

SDR 12/2009

29 January 2009

NHS COMMUNITY CONTRACEPTIVE SERVICES IN WALES, 2007-08

This statistical release provides summary data on community contraceptive services provided by clinics in Wales. Also included is some data on contraceptive services provided by General Practitioners. It should be noted that more people seek contraceptive services from their GPs than from community clinics. The trends described in this release for community clinics may be different from trends for contraceptive services in Wales as a whole.

An indication of contraception activity in the Great Britain general population can be obtained from a report based on a sample survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics, "Contraception and Sexual Health 2007-08". 74 per cent of women aged 16-49 reported to the 2007-08 survey that they were currently using at least one method of contraception. 28 per cent of women aged 16-49 reported using the contraceptive pill as their current contraception method and 24 per cent the male condom. The full survey report can be found on the [ONS](#) website.

Unless otherwise stated, data in this release is taken from the statistical return KT31: Community Contraception and Reproductive Health Services. Community contraceptive services are offered in a variety of designated clinic sessions. The majority of contacts are at general reproductive health / contraception clinics or young persons' clinics but in most NHS Trusts there are also designated 'well woman' clinics and, in some, psycho-sexual clinics.

Key facts:

In the year ended 31 March 2008

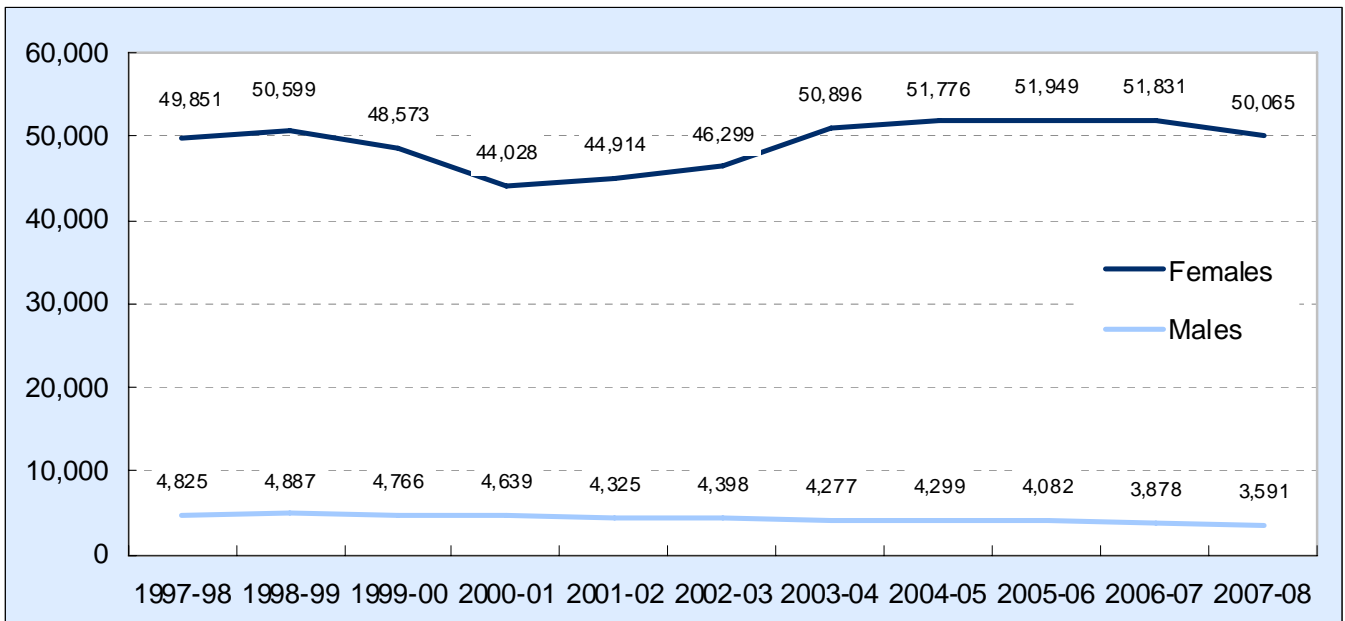
- just over 50,000 women and 3,600 men attended clinics for contraceptive services;
- more than a third (34%) of women attending clinics were under 20 years old;
- 48 per cent of the women attending clinics chose oral contraception, 18 per cent chose injectables and implants, with 17 per cent choosing male condoms;
- only 8 per cent of the female population in Wales aged between 12 and 49 attend community contraception clinics.

This release and detailed figures are available on the Assembly's interactive data dissemination service StatsWales: www.statswales.wales.gov.uk

Contact: Tel: 029 2082 5036 E-mail: stats.healthinfo@wales.gsi.gov.uk **Next Update:** January 2010 (provisional)



Chart 1: Patients seen at clinics (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)

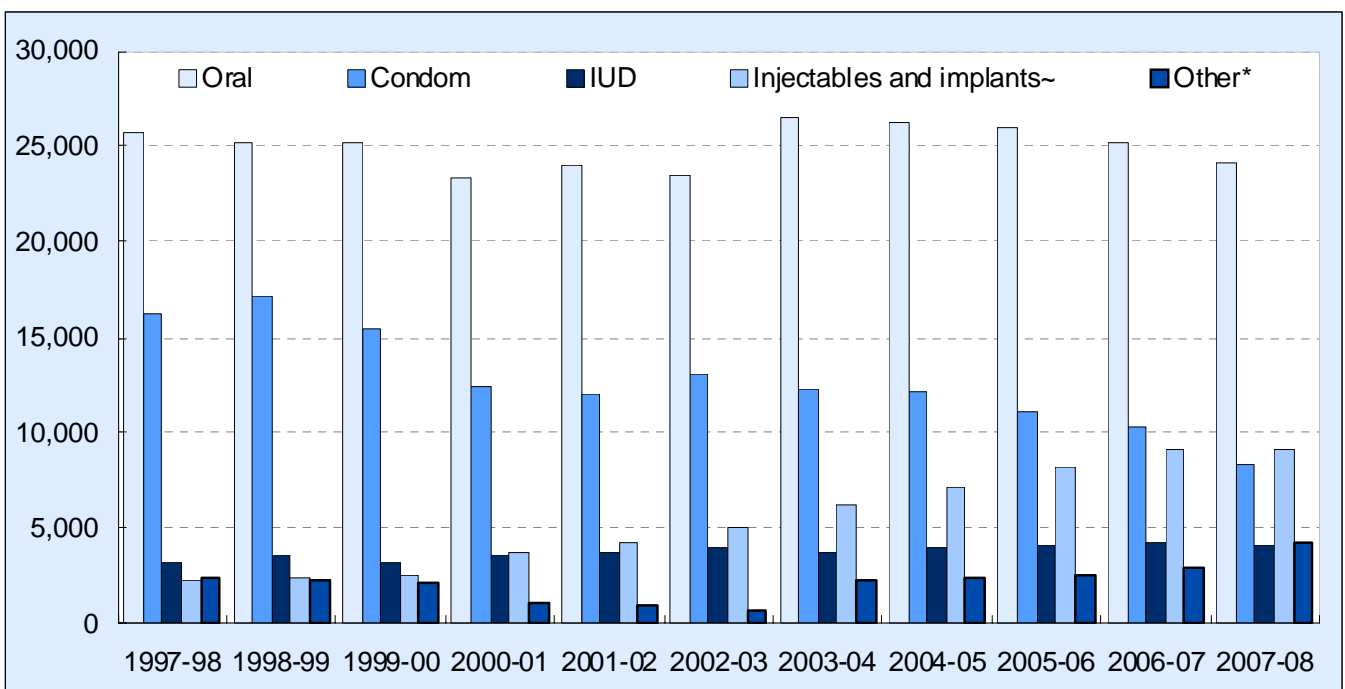


The number of female patients seen at clinics fluctuated around the 50,000 mark before dropping to under 45,000 in 2000-01. The numbers then started to rise again, and in 2006-07 stood at nearly 52,000, but have dropped to just over 50,000 in 2007-08. The number of male patients has fallen in recent years to 3,600 in 2007-08.

Main method of contraception provided

Nearly 50 per cent of women seen at clinics are provided with oral contraceptives, the most popular method provided. The number of women obtaining condoms has decreased in total, and as a proportion of all women seen, and now make up just 17 per cent of all women seen, whereas the numbers choosing injectables or implants has increased from 5 per cent in 1997-98 to 18 per cent in 2007-08. The number of women provided with IUDs (intra-uterine devices) in clinics has remained fairly constant since 1997-98 at 7-8 per cent of the total.

Chart 2: Main method of contraception provided to women at clinics (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)



* includes IUS (inter-uterine system) in 2003-04 onwards
 ~ excludes Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust until 1999-2000

Chart 3: Women attending clinics, by age 2007-08 ⁽¹⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾

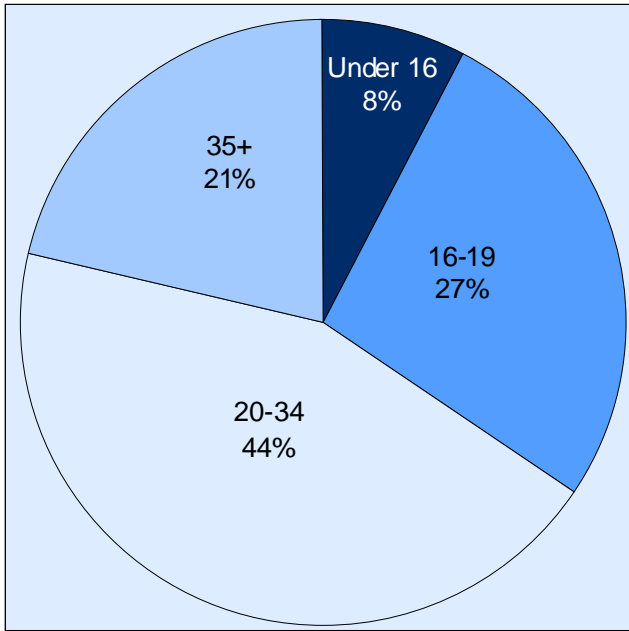
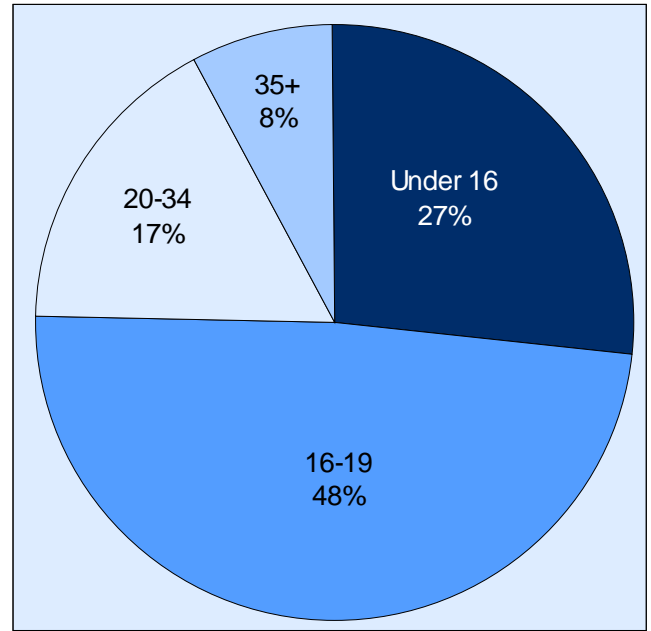
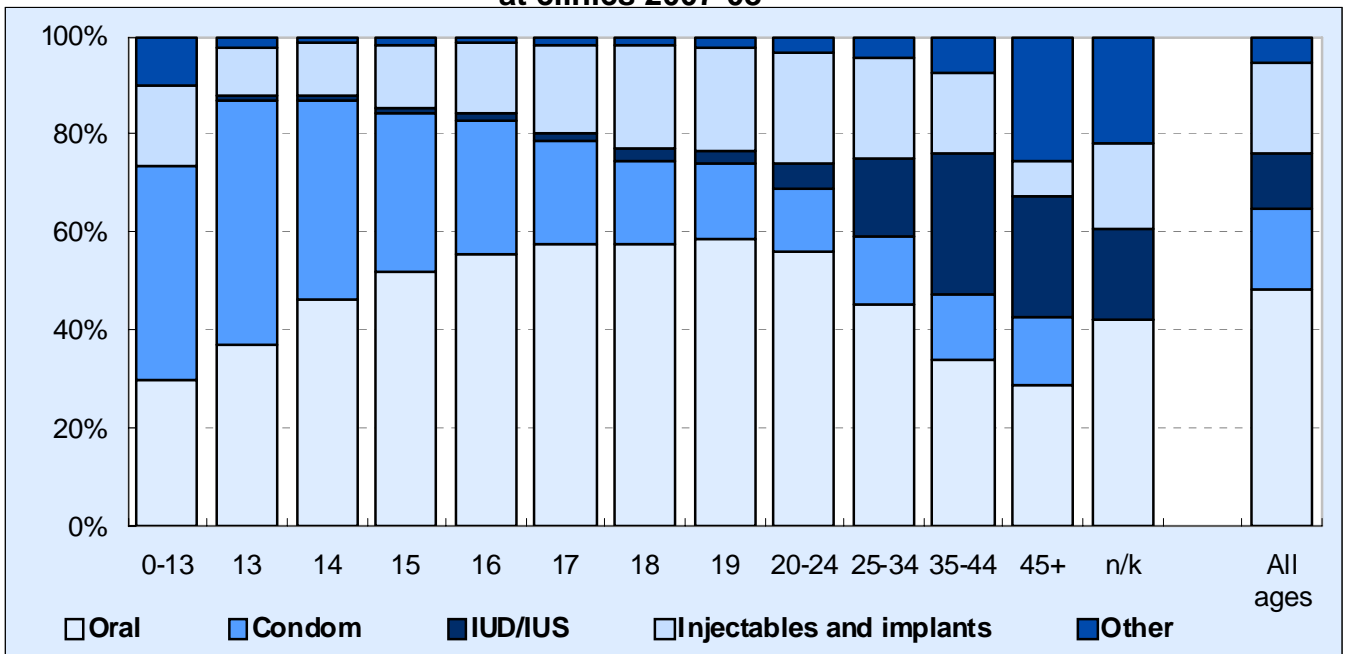


Chart 4: Men attending clinics, by age, 2007-08 ⁽¹⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾



First contacts by age: 44 per cent of the women attending clinics were in the 20-34 age group in 2007-08 (chart 3). More under 16s are attending clinics than previously with the proportion increasing from 7.1 per cent in 1997-98 to nearly 9 per cent in 2006-07, but down to 7.8% in 2007-08. 65 per cent of the under 16 year olds were aged 15 and 7 per cent were 13 or under. Three quarters of all men attending clinics are under 20 (chart 4).

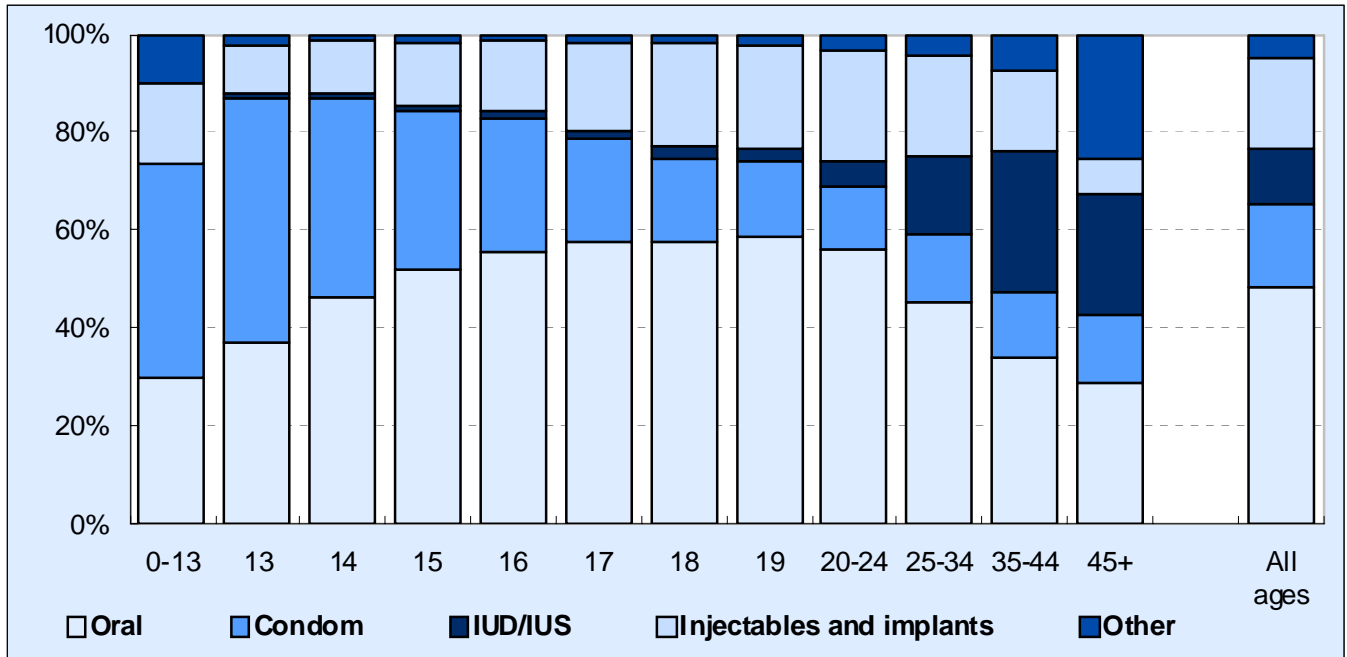
Chart 5: Percentage distribution of primary method of contraception provided to women at clinics 2007-08 ⁽¹⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾



Primary methods of contraception chosen by women in Wales varied between the age groups (chart 5). In 2007-08 half the female attenders chose to use oral contraception, while a fifth chose the male condom. The choice of oral contraception rose through the age groups from only 30 per cent for under 14 year olds, reaching nearly 60 per cent among 19 year olds, before dropping in the older groups. The male condom was most popular among the very young (around 42% for the under 15s and almost a third of the 15 and 16 year olds). For the age groups between 18 and 34, injectables and implants are

chosen by around 20% of women with fewer at younger and older ages choosing these methods. The IUD/IUS was chosen by very few women in the younger age groups, but this rose to 16 per cent in the 25-34 age group, and to 25-30 per cent among 35-44 year olds and those aged 45 and over.

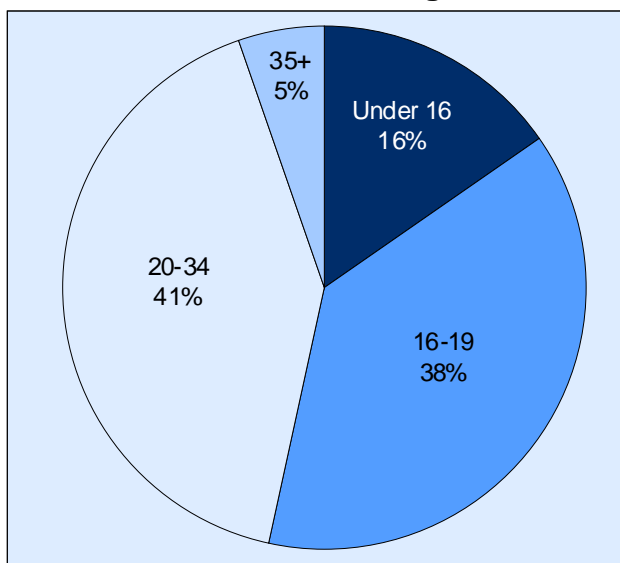
Chart 6: Number of women attending clinics for emergency contraception ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾



In the year ended 31 March 2008, the number of women attending clinics for emergency contraception (**Chart 6**) was nearly 4,700 - down 11 per cent from the previous year (and 27 per cent lower than 1997-98). During 2007-08 the numbers fell by 16 per cent in the 16-19 year olds, 10 per cent in the 20-34 age group and 13 per cent in the 35+ age group.

Since January 2001 women aged 16 or over have been able to purchase emergency contraception in a pharmacy without a prescription but this data is not collected centrally.

Chart 7: Women attending clinics for emergency contraception by age, 2007-08 ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁷⁾



As can be seen from **Chart 7**, more than half of the women attending clinics for emergency contraception were under 20 years old and almost 95% under 35.

The proportion of women in the younger age groups is higher for emergency contraception than the proportion attending for clinics as a whole.

Chart 8: Number of women seen by clinics in Wales (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)

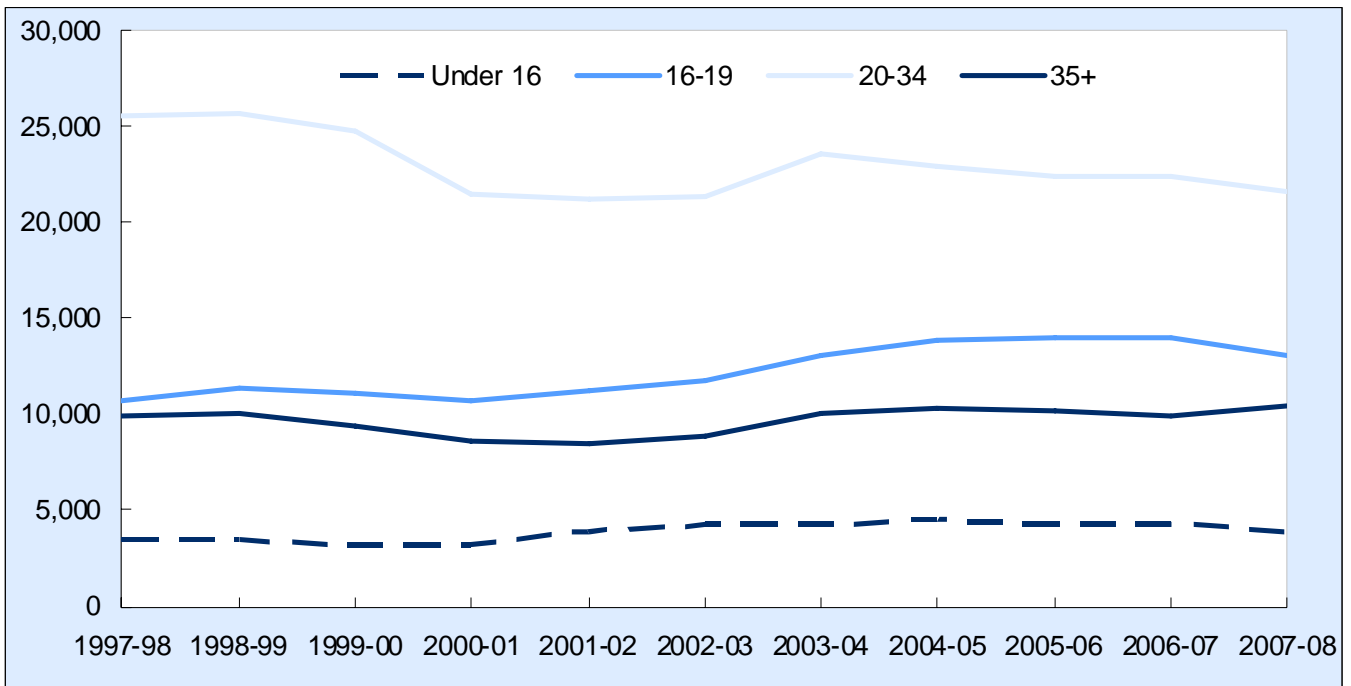
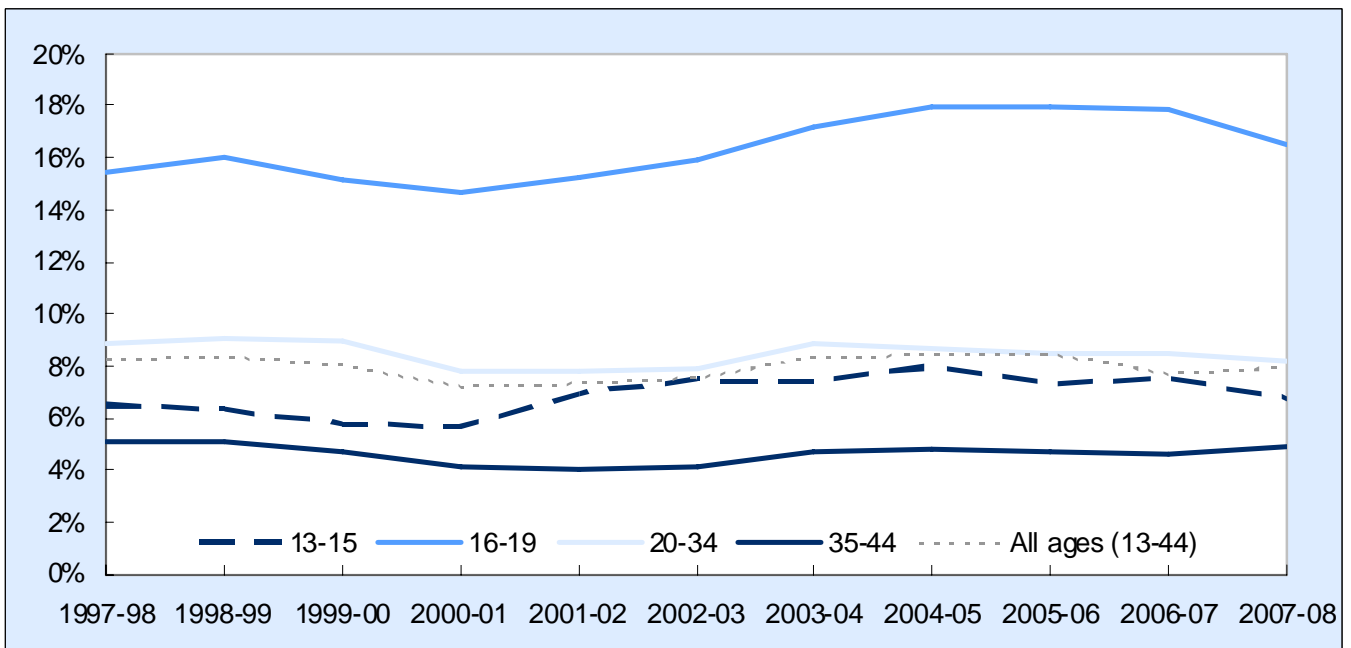


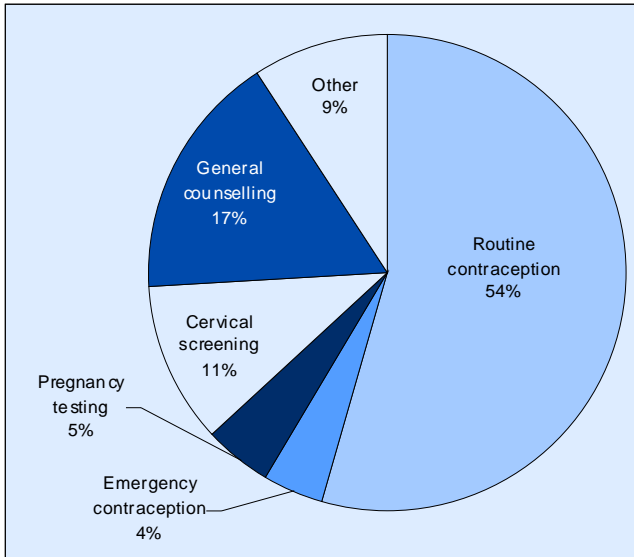
Chart 8 shows the trends of the different age groups of women attending clinics since 1997-98. The number of women attending in the younger age groups has been increasing but has dropped slightly in 2007-08.

Chart 9: Percentage of female population seen by clinics in Wales (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6)



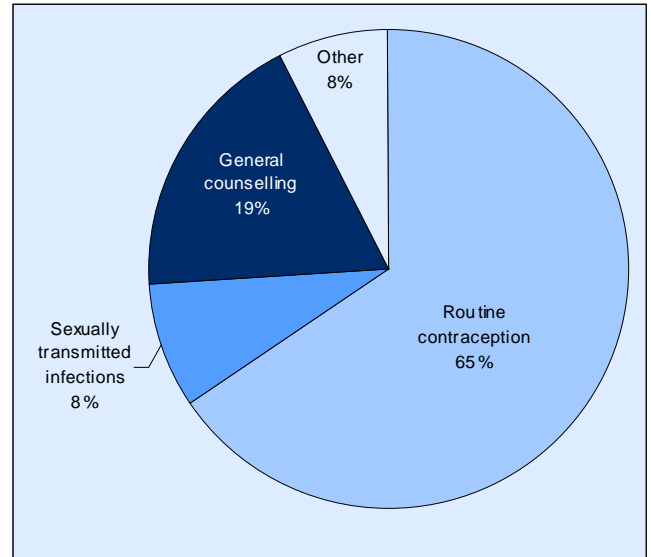
Data provided on KT31 return as Under 16s/35+ shown as a percentage of population aged 13-15/35-44. 7-8 per cent of the female population attended a clinic each year since 1997-98. The percentage remained more or less constant for the 20-34 and 35+ age groups (**chart 9**).

Chart 10: Reasons for females* attending clinics, 2007-08 ⁽¹⁾⁽⁵⁾



* 1st contacts in the year

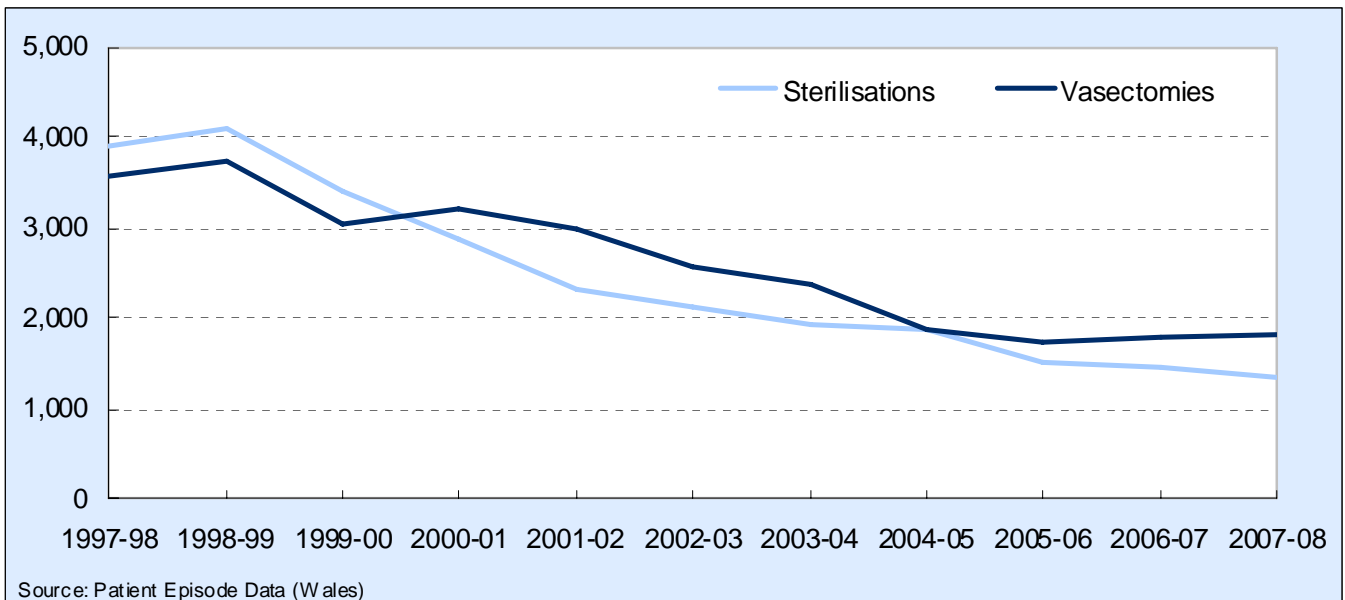
Chart 11: Reasons for males* attending clinics, 2007-08 ⁽¹⁾⁽⁵⁾



* 1st contacts in the year

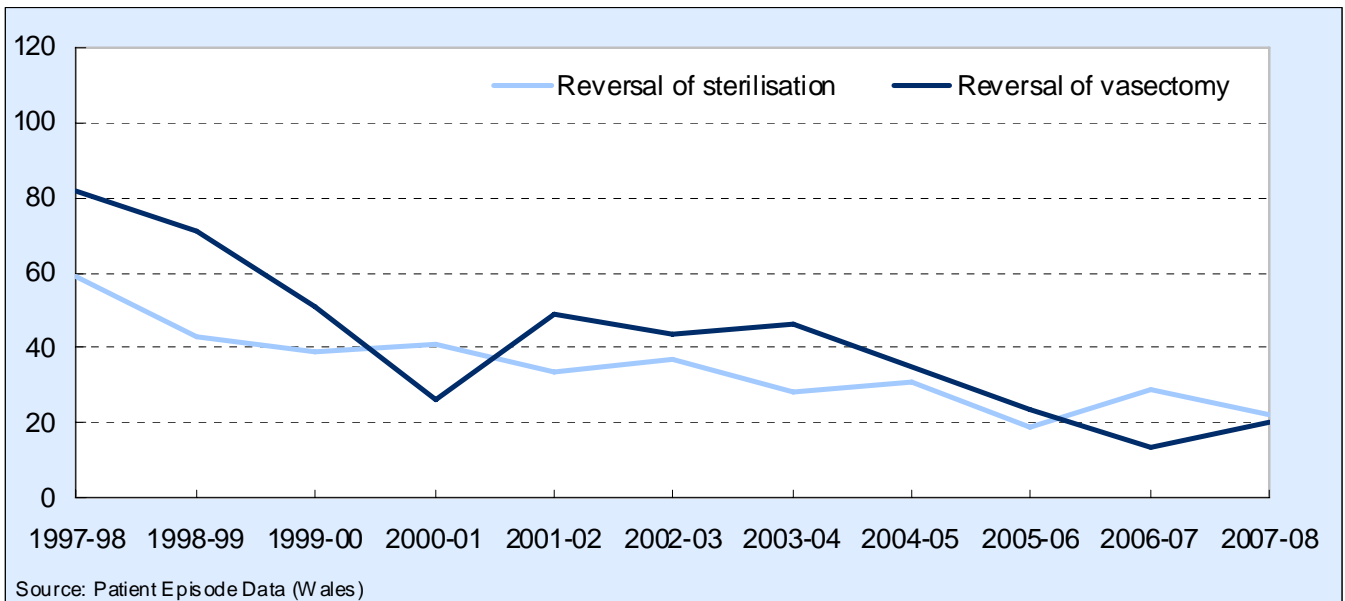
Charts 10 and 11 show the distribution of reasons (multiple reasons can be recorded) for first attendances during the year. As can be seen from **Chart 10**, routine and emergency contraception accounted for over half of the reasons recorded for females. Cervical screening, general counselling and pregnancy testing accounted for around 30 per cent of reasons given. Routine contraception accounted for nearly two thirds of all the reasons given by males (**Chart 11**) for attending clinics in Wales during 2007-08.

Chart 12: Number of sterilisations and vasectomies, Welsh hospitals



As can be seen from **Chart 12** the number of sterilisations carried out by the NHS in Wales has fallen in the last ten years. Sterilisations in 2007-08 are 66 per cent fewer (1,344) than in 1997-98 (3,910). After a long fall in the numbers of vasectomies carried out, in recent years the trend has stabilised at around 1,800 per year.

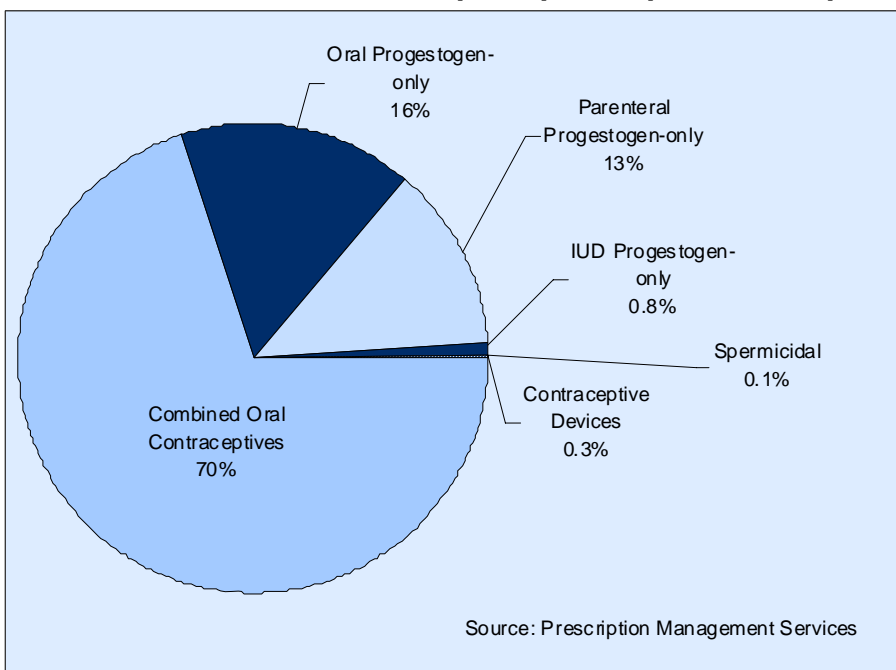
Chart 13: Number of sterilisation and vasectomy reversals, Welsh hospitals



The numbers of reversal procedures dropped sharply in the second half of the 1990s and in recent years have been very few (**Chart 13**).

In the general Great Britain population 6 per cent of women aged 16-49 indicated to the ONS survey "Contraception and Sexual Health 2007/08" that they had been sterilised and 16 per cent of men under 70 had undergone a vasectomy.

Chart 14: Number of contraceptive prescription items prescribed by GPs and dispensed



The number of contraceptive prescription items prescribed by GPs and dispensed by community pharmacies and dispensing doctors (**Chart 14**), has remained fairly constant, at around 500,000 since the mid 1990s.

Chart 15: Contraceptive prescription items, 2007-08

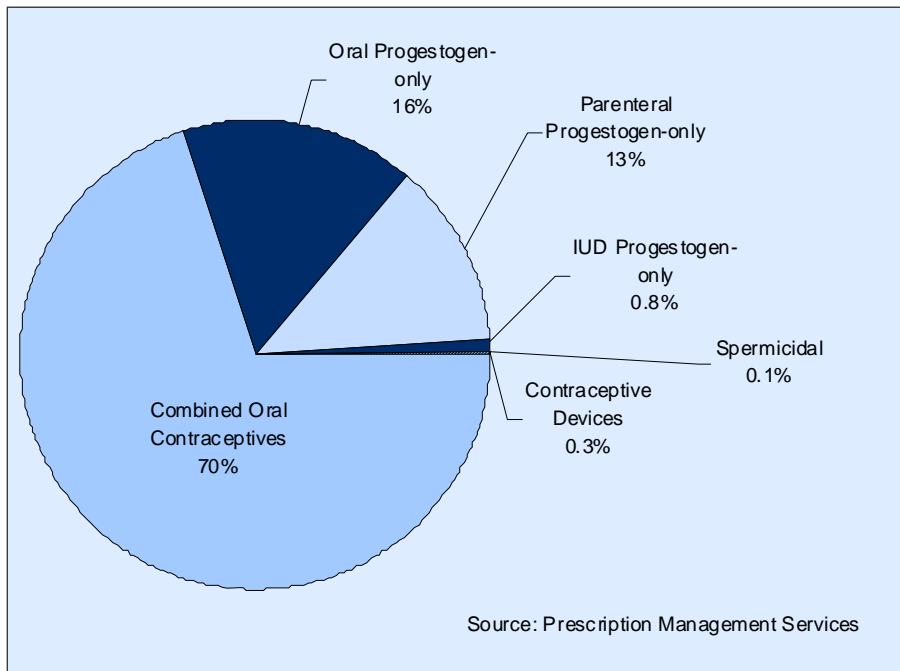


Chart 15 shows the percentage distribution of contraceptive prescription items prescribed by GPs and dispensed by community pharmacists and dispensing doctors in 2007-08. Nearly three quarters of the items dispensed were combined oral contraceptives.

Key Quality Information

Sources of data:

KT31 returns: Most of the charts in this release are from data collected from NHS Trusts annually on the KT31 return, "Community Contraception and Reproductive Health Services". The return relates to community contraception and reproductive health services activity in NHS clinics and non-NHS clinics providing services funded wholly or partly by the NHS. Activity in the following is excluded: (a) general practitioner surgeries and general practitioner clinics on or off hospital premises; (b) other agencies providing community contraception and reproductive health services not wholly or partly funded by the NHS.

Units recorded are first contacts in the financial year (people seen) and attendances for emergency contraception. Also recorded are the reasons for attending for each person seen; multiple reasons for attendance can be recorded.

PEDW: Sterilisation and vasectomy procedures are derived from the PEDW database (Patient Episode Data Wales) which is held by Health Solutions Wales and records information on patients admitted to hospital.

Prescribing Management Services: Prescriptions data is from the Prescribing Management Services in Health Solutions Wales and is based on the prescription slips submitted by pharmacists and doctors to PMS for payment.

Completeness: In some years some Trusts have not been able to return complete data; see the notes below for further details.

Confidentiality: The possibility of identifying confidential information about individuals from this data has been considered. The fact that clinic contraception services are only a part of all contraception services means that this is unlikely but associated StatsWales tables include only 2-way tabulations of age, method and NHS Trust to minimise the risk of being able to identify individuals.

NOTES:

- (1) Each patient is counted at first visit during the period only. Excludes people for whom no method of contraception was provided and people attending for purposes other than contraception.
- (2) 1997-98 to 1999-2000 figures for Gwent Community Health NHS Trust have been represented using their 1995-96 figures.

- (3) Pembrokeshire & Derwen NHS Trust was unable to provide any data in 2000-01, so their 1999-2000 data has been used instead for comparison purposes. They were only able to provide data for 3 months in 2001-02 so the figures have been extrapolated to 12 months for comparison purposes.
- (4) Swansea NHS Trust can provide data on first contacts from 'general reproductive health / contraception clinics' only. The figures are therefore an underestimate of total activity as they exclude 'young persons' and cervical cytology clinics.
- (5) Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust was unable to provide data for 2007-08 following a computer system failure; their 2006-07 data has been used for comparison purposes.
- (6) Population data from mid year estimates, ONS.
- (7) Excludes age 'not known'