

Consequences of Unintended Childbearing: Comparing New and Conventional Measures of Intention Status

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Abstract

In this poster we explore the relationship between pregnancy intentions and maternal behaviors and infant health outcomes. Findings from past studies have demonstrated a weak and often inconsistent relationship between unintended childbearing and pre and post-natal behaviors and outcomes, possibly because the conventional measure of intention status – intended, mistimed and unwanted – has been inadequate for identifying relevant attitudes and motivations toward childbearing that affect maternal behaviors. The 2002 and 2006-10 National Survey of Family Growth includes multiple measures of intentions and desires which we use to develop new measures of childbearing intentions. We then examine the association between these measures and maternal behaviors and infant health. We compare the strength of the relationships and discuss strategies for identifying the predictive value of the new and the conventional intention status measures on maternal behaviors and infant health.