

Trends in Pregnancy Attitudes Over the Postpartum Period in Adolescent and Young Adult Mothers



Celina Sarangi, Hana Smith MD, and Jeanelle Sheeder PhD.
Special Thanks to:
University of Colorado School of Medicine

Young Mothers Clinic
Children's Hospital Colorado
860 N Potomac Circle
Aurora, CO 80011

Purpose

To determine changes in pregnancy attitudes and pregnancy ambivalence over the first 24 months postpartum in adolescent and young adult mothers.

Introduction

- Pregnancy attitudes are defined as a person's feelings, ideas, and/or beliefs about a potential future pregnancy.
- Pregnancy attitudes may change over time and may be ambivalent or conflicting.
- Patients with pregnancy ambivalence are at an increased risk of unintended and rapid repeat pregnancy, which poses a risk to maternal and infant health.
- Pregnancy attitude surveys are an important clinical tool in identifying pregnancy ambivalence.

Methods

- Patients of the Young Mother's Clinic were surveyed about their pregnancy attitudes at well-child visits at 1, 2, 6, 12, 18, and 24 months postpartum between April 2020 and September 2022.
- At well-child visits, patients were asked "When do you want to have your next baby?" (Response options included <1, 1-2, 3-5, >5 years, Never, and Not Sure). Patients were also asked "How would you feel if you became pregnant in the next six months?" (Responses were on a Likert scale ranging from really excited to really upset).
- Pregnancy ambivalence was defined as discordance between those two items. (Table 1)

		How upset if in next 6m				
		really upset	a little upset	partly upset partly excited	a little excited	really excited
When next baby	Discordance=1					
	<1yr	1	1	0	0	0
	1-2y	0	0	0.5	1	1
	3-5y	0	0	0.5	1	1
	>5y	0	0	0.5	1	1
	never	0	0	1	1	1
	not sure/idk	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

Table 1. Ambivalent Attitudes Calculation.

Patients with a score of 1 were scored as ambivalent, 0.5 were scored as partly ambivalent/partly concordant, and 0 were scored as concordant.

Answers to ambivalent and partly concordant/partly ambivalent were combined into a separate category named "ambivalent + partly ambivalent/partly concordant".

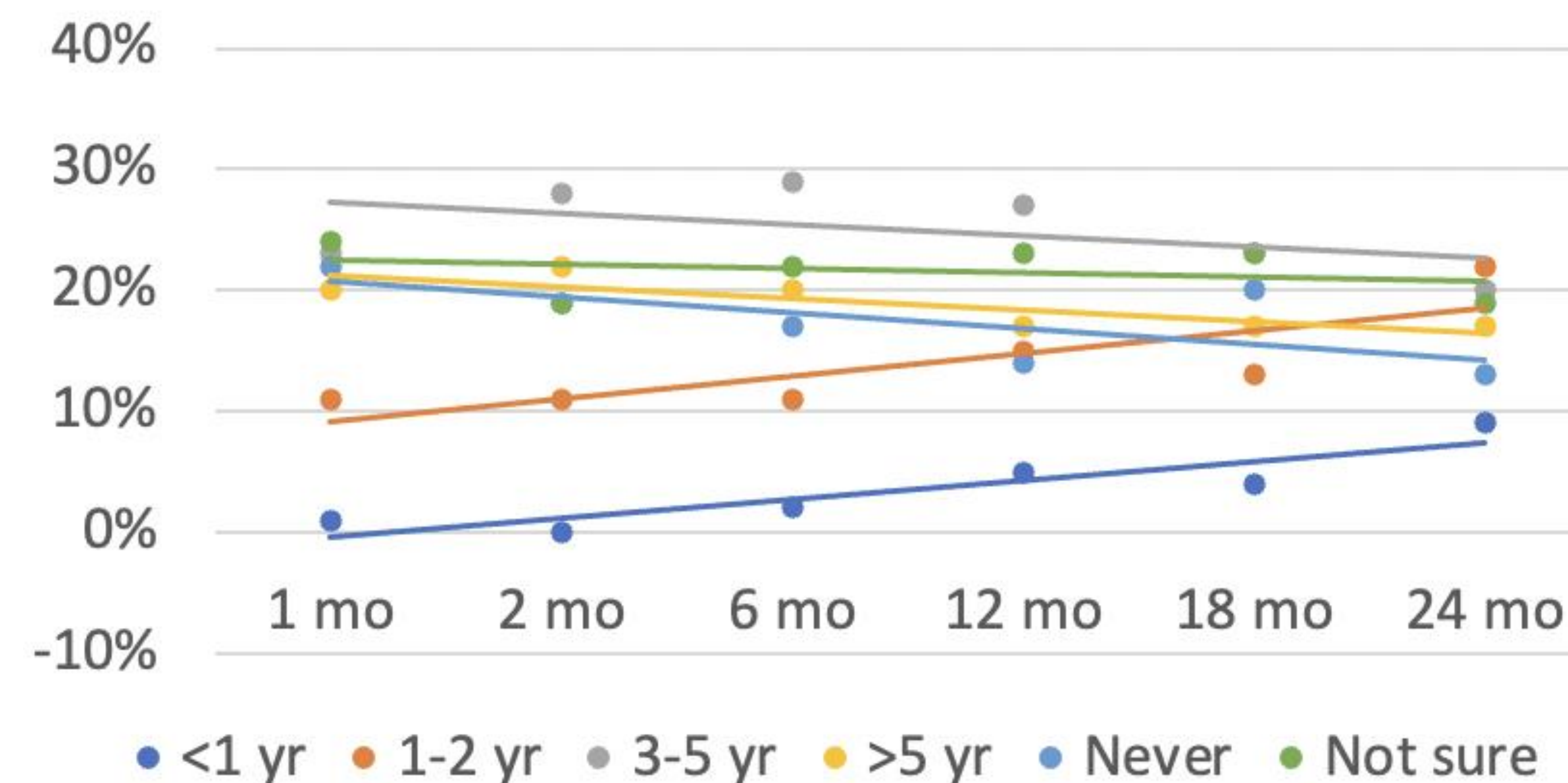


Fig 1. Types of Response to the Question "When Do You Want to Have Your Next Baby"? Over 24 Months Postpartum.

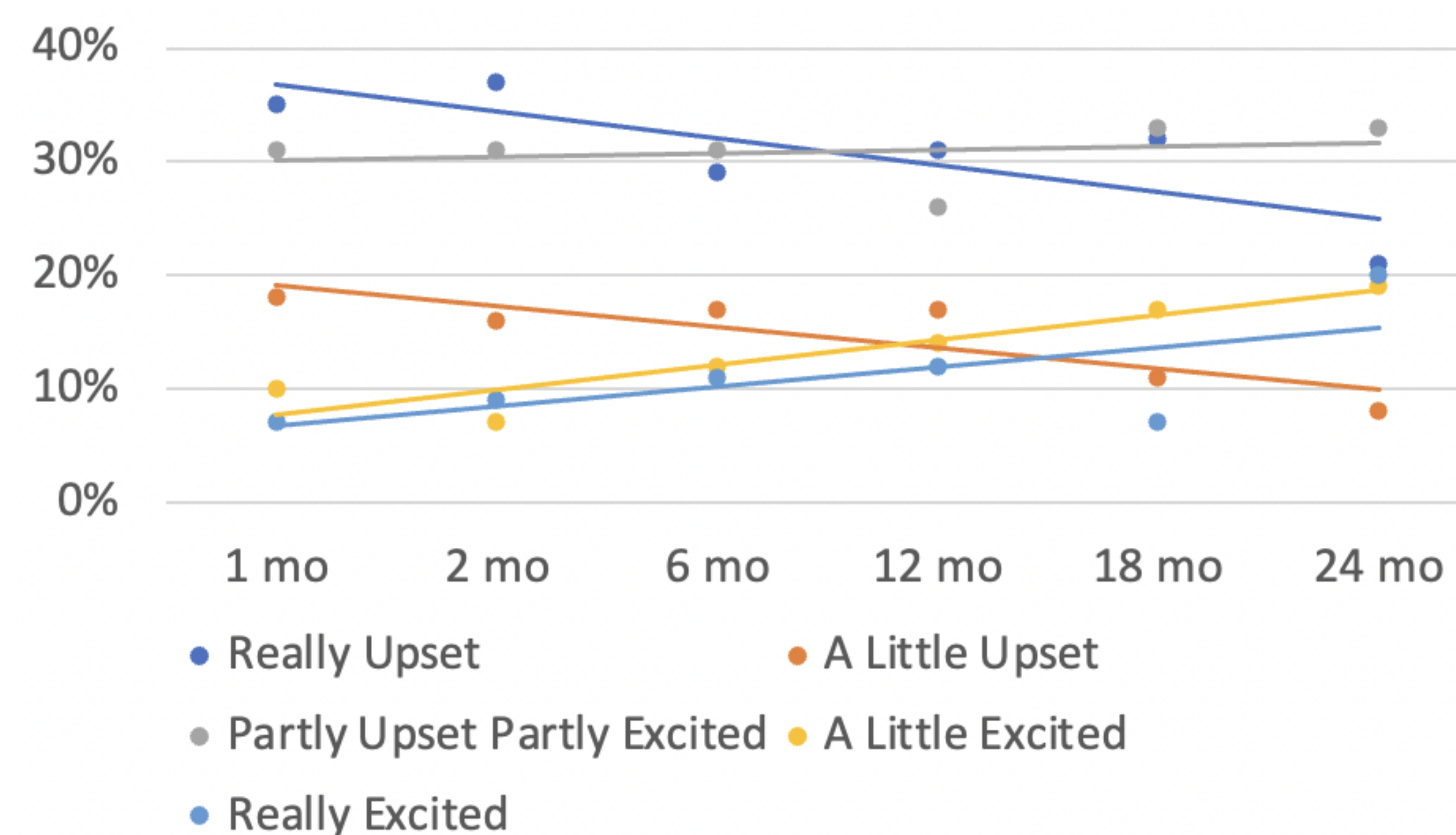


Fig 2. Types of Responses to the Question "How Would You Feel If You Became Pregnant In the Next 6 Months?" Over 24 Months Postpartum.

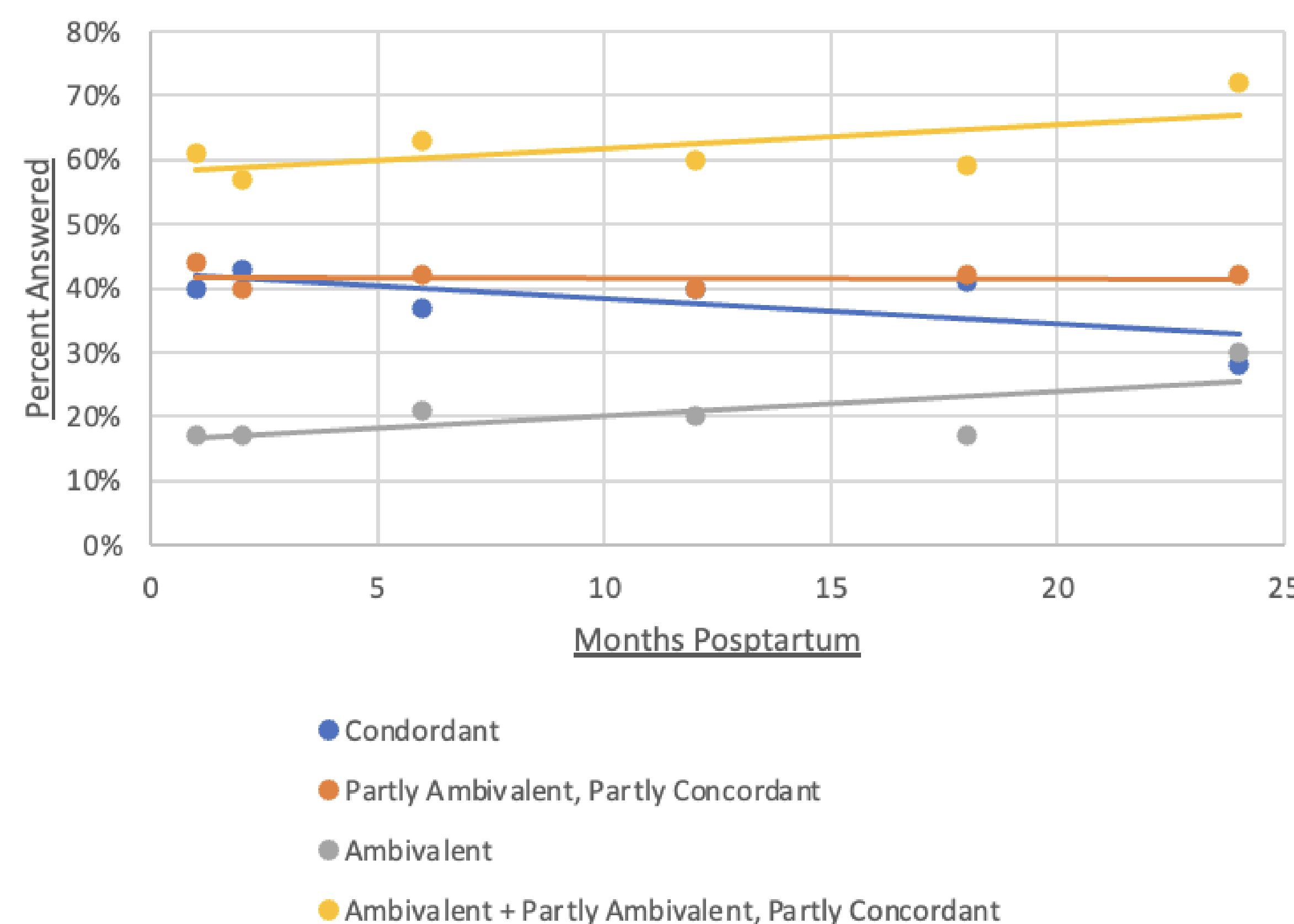


Fig 3. Patients with Concordance, Partly Ambivalent/Partly Concordant, and Ambivalent Over 24 Months Postpartum.

Results

- A total of 678 patients (1,375 visits) were included. Patients' demographics included a median age of 20 (range: 13-25 years) and 59% Latinx.
- Number of responses recorded at each visit were n=306 at 1 month, n=324 at 2 months, n=276 at 6 months, n=243 at 12 months, n=140 at 18 months, and n= 86 at 24 months.

Discussion

- Pregnancy ambivalence increased over time and concordance decreased over time, although these trends were not significant.
- The number of patients desiring pregnancy in <1 and 1-2 years increased significantly while the number of patients desiring pregnancy in > 5 years decreased significantly
- The number of patients with positive feelings toward a future pregnancy increased significantly and the number of patients who with negative feelings toward a future pregnancy decreased significantly.

Conclusion

- Adolescent and young adult mothers in the first two years postpartum may become more ambivalent and less concordant about their next pregnancy over time, but future studies are necessary to support this trend
- Providers should identify patients with pregnancy ambivalence, discuss these seemingly conflicting feelings, and support their contraceptive and parenting goals.

References

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