

Trends in Percent Ever Married by Age and Race/Ethnicity

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Headline/Trends

The percent of men and women who have ever married in the United States increases steadily with age, with nearly 100% of contemporary Americans over the age of 70 having been married at some point in their lives. Men tend to marry at older ages compared with women.¹

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Background

While the vast majority of contemporary Americans eventually marry, their age at marriage matters. Early marriage is associated with an increased risk of marital dissolution compared with marriages that occur to older individuals.² However, only a minority of Americans now marries in their teens or early twenties. Researchers have also found that individuals who have never married report lower overall levels of well-being compared with those who are married,³ although the exact reasons for this are unclear.

Differences by Subgroups

The percentage of black men and women who have ever married is lower for most age brackets than it is for their counterparts of other races/ethnicities. Across all ages in 2001, 57 percent of black men and 58

percent of black women had ever married, compared, for example, to 73 percent of white, non-Hispanic men and 79 percent of white, non-Hispanic women.⁴ The percent of young Hispanic females under the age of 30 who have ever married is higher than other females and males of the same age.

Definition

Data were collected from survey participants who were asked the number of times they had been married. Those who reported being married at least once are included in the “ever married” category. “Ever married” includes those who are currently married, as well as those who are widowed, divorced, or separated.⁵

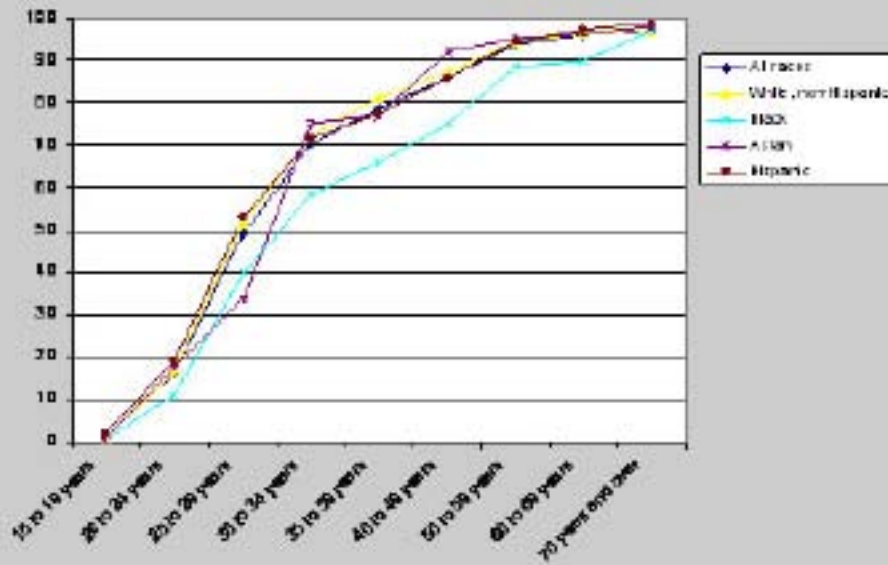
Data Source

Data for “all races” category: Kreider, RM (2005). Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2001, Table 3. Current Population Reports, P70-97. Washington, D. C.: U.S. Census Bureau. Data for individual race categories: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2001 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module.



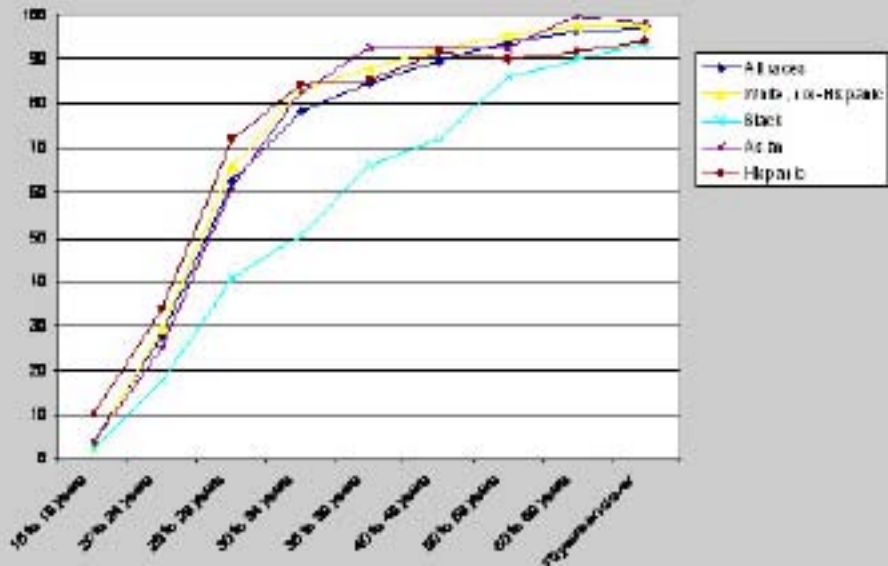
Percentage of Men Ever Married, by Age: 2001

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Percentage of Women Ever Married, by Age: 2001

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Percent Ever Married for People 15 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2001

| Characteristic | Total | 70 | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| | | 15-19 years | 20-24 years | 25-29 years | 30-34 years | 35-39 years | 40-49 years | 50-59 years | 60-69 years | years and over |
| All MEN | 69.1 | 0.9 | 16.1 | 49.2 | 70.5 | 78.5 | 85.8 | 93.7 | 95.7 | 96.7 |
| White Men | 72.6 | 0.6 | 16.3 | 51.7 | 71.9 | 81.0 | 87.2 | 94.3 | 96.0 | 96.5 |
| Black Men | 56.7 | 0.8 | 10.8 | 39.4 | 58.5 | 66.0 | 74.9 | 88.4 | 89.8 | 96.9 |
| Asian Men | 66.6 | 0.7 | 17.4 | 33.3 | 75.1 | 76.9 | 92.1 | 95.0 | 96.3 | 97.9 |
| Hispanic Men | 60.0 | 1.9 | 18.9 | 53.1 | 71.8 | 77.1 | 85.7 | 94.2 | 97.2 | 98.7 |
| All WOMEN | 75.4 | 3.7 | 27.6 | 62.7 | 78.3 | 84.4 | 89.5 | 93.6 | 95.9 | 96.7 |
| White Women | 79.3 | 2.7 | 29.1 | 65.9 | 82.9 | 87.7 | 91.9 | 95.0 | 97.1 | 97.1 |
| Black Women | 58.1 | 2.1 | 17.4 | 40.6 | 50.5 | 66.0 | 72.1 | 85.6 | 89.6 | 93.2 |
| Asian Women | 74.7 | 3.7 | 24.8 | 61.4 | 82.6 | 92.1 | 92.0 | 92.1 | 99.6 | 97.7 |
| Hispanic Women | 70.3 | 10.1 | 33.7 | 72.0 | 84.2 | 85.0 | 91.4 | 89.6 | 91.2 | 93.9 |

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau

1. Kreider, RM (2005). Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2001, Table 3. *Current Population Reports*, P70-97. Washington, D. C.: U.S. Census Bureau.
2. Bumpass, L. L., Martin, T. C., & Sweet, J. A. (1991). The impact of family background and early marital factors on marital disruption. *Journal of Family Issues*, 12, 22-42.; South, S. J. (1995). Do you need to shop around? Age at marriage, spousal alternatives, and marital dissolution. *Journal of Family Issues*, 16, 432-449.; Moore, K. A., & Waite, L. J. (1981). Marital dissolution, early motherhood, and early marriage. *Social Forces*, 60(1), 20-40.
3. Waite, L. J. (1995). Does marriage matter? *Demography*, 32, 483-507.; Waite, L. J., & Gallagher, M. (2001). *The case for marriage: Why married people are happier, healthier, and better off financially*. New York: Broadway Books.
4. U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2001 Panel, Wave 2 Topical Module.
5. Kreider, RM (2005). Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2001, Table 3. *Current Population Reports*, P70-97. Washington, D. C.: U.S. Census Bureau.