

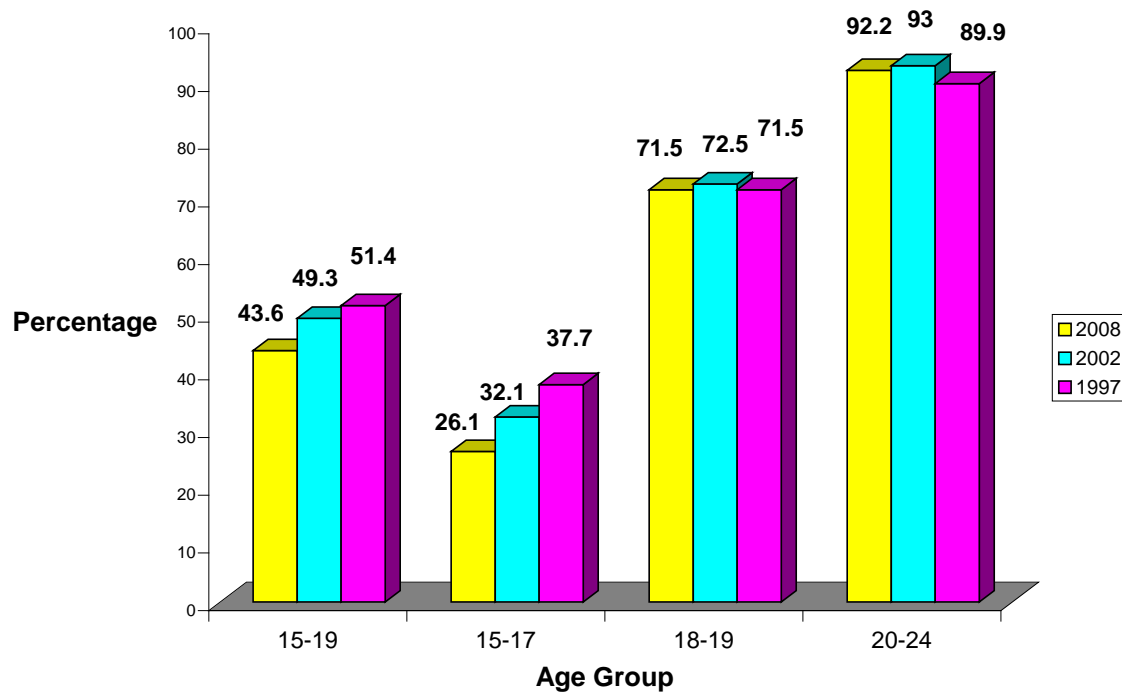
## Sexual Relations Among Adolescents and Youth

The charts and tables in this section illustrate the trends observed over comparative survey years as it relates to sexual relations among young males and females.

For both adolescent males and females, the percentage of those who have ever had sex is decreasing (**See Diagrams 1 and 2**). This shows that fewer adolescents will be exposed to the possibility of contracting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), fewer adolescent females will become pregnant, and a reduced number of adolescent females will drop out of school due to pregnancy. This will benefit the health and the economic prospects for the nation.

The data also imply that adolescents are waiting longer to have intercourse and practising primary abstinence for a longer period of time (**See Diagram 3**). Delaying sexual initiation has many benefits, some of which include:

- Determining the benefits of abstinence;
- Increasing the time available to determine the responsibilities, risks and challenges one may face with choosing to have intercourse too early in life;
- More time to get to know a potential partner to determine if they are the right person to engage in intercourse with; and
- Having the opportunity to get more information about how to have safe sex if one chooses to have intercourse.



**Diagram 1: Percent of Young Adult Women Aged 15-24 Years who have ever had Sexual Relations by age Group From the 2008, 2002 and 1997 RHS**

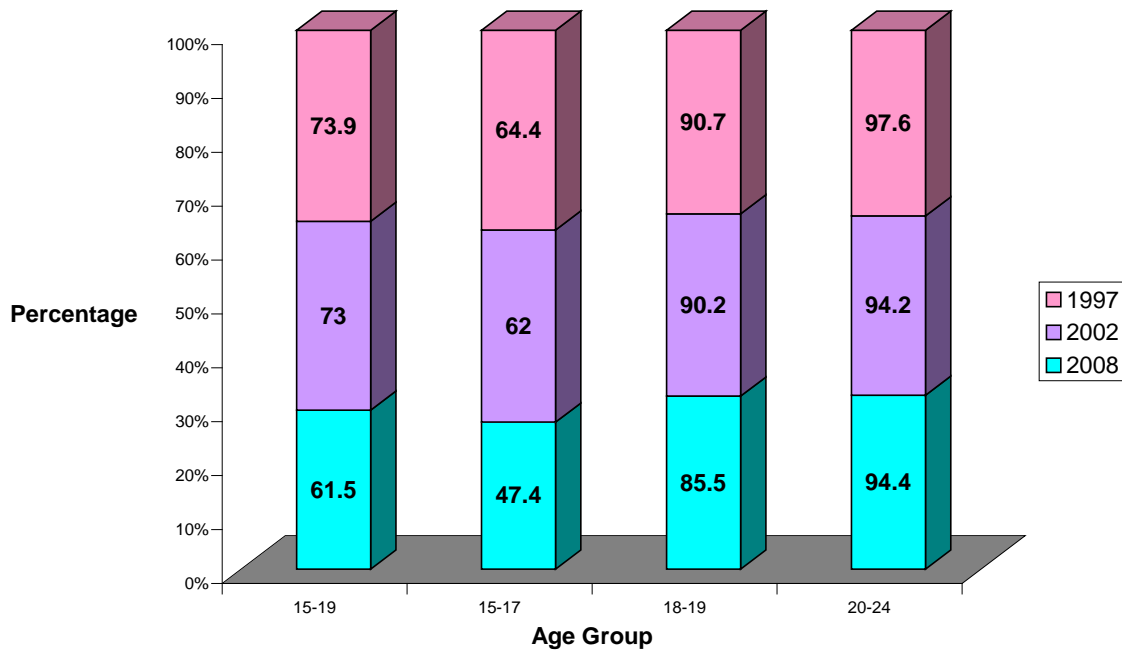
Source: 2008, 2002 and 1997 Reproductive Health Surveys

As seen in Diagram 1, the percent of young adult women aged 15-19 and 15-17 who have ever had sexual relations has decreased between comparative years 1997, 2002 and 2008 and has either remained stable or displayed marginal increases for the 18-19 and 20-24 age group. Overall, in the 15-19 age group, a decline of 7.8 percentage points was observed between comparative years 1997 and 2008 with 51.4 percent of these females having ever had intercourse in 1997 and 43.6 in the year 2008. There was also a 5.7 percentage point decline between comparative years 2002 and 2008.

For the age group 15-17 a decline over the comparative years 1997, 2002 and 2008 was also observed with an overall decline of 11.6 between 1997 and 2008 with 37.7 percent in 1997 and 26.1 percent in 2008. A decline of 5.6 percentage points was also observed between comparative years 2002 and 2008.

In the 18-19 age group, the percentage of females who have ever had sex remained stable between 1997 and 2008 with 71.5 percent in 1997 and 71.5 percent in 2008. A slight decrease of one (1) percentage point between comparative years 2002 and 2008 was also observed.

Finally, in the age group 20-24 the percentage of females who have ever had sex increased by 2.3 percentage points from 89.9 in 1997 to 92.2 in 2008. There was however a 0.8 percentage point decrease between the comparative years 2002 and 2008.



**Diagram 2: Percent of Young Adult Men Aged 15-24 Years who Have Ever had Sexual Relations by age Group From the 2008 and 2002 RHS**

Source: 2008 and 2002 Reproductive Health Survey, Young Adult Report, 2002

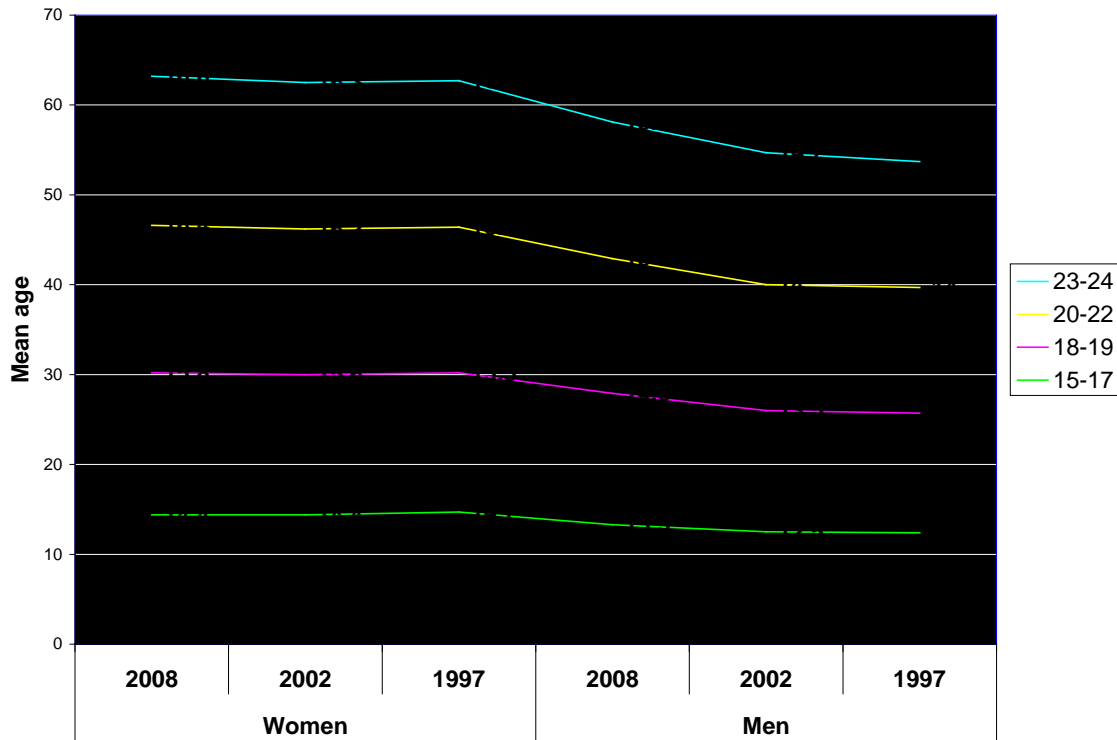
As seen in Diagram 2 above, the percentage of young adult males aged 15-24 who have ever had sexual relations has decreased between comparative years 1997, 2002 and 2008 for the group 15-19. Overall a decline of 12.4 percentage points was observed between

comparative years 1997 and 2008 with 73.9 percent of these males having ever had intercourse in 1997 and 61.5 in the year 2008. There was also an 11.5 percentage point decline between comparative years 2002 and 2008.

For the age group 15-17 a decline over the comparative years 1997, 2002 and 2008 was also observed with an overall decline of 17 percentage points between 1997 and 2008 with 64.4 percent in 1997 and 47.4 percent in 2008. A decline of 14.6 percentage points was also observed between comparative years 2002 and 2008.

In the 18-19 age group, the percentage of males who have ever had sex decreased by 5.2 percentage points with 90.7 percent in 1997 and 85.5 percent in 2008 and a decline of 0.6 percentage points between 2002 and 2008.

Finally, in the age group 20-24 the percentage of males who have ever had sex declined by 3.2 percentage points from 97.6 in 1997 to 94.4 in 2008. In addition, the percentage of males in this age group who have ever had sexual relations declined by 0.2 percentage points, comparing survey years 2002 and 2008.



**Diagram 3: Mean age at First Intercourse by Current age Group Young Adult Women and men Aged 15-24 Years who are Sexually Experienced**

Source: 2002 and 2008 Reproductive Health Survey

As seen in Diagram 3, the mean age at first intercourse has increased for most age groups between the comparative years 1997, 2002 and 2008. For females ages 15-17 the mean age at first intercourse declined from 14.7 in 1997 to 14.4 in 2002 and remained at 14.4 in 2008. For the age group 18-19 however, the mean age increased from 15.5 in 1997 to 15.6 in 2002 and finally 15.8 in 2008. For females aged 20-22, the mean age remained stable at 16.2 between the years 1997 and 2002 but increased to 16.4 in 2008. Finally in the age group 23-24, the mean age fluctuated comparing survey years 1997 and 2002 from 16.6 to 16.3 respectively, however by 2002, the mean age once again increased to 16.6.

For males ages 15-17 the mean age at first intercourse increased from 12.4 in 1997 to 12.5 in 2002 and increased further to 13.3 in 2008. For the age group 18-19, the mean age

increased from 13.3 in 1997 to 13.5 in 2002 and finally rose to 14.6 in 2008. For males aged 20-22, the mean age remained stable at 14 between the years 1997 and 2002 but increased to 15 in 2008. Finally in the age group 23-24, the mean age increased from 14 in 1997 to 14.7 in 2002 and rose further to 15.2 in 2008.