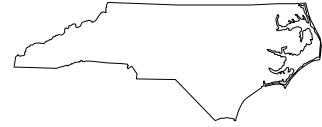


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# Statistical Brief



State Center for Health Statistics

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## FATHER'S AGE FOR TEENAGE LIVE BIRTHS IN NORTH CAROLINA – 1995

by Paul A. Buescher, Ph.D.

### Introduction

Teen pregnancy is a serious problem in North Carolina. The pregnancy rate for mothers under age 20 has changed very little in the last decade. In 1995 there were 22,251 reported teen pregnancies, accounting for 17 percent of all reported pregnancies to North Carolina residents. Live births accounted for 69 percent of the teen pregnancies, abortions accounted for 30 percent, and fetal deaths (20 or more weeks gestation) for one percent. More than three-fourths of these teen pregnancies were to unmarried mothers. Fifty-eight percent were to women ages 18 and 19.

Many factors contribute to pregnancy among teens, including insufficient family involvement and counseling, insufficient health education programs, and a lack of access to contraceptive services. Perhaps less recognized is the sometimes startling gap in age between the father and the pregnant teen, pointing to inappropriate sexual involvement by adult men. This report uses information from the live birth certificate, which contains mother's age and father's age, to address this issue.

In 1995 there were 15,466 live births to North Carolina teens. Of these births, 3,949 (26%) were to teens who were married. These births to married mothers are excluded from this report. Of the remaining 11,517 births to unmarried teens, 6,643 (58%) did not have age of the father reported on the birth certificate, so these births are also excluded. We do not know if the births with known father's age are representative of the births with missing father's age.

### Results

Table 1 presents the range of reported father's age for each single year of age of the mother. It is clear from this table that, in some cases, much older men are involved in the pregnancies of unmarried teens.

Figure 1 shows the average (mean) difference between mother's age and father's age, by single years of mother's age. The average father's age ranges from 18 to 22, but the average gap between mother's and father's age is much larger at the youngest maternal ages.

Figure 2 shows, for unmarried mothers under age 18, the percentage of births where the father was age 18 or older. Even for the youngest teen mothers (who had father's age reported on the birth certificate), half or more of the fathers were age 18 or older.



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N.C. Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources

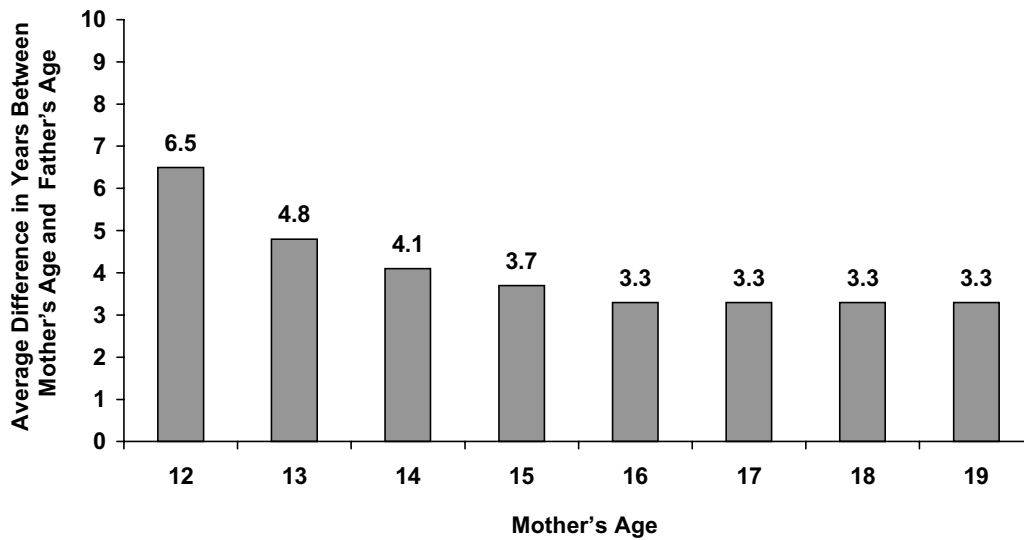
**Table 1**

**1995 North Carolina Resident Live Births to Unmarried Teens:  
Range of Father’s Age for Each Mother’s Age**

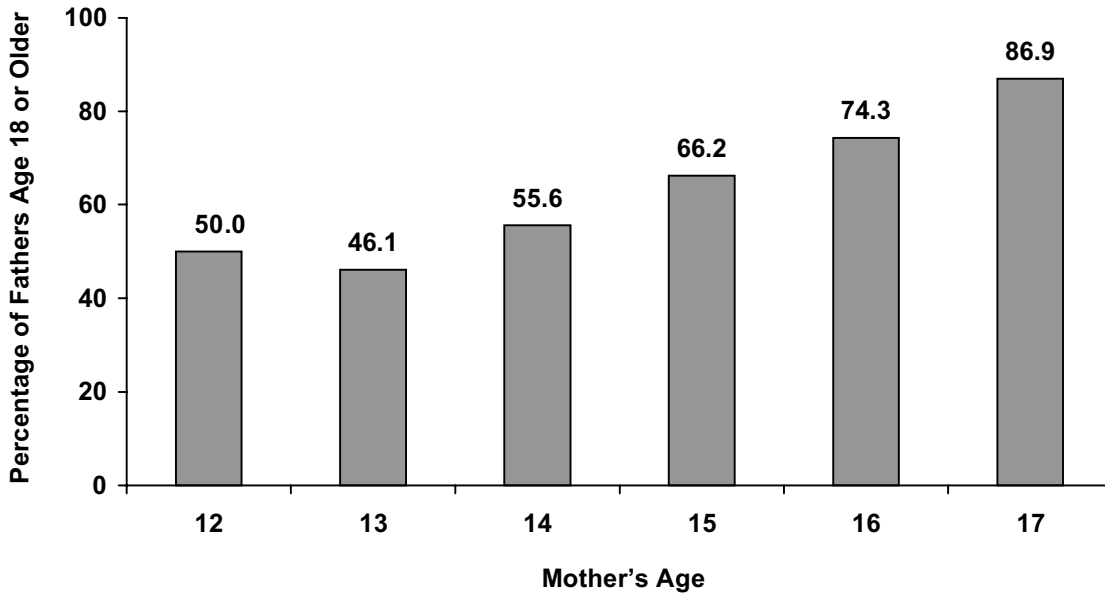
Mother’s Age	Total Number of Live Births	Live Births with Father’s Age Reported		Reported Father’s Age	
		Number	Percent	Youngest	Oldest
11	2	0	0.0	-	-
12	14	2	14.3	17	20
13	80	13	16.3	15	22
14	313	63	20.1	14	25
15	809	263	32.5	14	31
16	1,658	622	37.5	15	41
17	2,510	1,075	42.8	14	43
18	2,984	1,340	44.9	16	38
19	3,147	1,496	47.5	16	51

**Figure 1**

**1995 North Carolina Resident Live Births to Unmarried Teens:  
Average Difference Between Mother’s Age and Father’s Age,  
by Mother’s Age**



**Figure 2**  
**1995 North Carolina Resident Live Births**  
**to Unmarried Teens Under Age 18:**  
**Percentage of Fathers Age 18 or Older**



**Policy Implications**

Teen pregnancy is a complex problem with many causes. This report suggests that in many cases teen pregnancies are not a result of peer pressure, since older men are frequently involved in the pregnancies of unmarried teens in North Carolina. In addition to focusing on the choice and will power of teenage

girls and boys, pregnancy prevention programs need to address the role of adult men in teenage pregnancy. In addition to more public education, this problem may be reduced by better enforcing current laws and establishing additional legal and financial consequences for adult fathers of unmarried teen mothers.

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Information is timely and relevant .....  Yes  No

Charts and graphs are clear and concise .....  Yes  No

Enough detail was presented on each topic .....  Yes  No

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For more information about this data:  
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