

DAILY NEWS

Watch out, Emily!

Oumou gaining

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Michael and Emily are still our little darlings - but Mahdi and Oumou have big ambitions.

Though the city's most popular baby names are far from unique, immigration trends are leaving their mark.

The city's first new residents - Odunayo Muhamed, Oladipupo Oluwagbemiga Olusola and Yuki Lin, all born only minutes into the New Year - join a growing list of babies with culturally diverse names, according to the Health Department.

"What's most striking is that in the top 50 most popular names, there's no Mary, there's no Carolyn or Megan," said Mitchell Moss, a New York University urban planning professor. "And 20 years ago, there would have been no Kayla, yet now it's at number three."

"The names that we are using now definitely reflect a new ethnic composition in New York. The names are much more diverse in origin."

In its most recent figures, from 2005, the Health Department said names such as Zain, Kamari, Nyla and Zaniyah are as common as Mabel, Joanne and Bernard. Some, such as Oumou and Kamari, weren't on the list only a year before.

"You see the biblical names remaining very popular, but they are relevant to many different ethnic groups," Moss said. "Other names, Hispanic names or names which originate in Africa or Asia, definitely reflect immigration trends."

The rise in ethnic names doesn't necessarily show a rise in recent immigration. It could reflect cultural pride going back generations, said Warren Brown, an expert in demographics at Cornell University.

"My own grandchildren all have very Irish first names, but it is many years since their forebears came from Ireland," he said.

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Egan-Chin NEWS

**Oladipupo
Oluwagbemiga
Olusola**