

Board of Scientific Counselors NCHS Update

January 27, 2005

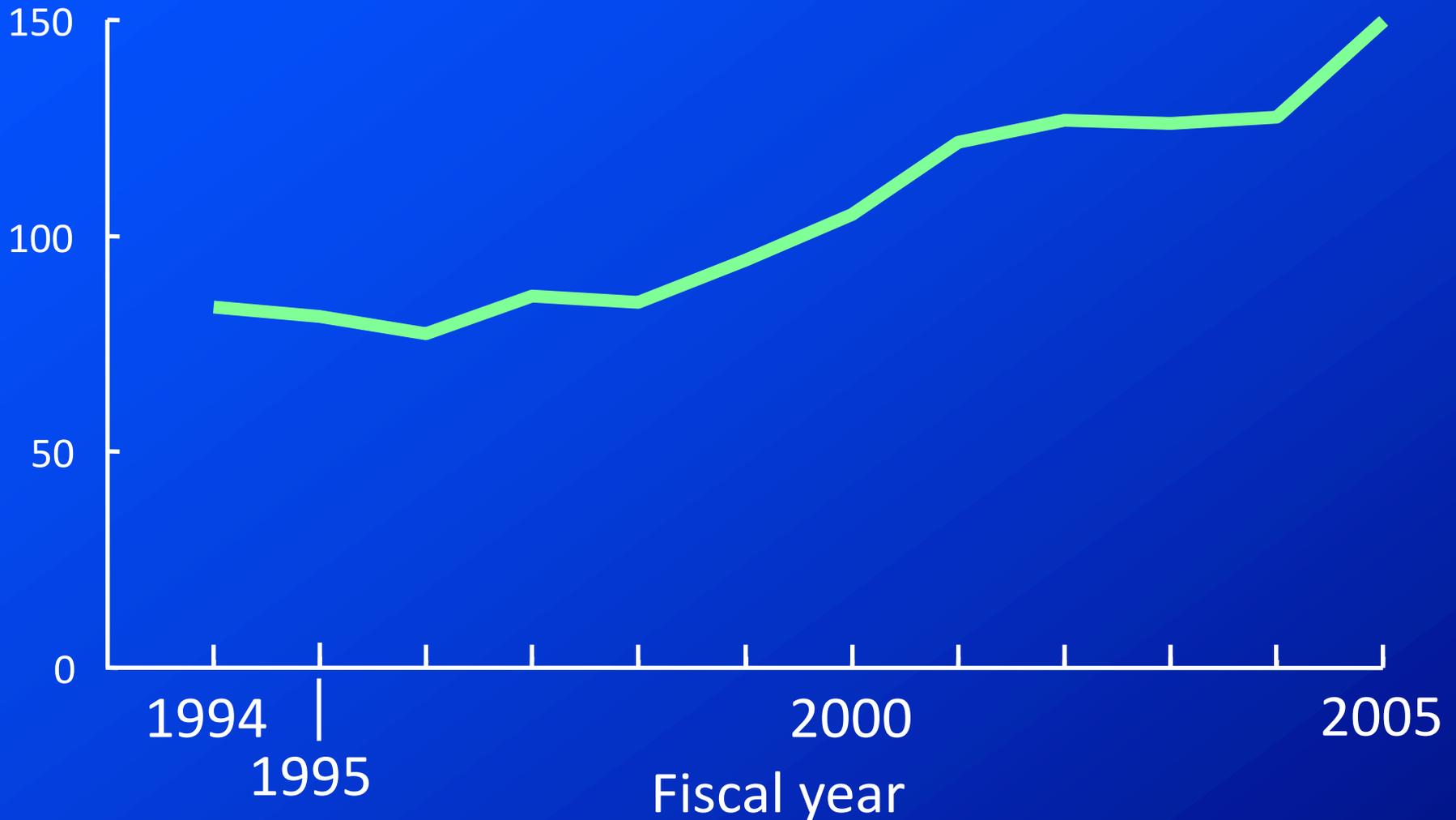


NCHS Update

- Administrative news
 - Budget
 - Retirements/Recruiting
- CDC activities
- HHS focus
- Program updates
 - Data systems
 - Data releases

National Center for Health Statistics Funding by Fiscal Year

Appropriations (\$ millions)



Budget Status 2005

- Unprecedented increase of \$22 million

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- However,
 - \$40 million of NCHS budget moved to CDC for business services and consolidated functions
 - CoCHIS budget role uncertain

Budget increase targeted to:

- **VSCP** - Fund contracts and re-engineer
- **NHANES** - Maintain full field operations
- **NHCS** - Transform surveys and stabilize data collection cycle
- **NHIS** – Restore sample size and redesign sample

Key NCHS Staff Changes

Retiring

- Jack Anderson, Deputy Director
- and many other valued and experienced staff members

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Recruiting

- Associate Director for Analysis and Epidemiology

CDC Update

- CDC Futures Initiative in full implementation stage
 - Task forces developing organizational structure for new Centers
 - Recruiting for 9 CIO Directors (including marketing and informatics) and 4 Coordinating Centers
 - Business improvement – consolidation and outsourcing continue
- Blake Caldwell and Ed Sondik - serving as acting co-directors of CoCHIS

HHS Focus

- Medicare drug prescription benefits
- Medicaid overhaul
- Secretary Tommy Thompson announces his resignation
- EPA's Michael Leavitt named to head HHS

Michael Leavitt at hearings -- confirmed yesterday



Data Systems Developments

DVS – 2002 infant mortality increase explained

NSFG

- 2002 survey data released
- Sample now includes men

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NHANES

- NYC city survey completed
- New components added to survey
 - Digital images of the retina to measure retinal diseases, such as macular degeneration
 - Allergies -- collecting dust to determine household exposures

More Data Systems Developments

NHIS

- 2003 public use file released, less than a year after data collection
- 2004 was first data year with new instrument public use file expected this summer
- Early Release estimates for January-June 2004 on the web by December

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NHCS

- NNHS data collection completed; Nursing Assistant Survey to be completed this month
- Ambulatory care surveys focus on chronic disease in 2005, with many new survey items
- New methodology developed to convert encounter data to people-based estimates

In the news

October – December

- Average height stable; weight up
- Births to 10-14 year olds decline
- Cesareans and births to older women rise
- Fewer teens sexually active
- Contraceptive patterns revealed
- Married and healthier, NCHS data show
- Prescription drug use up

Data Find a Taller, Fatter America Since 1960

By ROB STEIN
Washington Post Staff Writer

Americans have gotten a little taller but a lot heavier in the past 40 years, federal researchers reported yesterday.

A new analysis of data collected by ongoing long-term national surveys found the average adult was about an inch taller in 2002 than in 1960 and weighed nearly 25 pounds more.

The findings reinforce the well-documented increase in the number

of Americans who are overweight by estimating for the first time the average number of pounds that have been gained.

"This is the first time we've put average weight and heights together in one place in this way," said Cynthia L. Ogden, an epidemiologist at the National Center for Health Statistics, which produced the report.

The average height of men ages 20 to 74 increased from just over 5-foot-8 in 1960 to 5-foot-9½ in 2002, while the average height of women in that age range rose from just over

Bodies growing upward, outward

REUTERS NEWS AGENCY

Americans are getting taller on average but they are much heavier too, according to government figures released yesterday showing that the U.S. population is, literally, growing.

The findings hold for women, men and children, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) reports.

On average, adult men and women are about an inch taller than they were in 1960 and 25 pounds heavier.

The average body mass index (BMI), a weight-for-height formula used to measure obesity, has tipped

the biggest average weight gain—29 pounds—occurred among those ages 20 to 29. Women ages 40 to 49 gained about 25.5 pounds, while those 60 to 74 gained about 17.5 pounds.

The trend affected children as well. A 10-year-old boy weighed 77.4 pounds on average in 1963 but 88 pounds in 2002. The average 10-year-old girl in 1963 weighed 77.4 pounds, but nearly 88 pounds in 2002.

Their height also increased, with the average 10-year-old boy being

As Teen Births Drop, Experts Are Asking Why

By BETSY MCKAY
And ANN CARRNS

IT LOOKED LIKE an uphill battle when the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy set a goal in 1996 of cutting the teen-pregnancy rate by one-third by 2005. Teens accounted for about one million pregnancies a year, most of them unplanned. And taxpayers were paying as much as \$20 billion a year to financially support families started by girls 17 years old and younger.

Now, though, reducing teen pregnancies could turn into a rare public-health victory. This week's announcement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that the birth rate among girls between the ages of 10 and 14 has fallen to its lowest level in nearly 60 years is just the latest sign of success in the battle to curb teen pregnancy. The findings are similar to trends for teens overall—with pregnancies, abortions and birth rates all declining. Declines in birth rates have been particularly steep among African-Americans, plummeting 50% between 1991 and 2002 among black girls between the ages of 15 and 17.

Public health officials and other experts cite a number of possible reasons for the encouraging numbers, including better sex education, increased use of contraceptives and more public discussion about the risks of sex in the wake of the AIDS epidemic.

There also are signs that welfare reform may be encouraging teens to avoid starting families when they are very young.

Once confined to high schools, sex education now taught in many middle schools, with some kids getting their first exposure to a class as early as the fifth grade.

"There's been a growing recognition that sex and pregnancy don't wait until high school," says Sarah Brown, director of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Teen Pregnancy Drop Spurs Debate

Continued From Page B1

to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, a nonprofit organization based in Washington.

Fay Menacker, a statistician with the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics and the report's lead author, notes that over the past decade many public and private programs have aimed at getting teenagers to focus on the importance of pregnancy prevention, including some emphasizing abstinence and "responsible behavior."

"These programs have been sending these messages at many levels," says Dr. Menacker. "It's possible the message is getting through."

Other pregnancy-prevention advocates suggest the drop in births to young teens may be due in part to a "copycat" effect, in which younger teens are modeling the more-responsible sexual behavior already documented among older teens. Birth rates for 18- and 19-year-old women have fallen by almost 18% between 1990 and 2002, according to the CDC.

A push to educate parents about the importance of "supervised time," including after-school programs for young teens, may also be having an impact, says Claire Brindis, director of the Center for Reproductive Health Research and Policy at the University of California, San Francisco.

"We're starting to work with parents about the risk that occurs during the transitional years, as these young girls and boys enter adolescence," says Ms. Brindis.

Scattered anecdotal reports of an increase in practice of oral sex, particularly among young teenage girls, have alarmed many parents, but prevention experts say there is no good national data tracking that activity.

The decline in birth rates among pre-

teens and young teenage girls is a particularly welcome because many of those pregnancies resulted from unwanted sex with older men, according to pregnancy-prevention experts. The CDC report noted that the vast majority—97%—of births among 10 to 14 year olds occurred among 13 and 14 year olds. In 2002, for example, just 208 of the 7,315 births among young teens were to 10 to 12 year olds.

Still, it isn't entirely clear exactly which prevention efforts are most successful. The CDC findings are based on birth and death certificates, which don't include information about sexual behavior. And despite the improvement, the U.S. still has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the industrialized world, with about 34% of teenage girls getting pregnant at least once before turning 20.

One potential flaw of the CDC data: comparing current birth rates to those of generations past may be somewhat misleading. Historical fertility and birth patterns among teens in the U.S. have been affected by many factors and actually peaked in the 1950s, when many women married and began families during their teenage years.

Overall, teen birth rates declined steadily, falling from 96.3 per 1,000 women in 1957 to about 50 in late 1980s; before edging higher for five years and then turning downward again. Births among younger teenagers also account for only a tiny fraction of all teenage pregnancies, according to government data. The U.S. still has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the industrialized world, with about 34% of teenage girls getting pregnant at least once before turning 20.

The National Campaign to Prevent

Teen Pregnancy has been at the center of much of the push to lower teenage pregnancy and birth rates. Founded in 1996 by academics, politicians, corporate leaders, and health experts at the urging of President Clinton, the privately funded group has pushed the prevention message to virtually anyone who will listen. Its outreach efforts include training sex educators and advising Hollywood producers and scriptwriters.

While battles over whether teen pregnancy should be addressed through abstinence or easier access to contraception have often stalled efforts, the Washington group has collaborated with all sides, including Planned Parenthood and the Best Friends foundation, a group that promotes abstinence. Its work has involved helping run a workshop on contraception, and a training session for abstinence educators.

"We said the only thing we all have to agree on is that we want the rate of teen pregnancy to go down, and the only thing unacceptable is to do nothing," says Ms. Brown.

Going forward, the CDC report is likely to fuel further debate over what types of pregnancy-prevention programs—those emphasizing abstinence, or contraception—are most valuable. Dr. Brindis cautions that although programs that teach "abstinence only" have become increasingly popular in some states, there is concern that while teens may delay sex for a while in response to such exhortations, they may be less likely to use contraception when they do become active.

Other experts stress that the encouraging trend cited in the CDC report may not be sustainable without comprehensive efforts.

C-Section Births Rose 6% in 2003 To 27.6% of Total

By JENNIFER CORBETT DOOREN

Dow Jones Newswires

The number of babies delivered by Caesarean section rose for the seventh straight year to a record in 2003, according to preliminary government figures.

Meanwhile, the overall birth rate for women ages 40-to-44 years rose 5% last year and the number of births among women over age 40 topped 100,000 for the first time.

The report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed 27.6% of all babies were delivered by C-section in 2003, a 6% rise from 2002. The number of babies delivered by the surgical procedure is one-third higher than the rate seen in 1996.

The report showed the number of women attempting a vaginal delivery after a previous C-section dropped by 16% last year.

More older women giving birth as well as physicians' concerns about risks of vaginal birth for some patients may be contributing to the increase. But since the data were gathered from birth certificates, the precise reasons aren't clear, said Faye Menacker, a statistician with the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, which compiled the report.

Overall, the report showed that birth rates among women ages 30-to-49 years either rose or stayed steady while the birth rate for teenagers and women in their 20s declined last year. There were an estimated 4.09 million babies born last year, up from the 4.02 million born in 2002, but below a recent peak hit in 1991.

The birth rate for women ages 35 to 39 climbed 6% while the birth rate for women ages 30 to 34 rose 4%. Birth rates for women ages 20 to 24 declined by 1%

More U.S. Teens Are Delaying Having Sex

SEX, From A1

ing a bit more cautious about sex. This is a real sea change."

The report comes amid a ferocious debate over the value of abstinence-only education, an approach President Bush has backed with \$170 million in federal funding next year. Yesterday, both supporters and detractors of abstinence-until-marriage programs asserted that the report was validation of their sharply differing views.

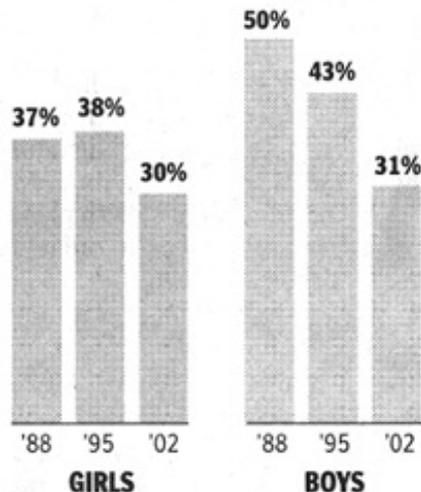
More neutral academics said the positive trends most likely reflect a combination of abstinence education and instruction on safer sex bringing about the notable decline in risky sexual behavior.

"They are both having an impact," said Douglas Kirby, a senior research scientist at ETR Associates, which focuses on health policy. "In today's polarized world, the very important message is that this [data] is not just abstinence-only or contraception."

In preparing its analysis, the National Center for Health Statistics interviewed close to 3,000 teenagers in one-on-one conver-

Teen Sex

Percent of never-married teenagers ages 15 to 17 who have had sexual intercourse:



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

With the exception of 18- and 19-year-old girls, teenagers of both sexes showed significant declines in early sexual activity. Older girls and African American girls were the only groups that did not show a drop in sexual activity. At the same time, nearly 10 percent of young women described their first sexual encounter as "non-voluntary."

of teen pregnancies every 1,000 live births. In 1995, 15 to 19 girls gave birth, on average, the teen birth rate was 15.5 per 1,000.

Even so, the rates remain among the highest in the world. In developed countries, the birth rate is about 10 per 1,000, and in some countries it is as low as 5 per 1,000.

There are many reasons for the lower rates. Kirby said that the availability of birth control and health information, along with the division of labor and higher pay for women, has changed the lives of young people.

"There is a gap between the research and the bearing of the burden."

Given the high rates of teen pregnancy, young people are at high risk for sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies. The course of a young woman's life can be affected by an early pregnancy, and girls who become pregnant are more likely to drop out of school and have lower earnings.

More U.S. Teens Delay Having Sex, Study Finds

By CECI CONNOLLY
Washington Post Staff Writer

American teenagers are waiting longer before first engaging in sexual intercourse, and an overwhelming majority of those who are sexually active report using contraception, according to a comprehensive, well-respected government survey released yesterday.

The report examining youth behavior found that more young men in particular have postponed sex—46 percent were sexually active in 2002, compared with 55 percent in 1995—and that 91 percent of those who had sex in the previous three months used contraception.

For the first time since the government began the National Survey of Youth, the study found that

Finally, the messages were picked up and acted

on. The use of contraception, especially the newer injectable and the high-dose oral pill, was more common among teenagers in 2002 than in 1995, the study found.

One of the good news is that teenagers are getting the message so they can make better choices," said Joneen Kenzie, executive director of the Denver-based Abstinence Relationship Training Institute. "Kids are seeing the effect; they know they need to do something to reduce

the risk. The next step is to shift the focus from contraception to abstinence," Kirby said. "When you encourage those kind of behaviors, you reduce your risk but you also reduce the risk to others."

The survey did raise questions about whether young people get information on reproductive health in school. One-third of teenagers interviewed did not learn about contraception in school, and only half of young women and one-third of young men said they had dis-

THE WASHINGTON POST

Fewer Women Using Birth Control

BIRTH CONTROL, From A1

(more than 7,600 women) and known for its accuracy, "an increase of even two percentage points is worrisome," said John S. Santelli, a professor of population and family health at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Even as he cheered the news that a growing number of teenagers are using contraception, Santelli wondered whether doctors are neglecting women.

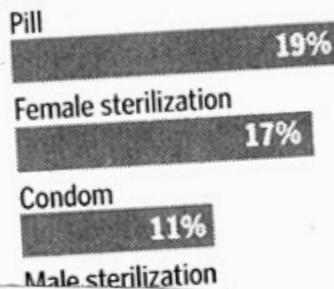
"Maybe we're failing with women over 21," Santelli said.

Although unintended pregnancies can be welcome surprises, the danger from a public health and societal standpoint is that many of the women are financially or psychologically unprepared for parenthood

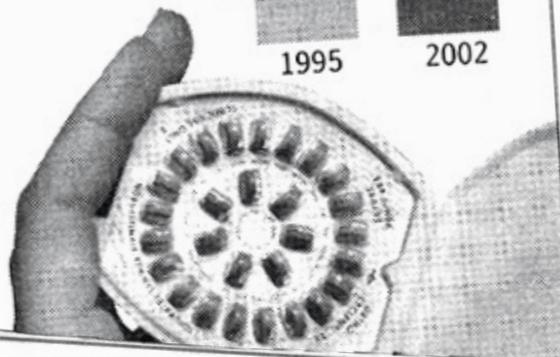
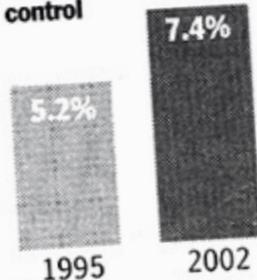
Skipping Birth Control

A new study shows an increase in sexually active women who are not using birth control. Among women who do use birth control, the pill is the preferred method.

Percentage of women using method of birth control (top five methods, 2002)



Women age 15 to 44 who had sex in the previous three months while not using birth control



More Women Opting Against Birth Control, Study Finds

By CECI CONNOLLY
Washington Post Staff Writer

At a time when the medical community has been heartened by a decline in risky sexual behavior by teenagers, a different problem

means that as many as 11 percent of all women are at risk of unintended pregnancy at some point during their childbearing years (ages 15 to 44).

Researchers at the National C

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MARRIED

From page A1

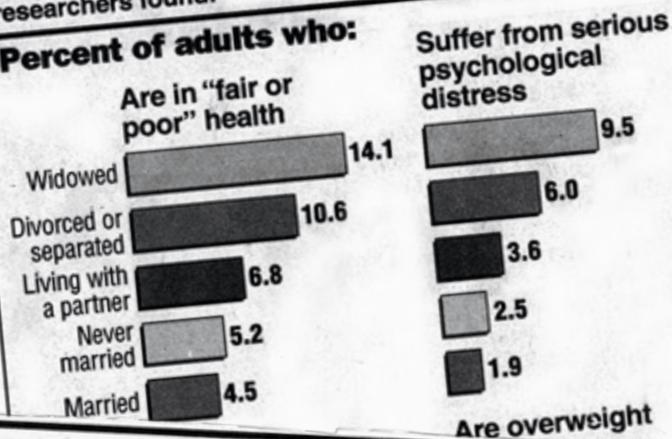
doctor, actually do them more often than people who aren't reminded," said Mrs. Gallagher, who, with University of Chicago sociology professor Linda J. Waite, wrote the 2000 book "The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier and Better Off Financially."

"When you're married, you have somebody to be accountable to, and I see this even in

MARRIAGE BENEFITS

Federal health data show that married people are generally healthier than other adults. Here is a snapshot of what researchers found:

Percent of adults who:



By Cheryl Wetzstein
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Married adults live well and are merry

Federal report shows health benefits of matrimony

Married adults are more likely to be healthier — physically and mentally — than divorced, widowed, cohabiting or never-married adults, a new federal report says.

Regardless of age, sex, race, education, income or nationality, married adults were least likely to be in poor health, suffer serious psychological distress and smoke or drink heavily,

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) says in its new report, which reviews health data gathered from more than 127,000 adults from 1999 to 2002.

The only category in which

married adults fared poorly was weight — and this was primarily because married men were more likely to be heavier than other men, the study says.

"[Husbands] are well-fed. But they don't smoke," said Charlotte Schoenborn, a re-

searcher at the NCHS' Division of Health Interview Statistics and author of the report.

The report doesn't speculate on why married adults are in better health. However, many researchers say that marriage has a "protective" effect.

"Wives are especially good at what social scientists call 'social support' and ordinary people call 'nagging,'" said columnist Maggie Gallagher, who heads the District-based Institute for Marriage and Public Policy.

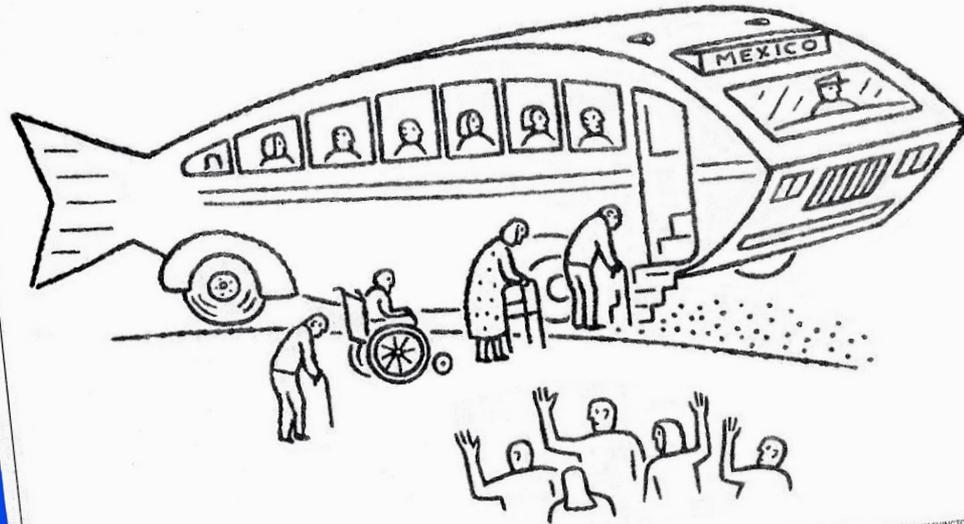
"And it turns out the nagging works: People who are reminded to do healthy things like wear your seat belts, eat vegetables, exercise or go to the

see MARRIED, page A12

OUTLOOK

UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

New facts and hot stats from the social sciences ♦ By Richard Morin



ILLUSTRATIONS BY LEWIS SCOTT FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

The Salmon Effect

For years, demographers have asked themselves this question: Why do adult Hispanics living in the United States live so long and never seem to get sick? States live so long and never seem to get sick? Demographers call it the "Hispanic Paradox": Hispanics, who tend to be poorer and have fewer advantages than non-Latino whites, nonetheless seem to live longer and have healthier lives, on average, than their Anglo counterparts.

The disparity in life expectancy is large, report demographers Alberto Palloni of the University of Wisconsin and Elizabeth Arias of the National Center for Health Statistics. They found the overall adult mortality rate was subopping 30 to 50 percent lower for Hispanics than for whites. Those differences "translate into five to eight years of additional life expectancy at age 45" for Hispanics living in the United States, Arias and Palloni wrote in the journal *Demography*.

non-Hispanic whites and Latinos born in Puerto Rico or Cuba. But among foreign-born Hispanics other than Cubans or Puerto Ricans, the paradox held. "They died later, and didn't get sick as often," Palloni said.

But why?

One clue came when they saw that the mortality gap was particularly large among men and women born in Mexico who lived in states closest to the Mexican border. Digging deeper into the data, they found the answer: The ill and infirm apparently returned home to die and thus didn't appear in U.S. vital statistics data, while healthy Mexican immigrants remained in the United States. It's called the "salmon effect," Palloni laughed.

But the puzzle wasn't completely solved. Hispanics living in the United States who were born in foreign countries other than Mexico also lived longer and healthier lives, despite the absence of a salmon effect. Some evidence suggests this finding may just be the result of incomplete data, Palloni said. Then again, there's still a lot of mystery about the people

Antidepressant Use By U.S. Adults Soars

*Overall Surge in Prescription Drug Usage
Comes Amid Questions of Cost and Safety*

By SHANKAR VEDANTAM
Washington Post Staff Writer

One in 10 American women takes an antidepressant drug such as Prozac, Paxil or Zoloft, and the use of such drugs by all adults has nearly tripled in the last decade, according to the latest figures on American health released yesterday by the federal government.

Those numbers are among a broad array of changes in health and health care use in the United States identified in the report. It

five other approved drugs are dangerous and should be taken off the market.

Antidepressant drugs called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) showed some of the largest increases in use, the report said. By 2000, the proportion of adults using such drugs had nearly tripled, compared with the data set that ended in 1994.

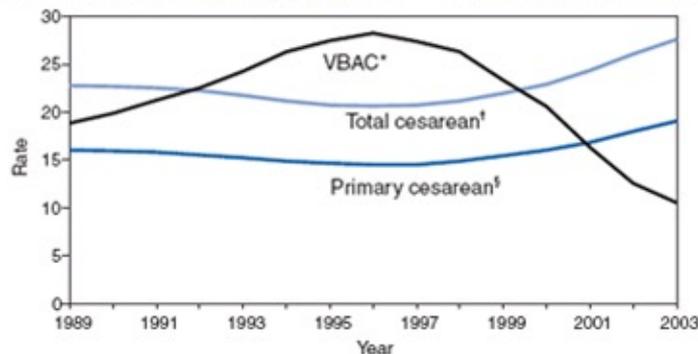
In 2002, more than one in three doctor's office visits by women involved a prescription for an antidepressant, said Amy Bernstein, a spokeswoman for the report is-

QuickStats: Total and Primary Cesarean Rate and Vaginal Birth After Previous Cesarean (VBAC) Rate --- United States, 1989--2003

QuickStats

FROM THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

Total and Primary Cesarean Rate and Vaginal Birth After Previous Cesarean (VBAC) Rate — United States, 1989–2003



* Per 100 births to women with a previous cesarean delivery.
 † Per 100 births.
 ‡ Per 100 births to women with no previous cesarean delivery.

Preliminary data for 2003 indicated that 27.6% of all births in the United States resulted from cesarean deliveries, an increase of 6% from 2002 and the highest percentage ever reported in the United States. After declines during 1989--1996, the total cesarean rate and the primary cesarean rate (i.e., percentage of cesareans among women with no previous cesarean delivery, 19.1% in 2003) have increased each year. In addition, the rate of VBAC, which had increased during 1989--1996, decreased by 63% to 10.6% in 2003. Among women with previous cesarean deliveries, the likelihood that subsequent deliveries would be cesarean was approximately 90% in 2003.

SOURCE: National Vital Statistics System, annual files, 1989--2003. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm>.

At this meeting

- Discuss methodology and approaches to determine impact of obesity on mortality
- Program review – VSCP
 - Directions
 - Policy implications
- Examine data on prescription drug use