13 percent), compared with 33 and 27 percent, respectively, in 1973. Another way to see the effect of the declining number of wanted births is to note that if the declining proportions of unwanted births within the parity groups were the only change, then the overall proportion of unwanted births in 1982 would have been 12 rather than 10 percent. It is important not to confuse the increase in the proportion of births that were wanted at conception with wanting a larger number of children.

“Wantedness” of Births: Never Married Women

Never married women were interviewed in the NSFG for the first time in 1982 (table 4). Although it is no surprise that births to never married women were wanted at conception (75 percent) less frequently than those born to ever married women (90 percent), the proportion of wanted births to never married women nonetheless was high. It is important to recall that a wanted birth is one that, at the time of conception, was wanted by the mother “at some time” but not necessarily at that particular time. In fact, more than half the wanted births to never married women (42 percent of the total births) were mistimed,

Table 4. Number of children ever born to never married women 15–44 years of age and percent distribution by whether the birth was wanted, wanted but mistimed, or unwanted at conception, according to age and race of the mother: United States, 1982

[Preliminary statistics based on samples of the female population of the conterminous United States; see Technical notes for estimates of sampling variability and definitions of terms]

Age and race	Children ever born	Wanted at conception		Unwanted at conception
		Total	Mistimed	

All races ¹	Number in thousands	Percent distribution		
15-44 years	4,341	75.1	42.3	24.8
15-19 years	474	75.6	54.9	24.4
20-24 years	1,273	80.5	48.1	19.5
25-44 years	2,593	72.3	37.1	27.6
White				
15-44 years	1,670	81.6	42.4	18.4
15-19 years	220	85.2	61.6	*14.8
20-24 years	473	89.9	53.5	*10.1
25-44 years	977	76.7	32.7	23.3
Black				
15-44 years	2,569	70.1	41.4	29.8
15-19 years	245	68.2	49.2	31.8
20-24 years	727	72.5	42.9	27.5
25-44 years	1,597	69.3	39.4	30.5

¹Includes white, black, and other races.

contrasted with less than one-third (28 percent of the total births) among ever married women. Moreover, data not shown in table 4 reveal that, among the group of wanted births that were not mistimed, only about two-thirds of mothers had not used, or had stopped using, contraception because they wanted to become pregnant then. In sum, although 75 percent of births to never married women were wanted “at some time,” the proportion that had been deliberately conceived or planned was on the order of 21 percent.

Differences in wantedness status by race and age found among ever married women are similar to those for never married women. In 1982, the proportion of births classified as unwanted to all never married black women was higher than that of never married white women aged 15–44 (30 compared with 18 percent). Within each age group, the proportions unwanted also tended to be higher for black women than white women, although the differences at age(s) 25–44 were not statistically significant.

The proportions of births that were wanted but mistimed are nearly the same for black never married women (41 percent) as for white never married women (42 percent). At ages 15–24, it appears that white women classified a larger percent of all births as mistimed compared with black women, but the difference is not statistically significant. For black women, the proportions of mistimed births among the never married were substantially higher than among either their currently or formerly married counterparts (table 2). For white women a similar pattern was found, but the difference in the proportions mistimed between never and formerly married women was not significant.

References

National Center for Health Statistics, D. French: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle I: Sample design, estimation procedures, and variance estimation. *Vital and Health Statistics*. Series 2, No. 76. DHEW Pub. No. (PHS) 78-1350. Public Health Service. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, Jan. 1978.

²W. F. Pratt, W. D. Mosher, C. A. Bachrach, and M. C. Horn: Understanding U.S. Fertility. *Population Bulletin*. Vol. 39, No. 5. Washington. Population Reference Bureau, Dec. 1984.

³C. A. Bachrach: Contraceptive Practice, 1982. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Population Association of America. Minneapolis, May 1984.

⁴National Center for Health Statistics, C. A. Bachrach and W. D. Mosher: Use of contraception in the United States, 1982. *Advance*

Data From Vital and Health Statistics. No. 103. DHHS Pub. No. (PHS) 85-1250. Public Health Service. Hyattsville, Md., Dec. 1984.

⁵U.S. Bureau of the Census: Marital status and living arrangements, March 1982. *Current Population Reports*. Series P-20, No. 380. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983.

⁶National Center for Health Statistics, S. J. Ventura: Trends in first births to older mothers, 1970-79. *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*. Vol. 31, No. 2 Supp. 2. DHHS Pub. No. (PHS) 82-1120. Public Health Service. Hyattsville, Md., May 1982.

⁷National Center for Health Statistics: Advance report of final natality statistics, 1982. *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*. Vol. 33, No. 6. Supp. DHHS Pub. No. (PHS) 84-1120. Public Health Service. Hyattsville, Md., Sept. 1984.

Symbols

- Data not available
 - ... Category not applicable
 - Quantity zero
 - 0.0 Quantity more than zero but less than 0.05
 - Z Quantity more than zero but less than 500 where numbers are rounded to thousands
 - * Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision (30 percent or greater relative standard error)
 - # Figure suppressed to comply with confidentiality requirements
-

Technical Notes

Survey design

The National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) is conducted periodically by the National Center for Health Statistics to collect data on fertility, family planning, and related aspects of maternal and child health. Field work for Cycle I was conducted under contract in 1973 by the National Opinion Research Center. Field work for Cycle III was conducted by Westat, Inc., in 1982.

In all cycles, personal interviews were conducted with a multistage area probability sample of women 15–44 years of age in the noninstitutionalized population of the conterminous United States. In Cycle I, ever married women and never married women with offspring living in the household were eligible for the survey. In Cycle III, all women aged 15–44 were eligible regardless of marital status or the presence of offspring. Women living in group quarters (such as college dormitories) were excluded from the samples in Cycle I, but included in Cycle III. Interviews were conducted with 9,797 women in Cycle I and 7,969 in Cycle III. The sample design of Cycle I is described in more detail in another report of the National Center for Health Statistics.¹

Field work for Cycle III was conducted between August 1982 and February 1983. Black women and women aged 15–19 were oversampled. Interviews were conducted by trained female interviewers and lasted an average of 1 hour. The interview focused on a woman's pregnancy history; use of contraceptives in each pregnancy interval; ability to bear children; future childbearing expectations; use of family planning and infertility services; marital history; labor force participation; and a wide range of social, economic, and demographic characteristics.

Reliability of estimates

Because the statistics presented in this report are based on a sample, they may differ from the statistics that would result if all 54 million women represented by the NSFG had been interviewed. The standard error of an estimate (SE) is a measure of such differences. The standard error of an estimated number or percent presented in this report may be calculated by using the appropriate values of *A* and *B* from table I in the equations

Table I. Parameters used to compute estimated standard errors and relative standard errors of numbers and percents of pregnancies by race, marital status, and age of women: National Survey of Family Growth

Race, marital status, and age	Parameter	
	A	B
1982		
All pregnancies:		
All races and white	−0.0000013533	25,567.4424
Black	0.0001091980	7,143.2252
Pregnancies to ever married women:		
All races and white	0.0031203910	43,592.7254
Black	−0.0001123101	15,678.7103
Pregnancies to never married women and to teenagers aged 15–19 years:		
All races:		
Never married	0.0138872800	8,660.9620
Teenagers	0.0059512240	7,802.2084
White:		
Never married	0.0709659500	13,265.3231
Teenagers	0.0102484400	9,664.9170
Black:		
Never married; teenagers	0.0045465070	3,430.7602
1973		
All races and white	0.0000176130	4,493.7916
Black	0.0000402190	1,600.4393

The chances are about 68 in 100 that a sample estimate will differ by no more than one standard error, and about 95 in 100 that it will differ by no more than two standard errors, from a corresponding statistic based on a complete count of the population represented by the NSFG. Differences among percents discussed in this report were tested for statistical significance at the 95-percent confidence level, using a two-tailed *t*-test with 39 degrees of freedom. This means that if there were no difference among the corresponding percents in the population as a whole, then a difference as large as the one observed in the sample would occur in fewer than 5 percent of repeated samples of the same size and design as the NSFG. When the observed

Recent Issues of *Advance Data From Vital and Health Statistics*

No. 107. Marriage and First Intercourse, Marriage Dissolution, and Remarriage: United States, 1982 (Issued Apr. 12, 1985)

No. 106. Use of Topical Antimicrobial Drugs in Office-Based Practice: United States, 1980–81 (Issued Apr. 10, 1985)

No. 105. Diagnosis-Related Groups Using Data From the National Hospital Discharge Survey: United States, 1982 (Issued Jan. 18, 1985)

No. 104. Fecundity and Infertility in the United States, 1965–82 (Issued Feb. 11, 1985)

No. 103. Use of Services for Family Planning and Infertility: United States, 1982 (Issued Dec. 20, 1984)

Table II. Approximate standard errors for estimated percents (expressed in percentage points) of pregnancies to women of all races: National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle III

Base of percent	Estimated percent						
	2 or 98	5 or 95	10 or 90	20 or 80	30 or 70	40 or 60	50
100,000	7.1	11.0	15.2	20.2	23.2	24.8	25.3
500,000	3.2	4.9	6.8	9.0	10.4	11.1	11.3
1,000,000	2.2	3.5	4.8	6.4	7.3	7.8	8.0
5,000,000	1.0	1.6	2.1	2.9	3.3	3.5	3.6
10,000,000	0.7	1.1	1.5	2.0	2.3	2.5	2.5
30,000,000	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
50,000,000	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1

Statistics in this report also may be subject to nonsampling error, that is, errors or omissions in responding to the interview, recording answers, and processing data. The data have been adjusted for nonsampling error due to nonresponse by means of adjustments to the sample weights assigned to each case. Other types of nonsampling error were minimized by a series of stringent quality control measures similar to those used in Cycle I.¹

Definitions of terms

Wantedness—Pregnancies were classified as “wanted” or “unwanted,” and wanted pregnancies that occurred earlier than they were desired were subclassified as “mistimed.” A pregnancy was classified as wanted at conception if the woman had stopped, or had not used, contraception because she wanted a pregnancy, or if she had become pregnant while using contraception but nonetheless had wanted, or probably wanted, a(nother) baby at some time. Similarly, a pregnancy was classified as unwanted at conception if the woman had stopped, or had not used, contraception for reasons other than seeking pregnancy or had become pregnant while using contraception and had not wanted, or probably had not wanted, a(nother) baby at some time. In this report, a wanted pregnancy was considered mistimed if the woman had wanted the pregnancy to occur at a later date. Pregnancies that occurred sometime later than had been desired, also might be considered mistimed for some purposes, but these did not represent failures in family planning that is subject to contraceptive control, and therefore are classified with other births that were wanted at conception.

NOTE: A list of references follows the text.

Pregnancies that ended in live births, on which this report is focused, were classified as wanted or unwanted births. However, pregnancies that ended in multiple births are counted only once because only the pregnancy is subject to contraceptive control.

Parity—Parity refers to the number of live births the respondent had had.

Age—Age is classified by the age of the respondent at her last birthday before the date of interview.

Race—Race refers to the race of the woman interviewed and is reported as black, white, or other. In Cycle III, race was classified according to the woman’s report of the race that best described her. In Cycle I, race was classified by the observation of the interviewer. Cycle III data indicated that results using either method of classification were found to be very similar.

Marital status—Persons were classified by marital status as married, widowed, divorced, separated, or never married. In Cycle I, informally married women—women who volunteered that they were sharing living quarters with their sexual partner—were classified as currently married. These women constituted about 2 percent of currently married respondents in Cycle I. In Cycle III, such women were classified according to their legal marital status. Thus, statistics on currently married women for 1982 shown in this report are not strictly comparable to those for 1973. Reclassifying women in the 1973 survey according to the 1982 definition of marital status, however, makes little difference in the distributions of currently married women by other characteristics for that year.

In all cycles, women who were married but separated from their spouse were classified as separated if the reason for the separation was marital discord, otherwise they were classified as currently married.

Recent Issues of *Advance Data From Vital and Health Statistics*

No. 107. Marriage and First Intercourse, Marriage Dissolution, and Remarriage: United States, 1982 (Issued Apr. 12, 1985)

No. 106. Use of Topical Antimicrobial Drugs in Office-Based Practice: United States, 1980-81 (Issued Apr. 10, 1985)

No. 105. Diagnosis-Related Groups Using Data From the National Hospital Discharge Survey: United States, 1982 (Issued Jan. 18, 1985)

No. 104. Fecundity and Infertility in the United States, 1965-82 (Issued Feb. 11, 1985)

No. 103. Use of Services for Family Planning and Infertility: United States, 1982 (Issued Dec. 20, 1984)

Suggested Citation

National Center for Health Statistics, W. F. Pratt and M. C. Horn: Wanted and Unwanted Childbearing, United States, 1973-82. *Advance Data From Vital and Health Statistics*. No. 108. DHHS Pub. No. (PHS) 85-1250. Public Health Service. Hyattsville, Md., May 1985.

Copyright Information

This report may be reprinted without further permission.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
National Center for Health Statistics
3700 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

THIRD CLASS MAIL
BULK RATE
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
PHS/NCHS
PERMIT No. G-281

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

To receive this publication regularly, contact
the National Center for Health Statistics by
calling 301 436-8500
