

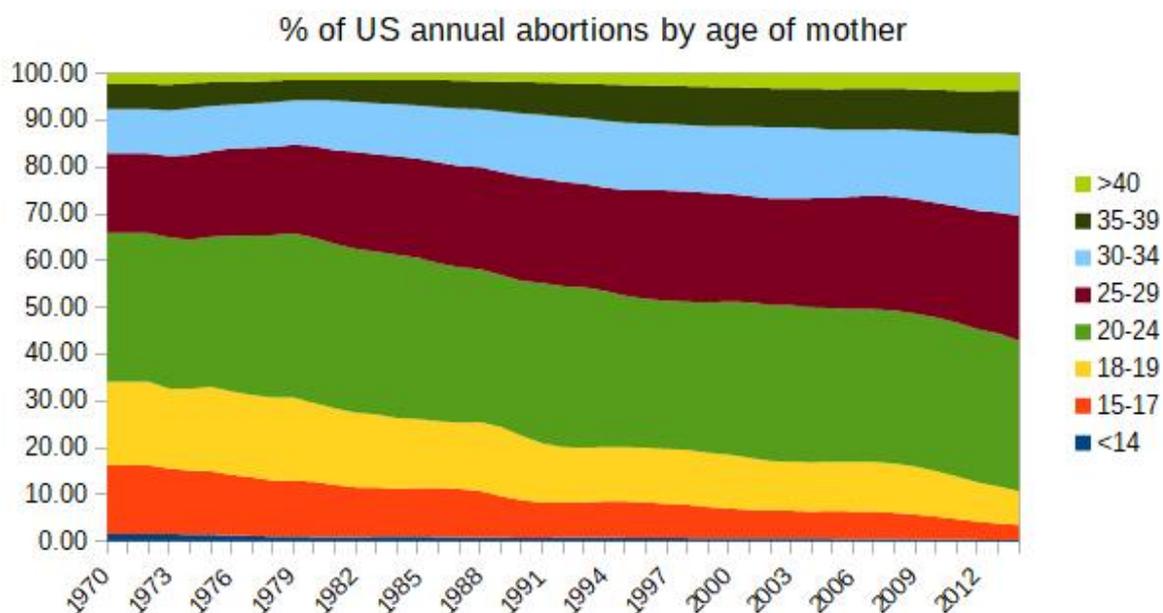
Abortion Worldwide Report: AWR Factsheet #4

United States Abortions by Mother's Age

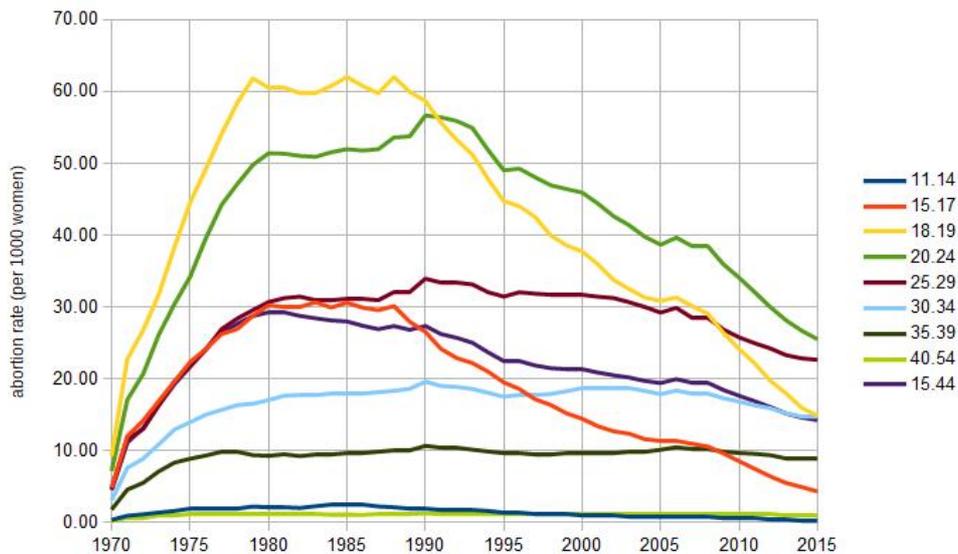
Wm. Robert Johnston – 21 June 2019

Available data: Understanding any aspect of abortion in the United States is hampered by incomplete data: the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) obtain only voluntary data from states, and the quality of statistics reported by the states varies significantly. The pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute (GI) periodically publishes studies based on voluntary reporting to them as well as on the state and CDC reports. To examine abortions by age of women obtaining abortions, we have compiled statistics from CDC annual reports from 1977 to 2015 as well as several studies published by GI (for example, one study covering 1973-2004¹). We have scaled the available breakdowns by age with the complete national totals to estimate abortions by women's age for the years 1970 to 2015.

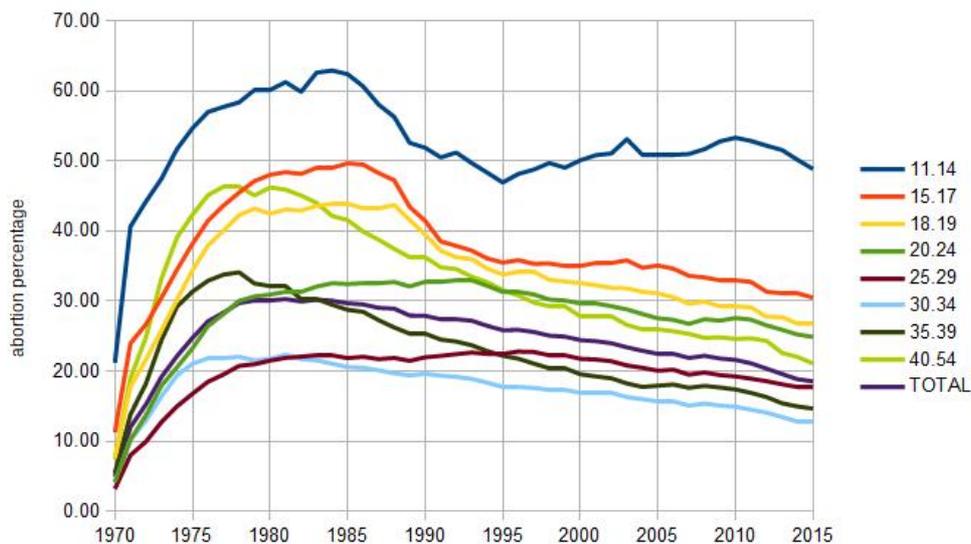
Changing age breakdowns of women obtaining abortions: Over the last 45 years there has been a shift in abortions by women's age with the fraction of abortion by older women increasing, and that by younger women dropping. The plot below shows the fraction of abortions annually by the age range of women obtaining abortions. From 1970 to 2015 the fraction of abortions by teenagers has dropped from 34% to 11%. The fraction by women 20-24 has remained about 32%, while that for women 25-29 has increased from 17% to 27%, and for women 30 or older has risen from 17% to 30%.



Abortion rates by women's age: The first chart on the next page shows abortion rates (abortions per 1000 women) by age range. For most age ranges, rates have been dropping for the last 25 years. Rates for teenagers have dropped dramatically since 1990: for women ages 18-19 by a factor of four, and for women ages 15-17 by a factor of five. For women 35 and older, rates have instead been relatively consistent since about 1975.



Abortion percentage by women's age: Abortion percentage (or abortion %) is the percentage of known pregnancies (excluding miscarriages and stillbirths) that end in abortion. For young teenagers (ages 11-14), roughly half of pregnancies end in abortion and half in live birth, and this has been consistent since 1990. However, for all other age groups the abortion % has been steadily declining for 10 to 35 years, with the time period of decline depending on the age group.



Together, these results show several trends:

- For the last 25 years, women of all ages (except 11-14) are increasingly rejecting abortion.
- The trends of decreasing abortions became even more rapid since 2008, and this applied to nearly all age groups.
- The drop in abortions for teenagers is mostly from fewer pregnancies but also includes the effect of fewer pregnant teenagers choosing abortion.

¹ Henshaw and Kost, 2008, "Supplementary tables: Abortion statistics..."
 [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/2008/09/18/TrendsWomenAbortions-wTables.pdf].