

Marriage Matters

RISKS AND LIMITATIONS OF UNMARRIED UNIONS

Children who live with a biological mother and her unmarried partner have lower academic outcomes, increased levels of behavioral problems and fewer economic resources.

Wendy Manning and Kathleen Lamb, "Adolescent Well-Being in Cohabiting, Married and Single-Parent Families," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 65, November 2003: 876-893

Unmarried cohabiting couples with children spend a greater percentage of their income on adult goods (alcohol and tobacco) than married parents. Conversely, cohabiting couples spend a smaller share of their income on health care and education for their children than do married parents.

Thomas DeLeire and Ariel Kalil, "How do cohabiting couples with children spend their money?" *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 67, May 2005: 286-295

Children who reside in a home with an unrelated cohabiting adult are at much higher risk of death or injury. Most perpetrators of abuse (83.9%) were unrelated males living with the biological mother.

Patricia Schnitzer and Bernard Ewigman, "Child Deaths resulting From Inflicted Injuries: Household Risk Factors and Perpetrator Characteristics," *Pediatrics*, Vol 116 November 2005: 687-693

Physical aggression is far more common in unmarried partner relationships than among married couples. Domestic violence is at least twice as common among cohabiting couples as it is among those who are married.

Jan Stets, "Cohabiting and Marital Aggression: The Role of Social Isolation," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 53, August 1991: 669-680

Individuals who are in a long-term cohabiting relationship have more negative views on marriage and tend to view divorce in a more positive light.

William Axinn and Jennifer Barber, "Living Arrangements and Family Formation Attitudes in Early Adulthood," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol 59, August 1997: 595-611

Cohabiters are more likely to engage in infidelity than married partners. The higher rate of infidelity is attributed to lower levels of investment in the relationship.

Judith Treas and Deirdre Giesen, "Sexual infidelity among Married and Cohabiting Americans," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol 62, February 2000: 48-60

Most unmarried partner relationships are rather short-lived. Forty percent of all cohabiting couples either marry or stop living together within one year, and only one-third are still cohabiting after two years. Couples who do not cohabit before marriage have a lower divorce rate than those who do cohabit prior to marriage.

Lee Lillard, Michael Brien, Linda Waite, "Premarital Cohabitation and Subsequent Marital Dissolution: A Matter of Self-Selection?" *Demography*, Vol 32, Issue 3: 437-457

Among women who have an unmarried partner, sexual commitment to each other is more similar to dating than marriage.

Renata Forste and Koray Tanfer, "Sexual Exclusivity Among Dating, Cohabiting and Married Women," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 58, February 1996: 33-47

Unmarried couples are less committed to one another and have less satisfaction with their relationships than married couples.

Steven Nock, "A Comparison of Marriages and Cohabiting Relationships," *Journal of Family Issues*, Vol. 16 No. 1: 53-75

In terms of employment, education and earnings, a biological mother and cohabiting partner more closely resemble a single-mother family than they do a married couple family.

Wendy Manning and Daniel Lichter, "Parental Cohabitation and Children's Economic Well-Being," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 58, November 1996: 998-1010

Evidence shows a strong correlation between a person's religiosity and their likely entry into marriage or cohabitation. Those with stronger religious ties and convictions were more likely to enter into marriage while those with weaker ties and convictions were more likely to enter a cohabiting relationship. There was also strong evidence that a person's choice of union commitment also influenced their religiosity. Individuals who entered marriage displayed increased religious ties and convictions while those who entered a cohabiting relationship became less religious.

Arland Thornton, William Axinn and Daniel Hill, "Reciprocal Effects of Religiosity, Cohabitation, and Marriage," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 93, Issue 3, November 1992: 628-651

Cohabiting couples are less likely to provide support to their parents, receive help from their parents or turn to their parents in times of emergency.

David Eggebeen, "Cohabitation and Exchanges of Support," *Social Forces*, Volume 83, Number 3, March 2005: 1097-1110

Among unmarried cohabiting couples, males report consuming more alcohol than either married or single men. Women who are in a cohabiting relationship report higher rates of smoking than married women.

Allan Horwitz and Helene White, "Relationship of Cohabitation and Mental Health: A Study of a Young Adult Cohort," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 60, Number 2, May 1998: 505-514

Children in married households are in a better economic environment that "promotes the economic and developmental well-being of children" than children from unmarried-couple households. Furthermore, children from married-couple families enjoy greater wealth transfers than unmarried-couple children.

Lingxin Hao, "Family Structure, Private Transfers, and the Economic Well-Being of Families with Children," *Social Forces*, Vol. 75, Issue 1, September 1996:269-292

Children exposed to a wide variety of living arrangements develop a greater acceptance of cohabitation and premarital sexual activity.

Paige Martin, "Adolescent Premarital Sexual Activity, Cohabitation, and Attitudes Toward Marriage," *Adolescence*, Vol. 36, Number 143, Fall 2001:601-609