were women aged 25 and older: Some 18–21% of teenagers were sporadic users, compared with 4% of women aged 25–34. Twenty-three percent of teenagers younger than 18 and 31% of those aged 18–19 were uninterrupted effective users, compared with 52% of women aged 20–24 and 62–73% of those aged 25 and older. Some 75–80% of women younger than 25 who were uninterrupted effective users were using oral contraceptives rather than long-acting methods, compared with less than half of women aged 25–34 (not shown).

Women aged 20–24 were significantly less likely to be uninterrupted effective users and significantly more likely to be sporadic users than were women aged 25–34. High levels of uninterrupted effective use among women aged 25 and older were due in part to their use of sterilization. When sterilized women were excluded from the analysis, the proportion of women aged 25 and older who were uninterrupted effective users decreased substantially, to 47% of those aged 25–34 and 26% of those aged 35 and older. In addition, differences in nonuse by age group were no longer significant. Teenagers were still significantly more likely to be sporadic users and less likely to be uninterrupted effective users than were women aged 25–34, however, although women aged 20–24 no longer differed significantly from women aged 25–34.

**Current Contraceptive Use Pattern**

There was a high degree of concordance between long-term and current contraceptive use patterns. With the exception of long-term sporadic users (who were distributed fairly uniformly across patterns of current use), 94–100% of women classified in a particular category for long-term contraceptive use were classified in that same category for current use.

In general, higher levels of contraceptive nonuse and lower levels of sporadic use were observed with the measure of current contraceptive use pattern than with the long-term measure, particularly among teenagers. Differences among age groups, however, were similar: Teenagers and women aged 20–24 were both more likely to report sporadic use than women aged 25 and older and less likely to report uninterrupted effective use (Table 2). Teenagers younger than 18 were more likely to be nonusers than were women aged 25–34. However, the level of nonuse among those aged 18–19 was nearly identical to the level among adults aged 20–24. The vast majority of teenagers (80% of those aged 15–17 and 91% of those aged 18–19) were uninterrupted users over the three-month period.

When sterilized women were excluded from the analysis, the proportion of uninterrupted effective users among women aged 25 and older decreased significantly (not shown). However, other findings remained the same: Nonuse was higher among teenagers younger than 18 than it was among 25–34-year-olds, while uninterrupted effective use was lower and sporadic use higher among all women aged 15–24 than among those aged 25–34.

**Measure Validity**

Levels of unintended pregnancy are highest among women who are long-term contraceptive nonusers, and become progressively lower among women who are sporadic users, uninterrupted other users and uninterrupted effective users, respectively (Figure 1). For example, among teenagers, 73% of nonusers reported a subsequent pregnancy within 12 months at risk, compared with 19% of sporadic users, nearly 10% of uninterrupted other users and only 6% of uninterrupted effective users.

The relatively small difference between uninterrupted effective users and uninterrupted users who choose other methods is somewhat surprising. However, among the uninterrupted users, pill users had much higher rates of unintended pregnancy than users of long-acting methods: Among teenagers, 7% of pill users experienced an unintended pregnancy within 12 months at risk, compared with 3% of those using long-acting methods (not shown).

Long-term contraceptive use pattern was more strongly associated with unintended pregnancy than was contraceptive use at first intercourse (Figure 2). Among never-married teenagers who initiated intercourse between ages 15 and 19, one-half...