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The Link between Couples' Pregnancy Intentions and Behavior: Does It Matter Who Is Asked?

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Abstract

CONTEXT—Previous research has found pregnancy intentions are associated with some pregnancy behaviors and measures of infant health. However, most studies have relied on women's reports of intentions and have examined only maternal behaviors.

METHODS—Data collected from mothers and fathers in the baseline Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (1998–2000) are used to examine an alternate measure of pregnancy intention—whether either parent considered abortion when they learned of the pregnancy—and whether it is associated with men's and women's pregnancy behaviors or infant birthweight. The association between outcomes and pregnancy intention is explored with multivariate probit regressions for 737 married and 2,366 unmarried couples.

RESULTS—Unmarried mothers are less likely to initiate early prenatal care and unmarried fathers are less likely to make cash or in-kind contributions during the pregnancy when one or both parents considered abortion. Mothers' reports of having considered abortion are associated with a statistically significant 12 percentage point decrease in early prenatal care initiation. Paternal contributions are a statistically significant 6–10 percentage points lower when the father considered abortion and 6–14 percentage points lower when both parents considered abortion.

CONCLUSIONS—Findings not only differ by each parent's intentions but also by which parent reported paternal contributions. Therefore, future research should examine measures of pregnancy intention and paternal behaviors reported by both partners. These findings may have implications for policies and programs aimed at promoting young women's and men's sexual and reproductive health.

Introduction

A large literature examines the links between pregnancy intentions and infant health and development, generally finding that unwanted or mistimed pregnancies lead to delayed prenatal care and other negative outcomes. One limitation of this literature is that it has almost exclusively focused on maternal reports of pregnancy intention. A study by Korenman, Kaestner, and Joyce (1) which looks at fathers' as well as mothers' pregnancy

intentions, finds that paternal intentions (as reported by mothers) also matter for some outcomes. In this paper, we take advantage of data collected from fathers and mothers in a representative sample of unmarried parents in large urban areas to look at an alternate measure of pregnancy intention—whether either parent considered abortion at the time they learned of the pregnancy—and whether it is associated with men’s and women’s behavior during the pregnancy and infant birth weight. In addition to considering pregnancy intentions from the perspectives of fathers and mothers, the Fragile Families data allow us to investigate paternal as well as maternal behaviors.

Background

In 2001, almost half of pregnancies to women in the United States were unintended, with rates of unintended pregnancies higher among unmarried, younger, lower income, less educated, and racial and ethnic minority women (2). Understanding the consequences of an unintended pregnancy is important given evidence suggesting that parents’ pregnancy intentions are predictive of their children’s physical and emotional well-being both in the short and long-term (e.g., 3; 4). For example, women who report that the pregnancy was unwanted have been found to exhibit some behaviors that are negatively associated with early child health, such as late initiation of prenatal care (4; 5; 6; 7). Previous research has also identified a link between mothers’ pregnancy intentions and children’s low birth weights (4; 8), although some of these results are mixed and others may not be causal.

Previous studies have typically focused on mothers’ pregnancy intentions rather than considering the intentions of both parents, in part, because most surveys have failed to collect information about paternal intentions. However, a pregnancy that is intended by one partner is not always intended by both partners (9). Using women’s reports, Williams (10) reports that close to one-third of partners in the 1988 National Survey of Family Growth had different childbearing desires, and that women who were never married, younger, Black, and had less than a high school education were less likely to share a desire to have a child with their partners. Furthermore, studies using couple data have shown that examining the reports of both partners may better predict fertility and family outcomes (11; 9; 12). Of particular relevance to this study, Korenman, Kaestner, and Joyce (1), found that mothers were more likely to report behaviors associated with adverse health outcomes (e.g., delaying prenatal care) if the pregnancy was unintended by both or either parent according to women’s reports. Although maternal intentions seemed to matter more than paternal intentions, early outcomes were better when a pregnancy was intended by both parents, suggesting fathers’ views were also important.

Despite calls for including men in research on fertility and pregnancy resolution decisions (e.g., 13; 14; 9), these studies using couple data have also typically relied on women’s reports, rather than examining their male partners’ intentions directly. The use of such proxy reports may not matter much in analyses of married couples, but unmarried women and those who are more disadvantaged may be unable to report their partners’ intentions accurately or may be unaware of their partners’ preferences (13; 10).

A few studies have examined information reported directly by men but without including women's views. Drawing on a national study of adolescent males, Marsiglio and Shehan (15) found young men were less likely to support the idea of an unmarried woman having an abortion if they themselves would accept an unplanned pregnancy or believed that men should be financially responsible for children born following an unplanned pregnancy. A recent study of (mostly married) resident fathers showed that men who reported they did not want the pregnancy were less likely to exhibit paternal warmth to their 9-month old infants, while those who wanted the pregnancy sooner than it occurred were more likely to display nurturing behaviors (16).

Previous studies show that fathers' contributions of cash are associated with larger positive impacts on child developmental outcomes than are other sources of income (17; 18). However, little research has examined how fathers' pregnancy intentions are associated with their early economic support of mothers, particularly when their desires diverge from those of their partner's. We also know very little about the relationship between men's pregnancy intentions and pregnancy behaviors and outcomes when parents are unmarried or do not live together. Compared to married parents, unmarried parents are not only more likely to have children unintentionally (4) but they also have fewer economic resources. Their children may also be at risk for early health problems (e.g., 19).

This analysis extends previous research in several ways. First, we investigate the relationship between partners' views of the pregnancy and early behaviors and birth outcomes in a representative sample of parents who have recently experienced a non-marital birth. Second, we make use of couple data from mothers and fathers of the same child to examine the implications of either or both parents intending the pregnancy. Third, we examine direct reports from fathers in the study. Finally, we investigate paternal behaviors during the pregnancy in addition to maternal behaviors.

Hypotheses

There are several reasons why we would expect parents' behaviors during pregnancy to be associated with their pregnancy intentions. When a woman does not intend a pregnancy, and particularly if she is unsure whether the pregnancy will be carried to term, she may postpone initiation of prenatal care for a variety of reasons, including lack of support from her partner, a delay in insurance coverage, lack of income, or the challenges of caring for older children. It is also possible that unintended pregnancies will be discovered by women later in gestation (4). Similarly, male partners may be less likely to provide financial or in-kind support if they are unaware of the pregnancy, have conflicted feelings about the pregnancy, or are unsure of the outcome.

Korenman, Kaestner, and Joyce (1) put forth several hypotheses about how the pregnancy intentions of men or women could influence infant health outcomes. The dose-response hypothesis would suggest that having both parents report that the pregnancy was unintended would be worse than having either parent report this, and having either parent report unintendedness would be worse than having neither parent report this. Therefore, we would not expect the relationship between having both parents consider abortion and early

outcomes to be the same as having only the mother or only the father consider abortion. A second hypothesis suggests that the mothers' intentions would be more consequential for birth outcomes than fathers' intentions, since mothers are more instrumentally involved in the pregnancy. However, they and other authors have also recognized an alternative scenario in which men's intentions pregnancy would be more consequential if women treat all pregnancies the same regardless of intention while fathers favor intended pregnancies. If fathers' intentions also matter, we would expect outcomes to vary not only by whether the mother considered abortion but also by whether the father considered this.

If we extend these hypotheses to partners' behaviors during the pregnancy, women may be more likely to delay prenatal care and men may be less likely to provide support if both partners reported the pregnancy was unintended compared to only one parent reporting this. At the same time, mothers' intentions may matter more than fathers' for the initiation of prenatal care and fathers' intentions may matter more than mothers' for paternal contributions.

Data and Methods

Data

This analysis uses baseline data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study collected in 1998–2000. The Fragile Families Study follows a new birth cohort of children in 20 U.S. cities to learn more about the circumstances and experiences of unmarried parents and their children in the early years of their child's life. The total sample includes 4,898 births, 3,712 of which occurred to unmarried parents and 1,186 occurred to a comparison sample of married parents. In this study, we use data from the subset of 16 cities where the unmarried sample is nationally representative of non-marital births in cities with populations over 200,000 (20). Sampling was based on hospital of birth, with a goal of representing hospitals with 75% of unmarried births in all cities but the largest two, Chicago and New York. Thus, married parents in the data were those giving birth in hospitals with a large share of unmarried births.

New mothers were initially interviewed in person at the hospital, and the fathers of their children were interviewed either at the hospital or someplace else as soon as possible after the birth. Baseline response rates were high, ranging from 82%–87% for unmarried and married mothers respectively. Approximately 76%–88% of their partners also participated in the baseline survey. In some specifications, we verified the robustness of our findings to restricting the sample to couples in which both partners completed the baseline survey. Although we primarily focus on parents who were unmarried at the time of their child's birth, we also present some results for samples of parents who were married at the birth.

Measures

The infant health outcomes we analyze include mothers' reports of the child's birth weight and whether the child was low birth weight (birth weight of 2,500 grams or less). Our measure of maternal behavior is indicated by whether the mother reported she initiated prenatal care during the first trimester. Paternal behaviors are measured by both parents'

reports of whether the father contributed money or in-kind help to the mother during the pregnancy. About one-quarter of fathers did not participate in the baseline survey. Thus, the paternal reports for these measures are missing and these observations are omitted from the analysis of fathers' reports. Questions about paternal support were asked in the sample of unmarried parents only.

Our key independent variables are measures of whether both parents, the mother only, or the father only reported having considered abortion at the time they learned of the pregnancy. In some specifications, we use an indicator for whether either parent considered abortion. We also include indicators for whether either parent refused or did not know the answer to these questions and for whether the father did not complete the interview.

Pregnancy intendedness is typically measured by whether the parent says the pregnancy was unwanted or mistimed. Although a measure of whether either parent or both parents considered abortion is unusual, we use this indicator for a practical reason: the Fragile Families survey did not ask the more standard questions about pregnancy intentions. However, the benefits of having a measure reported independently by the father and mother outweigh the possible disadvantages of using this indicator. As with most surveys measuring pregnancy intentions, parents were asked this question retrospectively. There may be less stigma associated with parents' reporting they considered an abortion after having a child than reporting that an existing birth was unwanted. Another advantage to using this measure is that complicated pregnancies or pregnancies with poor outcomes may lead women or men to retrospectively say that the pregnancy was unwanted, and this could cause researchers to erroneously conclude that unwanted pregnancies had worse outcomes. This measure may also be of intrinsic interest, given how little is known about family outcomes in situations where men and women disagreed about terminating a pregnancy (14). There are also disadvantages of using this measure. A point-in-time measure of whether a partner considered abortion when he or she learned of the pregnancy may not reflect that partner's later views of the pregnancy. Partners may also have learned of the pregnancy at different points in time.* (FN A)

We include individual-level controls for the mother, father, and child and for multi-partner fertility. Maternal controls include education (having less than a high school degree, exactly a high school degree, some college but not four year degree, and maternal education not being reported); age (under 20, 20–24, or 25–29), race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, other non-Hispanic, or race or Hispanic ethnicity or race being missing).* (FN B) Paternal controls are similar but also include a category for fathers' age being unreported. Child controls include dummies for the child being male or the sex being unreported, and for whether the birth was a multiple one. Month of birth dummies are also included to adjust for any systematic correlations between the births in each hospital and time of the year the data

* FN A While not an issue for our other measures, this could be a problem for our analyses of early receipt of prenatal care, which is impossible for women who learn of the pregnancy after the first trimester is over. We also consider receipt of prenatal care in the fourth month, and our conclusions are unchanged. In the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, of 3,012 women reporting a pregnancy during the previous five years, 95% reported that they knew they were pregnant by the 13th week of the pregnancy (21).

* FN B Thus, the omitted reference category for maternal characteristics is a non-Hispanic white woman with a four-year college degree aged 30 or older.

were collected as well as any systematic differences in the characteristics of parents who gave birth during the year (July, the most common month, is excluded). Multi-partner fertility is indicated by whether the father has biological children with another partner, the mother has biological children with another partner, or this cannot be determined (the omitted category is whether the parents have the same number of biological children).

Analytic Techniques

We present results from several analyses. First we present the summary statistics for our samples of married and unmarried parents. We then show the distribution of fathers' reports of whether he considered abortion for the overall samples and for each category of mothers' reports of having considered abortion and use a contingency table Chi-squared test to predict whether these reports and marital status are statistically independent from each other. Next, we present the average outcomes for our samples of married and unmarried parents by parents' reports of having considered abortion, using *t*-tests to examine differences between means. Finally, we predict our child health and parental behavior outcomes as a function of pregnancy intentions at the time the parent learned of the pregnancy; maternal, paternal, and child characteristics; and fixed effects for the month of birth and city in which the birth took place (New York is omitted). For the 0–1 outcomes, we present results of multivariate probit analysis and use Chi-squared statistics to conduct additional hypothesis tests about the coefficients estimated from these models.^{* (FN C)} We also present the results of least squares regressions predicting birth weight, with the same right hand side variables as in the categorical analysis. Because the sample design was complex, assuming independence among observations might lead to misleading conclusions about inference. To avoid this, our standard errors are adjusted for an arbitrary correlation structure within city, as well as being robust to possible heteroskedasticity.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 presents the summary statistics for our sample of unmarried and married parents and indicates results from *t*-tests of whether these means differ significantly. These descriptive results show that married parents in the study have higher levels of education, are older, and are less likely to have children with another partner than unmarried parents. Married parents are also more likely to be non-Hispanic white or other non-Hispanic and are less likely to be non-Hispanic black or Hispanic than unmarried parents.

Table 2 presents the distribution of fathers' reports of whether they considered abortion by mothers' reports. The descriptive results show that a minority of parents in either the sample of married or unmarried parents considered abortion, although unmarried parents were somewhat more likely to consider this option than married parents. For example, 7% of married mothers and 3% of married fathers said they considered abortion compared to 30%

* FN C The underlying latent index y_{is}^* has the basic form: $y_{is}^* = A_{is}\alpha + X_{is}\beta + S_s\gamma + e_{is}$, where e_{is} is distributed standard normal. The observed outcomes y_{it} are 0 if the latent index y_{is}^* is less than zero and 1 otherwise. We model the outcome variables (y_{it}) as a function of various controls X_{is} for child i in city s . A_{is} are our key independent variables (measures of pregnancy intention). X_{is} are a series of individual level controls for the mother, father, and child. S_s represent city fixed effects and e_{is} represent unobservable determinants.

of unmarried mothers and 16% of unmarried fathers. Overall, a simple contingency table Pearson Chi-squared test overwhelmingly rejects that marital status and the parental reports of intendedness are independent (Chi-squared statistic of 973, p-value of 0.000).

Although parents' initial thoughts about the pregnancy were most often the same, it was not infrequent for the mother to consider abortion and the father not to or vice versa. For example, among unmarried couples where the mothers did not consider abortion (row 2 of the lower panel), 12% of their male partners considered abortion. In unmarried couples where the mothers considered abortion (row 3 of the lower panel), 46% of the fathers reported not having considered abortion. Among married mothers who considered abortion (row 3 of the upper panel), fully 77% of their spouses did not.

Means for the outcome measures are presented in Table 3 for unmarried parents (panel A) and for married parents (panel B).^{* (FN D)} Values are marked with one or two asterisks if a *t*-test shows that the value differs significantly from that for couples where neither parent considered abortion at the 5 or 1 percent level. These results suggest that early initiation of prenatal care is less frequent among unmarried parents if the mother or both parents considered abortion (in both groups, 71% received early care) compared to when neither parent considered this option (82%). Prenatal care in the first trimester is also less frequent among married parents if the mother only considered abortion (80%) compared to neither parent (91%).

We also see that unmarried men are less likely to provide cash or in-kind contributions to the mother when at least one parent considered abortion. For example, results show that only about 80% of fathers report that they provided in-kind assistance to the mother when both parents considered abortion, 83% provided this in-kind support when only the father considered abortion, and 90% provided it when only the mother considered abortion (bottom row of Panel A). The overall pattern of results varies by which parent reports paternal contributions.

Birth weight and incidence of low birth weight do not vary by whether either parent considered abortion in either sample. Taken together the means suggest that behaviors during pregnancy seem to be more significantly related to our measure of pregnancy intention than birth weight. Because these simple mean comparisons may merely reflect other differences, however, we turn to multivariate analysis.

Multivariate Analysis

Table 4 presents selected results from unweighted probit regressions of the determinants of early prenatal care initiation, of paternal contributions during the pregnancy, and of the incidence of low birth weight.^{* (FN E)} Among unmarried parents (columns 1 and 2), the regression results suggest that mothers are less likely to initiate early prenatal care and fathers are less likely to contribute cash and in-kind contributions during the pregnancy

^{* FN D}Summary statistics for the unmarried and married samples for the control variables are presented in Table 3.

^{* FN E}In sensitivity analyses not presented here, we found that the results were similar qualitatively and in statistical significance when we used nationally representative weights in the regressions (results available upon request). Means for the control variables are presented in Table 1.

when both parents considered abortion. In order to get a sense of magnitudes, we also present the average marginal effects of these variables. When evaluating the implied marginal effects for couples with data on abortion considerations, we find that having both parents consider abortion is associated with a 12 percentage point decrease in the likelihood of obtaining early prenatal care. This is a large decrease in the probability of obtaining early prenatal care, compared to the baseline value for unmarried women of 82% receiving care when neither parent considered abortion.* (FN F) The marginal effects for both parents having considered abortion for fathers' cash contributions are either a 6 percentage point decrease by mothers' reports or a 10 percentage point decrease by fathers' reports. The analogous marginal effects for both parents having considered abortion on in-kind contributions is a 10 percentage point decrease by mothers' reports or 14 percentage point drop by fathers' reports.

Having the mother only consider abortion is also negatively associated with mothers' reports of all parental behaviors and with fathers' reports of in-kind help, while having the father only consider abortion is negatively associated with both parents' reports of fathers' cash contributions and with fathers' reports of paternal in-kind contributions. For example, having the father only consider abortion is associated with a 6 percentage point decrease in paternal reports of cash contributions, and a 10 percentage point decrease in paternal reports of in-kind support. None of these intention variables is significantly associated with low birth weight for unmarried parents (or, in least squares regressions not reported here, with actual birth weight).

Among married parents, (columns 4 and 5), the pattern of the coefficients is similar to what we see for the unmarried parents for early prenatal care, although the coefficients are imprecisely estimated. As for the unmarried parents, low birth weight is not statistically significantly associated with any of the measures of pregnancy intention for married parents, although all of the standard errors are large here.* (FN G)

One of the objectives of this paper is to examine if it matters whether either the mother or the father or both considered abortion. We have seen it does. We also find that outcomes vary by which parent reported the fathers' contributions. Although having both parents consider abortion is always associated with lower paternal contributions regardless of who reports these contributions, the results differ for mothers' and fathers' reports of paternal support when we consider situations in which only one parent considered abortion. Having either the mother only or the father only consider abortion is negatively associated with mothers' reports of cash contributions or fathers' reports of in-kind support. By contrast, the father-only considering abortion matters for fathers' reports of cash support and mother-only considering abortion matters for mothers' reports of in-kind support.

* FN F One concern may be that we are merely picking up cases where the mother realized she was pregnant after the first trimester was over. As noted above in footnote B, in the 2002 NSFG, for pregnancies to women 15–44 during the previous 5 years, in 95%, the women said knew they were pregnant by the 13th week. We also have considered the outcome “began prenatal care before the end of the fourth month”, and while the implied average marginal effect is smaller, it is still -6 percentage points.

* FN G Also note that in the results for low birth weight for married parents, no coefficient is included for both parents' having considered abortion because having both married parents report having considered abortion perfectly predicted low birth weight.

To examine these findings in greater depth, we conduct additional hypothesis tests about whether it matters which parent reports having considered abortion. First, we test whether fathers' pregnancy intentions are irrelevant (if they are, it suggests there is little harm to relying on maternal reports of pregnancy intention). This is a joint test of (1) the mother-only coefficient being equal to the coefficient for both parents' having considered abortion, and of (2) the father-only coefficient being equal to zero (the mean outcome for fathers-only considering abortion being the same as that of the reference category, neither parent having considered abortion, conditional on the other controls). These tests reject the hypothesis that fathers' intentions do not matter for his contributions of cash support (Chi-squared statistics of 13.0 or 9.3, p-value of 0.002 or 0.01) or for his reports of in-kind support (Chi-squared statistic of 53, p-value of 0.0000). However, the Chi-squared tests fail to reject that the fathers' reports are irrelevant for early prenatal care or for mothers' reports of fathers' in-kind contributions.

We also examine whether there is any evidence against the hypothesis that outcomes are no different when both parents report they considered abortion compared to having only one parent consider abortion. Therefore, we test whether the coefficients for the mother only, the father only, or both parents having considered abortion are the same. We can reject this null hypothesis for early prenatal care initiation and for fathers' reports of cash or in-kind contributions. For mothers' reports of fathers' cash or in-kind contributions, we see that we cannot reject the equality of the coefficients.

Given the mixed findings about which parents' intentions are important, it is also interesting to know if any parent's abortion considerations matter. Following Korenman, Kaestner, and Joyce (1), the last stage of the analysis considers whether having both parents or either parent consider abortion is associated with receipt of early prenatal care, paternal contributions, birth weight (results from linear regression), or low birth weight (Table 5). Consistent with the other results, having one or both parents consider abortion is negatively associated with early prenatal care and paternal contributions of cash or in-kind help for unmarried parents. Pregnancy intentions are not significantly related to birth weight or low birth weight for married or unmarried parents.

Discussion

This study extends previous research by including direct information about from men about their pregnancy intentions and their early support of mothers. Consistent with research by Korenman, Kaestner, and Joyce (1), we find that the pregnancy intentions of one or both parents are strongly associated with parents' behavior during the pregnancy but are not related to children's birth weight. We also find that results differ by each parent's intentions and by which parent reported paternal support. Therefore, these findings suggest it will be important for future research to examine measures of pregnancy intention and men's behavior reported by both parents.

When partners view the pregnancy differently, each parent's intentions appear to be most closely tied to their own self-reported behavior during the pregnancy. Unmarried mothers' intentions may be better predictors of early prenatal care initiation because they have more

direct control over the outcome of the pregnancy than fathers. Some qualitative evidence from the Fragile Families Study indicates that fathers may feel less financial (but not emotional) obligation to provide support when they had conflicts with the mother over the pregnancy, suggesting one possible explanation why men's own intentions may matter more for their contributions during the pregnancy (22). However, we find here that paternal support was most consistently associated with both partner's having considered abortion when they learned of it. Previous research also shows that men and women are more likely to give different reports of paternal involvement when they have conflicts in their relationship (23). Our findings suggest that parents' feelings about the pregnancy may be associated with either their perceptions of paternal support or with actual paternal support.

Our results also parallel those of other studies (1, 4) in suggesting that pregnancy intentions may be more strongly related to parents' behaviors during pregnancy than they are to birth weight. Because parents in the Fragile Families Study were asked to describe whether they considered abortion at a particular point-in-time—namely when they learned of the pregnancy, parents' initial responses may not reflect their later feelings about the pregnancy. Therefore, parents' immediate reactions to the pregnancy may have been more closely tied to behaviors that occurred around this time than to outcomes measured at the birth.

Recent policy debate has focused on understanding and avoiding unintended pregnancies among young men and women. New research and policy efforts around men's sexual and reproductive health have also considered how to encourage men's involvement in family planning, prenatal health care, and parenting (e.g., 14, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28) through a combination of education, counseling, clinical and supportive services (24). Knowing more about men's pregnancy intentions and how they are linked to early support of mothers may inform these discussions.

Although a major advantage of the Fragile Families data set is the inclusion of reports from unmarried fathers as well as mothers, an important limitation of the study is that standard questions about pregnancy intention were not asked of parents. Future research investigating the consequences of pregnancy intention should examine measures of pregnancy timing and wantedness which can more easily be compared to those used in previous research. As in other surveys, a measure asking parents how they felt when they learned of the pregnancy may be subject to some recall and social desirability bias. It is also possible that differences we see between men and women's pregnancy intentions may simply reflect differences in the points in time they became aware of the pregnancy. Finally, the patterns we have seen here may not hold for pregnancies which do not result in a live birth. In addition to acknowledging these measurement issues, we note that the patterns we have uncovered are descriptive and may not indicate causal relationships. Given our cross-sectional data, it is also possible that these associations may be caused by other omitted factors we cannot control for.

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TABLE 1

Selected child, maternal, and paternal characteristics among Fragile Families and Wellbeing Survey respondents, by parents' marital status at birth

Characteristics	Unmarried parents	Married parents
<i>Child/birth</i>		
Child is male (%)	52	55
Multiple birth (%)	2	2
<i>Maternal characteristics</i>		
No high school degree (%)	40**	15
High school degree, no college	32**	18
Some college, no 4-year degree	24**	29
4-year degree	3**	38
Age less than 20	22**	3
Age 20–24	43**	18
Age 25–29	20**	29
Age at least 30	15**	50
Non-Hispanic black	44**	18
Hispanic	33**	25
Other non-Hispanic	3**	8
Non-Hispanic white	18**	46
<i>Paternal characteristics</i>		
No paternal interview	24**	10
No high school degree (%)	31**	14
High school degree, no college	26**	19
Some college, no 4-year degree	18**	27
4-year degree	2**	30
Age less than 20	9**	0.4
Age 20–24	29**	10
Age 25–29	18**	22
Age at least 30	20**	58
Non-Hispanic black	33**	15
Hispanic	24*	21
Other non-Hispanic	4**	8
Non-Hispanic white	11**	43
<i>Biological kids with other partners</i>		
Mother has some	20**	8
Father has some	17**	9
None or unknown	63**	83

* denotes means significantly different from each other at $p < 0.05$, and ** at $p < 0.01$.

Notes: Means for maternal, paternal and child/birth characteristics reported for children of unmarried parents (column 1) or married parents (column 2).

TABLE 2

Percentage distribution of births, by whether father considered abortion, according to whether mother considered abortion and marital status, Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Survey respondents

Mother's report of whether she considered abortion	N (% of total)	Father's report of whether he considered abortion				Total
		Father did not consider	Father considered	No father answer	No father interview	
Married parents	737 (100.0)	86.4	3.4	0.3	9.9	100.0
Mother did not consider	682 (93.0)	87.4	2.3	0.1	10.1	100.0
Mother considered	53 (7.2)	77.4	15.1	0.0	7.5	100.0
No answer	2 (0.003)	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
Unmarried parents	2,366 (100.0)	59.8	15.8	0.6	23.8	100.0
Mother did not consider	1,628 (68.8)	67.0	12.0	0.3	20.8	100.0
Mother considered	702 (29.7)	46.2	25.4	0.4	28.1	100.0
No answer	36 (1.5)	0.0	5.6	19.4	75.0	100.0

Notes: Marital status is measured as of birth. Fathers' and mothers' self-reports at time of birth/when interview completed of whether they considered abortion when they learned of pregnancy.

TABLE 3

Selected outcomes of behavior during pregnancy, birth outcomes, and child, maternal, and paternal characteristics among Fragile Families and Wellbeing Survey respondents, by parents' reports of whether they considered abortion.

<i>Summary statistics by parents' reports of having considered abortion</i>						
A. Sample of unmarried parents	Neither	Both	Mother Only	Father Only	DK/RF	No father Interview
Birth weight (lbs)	7.07	6.99	7.07	6.91	7.04	7.02
Low birth weight (%)	9.7	10.9	9.3	11.1	5.9	8.5
Any prenatal care (%)	97.8	97.2	97.5	99.5	100.0	97.3
Prenatal care initiated first trimester	81.8	71.0**	70.5**	80.9	62.5	74.3**
Mother's report						
Father contributed cash (%)	92.1	87.0	84.7**	83.5**	57.1**	53.0**
Father contributed in-kind (%)	91.2	79.8**	82.4**	86.7	42.9**	47.7**
Father's report						
Father contributed cash (%)	94.1	84.0**	91.8	88.7**	75.0**	--
Father contributed in-kind (%)	94.2	79.9**	90.0*	83.0**	50.0**	--
B. Sample of married parents						
Birth weight (lbs)	7.46	7.02	7.69	7.35	5.27**	7.49
Low birth weight (%)	3.4	0.0	4.9	6.3	66.7**	4.2
Any prenatal care (%)	99.2	100.0	97.6	100.0	100.0	100.0
Prenatal care initiated first trimester	91.2	85.7	80.5*	93.8	100.0	83.3*

* denotes significantly different from the mean for neither parent considered abortion at p<0.05, and ** at p<0.01.

Notes: Means in top panel for outcomes reported for unmarried (panel A) or married parents (panel B).

TABLE 4

Coefficients from probit analyses indicating the association between parents' reports of having considered abortion and maternal and paternal behaviors during the pregnancy and low birth weight, by parents' marital status.

Outcome	Unmarried parents			Married parents		
	Coefficient	SE	%-age point change from baseline	Coefficient	SE	%-age point change from baseline
Prenatal care initiated, first trimester						
Both considered abortion	-0.41**	0.15	-12.2	-0.45	0.76	-8.0
Father only considered abortion	-0.01	0.07	-0.4	0.19	0.65	2.4
Mother only considered abortion	-0.39**	0.08	-11.6	-0.36	0.21	-6.0
<i>Chi-squared test (p-value)</i>						
<i>Father irrelevant[†]</i>	0.04 (0.98)			0.27 (0.87)		
<i>Equality of effects^{††}</i>	24.4 (0.000)			2.78 (0.25)		
Mother reports father gave cash in pregnancy						
Both considered abortion	-0.32*	0.15	-5.6			
Father only considered abortion	-0.40**	0.11	-7.1			
Mother only considered abortion	-0.41**	0.08	-7.4			
<i>Chi-squared test (p-value)</i>						
<i>Father irrelevant[†]</i>	13.0 (0.002)					
<i>Equality of effects^{††}</i>	0.4 (0.82)					
Father reports he gave cash in pregnancy						
Both considered abortion	-0.57**	0.18	-9.7			
Father only considered abortion	-0.38*	0.17	-5.6			
Mother only considered abortion	-0.10	0.11	-1.3			
<i>Chi-squared test (p-value)</i>						
<i>Father irrelevant[†]</i>	9.3 (0.01)					
<i>Equality of effects^{††}</i>	8.2 (0.02)					
Mother reports father gave in-kind help in pregnancy						
Both considered abortion	-0.49**	0.12	-10.4			
Father only considered abortion	-0.17	0.13	-3.0			
Mother only considered abortion	-0.42**	0.14	-8.5			

Outcome	Unmarried parents			Married parents		
	Coefficient	SE	%-age point change from baseline	Coefficient	SE	%-age point change from baseline
<i>Chi-squared test (p-value)</i>						
<i>Father irrelevant</i> [†]	3.7 (0.16)					
<i>Equality of effects</i> ^{††}	4.8 (0.09)					
Fathers reports he gave in-kind help in pregnancy						
Both considered abortion	-0.75**	0.12	-14.0			
Father only considered abortion	-0.61***	0.11	-10.4			
Mother only considered abortion	-0.22 *	0.09	-3.0			
<i>Chi-squared test (p-value)</i>						
<i>Father irrelevant</i> [†]	53.0 (0.0000)					
<i>Equality of effects</i> ^{††}	20.3 (0.0000)					
Low birth weight						
Both considered abortion	0.01	0.16	0.1	--		
Father only considered abortion	-0.05	0.11	-0.7	0.73	0.54	9.1
Mother only considered abortion	-0.12	0.12	-1.9	-0.08	0.58	-0.6
<i>Chi-squared test (p-value)</i>						
<i>Father irrelevant</i> [†]	0.8 (0.69)			--		
<i>Equality of effects</i> ^{††}	1.0 (0.61)			1.2 (0.27)		

* denotes coefficient is significant at p<0.05 and **at p<0.01.

[†] Test of joint hypothesis that the coefficient on the mother only having considered abortion equals the coefficient on both parents having considered abortion and that the coefficient on the father only having considered abortion equals the coefficient for neither parent having considered abortion.

^{††} Test that the three coefficients shown are equal.

Notes: Table presents selected coefficients from probit regressions of determinants of maternal and paternal behaviors during pregnancy and whether birth was low birth weight. Columns 1 and 2 present results for the sample of unmarried women, and columns 3 and 4 for married women. Standard errors adjusted for heteroskedasticity and for arbitrary covariance structure within city. Percentage point changes from baseline are 100 times the implied marginal effects. Marginal effects are the average of the predicted marginals for the other Xs across the sample with the relevant intention category set to 1 and 0. Regressions also include controls for whether either parent did not answer the questions about having considered abortion; whether there was no paternal interview; child sex; whether the birth was a multiple; mother's and father's education, race, age, and ethnicity; whether the mother or father had biological children with other partners; and city and month of birth dummies.

TABLE 5

Coefficients from regressions indicating the association between any parent reports having considered abortion and maternal behaviors, paternal behaviors, low birth weight, and birth weight, by parents' marital status.

Outcome	Unmarried parents			Married parents		
	Coefficient	SE	%-age point change from baseline	Coefficient	SE	%-age point change from baseline
Prenatal care initiated, first trimester	-0.30**	0.06	-8.6	-0.26	0.29	-4.1
Mother reports father gave cash in pregnancy	-0.39**	0.07	-6.9			
Father reports he gave cash in pregnancy	-0.31 *	0.13	-4.5			
Mother reports father gave in-kind help in preg.	-0.37**	0.11	-7.4			
Father reports he gave in-kind help in preg.	-0.48**	0.07	-7.8			
Low birth weight	-0.06	0.09	-1.0	0.11	0.45	1.0
Birth weight	0.03	0.06		0.17	0.18	

* denotes coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$, and **at $p < 0.01$.

Notes: Table presents coefficient on whether either or both parents reported having considered abortion from regressions of determinants of maternal and paternal behaviors during pregnancy, whether birth was low birth weight, and of birth weight. Regressions for determinants of maternal and paternal behaviors are probits, regression for determinates of birth weight is ordinary least squares. Columns 1 and 2 present results for the sample of unmarried parents, and columns 3 and 4 for married parents. Standard errors adjusted for heteroskedasticity and for arbitrary covariance structure within city. Percentage point changes from baseline are 100 times the implied marginal effects. Marginal effects are the average of the predicted marginals for the other X s across the sample with the relevant intention category set to 1 and 0. Regressions also include controls for whether either parent did not answer the questions about having considered abortion; whether there was no paternal interview; child sex; whether the birth was a multiple; mother's and father's education, race, age, and ethnicity; whether the mother or father had biological children with other partners; and city and month of birth dummies.