

2017

# FP-17-20 Age Variation in the Divorce Rate, 1990 & 2015

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## Repository Citation

Wu, Huijing, "FP-17-20 Age Variation in the Divorce Rate, 1990 & 2015" (2017). *National Center for Family and Marriage Research Family Profiles*. 180.

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# Age Variation in the Divorce Rate, 1990 & 2015



Huijing Wu

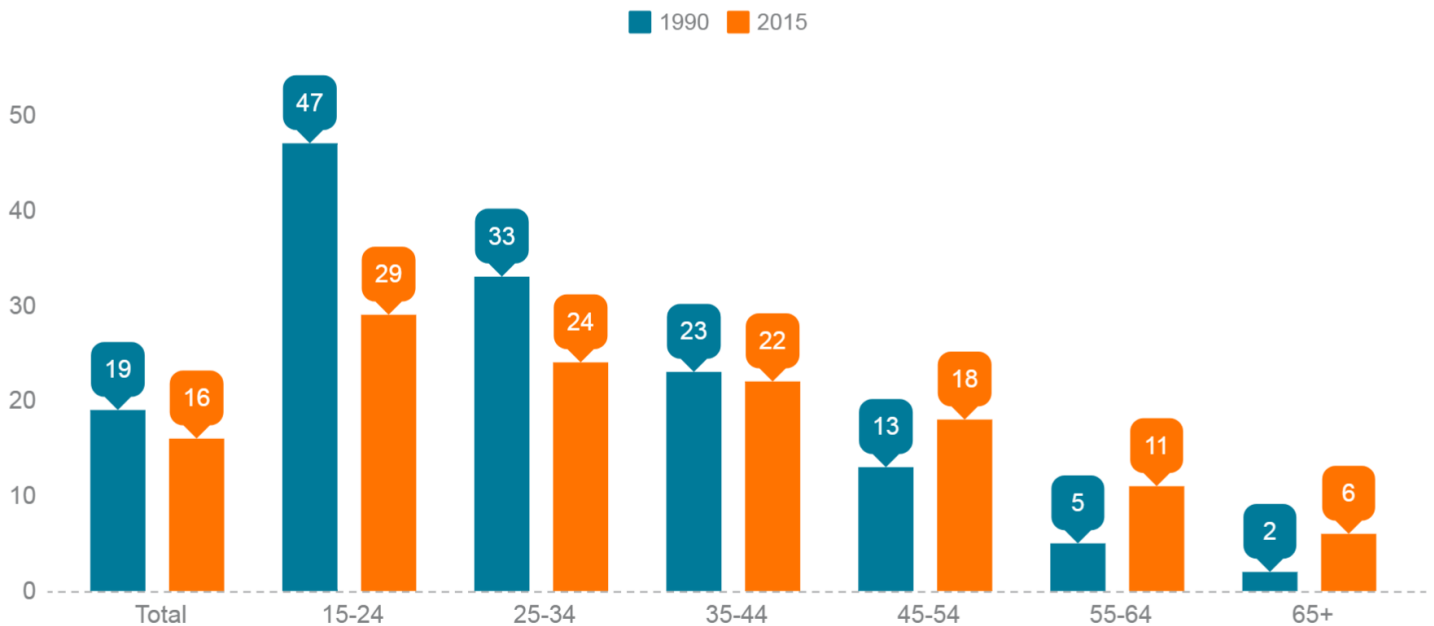
The overall U.S. divorce rate has remained essentially unchanged over the past 20 years. In 1990, 19 people divorced for every 1,000 marrieds versus 16 per 1,000 in 2015, a modest decline of roughly 16% (FP-12-05; Figure 1). This overall trend belies considerable variation by age group. A recent study indicates that the divorce rate among those aged 50 and older doubled since 1990 (Brown & Lin, 2012), which suggests that the risk of divorce declined among younger adults (Kennedy & Ruggles, 2014). This profile updates FP-14-16 by combining data from the 1990 U.S. Vital Statistics and the 2015 American Community Survey.

## Divorce Rates

The risk of divorce declined with age. The gap in the divorce rates across age groups was wider in 1990 than in 2015.

- ▶ The divorce rate for adults under age 35 has decreased since 1990.
  - ▶ The decline was greatest among those aged 15-24, for whom the divorce rate dropped by roughly 38% (from 47 to 29 per 1,000).
- ▶ The divorce rate increased for those aged 35 and older, and this growth was most dramatic for the oldest age groups.
  - ▶ Among those aged 55-64, the risk of divorce nearly doubled (5 to 11 per 1,000). The rate of divorce tripled (2 to 6 per 1,000) among men and women aged 65 and older.

Figure 1. Divorce Rates by Age Groups



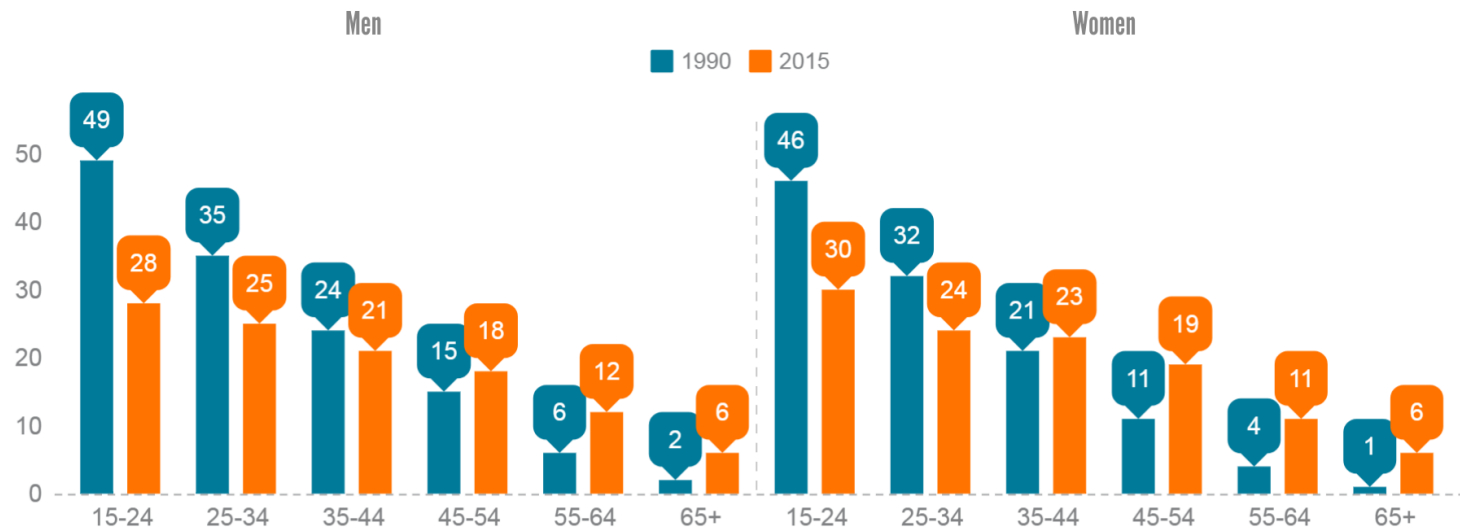
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Stats and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015

## Divorce Rates by Gender

The pattern and level of divorce by age were similar for men and women.

- ▶ The decline in the divorce rate under age 35 occurred for both men and women.
  - ▶ The decrease was most evident for men in the youngest group (aged 15-24), for whom the divorce rate declined by 43% (from 49 to 28 per 1,000). Young women experienced a 36% decline (46 to 30 per 1,000).
- ▶ The rise in the divorce rate among those aged 45 and older was much greater for women than men.
  - ▶ For women aged 55-64, the divorce rate nearly tripled (4 to 11 per 1,000). The divorce rate quadrupled (1.4 to 5.8 per 1,000) among women aged 65 and older.
  - ▶ By comparison, the divorce rate among men aged 55-64 almost doubled (6 to 11 per 1,000), and the rate for men aged 65 and older nearly tripled (2.1 to 5.6 per 1,000) since 1990.

Figure 3. Divorce Rates by Age Groups and Gender



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Stats and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015

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### Suggested Citation:

Wu, H. (2017). Age variation in the divorce rate, 1990–2015. *Family Profiles*, FP-17-20. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research. <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-17-20>



This project is supported with assistance from Bowling Green State University. From 2007 to 2013, support was also provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are solely those of the author(s) and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of any agency of the state or federal government.

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