

# NPRST



**Navy Personnel Research, Studies, and Technology**

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research at work

## 2014 Navy Pregnancy and Parenthood Survey Executive Summary

### Purpose

As of June 2014, women make up 18% of the Navy and are 23% of the Navy's FY15 enlisted recruiting goal. Because of the growing percentage of women, Navy leadership continues to monitor pregnancy and parenthood trends, and the impact of these issues on all service members as well as on Navy readiness. Relevant data may not exist in current medical or personnel databases, so the Navy-wide Pregnancy and Parenthood Survey (conducted biennially since 1988) has served as the primary source of metrics related to pregnancy, single parenthood, and related topics. The survey meets the requirements of SECNAVINST 1000.10A, Department of the Navy (DON) Policy on Parenthood and Pregnancy, to collect objective data for evaluating pregnancy policies.

### Approach

NPRST administered the 2014 Pregnancy and Parenthood Survey from late October 2014 until February 2015. Survey invitation letters were sent to a stratified random sample of 20,911 women and 9,831 men in pay grades E2-E9 and O1-O5; letters included a unique user login for each service member as well as the survey website. Before the field closed, two reminder letters were sent to participants at their command address and an additional reminder email was sent to each participant at their email address of record in the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS). Men and women were asked a common core of items about parenthood, single parenthood, family planning, sabbaticals, attitudes towards birth control and health care providers, and sources of training on sexual and reproductive health; the only differences in these common questions were in gender-specific wording (e.g., "father a child" vs. "become pregnant"). Men were asked additional questions about paternity leave while women were asked additional questions about pregnancy experiences while in the Navy. Survey items were automatically skipped if they were not applicable to a respondent, based upon the respondent's previous answers. To maintain anonymity of respondents, all login information was removed from the data before analysis. Results were statistically weighted by pay grade and gender strata to be representative of the entire Navy population at the time of survey administration.

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*About 9% of enlisted women and 8% of officer women are pregnant at any point-in-time, and there are about 13,200 single Navy fathers and 5,700 single Navy mothers.*

*Few women assigned to shore or non-deployable units have orders to a ship or deployable unit when they become pregnant.*

## Findings

About 5,400 men and women provided useable responses to the survey, yielding return rates of 17% for men and 18% for women. Margins of error for overall questions were no more than  $\pm 5.4\%$  for women and  $\pm 4.9\%$  for men.

Results overall continue to be similar to previous results. Single parenthood rates are similar to 2012 rates; there are about 13,200 single Navy fathers and 5,700 single Navy mothers (6% of Navy men and 11% of Navy women). Women continue to be more likely than men to have sole custody of their children. Fifty-nine percent of enlisted women were unmarried when their child was born, while divorce accounts for the largest percentage of single parenthood for enlisted men (49%), officer women (55%), and officer men (81%). Compliance with OPNAVINST 1740.4 series (which designates child care arrangements in the event of a deployment for single or dual-military parents) is not 100% (although it has sharply increased for enlisted men), most single parents and dual-military parents do have some type of child care plan in place in case they are deployed, and they have contacted their planned caregiver within the last 6 months.

Attitudes towards family planning are generally similar to previous results. About half of Navy men and women indicate their sea/shore flow is good for family planning, ranging from 44% for enlisted women to 68% for officer men. About 1/3 of the Navy (only 20% of officer women) has not discussed family planning while in the Navy with anyone, with almost 4 in 10 enlisted and 1 in 4 officers who have not discussed it indicating that is because they are not yet prepared to think about having a family. Birth control usage is similar to previous years, although now at the lowest percentage for most groups; the most common methods continue to be the pill and/or the condom. Compared to 2012, fewer women discussed long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) at their last medical exam; about 1/3 of enlisted Navy women and 1/4 of partners of enlisted Navy men usually use a LARC (lower for officers). Less than one-quarter of those who do not use birth control (16% of enlisted women, 24% of enlisted men, 11% of officer women, and 20% of officer men) indicate they do not use it because they do not want to use birth control.

Sexual health training usually occurs at either GMT or from medical providers. Compared to 2012, significantly more enlisted women had STI/STD and birth control training at GMT within the last year. Women continue to predominantly receive training in methods of birth control from medical providers while men tend to receive it from GMT. The majority of respondents believe sexual health training should come from medical personnel annually during physical exams, but also during Boot Camp and OCS/USNA/ROTC.

Over 80% of men who have fathered a child since the onset of paternity leave (14 October 2008) have taken that leave, averaging 2-3 weeks combined annual and paternity leave. Few men or women have taken leave in conjunction with adopting a child.

*Trends over the last 14 or more years show consistent findings.*

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Pregnancy rates are similar to previous years; about 9% of enlisted women and 8% of officer women are pregnant at any point-in-time (snapshot), and about 11% of Navy women became pregnant in FY13. The majority (77%) of pregnancies of officer women are planned, compared with 43% of enlisted pregnancies (highest point estimate for enlisted women and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest for officer women across all survey years). Few women assigned to shore or non-deployable units have orders to a ship or deployable unit when they become pregnant; those assigned to deployable units are most likely to have just returned from a deployment (within the last 136 days for enlisted and 95 days for officer women, on average) or be in an industrial availability when they become pregnant. Most officer women and almost half of enlisted women are not required to transfer or move as a result of their pregnancy. On average, women use about 7 weeks of leave (6 weeks of convalescent and 1 week annual leave combined) after they give birth. Fifty-nine percent of enlisted women and 82% of officer women are able to successfully complete their next regularly scheduled PFA after the expiration of their 6-month post-pregnancy waiver, with an additional 28% of enlisted and 12% of officer women receiving a medical waiver longer than 6 months.

Women and men indicate similar key influencers in their decision to stay in the Navy, although results for women tend to be lower than for men; results for enlisted personnel tend to be lower than for officers. Strongest influencers to stay are rather broad and include "Job security/stability" and "Retirement" while influencers to leave relate to family and unpredictability (such as "The impact of your Navy career on your spouse/family" and "The balance between work and life"). Many influencers, particularly those relating to their career in the Navy, have become less of a reason to stay than in 2012, especially "Civilian job opportunities/economy."

Trends over the last 14 or more years show consistent findings year-to-year (within a 10 percentage point window) in six key areas: (1) rates of single parenthood and single parent custody have been consistent since 1999; (2) completion of the Family Care Plan is still not 100% (but is at the highest rate seen since 2001); (3) results for questions asked about family planning attitudes have been similar since 2001, although there has been a slight increase in enlisted women who would have sexual intercourse without birth control if their partner wanted; and (4) about 2/3 of enlisted and over 3/4 of officers usually use birth control, similar to rates found since 1997 (although the lowest ever for enlisted men); (5) point-in-time and annual pregnancy rates have been relatively stable since 1992; and (6) rates of pregnancy planning have been consistent (although highest point estimate ever for enlisted women).



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