

Family Profile No. 11, 2017

Nonmarital Sex by Age 25: Generational Differences between Baby Boomers and Millennials

Authors: Paul Hemez

Attitudes and demographic characteristics appear to differ between Baby Boomers and Millennials (Anderson, 2017; Taylor, 2014). Using the 2002 and 2011/15 cycles of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), this Family Profile considers whether generational differences between Baby Boomers and Millennials also exist with regards to women's engagement in nonmarital sex in early adulthood. Specifically, we compare the shares of late Baby Boomer women (born between 1957 and 1964) and early Millennial women (born between 1981 and 1990) who had sex outside of marriage by age 25, with distinctions by racial/ethnic status and educational attainment. Our analyses are restricted to women's sexual experiences with male partners only.

*Note: The terms Baby Boomer and Millennial throughout this profile represent late members of the Baby Boomer generation and early members of the Millennial generation.

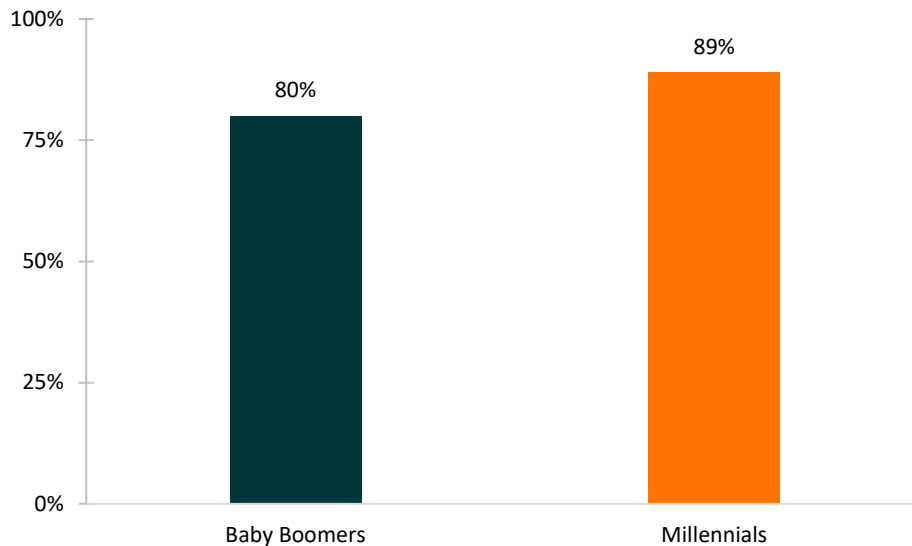


Share of Baby Boomer and Millennial Women who had Nonmarital Sex by Age 25

- Eight in ten Baby Boomer women had sex outside of marriage before their 25th birthday compared to nine in ten Millennial women, a percentage increase of 11%.
- Among women who had sex outside of marriage during early adulthood, the average number of partners increased from 4.6 to 6.5 between Baby Boomers and Millennials.

...the average number of partners increased from 4.6 to 6.5 between Baby Boomers and Millennials.

Figure 1. Share of Women Who had Nonmarital Sex by Age 25, by Generation



Source: NCFMR analyses of Baby Boomers, 2002 NSFG; Millennials, 2011/15 NSFG

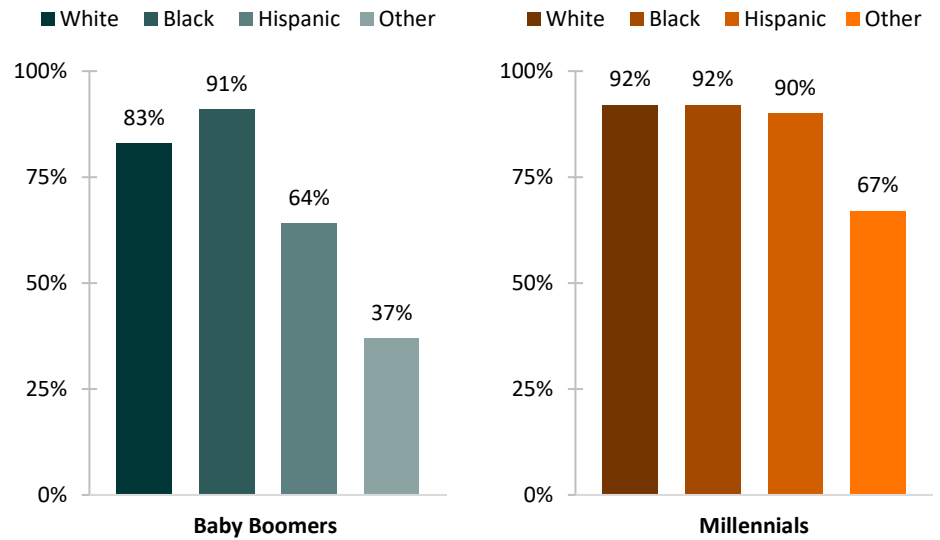
References

- Anderson, L. R. (2017). Generational differences during young adulthood: Baby Boomers vs. Millennials. Family Profiles, FP -17-06. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research <http://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/anderson-demographics-baby-boomers-millennials-fp-17-06.html>
- Taylor, P. (2014, April 10). The next America. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/next-america/#Two-Dramas-in-Slow-Motion>.

Nonmarital Sex by Age 25 across Racial and Ethnic Status

- Across race/ethnicity, the share of women who had nonmarital sex by age 25 was greater among Millennials than Baby Boomers.
- The racial/ethnic gap in nonmarital sex has diminished. Among Baby Boomers, the share of women who experienced nonmarital sex by age 25 varied by race/ethnicity, ranging from 64% of Hispanics to 91% of Blacks.
 - Among women born a quarter century later, however, there was virtually no racial/ethnic variation in the share of women who had sex outside of marriage (90% - 92%).

Figure 2. Share of Women Who had Nonmarital Sex by Age 25, by Generation and Race/Ethnicity

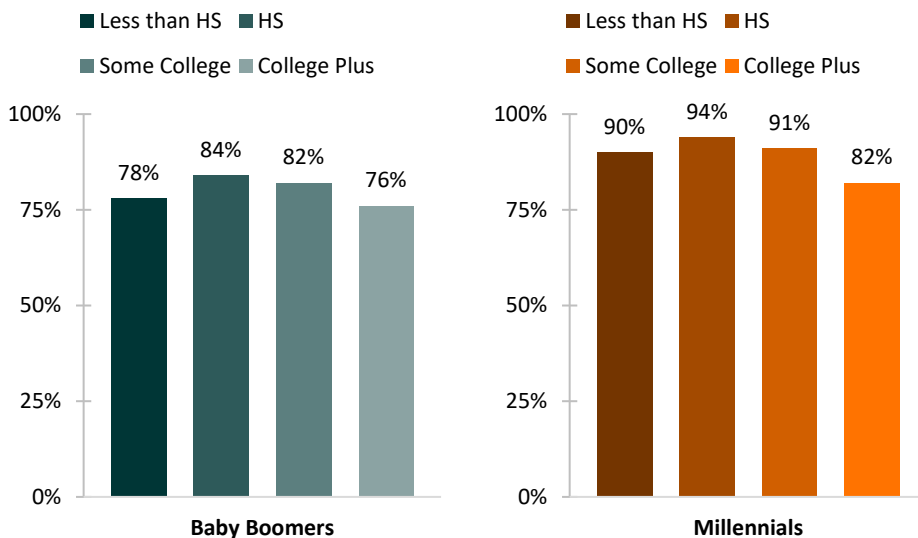


Source: NCFMR analyses of Baby Boomers, 2002 NSFG; Millennials, 2011/15 NSFG

Note: We exclude respondents who report "other" or multiple racial/ethnic statuses from Figure 2, but they are included in the overall totals.

Nonmarital Sex by Age 25 across Educational Attainment Levels

Figure 3. Share of Women Who had Nonmarital Sex by Age 25, by Generation and Educational Attainment



Source: NCFMR analyses of Baby Boomers, 2002 NSFG; Millennials, 2011/15 NSFG

- Nonmarital sexual experience by age 25 was more common among Millennials than Baby Boomers across each educational attainment level.
- In both the Baby Boomer and the Millennial generations, the largest share of women who had nonmarital sex by their 25th birthday were those with a high school education or GED, whereas the smallest share included those with at least a college degree.

Suggested Citation:

Hemez, P. (2017). Nonmarital sex by age 25: Generational differences between Baby Boomers and Millennials. *Family Profiles*, FP-17-11. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-17-22>