

Male Infant Circumcision

Headline

In 2002, male infants born in the western region of the United States were two and a half times less likely than male infants born in the Midwest to be circumcised (33 percent versus 81 percent, respectively). ([See Figure 2](#))

Importance

Parents often choose to circumcise their infant sons because of religious, cultural, or health reasons. Some research shows that circumcision reduces the risks of various diseases. Boys who remain uncircumcised are at a greater risk for Urinary Tract Infection,¹ the human papilloma virus,² and penile cancer, although the risk of contracting penile cancer among both circumcised and uncircumcised men is small.³ Circumcision may also reduce the risk of contracting HIV, although findings to date are insufficiently strong to be definitive.^{4,5} However, occasionally, complications such as bleeding or infection may occur with circumcision.⁶ Additionally, some research shows that infants feel pain when experiencing circumcision that may continue after the circumcision is complete.⁷

In its most recent policy statement, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents be well-informed about the benefits and risks of circumcision before deciding what is best for their own sons.⁸ If parents choose to circumcise their infant sons, the AAP recommends that procedural analgesia be provided.⁹ More information is available for parents at:

http://www.medem.com/medlb/article_detailb_for_printer.cfm?article_ID=ZZZJZMEMH4C&sub_cat=1.

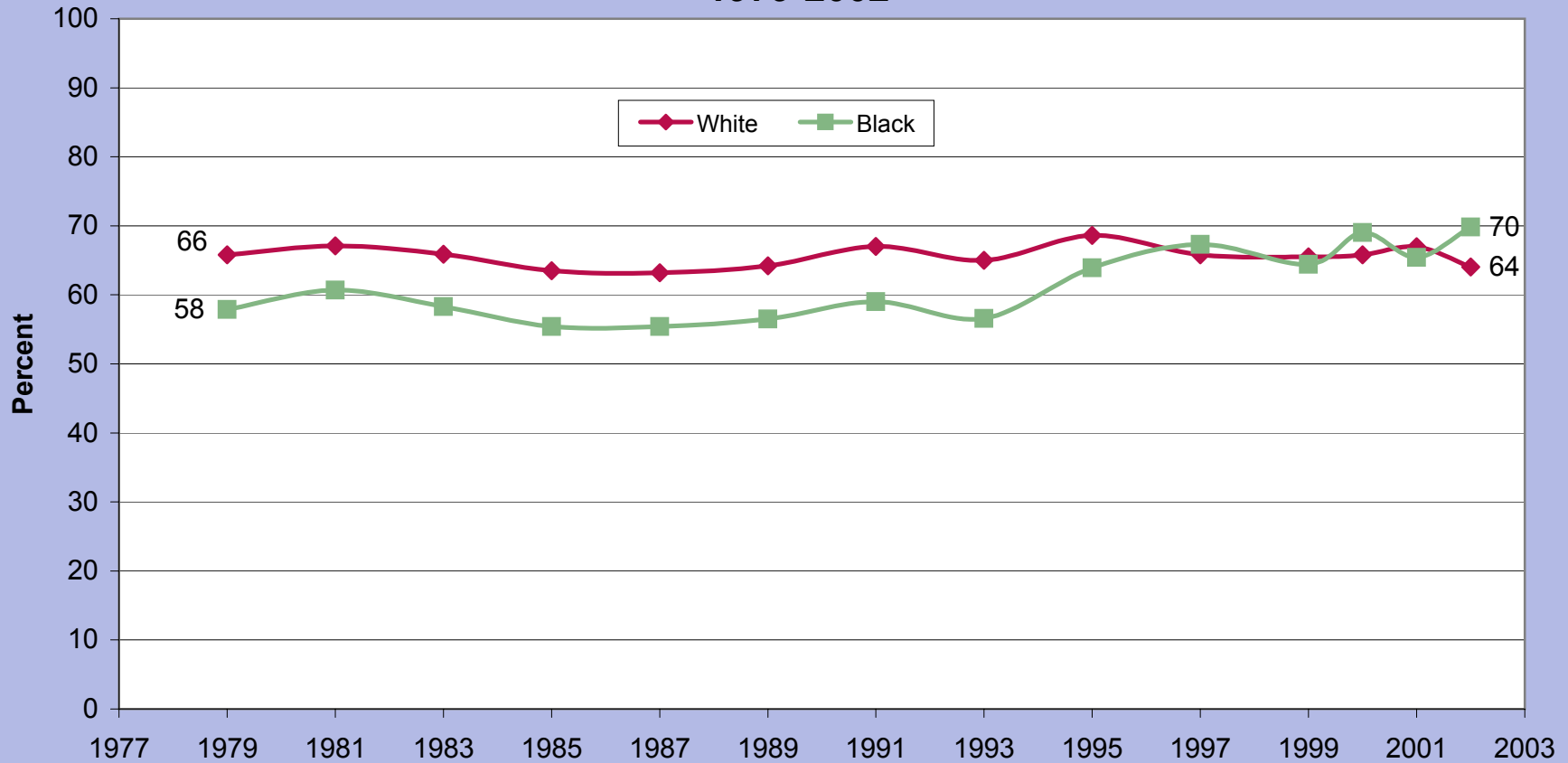
Trends

Between 1979 and 2002, the percentage of male infants who were circumcised in the hospital has remained relatively constant, ranging from 59 percent to 65 percent. In 2002, the latest year for which data are available, 60 percent of male infants were circumcised in the hospital. ([See Table 1](#))

The percentage of male newborns in the western region of the United States receiving circumcisions has significantly decreased, from 64 percent in 1979 to 33 percent in 2002. A large part of this decline took place in the 1980s. Between 1981 and 1989, the percentage of males in the West circumcised declined by 16 percentage points. ([See Figure 2](#)) This decrease may be reflective of an increase in the proportion of births to Hispanics, who have been found to be less likely to receive circumcisions.¹⁰

Figure 1

Percentage of Newborn Males Circumcised in the Hospital, By Race, 1979-2002

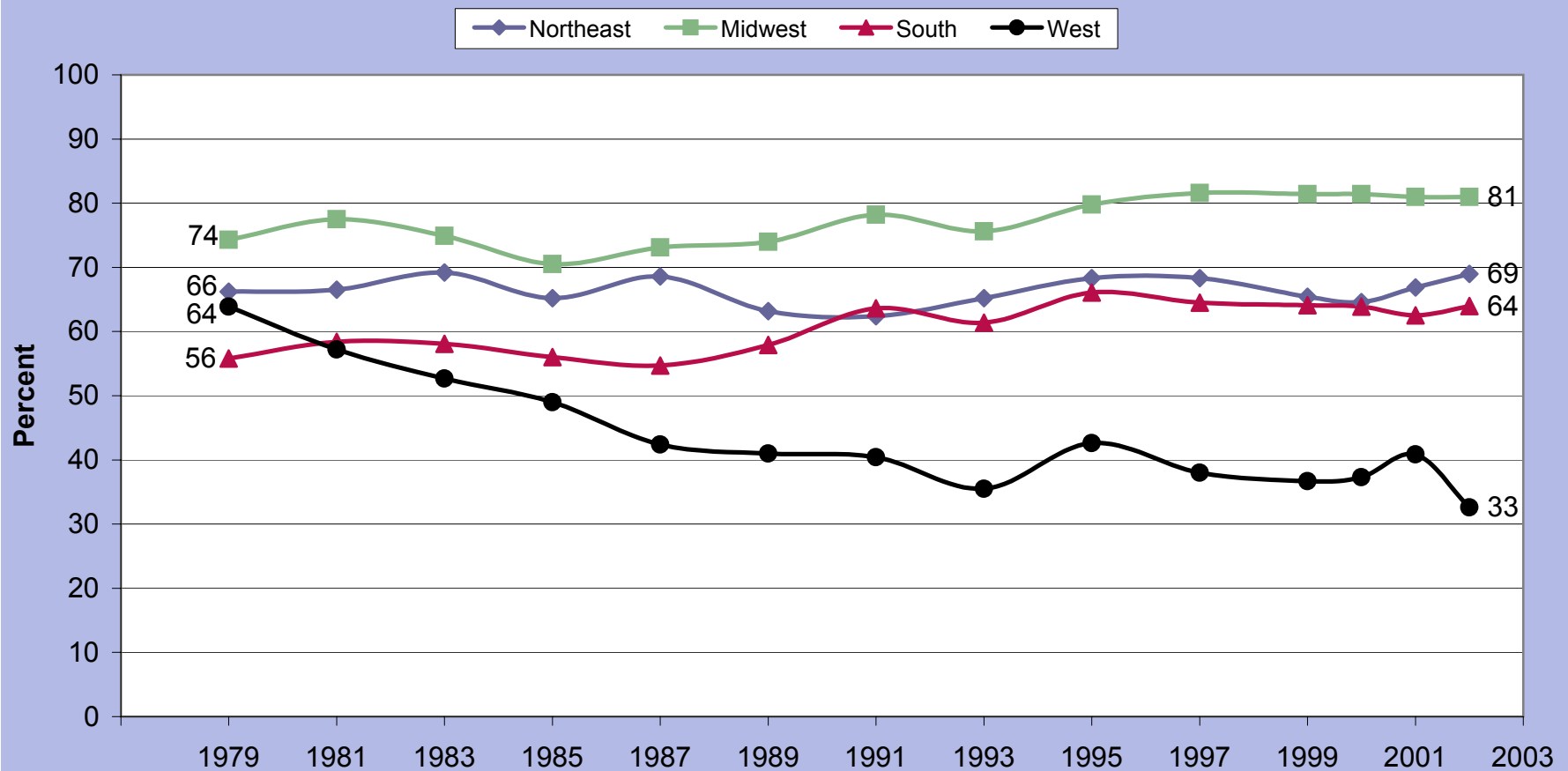


Sources: Data from 2000-2002 from Child Trends' original analysis of National Hospital Discharge Survey data. 1979-1999 from National Center for Health Statistics. *Trends in Circumcision Among Newborns*. May 25, 2004: Table 1. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/circumcisions/circumcisions_race.htm#Table%201.



Figure 2

Percentage of Newborn Males Born who were Circumcised in Hospitals, by Region, 1979-2002



Sources: Data for 2000-2002 from Child Trends' original analysis of the National Hospital Discharge Survey. Data for 1979-1999 from National Center for Health Statistics. *Trends in Circumcision Among Newborns*. May 25, 2004: Table 2. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/circumcisions/circumcisions_region.htm#Table%202..



Table 1

Percentage of Newborn Males Circumcised in Hospitals, Selected Years, 1979-2002

	1979	1981	1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total¹	64.5	64.9	63.2	59.5	58.6	58.8	61.1	59.5	64.1	62.8	61.5	62.4	63.1	60.1
Race														
White	65.8	67.1	65.9	63.5	63.2	64.2	67.0	65.0	68.6	65.8	65.5	65.8	67.0	64.0
Black	57.9	60.7	58.3	55.4	55.4	56.5	59.0	56.6	63.9	67.3	64.4	69.0	65.4	69.8
Region														
Northeast	66.2	66.5	69.2	65.2	68.6	63.2	62.4	65.2	68.3	68.3	65.4	64.6	66.9	69.0
Midwest	74.3	77.5	74.9	70.5	73.1	74.0	78.2	75.6	79.8	81.6	81.4	81.4	81.0	81.0
South	55.8	58.4	58.1	56.0	54.7	57.9	63.6	61.4	66.1	64.5	64.1	63.9	62.5	64.0
West	63.9	57.2	52.7	49.0	42.4	41.0	40.4	35.5	42.6	38.0	36.7	37.3	40.9	32.6

¹ Total estimates presented here include all races and differ from total estimates in published reports, which only include white and black infants.

Sources: Totals and data for 2000-2002 from Child Trends' original analysis of the National Hospital Discharge Survey. Other data from National Center for Health Statistics. *Trends in Circumcision Among Newborns*. May 25, 2004. Tables 1 and 2. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/circumcisions/circumcisions.htm>

