

**HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIOLOGY HIGHLIGHT
APRIL 2001
1999 OHIO YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY:
HIV AND SEXUAL BEHAVIORS**

Introduction

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was implemented in Ohio to monitor health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of mortality, morbidity, and social problems among youth in the United States. The survey was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in collaboration with state and local departments of education and other federal agencies. The questionnaire contains multiple choice questions addressing health related behaviors, drug use, sexual behaviors, HIV infection, and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). This highlight examines questions from the 1999 survey that address behaviors that are related to HIV infection. Since injection drug use and sexual contact are potential sources of exposure for HIV transmission, knowledge about the extent to which students engage in these behaviors is useful for HIV prevention.

In 1999, the YRBS was completed by 2,061 students in 55 Ohio public high schools, representing a school response rate of 87%, and a student response rate of 81%. This response rate was sufficient to produce results which are representative of Ohio's high school students, but does not provide information on behaviors of those not in school. Since the survey is based on self report there is the potential for reporting bias. There is no way to know the extent of over-reporting or under-reporting of behaviors. The data presented in this report have been weighted, so that percentages are representative of the entire population of high school students in Ohio.

All High School Students

**1999 Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey: HIV and Sexual Behaviors
All High School Students**

	Total	Sex		Age in Years		
		Male	Female	<16	16-17	18+
Have injected any illegal drug	2%	3%	1%	1%	3%	3%
Have had sexual intercourse	47%	49%	45%	27%	53%	66%
Age at first intercourse						
Never had intercourse	53%	51%	55%	73%	47%	34%
less than 13 years old	5%	9%	2%	7%	6%	1%
13 - 15 years old	25%	23%	27%	20%	28%	26%
16 or more years old	17%	17%	16%	NA	19%	39%
Taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school	91%	91%	91%	93%	90%	90%

Among all high school students, two percent indicated that they have injected an illegal drug. The proportion of students reporting injection drug use was higher among male students than female students, and was higher among students 16 and older than among those under age 16.

Forty-seven percent of all high school students reported that they have had sexual intercourse. Sixty-three percent of 12th grade students reported that they have had sexual intercourse. This suggests that the majority of students will have sex while still in high school. The proportion of students having sexual intercourse increases as age increases. While 27% of students under age 16 have had sexual intercourse, 53% of 16-17 year old students, and 66% of students aged 18 and older have had sexual intercourse. A notable proportion of students report that they first had sexual intercourse before age 13 (5%).

Ninety-one percent of students report having been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school. This proportion is similar across gender and age groups.

High School Students Who have had Sexual Intercourse

1999 Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey: HIV and Sexual Behaviors High School Students Who have had Sexual Intercourse

	Total	Sex		Age in Years		
		Male	Female	<16	16-17	18+
Age at first intercourse						
less than 13 years old	11%	18%	5%	25%	11%	2%
13 - 15 years old	53%	48%	59%	75%	53%	39%
16 or more years old	35%	35%	36%	NA	36%	59%
Had sex with 4 or more people	34%	34%	34%	28%	38%	29%
Had sex with 1 or more people during past 3 months.	72%	70%	73%	61%	74%	73%
Consumed alcohol or drugs before last sexual intercourse	29%	31%	27%	29%	29%	29%
Used a condom during last sexual intercourse.	60%	63%	57%	72%	59%	55%

Among students who have engaged in sexual intercourse, 53% were aged 13-15 when they first had sexual intercourse. Male students tended to be younger than female students at time of first sexual intercourse. Eighteen percent of sexually active males had intercourse before age 13, compared to five percent of females.

Among high school students who reported having had sexual intercourse, 34% have had four or more sex partners. Seventy-two percent of high school students who reported having had sexual intercourse reported having had at least one partner in the past three months.

Twenty-nine percent of sexually active students consumed alcohol or drugs before their last sexual intercourse. The use of alcohol or drugs may impair judgement, which can lead to high-risk behavior. Slightly more males than females consumed alcohol or drugs prior to the last time they had sexual intercourse.

Correct and consistent use of condoms has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV transmission. This has been the essence of many HIV prevention messages. Sixty percent of sexually active students used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse. Slightly fewer females than males reported having used a condom.

Conclusion

This survey suggests that high school students are engaging in behaviors that might put them at risk for HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. In 1999, sixty-three percent of high school seniors report having had sexual intercourse. The majority of sexually active students were under age 16 when they began having sexual intercourse. Research indicates that earlier onset of sexual activity is associated with a higher number of lifetime sexual partners. A substantial proportion of students consumed alcohol or drugs prior to sexual intercourse. While the majority of students used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse, a substantial percentage did not use a condom. Again, it should be noted that these results are based on self-report and should be interpreted with caution.

Data Source: 1999. Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Office of Criminal Justice Services – Ohio Violence Prevention Center.

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