

# Induced Terminations of Pregnancy

## CURRENT TRENDS

During 1999, 14,145 induced terminations of pregnancy occurred in Oregon. This total represents a 1.4 percent decrease from 1998 and a decrease of 10.1 percent from the record high of 15,735 abortions reported in 1980. [Figure 3-1].

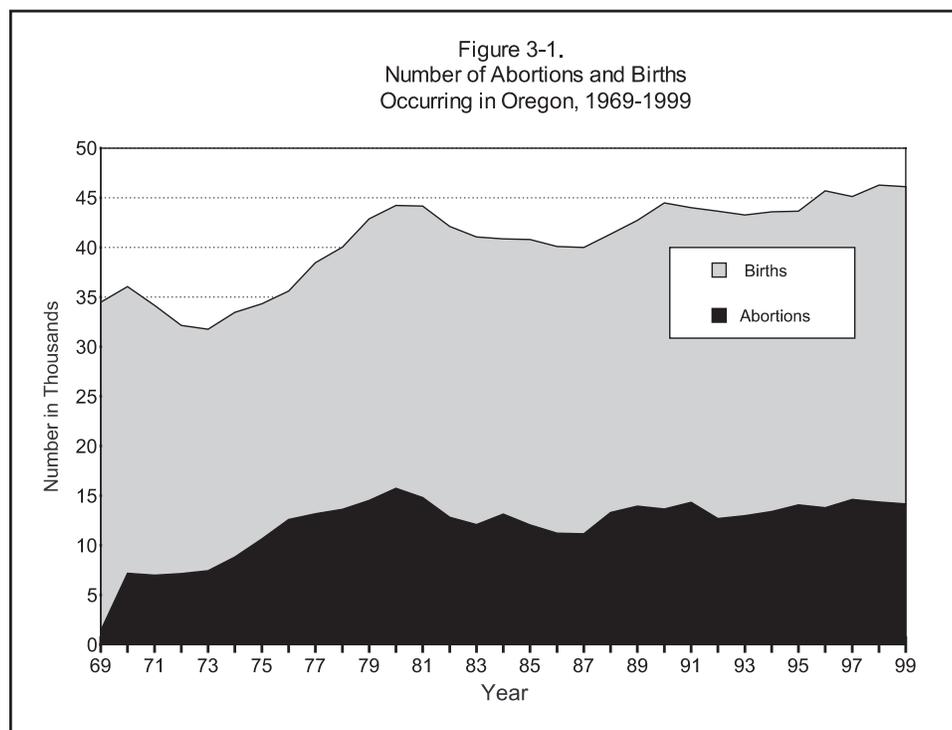
This chapter reports occurrence data; that is, all abortions occurring in Oregon whether obtained by Oregon residents or residents of another state. During the 1990s, out-of-state residents generally accounted for 11 to 12 percent of abortions in Oregon. In 1999, 1,788 (12.6 %) of patients were out-of-state residents. [Table 3-6]. Oregonians who obtained abortions out of state are not included in this data. Because rate calculations use Oregon population numbers, these calculations substitute out-of-state residents for the unknown number of Oregonians who obtained an abortion in another state. (See Appendix B, Technical Notes section for a more extensive discussion of the completeness of abortion data.)

Changes of behavior are revealed more by shifts in rates, which account for population change, than changes in the number of events. The U.S. abortion rate has been declining since 1980 from approximately 25 per 1,000 women of childbearing age to 20 per 1,000 in 1997. In 1999, the Oregon rate was also 20.0 per 1,000, a 1.5 percent decrease from 1998 and 20.3 percent lower than the record high of 1980 (25.1 per 1,000). Oregon's rate has fluctuated around 20 per 1,000 since 1988. [Table 3-1].

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***In 1999 Oregon's  
abortion rate  
remained 20 percent  
below the 1980  
record***

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**Comparison of Oregon and U.S. Abortion Ratios, 1972-1997**

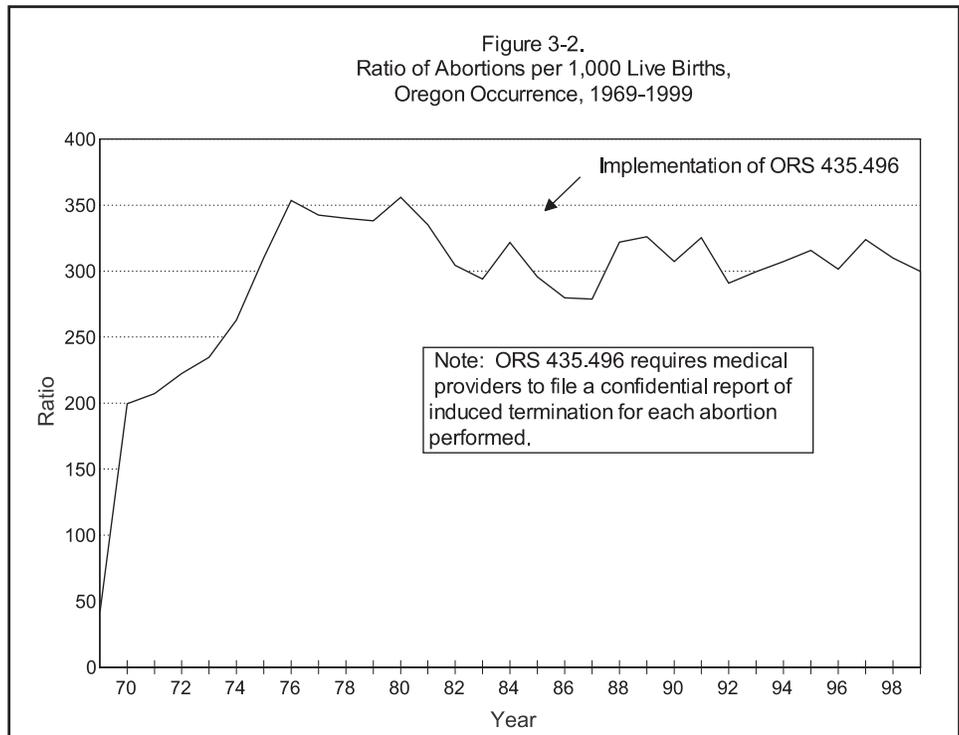
| Year  | U.S. Abortion Ratio <sup>1</sup> | Oregon's Abortion Ratio <sup>2</sup> as Percent Difference from U.S. |
|-------|----------------------------------|--|
| 1972  | 180                              | +23%   |
| 1973  | 196                              | +19%   |
| 1974  | 242                              | +9%  |
| 1975  | **                               | **   |
| 1976  | 312                              | +13%   |
| 1977  | **                               | **   |
| 1978  | 347                              | -2%  |
| 1979  | **                               | **   |
| 1980  | 359                              | -1%  |
| 1981  | **                               | **   |
| 1982  | 354                              | -14%   |
| 1983  | **                               | **   |
| 1984  | 364                              | -12%   |
| 1985  | 354                              | -16%   |
| 1986  | 354                              | -21%   |
| 1987  | 356                              | -21%   |
| 1988  | 352                              | -9%  |
| 1989  | 346                              | -6%  |
| 1990  | 345                              | -11%   |
| 1991  | 339                              | -4%  |
| 1992  | 335                              | -13%   |
| 1993  | 334                              | -10%   |
| 1994  | 321                              | -4%  |
| 1995  | 311                              | +2%  |
| 1996  | 314                              | -4%  |
| *1997 | 306                              | +6%  |

1 Estimated Number of Abortions per 1,000 Live Births.

2 See Table 3-2.

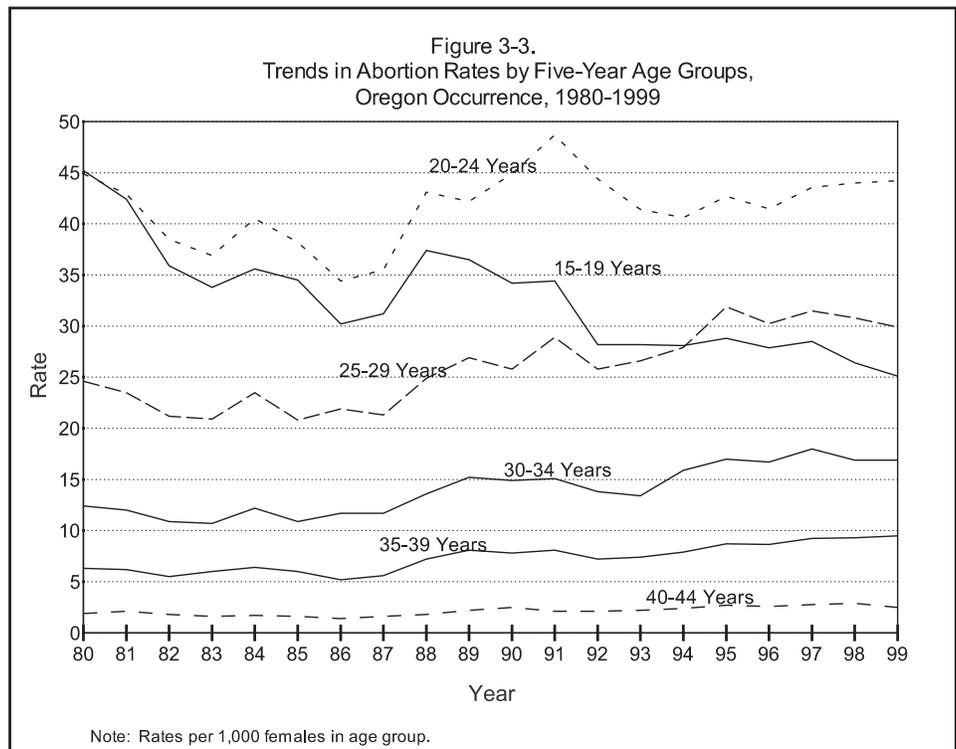
\* Most recent data available.

\*\* Data not available.



**PREGNANCY OUTCOMES**

Figure 3-2 shows the ratio of abortions to births occurring in Oregon, indicating the prevalence of unwanted pregnancies that occurred in the state. Both the highest abortion rate (number of abortions per 1,000 female population) and the highest ratio of abortions (number of abortions per 1,000 births) occurred in 1980. Between 1980 and 1987, the ratio of abortions to births declined,



although an increased level of reporting beginning in 1984 (as a requirement of new legislation) obscures this fact. In 1999, there were 306.8 abortions per 1,000 occurrence births. This represents a 1.0 percent decrease from 1998 and a 13.8 percent decrease from 1980, when this ratio was 355.8 per 1,000 births. [Table 3-2].

In 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion with the Roe v. Wade decision, Oregon's abortion ratio was about one-fifth higher than that of the U.S. [see sidebar, page 3-2]. In the mid-1980s and early 1990s this changed: Oregonians were less likely than residents of other states to terminate a pregnancy with an induced abortion (see sidebar). Since 1995, Oregon's abortion ratio has fluctuated around the U.S. ratio. The 1999 abortion ratio in Oregon was essentially equal to the 1997 U.S. ratio (the most recent comparison available) 306.8 to 306.

**ABORTION PATIENTS**

Similar to births rates, abortion rates differ by age group, race, ethnicity, marital status and prior pregnancy.

Almost two-thirds of abortion patients have never been married. [Table 3-3]. More than half have previously given birth. [Table 3-5].

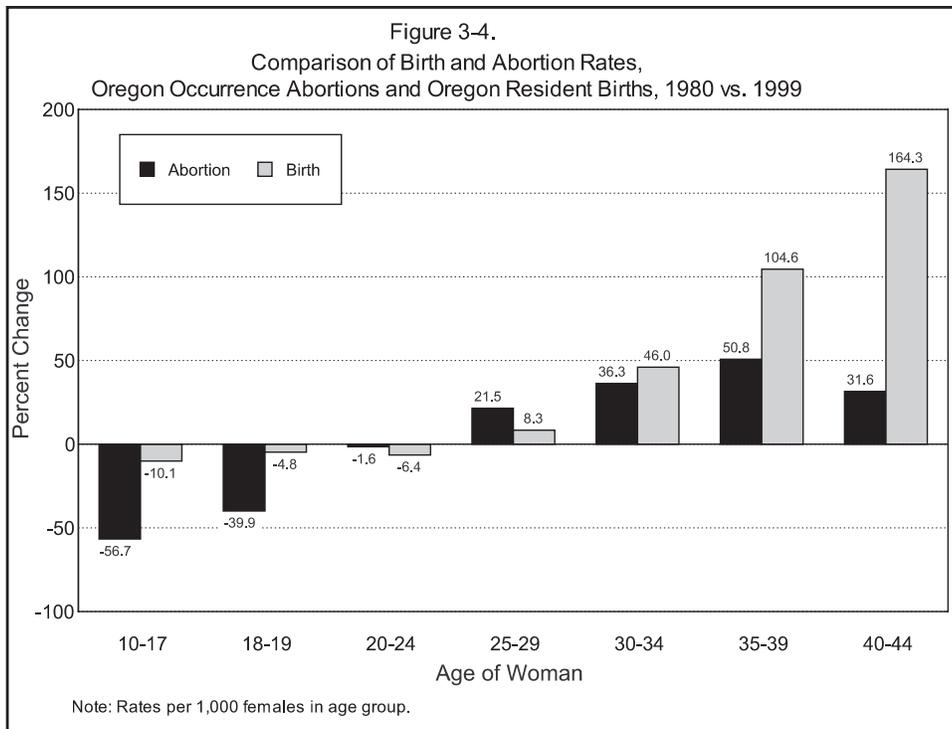
**AGE**

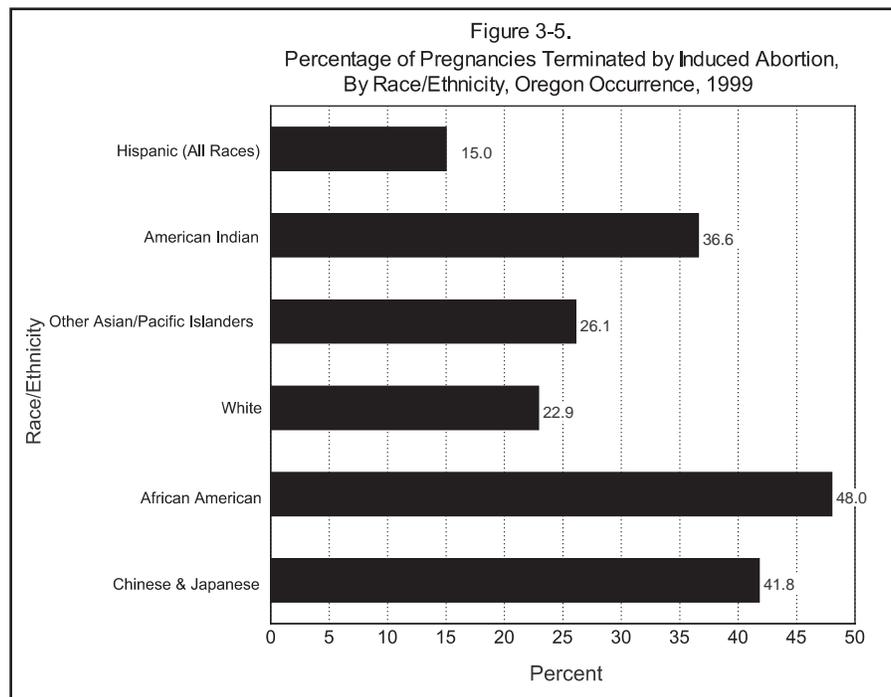
There is wide variation in abortion rates among age groups (see sidebar): The highest rate in 1999 occurred among women age 20-24 (44.2 per 1,000). The lowest rates were among women 45-49, (0.2 per 1,000) and women under age 15 (0.6 per 1,000). [Figure 3-3, sidebar].

| Abortion Rates by Age and Percentage Distribution, Oregon Occurrence <sup>1</sup> , 1999 |                   |      |
|--|-------------------|------|
| Age  | Rate <sup>2</sup> | %    |
| < 15   | 0.6               | 0.5  |
| 15-19  | 25.1              | 20.9 |
| 20-24  | 44.2              | 32.0 |
| 25-29  | 29.9              | 21.8 |
| 30-34  | 16.9              | 13.4 |
| 35-39  | 9.5               | 8.7  |
| 40-44  | 2.5               | 2.5  |
| 45-49  | 0.2               | 0.2  |
| 15-44  | 20.1              | 99.3 |

<sup>1</sup> Occurrence data include all abortions reported by providers located in Oregon, regardless of the patient's residence. Because rate calculations employ Oregon population figures, these calculations, in effect, substitute out-of-state residents for Oregonians who may have obtained an abortion in another state.

<sup>2</sup> Per 1,000 females in age group.





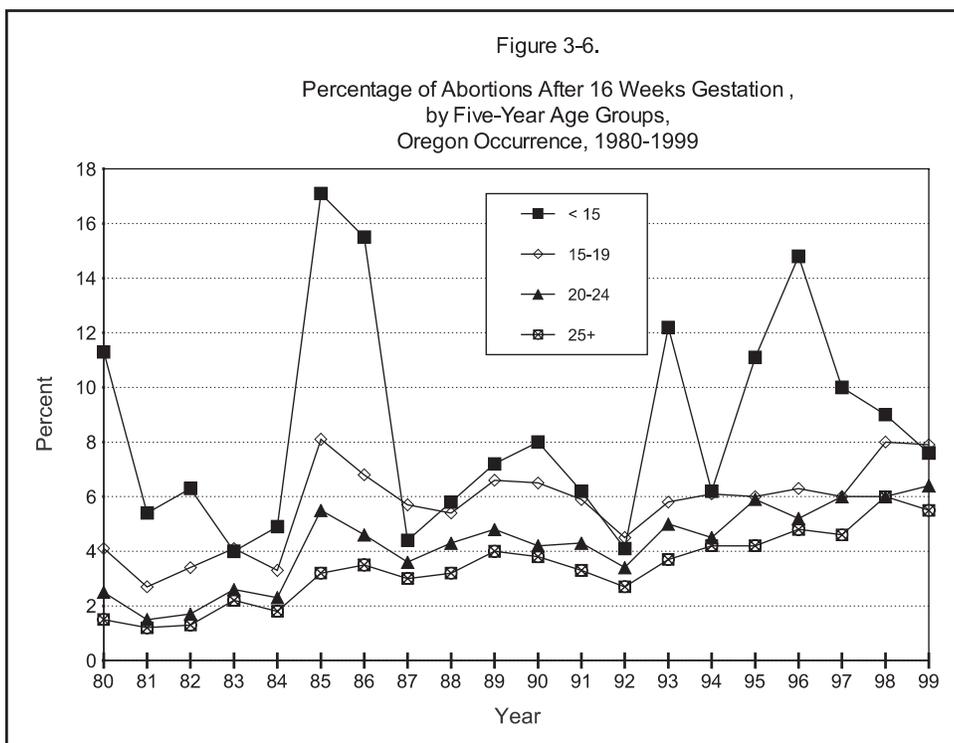
The 1999 abortion rate among teens age 10-17 was 56.7 percent lower than the rate in 1980 (when the statewide abortion rate was highest); the rate for 18- to 19-year-olds was 39.9 percent lower. [Figure 3-4] The absence of a corresponding increase in the birth rates among teens suggests success in avoiding unwanted pregnancy, rather than an increase in decisions to carry unwanted pregnancies to term. In contrast, among women age 25 and older, both abortion rates and birth rates were markedly higher in 1999 than in 1980.

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

The frequency with which abortion procedures were used to terminate a pregnancy varied among ethnic and racial groups. African American women and women of Chinese and Japanese origin were most likely to have an abortion. In 1999, African American women terminated 48.0 percent of their pregnancies, Chinese women terminated 45.5 percent and Hawaiian women terminated 44.3 percent. Because Oregon's demographic composition is predominately white, white women obtained the majority of abortions by count in 1999 (86.6%) although the group was second lowest in percentage of pregnancies terminated. As in past years, Hispanic women were least likely to terminate a pregnancy (15.0%). [Figure 3-5].

## CONTRACEPTIVE USE

In the majority of abortions that occur in Oregon, the pregnancy is not a result of contraceptive failure. In 1999, based upon data obtained from abortion reports, only 37 percent of women had used some method of contraception to avoid the pregnancy. [Table 3-5].



**MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

Eighty-seven percent of abortions with known gestation were performed prior to the thirteenth week of pregnancy. Just one in sixteen (6.3%) of induced terminations were performed after sixteen weeks gestation. Suction curettage was the procedure used in 98.8 percent of terminations prior to the thirteenth week where method was reported. Dilation and evacuation was the procedure in 74 percent of terminations occurring after sixteen weeks gestation. Women under the age of 20 were one-third more likely to obtain an abortion after sixteen weeks gestation than were women age 25 and over. [Table 3-4]. The percentage of abortions occurring after sixteen weeks gestation declined for every group except age 20-24, which increased slightly, and age 15-19, which was unchanged. [Figure 3-6].

Complications at the time of the procedure were reported for 160 terminations (one percent of abortion patients): retained products (55 patients) and infection (33 patients) were the most common complications. In Oregon, no woman has died as the result of a legally induced termination.

**GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION**

Abortion rates varied widely within the state, yet 35 of Oregon's 36 counties had at least one resident who sought an abortion in 1999. The providers of such services, however, were geographically concentrated. In 1999, abortions were reported in 10 of Oregon's 36 counties. The degree of concentration was evident in the fact that 97 percent of all abortions were obtained in the five counties of highest occurrence: Jackson, Lane, Marion, Multnomah and Washington. [Table 3-7]. Although abortions may often be sought outside a patient's community to help insure anonymity, this degree of concentration suggests that access to abortion services may be limited for some Oregon women.