

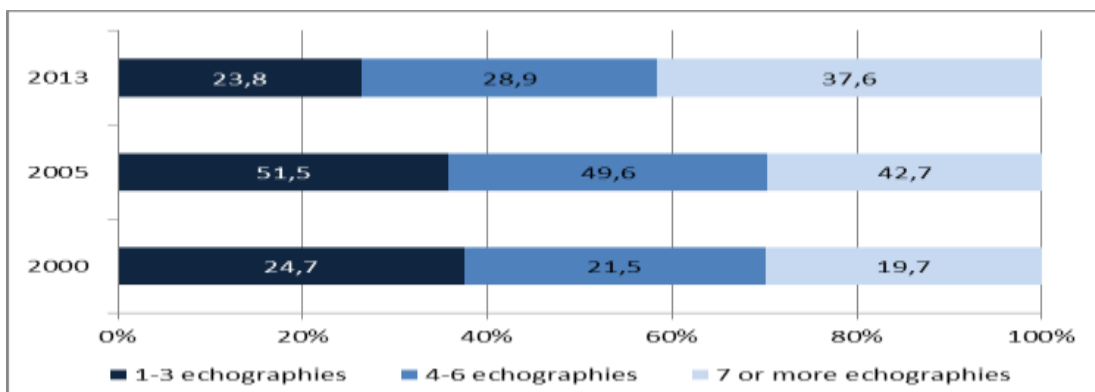
Pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding in Italy

Year 2013

Pregnant women in Italy have access to good health care services. Istat survey on Health Conditions and Use of Health Services¹ estimates that in 2013 2,7 million women had a child in the last 5 years (18.2% were foreign women). 94.3% of mothers had the first medical visit within the third month of pregnancy (the same as in 2000 and 2005), as the national guidelines recommended.

Medicalization during pregnancy is on the rise: 37.6% of women had more than 6 echography exams during pregnancy, while the percentage was 23.8% in 2000 and 28.9% in 2005.

FIGURE 1. WOMEN BY NUMBER OF ECHOGRAPHY EXAMS DURING PREGNANCY. Years 2000, 2005 and 2013



*Per 100 mothers of 0-5 years old children.

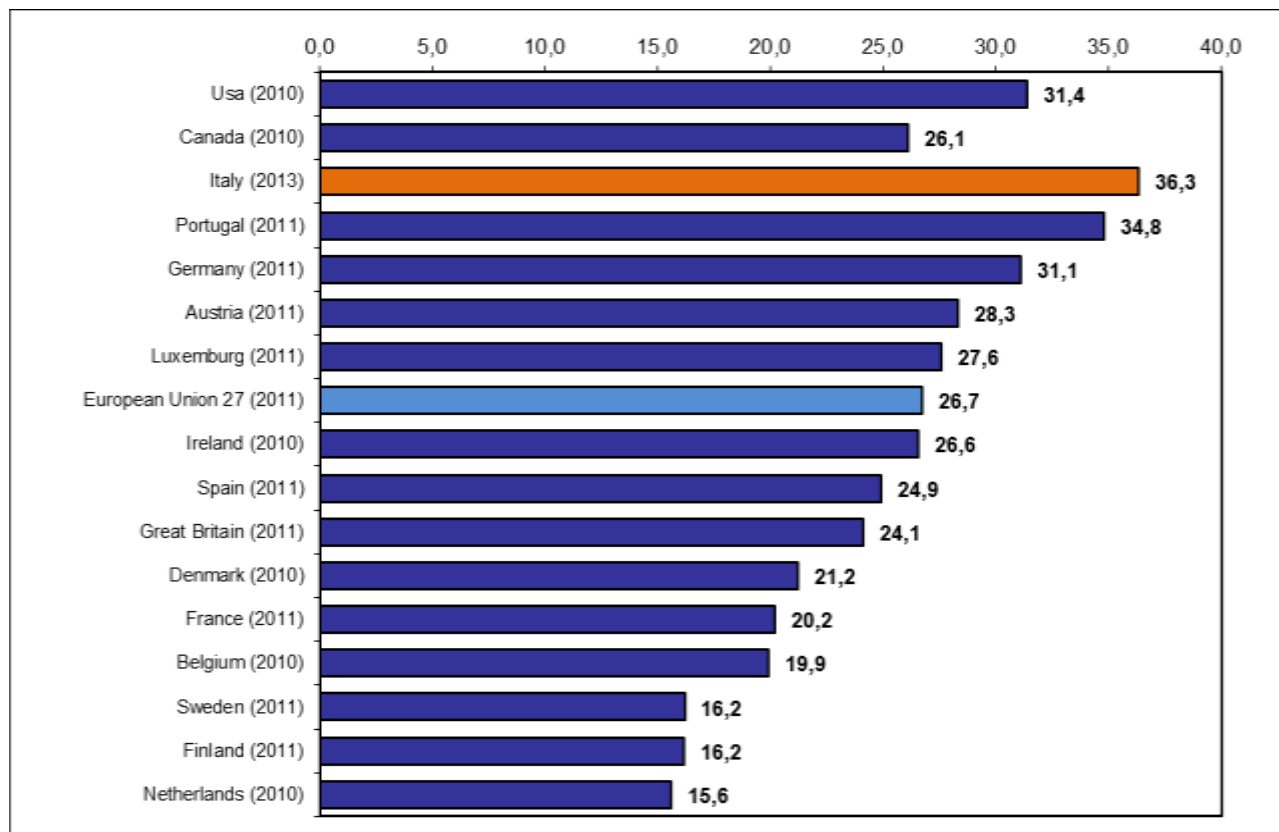
Women awareness of health risks of smoking for the new born was rising: 74.1% of women stated that they quit smoking during pregnancy (63.4% in 2000). 22.3% of mothers reduced the number of smoked cigarettes, and only 3% didn't change their smoking behavior (6.8% in 2000). Among more educated women the share of those who stopped smoking during pregnancy was even higher (89.2%), while it decreased among less educated women (65.2%).

Italy was the European country with the highest level of Caesarian section rate (36.3%) according to the 2013 hospital discharge records (Sdo), collected by the Health Ministry and confirmed by Istat survey. A sharp variability was registered among Italian regions with higher rates in Southern Italy.

¹ The overall sample size is about 60,000 households, 119,000 interviewed people.

In 2010 and in 2012 guidelines regarding the appropriateness of Caesarian section² were released by the Italian Ministry of Health and the National Health Institute. Furthermore, according to the National Health Plan recommendations (2011-2013) the Caesarian section rate should be kept below 20% of all births³.

FIGURE 2. PERCENTAGE OF CAESARIAN SECTION RATE IN SOME EU-COUNTRIES, USA AND CANADA. Years 2010- 2013



Sources: For Italy "Ministry of Health - Schede di dimissione ospedaliera 2013". For other countries Oecd: Health database. For (Eu27) European Health for all database Who.

Among women who had a spontaneous delivery, medicalization of labour and birth was relevant: 32.0% of mothers declared they had an amniotomy (artificial rupture of membranes), 34.7% episiotomy, 22.3% injected oxytocin used for labor induction.

The share of breastfeeding mother was increasing: from 81.1% in 2000, to 80.3% in 2005 and to 85.5% in 2013. The mean duration of breastfeeding was rising too, from 6.2 months in 2000, to 7.3 in 2005 and 8.3 in 2013. The mean number of months of exclusive breastfeeding was equal to 4.1, with important regional differences: the highest value was 5 months in the province of Trento and the lowest I was 3.5 in Sicilia.

The rate of breastfeeding mothers was higher among foreign citizens (89.4% vs 84.6% of Italian mothers), as well as the duration of breastfeeding, which was 9.2 month on average among foreign mothers and 8.1 among Italian mothers.

² Snlg-Iss. Taglio cesareo: una scelta appropriata e consapevole-parte seconda. Linea guida 22 Roma: Ministero della Salute, Istituto Superiore di Sanità; 2012; <http://www.snlgiiss>.

³ Ministero della Salute, Schema di piano sanitario nazionale 2011-2013.

TABLE 1. BREASTFEEDING* BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA.

Years 2000, 2005 and 2013

Geographical area	% of breastfeeding women			Mean number of months the child was breastfed		
	2000	2005	2013	2000	2005	2013
North-west	81.1	80.3	85.9	5.8	7.6	8.5
North-east	86.6	86.0	88.5	6.7	7.2	8.6
Center	84.9	81.9	86.7	6.3	7.6	9.1
South and Islands	77.2	79.6	82.8	6.1	7.0	8.2
Total	81.1	81.4	85.5	6.2	7.3	8.3

*For 100 mothers of 0-5 years old children.

For more details please refer to the Italian version

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