

Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion In Northern America



Model-based estimates offer an opportunity to observe and assess unintended pregnancy and abortion over time and, because they enable comparability across borders and groups, to do so for individual countries, for regions and globally. Estimates for regions and subregions, as defined by the United Nations Statistics Division groupings, can offer advocates, policymakers, researchers and others valuable insight into sexual and reproductive health and autonomy. Regional estimates can help reveal disparities and areas where continued investment is needed to ensure that individuals can access the full spectrum of quality sexual and reproductive health care.

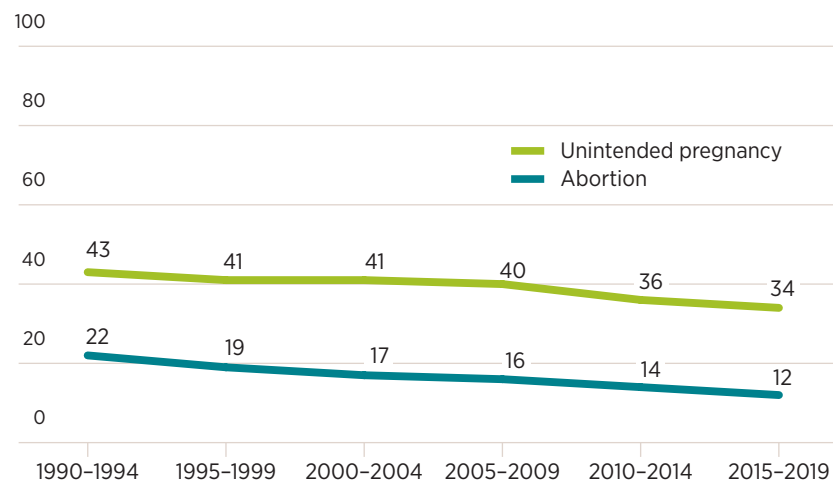
The estimates below provide an overview of the incidence of unintended pregnancy and abortion in Northern America from 1990 through 2019; the values are based on average annual estimates for five-year time periods. View these estimates in country profiles on guttmacher.org.

Unintended pregnancy and abortion in the United States

- In the United States, the unintended pregnancy rate declined by 23% between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019.
- During the same period, the abortion rate declined by 48%.

In Northern America, the unintended pregnancy rate declined by 20% over the past 30 years, while that of abortion declined by 45%

Average annual no. per 1,000 women aged 15–49



- The share of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion fell from 50% to 34%.
- In 2015–2019, there were a total of 5,660,000 pregnancies annually.
- Of these, 2,590,000 pregnancies were unintended and 886,000 ended in abortion.

Unintended pregnancy and abortion in Canada

- In Canada, the unintended pregnancy rate increased by 22% between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019.

- During the same period, the abortion rate declined by 13%.
- The share of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion fell from 51% to 37%.
- In 2015–2019, there were a total of 570,000 pregnancies annually.
- Of these, 265,000 pregnancies were unintended and 97,500 ended in abortion.

Note: Guttmacher has a separate, extensive body of work around unintended pregnancy and abortion in the United States. The findings in this fact sheet are broadly aligned with those from our US-specific work, but they rely on a different methodology and are not directly comparable. There are contexts in which it may be more appropriate to use one body of work over the other: Comparisons of the United States with other countries should rely on the estimates included here, which were generated using the same methodology across all other countries and regions. In contrast, our US work should be used when focusing solely on the United States; it includes year-specific trends and information on how unintended pregnancy and abortion vary between population groups.

Sources

The information in this fact sheet is based on Bearak J et al., Unintended pregnancy and abortion by income, region, and the legal status of abortion: estimates from a comprehensive model for 1990–2019, *Lancet Global Health*, 2020, 8(9):e1152–e1161, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(20\)30315-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30315-6); and Bearak J et al., Country-specific estimates of unintended pregnancy and abortion incidence: a global comparative analysis of levels in 2015–2019, *BMJ Global Health*, 2022, 7(3), <https://gh.bmj.com/content/7/3/e007151>. Regional and subregional trends in this fact sheet were re-estimated using a revised data set, available on OSF; revised estimates are available at the Guttmacher Data Center.

Acknowledgments

This fact sheet was made possible by UK Aid from the UK Government and grants from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. The findings and conclusions contained within do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the donors.



**Good reproductive health policy
starts with credible research**

[guttmacher.org](https://www.guttmacher.org)

125 Maiden Lane
New York, NY 10038
212.248.1111
info@guttmacher.org

Find this and related fact sheets in the series, Regional Estimates of Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion, at <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/unintended-pregnancy-and-abortion-northern-america>.