

# Youth Risk Behavior Surveys

YOUTH SEXUAL RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS

LOUISIANA 2008 & 2009



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### ABOUT SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIORS AMONG TEENS

Sexual behavior places young people at risk for HIV infection, sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. Each year, there are approximately 19 million new STD infections, almost half of which are among youth aged 15 to 24. Additionally, young people use high rates of alcohol and drugs, and are more likely to engage in high risk sexual behavior, such as unprotected sex, when under the influence of drugs and alcohol. It is important that HIV/STD prevention education involve parents and be developed to fit local needs of the community. Youth sex education should focus on teaching young people about the connection between substance use and risky sexual behaviors in social settings, emphasizing the impairment alcohol and other drugs can have on judgment.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), sexual health should remain an important public health concern for U.S. youth. There are gender and racial disparities that need to be addressed, and progress previously seen throughout the U.S. appears to be slowing or even reversing.<sup>2</sup>

### LOUISIANA STATISTICS

Although the State of Louisiana does not gather data on sexual risk factors, Louisiana rates were predicted based on the relationships between sexual behavior and alcohol/drug use. Moreover, comparisons were made with other states in the region: Mississippi, Texas, Arkansas and Alabama.

- » A higher percentage of students had sex sometime in their lives in all states in the region when compared to the national average (Table 1). In all states in the region, with the exception of Mississippi, slightly more students had unprotected sex than the national average. Sex before age 13 and having 4 or more partners in a lifetime were also higher in almost all regional states than in the US as a whole.
- » The rate of lifetime alcohol and marijuana use in the region overall is similar to the national average (Table 1). The use of ecstasy tends to be higher in the region, and cocaine use is higher in all regional states, except for Mississippi.

### 2009 NATIONAL STATISTICS

Forty-six percent of youth in grades 9-12 have had sex sometime in their lives, and 39% of students nationwide had unprotected sex (Table 1).<sup>3</sup>

Youth in grades 9 - 12 were more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors, such as unprotected sex, when they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol.<sup>4</sup>

Twenty-two percent of high school students who had sexual intercourse during the past three months drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse.<sup>5</sup>

Substance use has been shown to be strongly related to having multiple partners.<sup>6</sup>

Nationwide, male students were more likely than female students to participate in risk-taking behaviors such as using marijuana or cocaine, having sexual intercourse and using alcohol or drugs prior to last sexual intercourse.<sup>7</sup>

Females were more likely than males to use inhalants and to have unprotected sex.<sup>8</sup>

- » Louisiana follows closely the trends in alcohol and drug use in other states in the region. Sexual risk factors, predicted from alcohol/drug use and demographics, are likewise similar to regional percentages (prediction methods described in the Appendix).
- » Sexual risk factor percents from the 2007 New Orleans YRBS were nearly identical to the predicted estimates for the entire state of Louisiana in 2009; except condom use was much higher in New Orleans where only 24% did not use a condom last time they had sexual intercourse (SI) compared to 41% in the state (NOLA statistics not available for 2009).

## 2009: Risk-Taking Behaviors: Students in Grades 9 - 12

|                                   | U.S. | Mississippi | Arkansas | Texas | Alabama | Louisiana    |
|-----------------------------------|------|-------------|----------|-------|---------|--------------|
| <b>SUBSTANCE USE</b>              |      |             |          |       |         |              |
| Alcohol use (ever)                | 73%  | 70%         | 70%      | 76%   | 67%     | 74%          |
| Drug Use (marijuana)              | 37%  | 35%         | 37%      | 37%   | 31%     | 33%          |
| Drug Use (cocaine)                | 6%   | 4%          | 8%       | 9%    | 6%      | 8%           |
| Drug Use (Inhalants)              | 12%  | 10%         | 17%      | 12%   | 12%     | 12%          |
| Ecstasy                           | 7%   | 5%          | 11%      | 9%    | 7%      | 10%          |
| <b>SEXUAL RISK FACTORS</b>        |      |             |          |       |         | (Predicted)* |
| Ever had sex                      | 46%  | 61%         | 54%      | 52%   | 57%     | (55)         |
| Sex before age 13                 | 6%   | 13%         | 10%      | 6%    | 10%     | (10)         |
| 4+ partners                       | 14%  | 24%         | 18%      | 17%   | 20%     | (21)         |
| No condom used                    | 39%  | 34%         | 41%      | 42%   | 42%     | (41)         |
| Used drugs/alcohol before last SI | 22%  | 19%         | 20%      | 22%   | 21%     | (20)         |

\* Methods for prediction are described in Appendix.

**TABLE 1**

## TEN YEAR TRENDS: 1997-2007

Ten year trends overall show improvement in most factors associated with sexual risk-taking behaviors (Table 2).<sup>9</sup>

- » Student alcohol use has decreased over the past ten years across the U.S. and in most states in the region (Table 2).<sup>10</sup>
- » Lifetime drug use in the regional states showed mixed trends, compared to a consistent decrease in the US as a whole. Sexual risk factors had some decreases, but mostly insignificant changes. No states showed increases in risk-taking behavior over the course of ten years. Only Texas has had no significant changes in alcohol use, drug use, or sexual risk behaviors (Table 2).
- » From these data we can project that Louisiana may be improving similarly to Texas, Arkansas and Mississippi.

## Changes over Ten Years: Students in Grades 9 - 12

| 1997-2007   | U.S.             | Mississippi      | Arkansas         | Texas*            | Louisiana*       |      |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------|
| <b>ALCOHOL USE</b>  |                  |                  |                  |                   |                  |      |
|   | Overall Decrease | Overall Decrease | Overall Decrease | Overall No Change | Overall Decrease |      |
| Lifetime alcohol use                                      | 1997             | 79%              | 79               | 81                | 84               |      |
|   | 2007             | 75%              | 72               | 78                | 78               |      |
| <b>DRUG USE</b>   |                  |                  |                  |                   |                  |      |
|   | Overall Decrease | Overall Decrease | Overall Decrease | Overall No Change | Overall Decrease |      |
| Lifetime marijuana use                                    | 1997             | 47%              | 41               | 41                | 44               |      |
|   | 2007             | 38%              | 36               | 38                | 32               |      |
| Lifetime cocaine use                                      | 1997             | 8%               | 4                | 9                 | 6                |      |
|   | 2007             | 7%               | 5                | 8                 | 8                |      |
| Lifetime inhalant use                                     | 1997             | 16%              | 17               | 20                | 17               |      |
|   | 2007             | 13%              | 13               | 15                | 15               |      |
| <b>SEXUAL RISK FACTORS</b>                                |                  |                  |                  |                   |                  |      |
|   | Overall Decrease | Overall Decrease | Overall Decrease | Overall No Change |                  |      |
| Ever had sexual intercourse                               | 1997             | 48.4%            | 70               | 60                | 81               | N/A* |
|   | 2007             | 47.8%            | 60               | 55                | 78               |      |
| Had sexual intercourse before age 13                      | 1997             | 7.2%             | 21               | 12                | 50               | N/A  |
|   | 2007             | 7.1%             | 13               | 10                | 53               |      |
| Had sexual intercourse with 4 persons or more during life | 1997             | 16%              | 31               | 25                | 16               | N/A  |
|   | 2007             | 15%              | 23               | 19                | 17               |      |
| Did not use condom during last sexual intercourse         | 1997             | 43%              | 38               | 43                | 45               | N/A  |
|   | 2007             | 39%              | 33               | 41                | 44               |      |
| Used drugs or alcohol prior to last sexual intercourse    | 1997             | 25%              | 19               | 29                | 27               | N/A  |
|   | 2007             | 23%              | 18               | 21                | 22               |      |

\* Texas data from 2001 and 2007; no 1997 data available. Sexual risk behavior data not available for Louisiana.

**TABLE 2**

# APPENDIX

## Methodology for Predicting Sexual Behavior in Louisiana

It is known that young people with high rates of alcohol and drug use are more likely to engage in high risk sexual behavior. Therefore, these two behavior patterns are highly correlated with one another. Based on this, one can predict a sexual risk factor with combinations of alcohol/drug use variables. To improve the prediction of the model, demographics variables were added, as well (race, age and gender).

A model was created for each of the five sexual risk factors listed in Table 1, using a sample of 31 states with complete data on both sexual risk factors and alcohol/drug use (and demographics) from the CDC 2009 YRBS. A regression analysis in SPSS Statistical Software was used to create the model, which was then applied to the alcohol/drug use data from Louisiana to estimate the sexual risk factors in this state. Predicted estimates are in '( )'s in Table 1.

## DEFINITIONS

**Alcohol Use:** Percentage of students who had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one day during their lives

**Drug Use (marijuana):** Percentage of students who used marijuana one or more times during their lives

**Drug Use (cocaine):** Percentage of students who used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase one or more times during their lives

**Drug Use (inhalants):** Percentage of students who sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high one or more times during their lives

**Ever had sex:** Percentage of students who ever had sexual intercourse

**No condom used:** Among students who were currently sexually active, the percentage who reported that either they or their partner had not used a condom during last sexual intercourse

**Used drugs/alcohol before last SI:** Among students who were currently sexually active, the percentage who drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse

- <sup>1</sup> Santelli J., Robin L., Brener N., Lowry R. Timing of Alcohol and Other Drug Use And Sexual Risk Behaviors Among Unmarried Adolescents and Young Adults. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 2001, 33(5): 200-205.
- <sup>2</sup> CDC. Sexual and Reproductive Health of Persons Aged 10-24 Years – United States, 2002-2007. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2009; 57(SS-6): 1-64.
- <sup>3</sup> CDC. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 2008; 57(SS-4):1–131.
- <sup>4</sup> Leigh B., Stall R. Substance use and risky sexual behavior for exposure to HIV: issues in methodology, interpretation, and prevention. *American Psychologist* 1993;48:1035–1043.
- <sup>5</sup> CDC. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 2008; 57(SS-4):1–131.
- <sup>6</sup> Santelli J., Robin L., Brener N., Lowry R. Timing of Alcohol and Other Drug Use And Sexual Risk Behaviors Among Unmarried Adolescents and Young Adults. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 2001, 33(5): 200-205.
- <sup>7</sup> CDC. Health Risk Behaviors by Sex. *National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance: 2007*. 2008.
- <sup>8</sup> CDC. Health Risk Behaviors by Sex. *National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance: 2007*. 2008.
- <sup>9</sup> CDC. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 2008; 57(SS-4):1–131
- <sup>10</sup> CDC. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 2008; 57(SS-4):1–131.

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