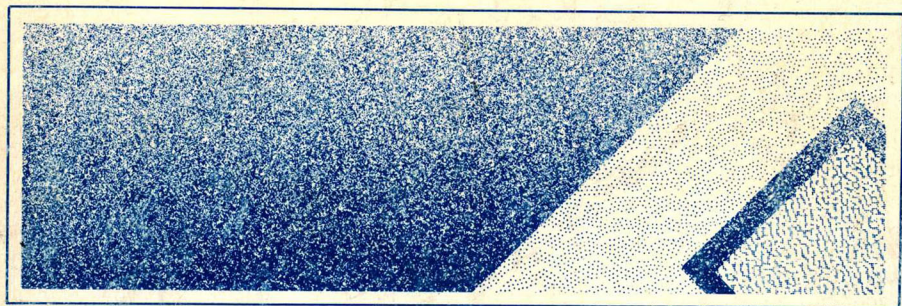


# Sex and Pregnancy in Adolescence

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MELVIN ZELNIK  
JOHN F. KANTNER  
KATHLEEN FORD

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Published in Cooperation with the  
National Council on Family Relations

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## FOREWORD

For many years, research and applied professionals have been reading with great interest the many articles published by Jack Kantner and Mel Zelnik reporting results of their national studies of adolescent female sexuality and fertility control. Anyone who had the slightest interest at all in the topic is familiar with their work. And all of us have been eagerly awaiting the time when they would compare their two studies and provide us with the kinds of interpretations and explanations their rich and unique data deserve.

This book fulfills our expectations by providing detailed analyses of the sexual activity, contraception, and pregnancy outcomes of adolescent women during 1971 and again in 1976. The authors supply numerous insights in helping us to try to grasp these complex phenomena; but they also point out that, as yet, we possess no "easy answers" as far as guiding social policy addressing the matter of unwed motherhood is concerned. I am very pleased to welcome this long-awaited contribution into the NCFR-Sage Series. I am sure that the reader will become as convinced as I that it is an important step on the road toward developing meaningful social policy regarding adolescent sexuality and unwed motherhood.

*John Scanzoni*

Series Editor

National Council on Family Relations

Book Series





## P R E F A C E

The facts and figures presented in this book are based for the most part on two national surveys of young women aged 15 through 19, the first survey conducted in 1971, the second in 1976. Previously published articles based on these two surveys were concerned largely with levels, trends, and group differences in premarital sex, contraceptive use, and pregnancy-related behavior, and with the probability of the occurrence of certain of these events. In this book we attempt to see behind these findings, and in the concluding chapter look briefly at changes since 1976 as revealed by a third, yet-to-be-analyzed, survey carried out in 1979.

Prior to the publication of this book, we published very little that attempted to explain these different aspects of adolescent behavior. Our decision to proceed as we did, that is, by suspending efforts to account for the behavior until we had rather fully described it, was not one we reached easily or without some subsequent misgivings. We did feel, however, an obligation to respond to the demands of those concerned with helping young women who are faced with the risk or the reality of a premarital pregnancy that we make available as quickly as possible information about levels and differentials in adolescent reproductive behavior—information that prior to these surveys was not available. Thus, for example, we gave first priority to the question of the magnitude of the problem of how many young women have had intercourse and second priority to the factors that “cause” premarital intercourse. Even though many readers may not be familiar with our earlier publications, we have kept to a minimum the presentation of material contained there. However, each of the analytical chapters in this book begins with a set of purely descriptive tables that characterize the behavior in question as to levels, trends (1971 to 1976), and selected group differences. These tables will be of interest to those whose policy or programmatic interests require that they know