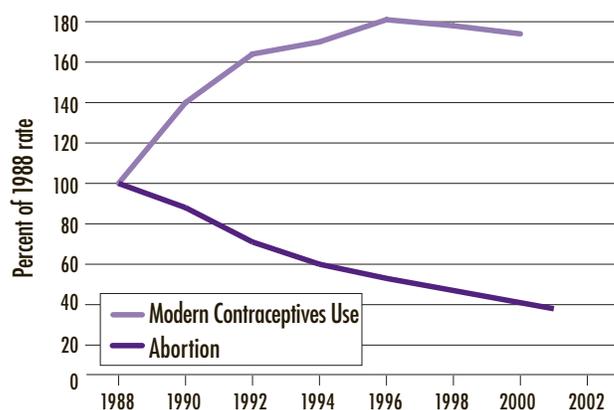


Contraceptive Use Helps Reduce the Incidence of Abortion

Nearly 80 million unintended pregnancies occur worldwide every year. More than half of these pregnancies end in abortion, often in countries where abortion is illegal and access to contraception is limited. Access to voluntary family planning services, including contraception, is essential in helping to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and, consequently, the incidence of abortion.

- **The primary cause of abortion is unplanned pregnancy.** When modern contraceptives are unavailable, women often turn to abortion to end an unwanted pregnancy.
- **Contraceptives can help save the lives of mothers** by enabling women to avoid unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, or high-risk childbirths.
- **Whether abortion is legal or not has little to do with its overall incidence.** In many countries where abortion is illegal or severely restricted (e.g., many Latin American and African countries), abortion rates are higher than in countries where it is legal (e.g., countries in western Europe).
- **Access to family planning and contraception has been proven to help prevent unintended pregnancies and reduce rates of abortion.** Voluntary family planning programs provide men and women a choice of safe and effective contraceptive methods for planning the number and timing of their children. When available and accessible, contraceptives help reduce abortion rates, sometimes dramatically.
- **Increased use of contraception has been accompanied by significant declines in abortion rates** in a number of countries, including Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Chile, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Russia and Turkey.
- **Modern contraceptive use increased in Russia by 74 percent, while the abortion rate declined by 61 percent** between 1988 and 2001. Prior to 1988, contraception was difficult to obtain. As a result, most women relied on abortion as a primary means of controlling their fertility.
- **Abortion rates declined in the 1990s in tandem with a rise in use of modern contraception** in the republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgystan. In Kazakhstan, contraceptive

Abortion and Modern Contraceptives Use by Women in Russia, 1988-2001



Source: Deschner A and Cohen SA, Contraceptive Use Is Key to Reducing Abortion Worldwide, *Guttacher Report on Public Policy*, Oct. 2003, 8.

prevalence increased by 50 percent in the 1990s, and abortion rates decreased by nearly the same amount.

- **In the Czech Republic, abortion rates have fallen from an annual rate of about 116,000 in the late 1980s to 27,600 today.** Many credit the increased availability of contraceptives with this decline. Since the 1980s, the percentage of Czech women using birth control pills has quadrupled.

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