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Pregnancy Intention from Men's Perspectives: Does Child Support Enforcement Matter?

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CONTEXT: Most research on pregnancy intention has focused on women's perspectives and characteristics. Because decisions about sexual activity and contraceptive use usually involve both men and women, it is important to understand factors associated with men's intentions—for example, child support enforcement—to maximize the potential for reducing unwanted pregnancies.

METHODS: Data from the 1982–2002 waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth were used in multinomial logit analyses to examine the determinants of pregnancy intention from men's perspectives.

RESULTS: Forty-six percent of pregnancies reported by never-married men were unwanted, compared with 21% of those reported by married men. Stronger child support enforcement was marginally associated with men's decreased likelihood of being involved in an unwanted pregnancy compared with no pregnancy (coefficient, -0.14) and of being involved in an unwanted pregnancy compared with a wanted pregnancy (-0.15). Without the improvement of child support enforcement over the survey period, the rate of unwanted pregnancies would have been an estimated 7% higher than the observed rate.

CONCLUSIONS: Strengthening child support enforcement may have a positive impact on preventing unwanted pregnancies. Programs designed to reduce unwanted pregnancies and nonmarital births should include information on child support enforcement to increase their success.

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