

Abortion: Statistics for the United States

How many abortions are performed annually?

According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a pro-choice research organization affiliated with Planned Parenthood, in 2002 there were approximately 1.29 million abortions performed in the U.S. This translates to over 3500 abortions performed daily and over 40 million occurring in America since *Roe v Wade* legalized abortion in 1973.

In which states are the most abortions performed?

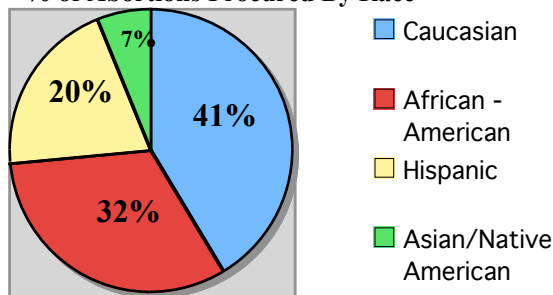
As of 2000, California and New York both performed the most abortions (400,690 total) and have the highest percentage of women obtaining them. Source:

www.guttmacher.org/pubs/sfaa/pdf/california.pdf -
www.guttmacher.org/pubs/sfaa/pdf/new_york.pdf -

What types of women have abortions?

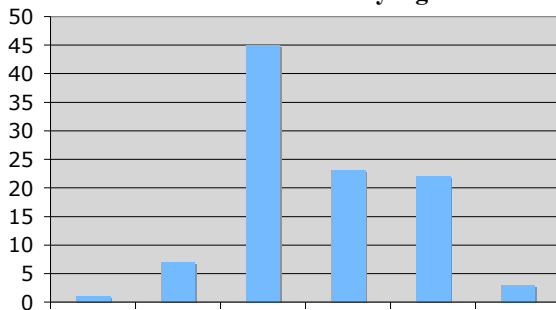
Women who procure abortions come from a variety of age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and religions. The following graphs illustrate this wide variety:

% of Abortions Procured By Race



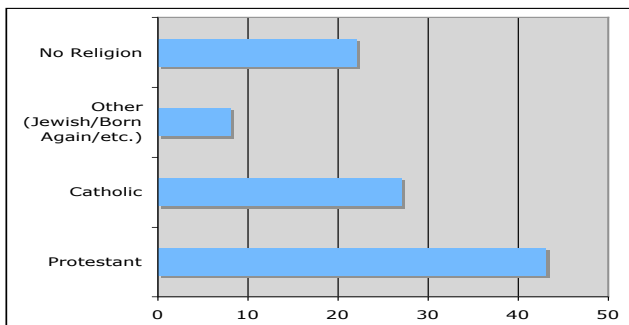
While Caucasians represent 68% of the total population, they only have 41% of abortions. Contrast this with African-Americans who represent only 14% of the total population, but obtain 32% of abortions.

% of Abortions Procured By Age



Almost half (45%) of all abortions are obtained by college-age women. This statistic sheds light on the fact that 83% of abortions are sought by unmarried women and that women living below the poverty level (i.e. college students) are four times as likely to seek an abortion than affluent women.

% of Abortions Procured By Religion



In conclusion, white unmarried Christian college-age women are the most likely demographic to have an abortion in the United States. In addition, 48% of women who have abortions have had a previous abortion.

Source: Jones RK, Darroch JE and Henshaw SK, *Patterns in the socioeconomic characteristics of women obtaining abortions in 2000-2001, Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2002, 34(5):226-235.

What reasons do women give for having abortions?

In a survey conducted by Torres and Forrest in *Family Planning Perspectives* (“Why do women have abortions,” July/August 1988), which was reaffirmed by the Alan Guttmacher Institute in 2006, these are the primary reasons women have abortions:

Facts

Abortion is legal all nine months of pregnancy. (*Roe v Wade 1973*)

During the 2nd and 3rd trimesters abortion can be banned but there must be an exception for a woman’s life or health.

“Health” is defined as any physical, emotional, psychological, familial, or marital factor that affects a woman. (*Doe v Bolton 1973*)

This effectively creates abortion on demand through all nine months of pregnancy.

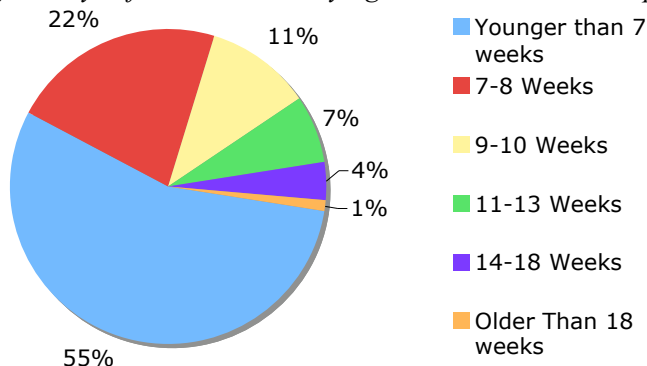
Reasons Women Give For Having Abortions

I am unready for responsibility	21.00%
I can't afford a baby now	21.00%
I am concerned about how having a baby could change my life	16.00%
I don't want to be a single mother or I am having relationship problems	12.00%
I don't feel mature enough to raise another child or I feel too young	11.00%
I do not want to have any more children	8.00%
My husband or partner wants me to have an abortion	1.00%
My parents want me to have an abortion	0.50%
I don't want people to know I had sex or got pregnant	1.00%
Other	3.00%
There is a physical problem with my health	3.00%
There is a possible problem affecting the health of my fetus	3.00%
I was a victim of rape or incest	1.00%

When are abortions performed?

88% of abortions are performed during the first trimester of pregnancy. While only less than one percent occur during the third trimester of pregnancy, this still amounts to thousands of abortions occurring at a stage when an unborn child can survive outside of the womb. The following graph displays what percentage of abortions are procured by age of the embryo/fetus dated in weeks after conception:

% of embryos/fetuses aborted by age in weeks since conception



Source: http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.pdf

Even late term abortions during the second trimester are usually performed for social reasons instead of reasons related to a woman’s health. Abortionist Martin Haskell admits in an interview about performing late term abortions that:

“... in that 20-24 week range . . . probably 20% are for genetic reasons. And the other 80% are purely elective [not health related].”

(*American Medical News*, July 11, 1995)

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