

## Background

While decreased fertility in women is associated with many factors including: hormonal abnormalities, physical barriers in the reproductive tract, tobacco use and being over or under weight, infertility increases dramatically with age. Many American women are delaying childbearing. Research has shown that many women with infertility related to age suffer a significant amount of guilt regarding their decision to delay childbearing. For the health of our patients, it is important that we learn what they know about the course of human fertility and develop improved methods to educate women regarding their fertility choices.

## Objective

To describe women's knowledge of fertility.

## Methods

### Design

Cross-sectional survey

### Participants

OB and GYN patients

Excluded: REI patients, Unassigned ER follow-up patients, Girls <16 years old

### Setting

OB/GYN Clinic in Western North Carolina

## Methods

### Survey

Socio-demographics, pregnancy & infertility Hx  
16 fertility knowledge items  
- modified from published documents  
Paper/pencil in exam rooms

### Knowledge Scores

Answers were scored for accuracy & summed. Median splits (high vs. low score) were used in comparisons by socio-demographic variables

### Fertility Curve

Mode responses of age categories for peak fertility, gradual and rapid decline were graphed against the standard fertility curve.

### Statistics

Chi square analysis  $p < .05$

## Results

### Response Rate

N=206/330 (62.4% response rate)

### Participants

Ages: Median=25 (16-51) years

Pregnant: 64% Parents: 67%

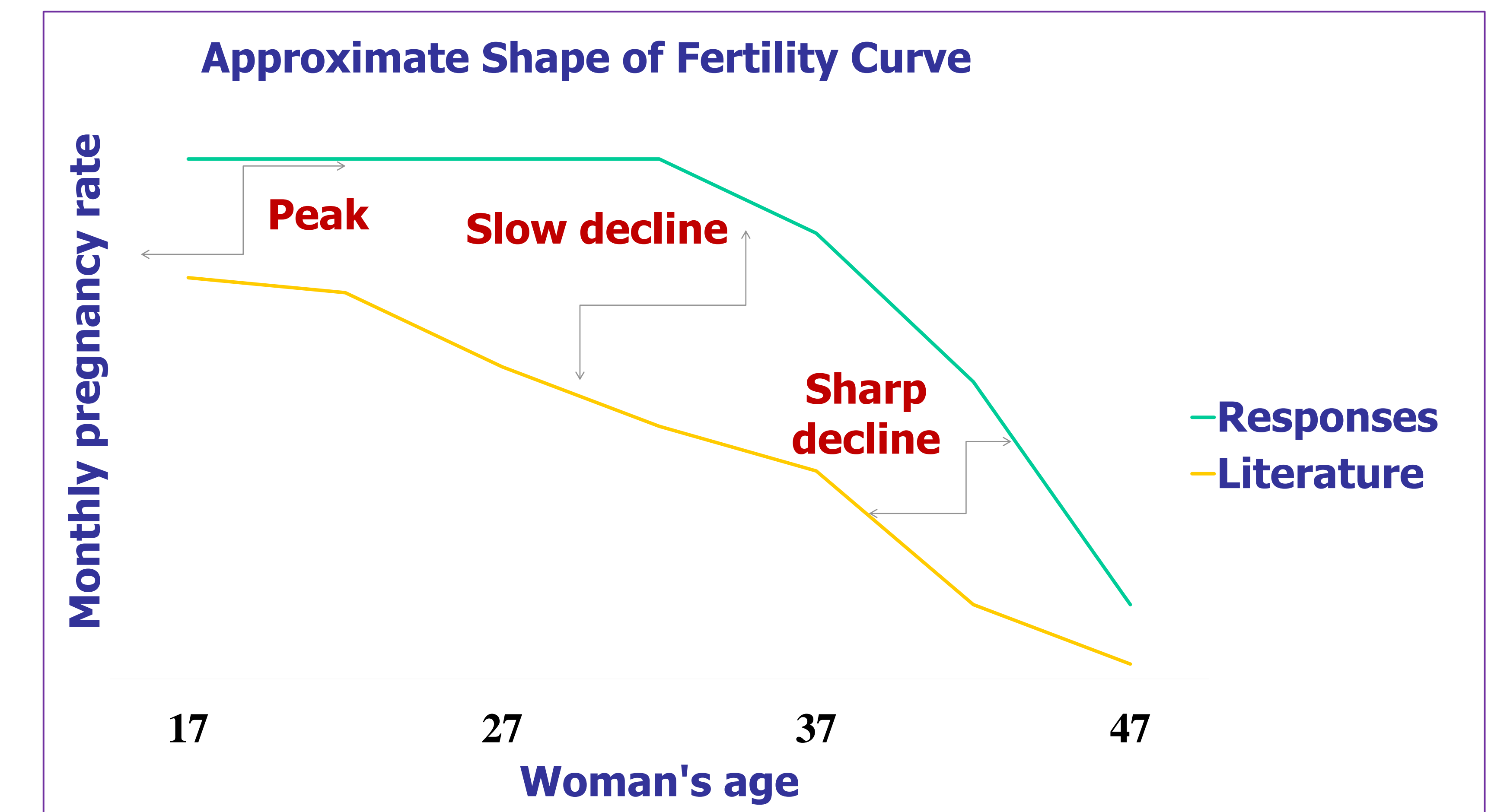
Education > High school: 59%

### Knowledge

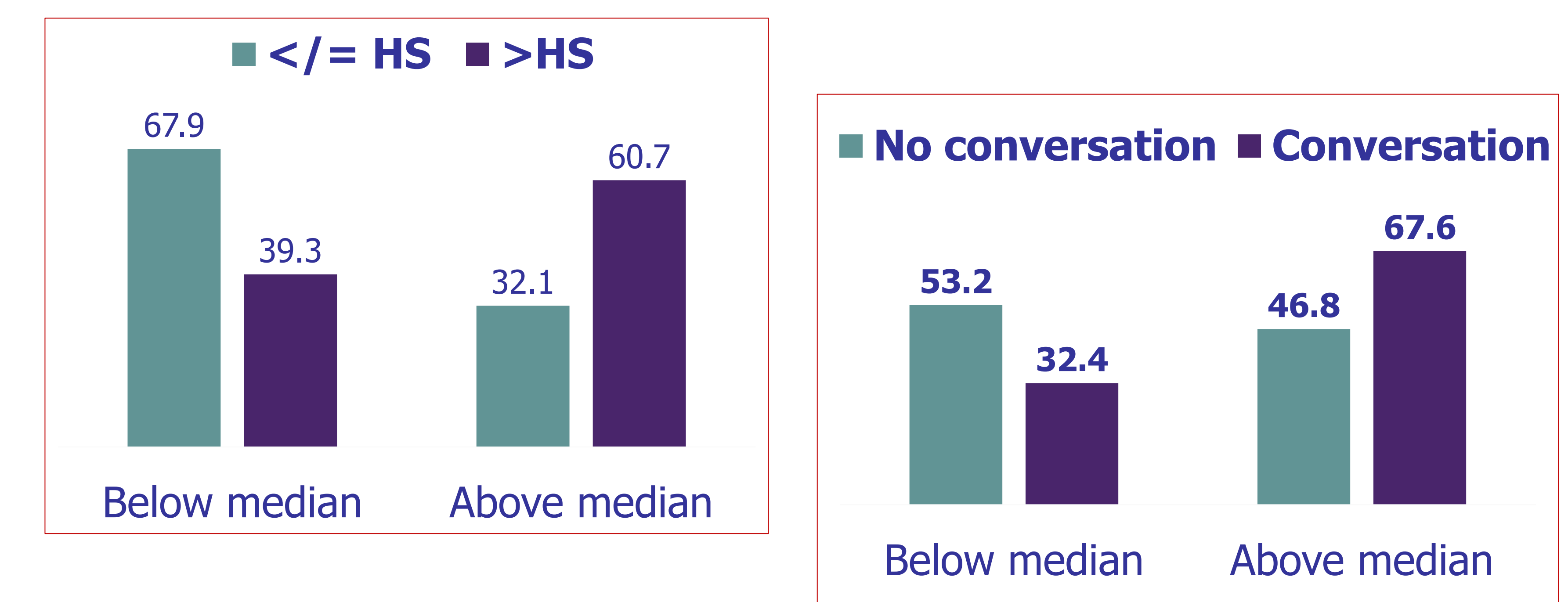
	Raw Scores		Percent	
Possible	0 - 16		0 - 100%	
Actual	1 - 13		6 - 81%	
M SD	6.5	2.7	41%	17%

## Results

### Fertility Curve



### Significant Predictors of Fertility Knowledge



## Conclusions

Overall knowledge is poor. Women think fertility peaks and subsequently declines later in life than it actually does. Providers should have conversations about fertility with all women, especially those with less formal education.



# Fertility Knowledge and Awareness among Reproductive Age Women

*<sup>a</sup>Rachel Harper, BS, <sup>b</sup>Andrea F. Currens, MD, <sup>b</sup>Melissa Lord, BS and <sup>c</sup>Shelley L. Galvin, MA*

*<sup>a</sup>UNC School of Medicine – Asheville Campus*

*<sup>b</sup>Department of OB/GYN, <sup>c</sup>Center for Research, Mountain Area Health Education Center, Asheville,  
North Carolina*

Poster Presented at  
MAHEC Research Day, May 17, 2013.