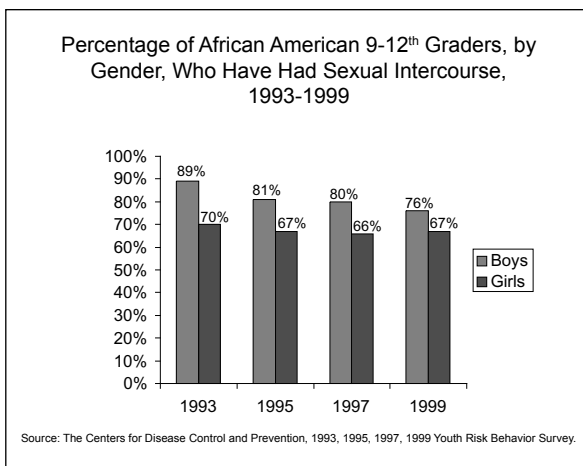


## Sexual Health of Young African Americans in the U.S.

African Americans represent twelve percent of the U.S. population, or approximately 35 million people,<sup>1</sup> but have been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. African Americans now account for roughly half of new HIV infections and AIDS cases<sup>10</sup> and the unintended pregnancy rate for African Americans is much larger than the rate for whites and Latinas.<sup>8</sup> Reported rates of some STDs, including gonorrhea and syphilis, are significantly higher for African Americans than for other racial or ethnic groups in the U.S.<sup>18</sup>

### Teen Sexual Activity

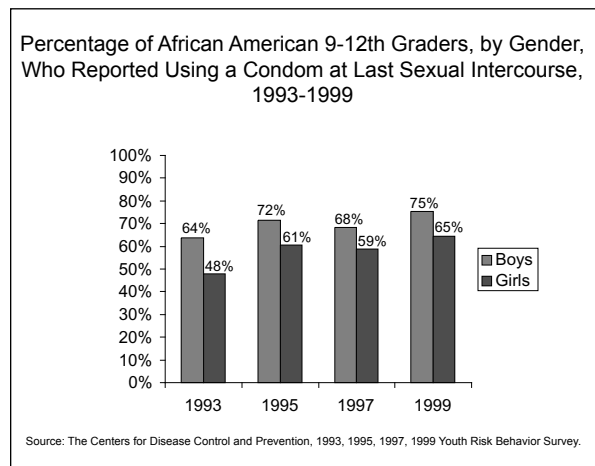
- Sixty-seven percent (66.9%) of African American females in 9-12<sup>th</sup> grades have had sex, compared with 44.8 percent of white females and 45.5 percent of Latinas in the same grades.<sup>2</sup>
- Seventy-six percent (75.7%) of 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade African-American males have had sex, compared with 45.4 percent of white males and 62.9 percent of Latino males in the same grades.<sup>2</sup>
- About one in five (20.5%) African American 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders had sex before age 13, compared with 5.5 percent of whites and 9.2 percent of Latinas in the same grades.<sup>3</sup>



### Contraceptive Use

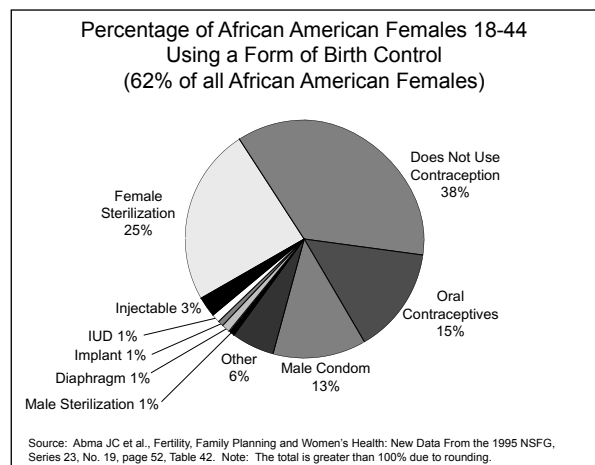
- Among currently sexually active<sup>4</sup> 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders, 70 percent of African Americans reported using a condom the last time they had sex, compared with 55 percent of whites and 55.2 percent of Latinas in the same grades.<sup>3</sup>
- Among currently sexually active 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders, 7.7 percent of African Americans reported that either they or their partner were using oral contraceptives as a birth control method the

last time they had sex, compared with 21 percent of whites and 7.8 percent of Latinas in the same grades.<sup>3</sup>



### Pregnancy, Births, and Abortions

- Overall, 62 percent of African American females aged 15 to 44 use some form of birth control, including sterilization, compared with 66 percent of white females and 59 percent of Latinas in the same age group.<sup>5</sup>
- The pregnancy rate for African American teens aged 15-19 is 170.4 per 1000 teens. The pregnancy rates for whites and Latinas of the same age are 94 and 148.7, respectively. Among African American teens under age 15, the pregnancy rate is 7.7 per 1000 compared with 1.1 for whites and 3.9 for Latinas the same age.<sup>6</sup>



- Pregnancy rates for African American teens aged 15-19 declined 23 percent between 1994 and 1997. Pregnancy rates declined 26 percent among white teens and 11 percent among Latina teens during the same time period.<sup>6</sup>
- The unintended pregnancy rate for African Americans aged 15-44 is 99 per 1000 females, much larger than the rate for whites (36 per 1000), and for Latinas (69 per 1000) the same age.<sup>8</sup>
- The abortion rate for African Americans aged 15-19 is 62.7 per 1000 females; for comparison, abortion rates for white and Latinas the same age are 18.2 and 35.4, respectively. Among African Americans under age 15, the abortion rate is 3.4 per 1000 compared with 0.5 and 1.2 for whites and Latinas the same age.<sup>6</sup>
- The abortion rate for African Americans aged 15-44 is 31 per 1000 females, compared with 12 per 1000 for whites and 20 per 1000 for Latinas the same age.<sup>9</sup>

### HIV/AIDS

- Despite only representing 12% of the U.S. population, African Americans now account for an estimated 54 percent of new HIV infections and 47 percent of new AIDS cases.<sup>10</sup>
- Although African American youth represent approximately 15 percent of U.S. teenagers, they accounted for 64 percent of new AIDS cases reported among those aged 13-19 in 2000.<sup>11</sup>
- AIDS is the leading cause of death among African Americans aged 25 to 44, while HIV is the third leading cause of death among Latinos and the fifth leading cause of death among whites in the same age group.<sup>12</sup>
- Among African American men, sex between men accounted for an estimated 41% of new AIDS cases diagnosed in 2000; approximately one third (32%) were due to injection drug use, and one fifth (20%) to heterosexual transmission. Among African American women, two thirds (66%) of cases diagnosed in 2000 were estimated to be due to heterosexual contact and almost one third (31%) to injection drug use.<sup>10</sup>
- Some groups of young African Americans may be at particularly high risk. For example, young African American men who have sex with men have higher rates of HIV infection than their white or Latino counterparts. In a recent seven-city study of 15-22-year-old men who have sex with men, 7 percent were found to be infected with HIV. The HIV prevalence rate was highest among young African American men: 14 percent, compared with 7 percent among Latinos and 3 percent among whites.<sup>14</sup>

### Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

There are an estimated 15.3 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the U.S. each year.<sup>15</sup> Two-thirds of all new STD cases occur among people under the age of 25.<sup>16</sup> Every year, 3 million teens—about 1 in 4 sexually active teens—are infected.<sup>17</sup> Some data is available on race/ethnicity of reported cases, which are believed to be significantly lower than the actual number of infections.

- There are an estimated three million cases of chlamydia each year.<sup>18</sup> There were 7,786.3 reported cases of chlamydia per 100,000 African American females aged 10-19, compared with 1,190.8 cases among whites and 2,564.2 cases among Latinas the same age.<sup>2</sup>
- An estimated 650,000 cases of gonorrhea occur annually in the U.S.<sup>18</sup> The gonorrhea rate among African Americans increased from 802.4 cases per 100,000 people in 1997 to 848.8 in 1999.<sup>19</sup>
- The rate of syphilis decreased 29 percent among African Americans from 1997 to 1999, but reported rates of syphilis remain disproportionately high among African Americans.<sup>19</sup>

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- <sup>4</sup> The Youth Risk Behavior Survey defines "currently sexually active" as having had sexual intercourse during the three months prior to the survey interview.
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- <sup>6</sup> Ventura SJ et al., Trends in Pregnancy Rates for the United States, 1976-97: An Update, National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 49, Number 4, June 6, 2001.
- <sup>7</sup> National Vital Statistics Reports defines a birth as "wanted" if the mother said that, at or before the time she became pregnant, she wanted to have another child.
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