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## Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives

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**CONTEXT:** Understanding women's reasons for having abortions can inform public debate and policy regarding abortion and unwanted pregnancy. Demographic changes over the last two decades highlight the need for a reassessment of why women decide to have abortions.

**METHODS:** In 2004, a structured survey was completed by 1,209 abortion patients at 11 large providers, and in-depth interviews were conducted with 38 women at four sites. Bivariate analyses examined differences in the reasons for abortion across subgroups, and multivariate logistic regression models assessed associations between respondent characteristics and reported reasons.

**RESULTS:** The reasons most frequently cited were that having a child would interfere with a woman's education, work or ability to care for dependents (74%); that she could not afford a baby now (73%); and that she did not want to be a single mother or was having relationship problems (48%). Nearly four in 10 women said they had completed their childbearing, and almost one-third were not ready to have a child. Fewer than 1% said their parents' or partners' desire for them to have an abortion was the most important reason. Younger women often reported that they were unprepared for the transition to motherhood, while older women regularly cited their responsibility to dependents.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The decision to have an abortion is typically motivated by multiple, diverse and interrelated reasons. The themes of responsibility to others and resource limitations, such as financial constraints and lack of partner support, recurred throughout the study.

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