

Youth Risk Behaviors: Sexual Activity



ILLINOIS RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY, ISSUE 5, MAY 2010

Sexual activity in youth can lead to a variety of negative outcomes, including sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, that can affect a youth's life course. Teens who become pregnant have lower education attainment compared to women who delay having children. Offspring of teen mothers are more likely to have an unstable home environment, and generally fair worse emotionally and educationally compared to offspring of those who delay having children. This Data Brief reports sexual activity among high school students in Illinois and Chicago as reported on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Table 1 shows that the percentage of Chicago youth who reported having sexual intercourse is statistically higher than U.S. youth.

More Chicago Youth Have Sex Before 13

Nearly 12% of Chicago youth have had sexual intercourse before the age of 13. This is significantly higher than the percentage of U.S. youth who have had sexual intercourse before age 13 (11.5% compared to 7.1%).

Chicago had a significantly lower percentage of youth using alcohol before their last sexual intercourse compared to U.S. and Illinois youth. Additionally, although not significantly different, Chicago had a higher percentage of youth using condoms during their last sexual intercourse than U.S. youth (68% compared to 62%).



Table 1. Prevalence of Selected Sexual Activities by High School Students, 2007

	U.S.*	Illinois	Illinois excluding Chicago	Chicago
	% (95% C.I.)	% (95% C.I.)	% (95% C.I.)	% (95% C.I.)
Sexual intercourse, ever	47.8 (45.1-50.6)	50.1 (41.8-58.5)	49.1 (39.7-58.7)	56.9 (52.4-61.3)
Sexual intercourse before age 13	7.1 (6.2-8.1)	6.7 (4.6-9.7)	6.0 (3.8-9.3)	11.5 (8.4-15.7)
Had four or more partners, ever	14.9 (13.4-16.5)	15.8 (12.1-20.5)	15.4 (11.3-20.5)	18.1 (15.0-21.6)
Among those who had sex in the past 12 months:				
Used condom at last sexual intercourse	61.5 (59.4-63.6)	64.8 (60.7-68.6)	64.5 (59.8-69.8)	67.8 (60.4-74.4)
Used alcohol before last sexual intercourse	22.5 (20.7-24.5)	22.6 (18.3-26.4)	23.6 (18.9-29.0)	12.5 (8.1-18.7)

*United States prevalence from National Youth Risk Behavior Survey

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Chicago youth report a higher percentage of sexual intercourse, as well as sexual intercourse before age 13, compared to U.S. youth.
- Males report a higher percentage of condom use, but also a higher percentage of using alcohol before last sexual intercourse.
- The percentage of youth who have had sexual intercourse increases dramatically with age.

FAST FACTS

- Each year, there are approximately 19 million new sexually transmitted infections, and almost half of them are among youth ages 15-24.
- Nationally in 2002, 55% of males and 54% of females ages 15-19 had engaged in oral sex with someone of the opposite sex.
- Nationally in 2002, 12% of all pregnancies, or 757,000, occurred among adolescents ages 15-19.

Source: cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/index.htm

Older Students Report More Sexual Activity

The older the youth, the more likely they are to have had sexual intercourse in their life (Figure 1). Ninth grade Chicago youth have are significantly more likely to have ever had sex compared to U. S. youth. While not statistically significant, 12th grade Illinois youth are slightly more likely than U. S. youth to have had sexual intercourse.

Among those youth who have had sex within the last three months, males are more likely than females to report having used a condom (Figure 2), and also are more likely to use alcohol before having sex (Figure 3).

Figure 1. Percentage of students who report being sexually active by grade in school, 2007

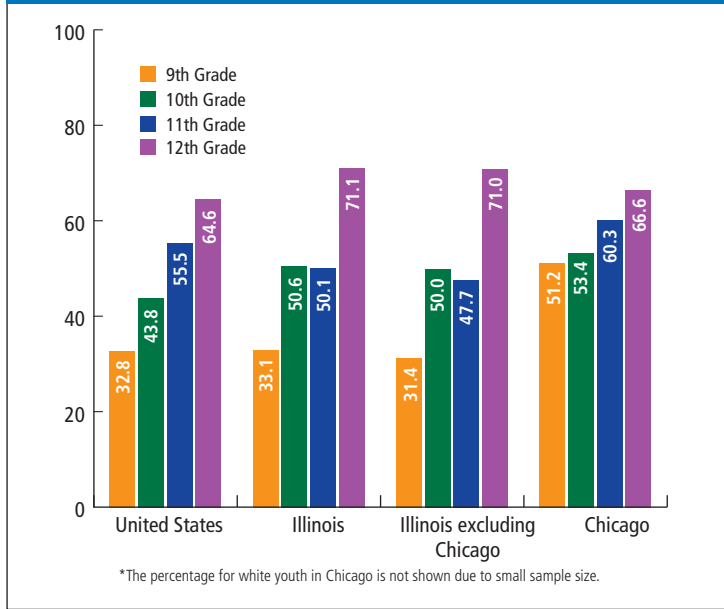


Figure 2. Percentage of students who report using a condom during the last sexual intercourse by gender, 2007

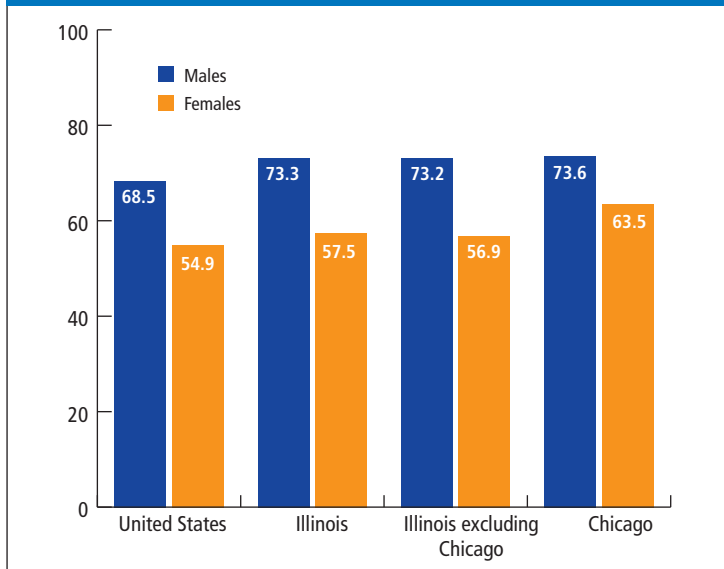
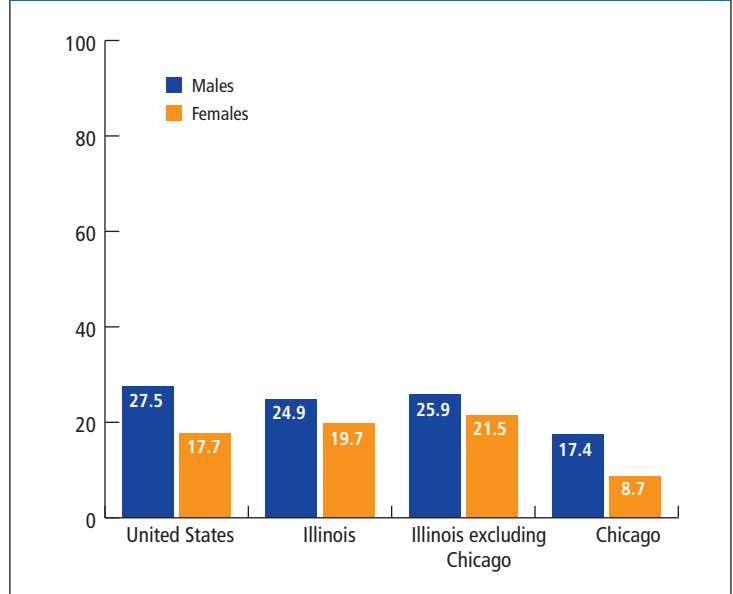


Figure 3. Percent of students who report drinking alcohol before their last sexual intercourse by gender, 2007



ABOUT THE YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

The Illinois Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and the Chicago YRBS were completed in randomly selected public high schools in Illinois and Chicago during the spring of 2007. The survey focuses on priority health-risk behaviors that result in the most significant mortality, disability, and social problems during both youth and adulthood. Questions cover nutrition, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, physical activity, injuries, and sexual behavior resulting in sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. YRBS is one component of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in collaboration with representatives from state and local departments of education and health, other federal agencies, and national education and health organizations. For more information visit cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrebs/.

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HELPFUL RESOURCES

Institute for Youth Development
youthdevelopment.org

Healthy Youth!
cdc.gov/healthyouth/sexualbehaviors/index.htm