



CWHS

# Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE 2008 CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Traditionally, family planning efforts have focused on women. Thus, contraceptive use has often been left to women primarily due to the scarcity of birth control methods available to men. But in the last decade, efforts have intensified to include men in reproductive health programs and to target them for family planning services. These efforts were spurred in part by the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases that led public health professionals to explore the reproductive and contraceptive behavior of men. Additionally, a growing body of literature has documented the importance of a couple's shared responsibility in curbing unintended pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>

In 2008, the California Women's Health Survey (CWHS) included three questions, sponsored by the Office of Family Planning, California Department of Public Health, that explored men's role in the use of birth control. Women ages 18 to 49, who were previous or current users of contraception were asked the following questions: (1) "Who initiates/initiated discussions about birth control use?;" (2) "Who chooses/chose the type of birth control?;" and (3) "Who makes/made sure that birth control is/was used?" The response categories were "Shared," "You (the respondent)," "Current/most recent partner," and "Refused (for respondents who did not provide any answer)."<sup>2</sup> Nearly one quarter of respondents (24.8 percent) and 30.0 percent of those having household incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) refused to answer the three questions. Because of this high percentage of

refusals, this group was included as a subgroup in the analysis. Responses were weighted in these analyses by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population.

Among women who previously or currently used contraceptives, more than one third (34.7 percent) reported that initiating discussions about birth control was shared with their partners. A slightly higher proportion of women responded that they alone chose the type of birth control (42.2 percent) and made sure that the method was used (38.7 percent).

Variations were found by different subgroups of women in reporting of their partners' involvement in birth control use (see Figure 1):

- A higher proportion of women ages 18 to 29 (45.0 percent) reported that they chose the type of birth control than women ages 30 to 39 (41.4 percent) and women ages 40 to 49 (39.8 percent).<sup>3</sup>
- Similar proportions of White (37.2 percent) and Hispanic (37.7 percent) women reported that discussions about initiating birth control were shared. Although less than one quarter of Asian/Pacific Islander (23.2 percent) women responded that such discussions were shared, more than one third (35.1 percent) refused to answer, an important caveat when interpreting the results.

## *California Women's Perceptions About Their Partners' Involvement in Birth Control Use, 2008*

California Department of Public Health  
Office of Family Planning

**Public Health Message:**  
*Men's involvement in family planning encompasses a broad range of behaviors. Supporting men's involvement means not only encouraging them to adopt condoms or vasectomy as a contraceptive method, but, equally important, is giving them sufficient resources and information so they can provide appropriate support to their partner. The 2008 CWHS questions exploring men's involvement in birth control discussions, selection and use demonstrated that a considerable number of women reported their male partners were involved to some extent in each area.*

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- About 4 in 10 (39.9 percent) women with at least a college education responded that they shared the decision about making sure that birth control was used compared with 34.3 percent of women with high school or some college education and 34.1 percent of women with less than a high school education.<sup>5</sup>
- Almost one half (48.6 percent) of the women with an income above 200 percent of the FPL reported that they alone chose their birth control compared with 38.3 percent of the women with income at or below 200 percent of the FPL.<sup>4</sup> A higher proportion (30.8 percent) of women in the higher income group refused to answer this question than did women in the lower income group (14.3 percent).

Figure 1

Select Demographic Characteristics	Initiated/Initiates discussions about birth control (n= 1747)				Chose/Chooses type of birth control (n=1747)				Made/Makes sure birth control was/is used (n= 1747)			
	Shared	You	Partner	Refused	Shared	You	Partner	Refused	Shared	You	Partner	Refused
<b>Age</b>												
18-29	31.9	35.7	5.3	27.2	26.6	45.0	-	26.9	34.1	36.4	-	-
30-39	37.4	35.9	2.8	23.8	32.0	41.4	2.8	23.8	34.2	39.5	2.9	23.4
40-49	34.6	36.9	4.6	23.9	30.6	39.8	5.8	23.8	31.0	40.6	4.4	24.0
$\chi^2$			-					$P < .01$				-
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>												
White	37.2	41.4	3.9	17.5	32.7	46.7	3.3	17.3	33.6	45.6	3.5	17.3
African American/Black	25.1	44.5	-	30.4	20.4	44.6	-	30.4	31.6	38.8	-	29.6
Hispanic	37.7	29.0	3.7	29.6	28.0	40.1	2.3	29.6	33.1	34.7	2.3	29.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	23.2	33.3	8.4	35.1	29.0	30.8	5.3	34.9	33.8	26.3	-	34.4
$\chi^2$			-					$P < .01$				-
<b>Education</b>												
College/Graduate	41.2	41.3	4.3	13.3	37.8	44.6	4.4	13.3	39.9	43.9	3.8	12.4
High School/Some College	33.4	41.9	4.9	19.8	29.4	47.9	3.2	19.5	34.3	42.2	3.7	19.8
Less than High School	41.8	30.3	4.6	23.2	29.3	45.0	2.5	23.2	34.1	39.7	-	23.9
$\chi^2$				$P < .01$				$P < .01$				$P < .05$
<b>Poverty Status</b>												
Above 200% FPL	38.3	42.5	4.7	14.4	33.0	48.6	4.1	14.3	36.6	45.0	3.9	14.4
At/Below 200% FPL	33.5	31.8	3.8	30.8	28.4	38.3	2.6	30.8	32.5	34.6	2.0	31.0
$\chi^2$				$P < .0001$				$P < .0001$				$P < .0001$
<b>Marital Status</b>												
Currently married	41.7	36.2	5.0	16.1	36.9	42.7	4.3	16.1	38.3	41.8	3.8	16.1
Not currently married	22.9	36.1	3.0	38.0	19.3	41.5	1.7	37.5	25.9	34.3	2.3	37.5
$\chi^2$				$P < .0001$				$P < .0001$				$P < .0001$

-Fewer than 10 cases or none

Some totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Note: The response "Shared" meant both respondent and her partner;

"You" meant the respondent; and "Partner" meant the respondent's male partner.

Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2008

*California Women's  
Perceptions About Their  
Partners' Involvement in  
Birth Control Use, 2008*

California Department of Public  
Health  
Office of Family Planning

- Currently married women were nearly twice as likely to respond “shared” than were women not currently married in initiating discussions about the use of birth control methods. (42.7 percent vs. 22.9 percent).<sup>4</sup>
- 1 Alan Guttmacher Institute. *In Their Own Right; Addressing the Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs of American Men*. New York, NY. 2002. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/us\\_men.pdf](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/us_men.pdf). Accessed August 4 2009.
  - 2 Three to six respondents replied “don’t know/not sure” across the 3 questions and were excluded from the analysis.
  - 3  $P < .01$  (Chi-square test)
  - 4  $P < .0001$  (Chi-square test)
  - 5  $P < .05$  (Chi-square test)

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