Do local employment conditions affect women's pregnancy intentions?

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Economic conditions can shape the decisions that adults make about their families, such as whether and when to have children. A recent *Journal of Marriage & Family* analysis of US women aged 20 to 44 years found that higher unemployment rates were associated with a lower likelihood of unintended pregnancy.

The study combined data from 13,702 women from the National Survey of Family Growth with employment data from the US Census and the American Community Survey. Weak local employment conditions were associated with lower odds of unintended pregnancies (including both mistimed and unwanted) relative to having no pregnancy. Women were less likely to have unwanted pregnancies in particular. Women with both high and low education experienced declines in unintended pregnancy as unemployment rates rose, although the declines were larger among those with less than a high school degree.

"The United States has a high rate of unintended pregnancy, and we tend to focus on individual characteristics, such as education, socioeconomic status, and race or ethnicity, that are associated with this pattern of fertility," said author Dr. Jessica Houston Su, of the University of Buffalo. "This study broadens this focus and suggests that local employment conditions are also an important context for fertility intentions."

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