

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Data Brief

Racial and Ethnic Minority Adolescents in Vermont

This summary presents highlights from an analysis of 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data by two distinct categories – racial or ethnic minority students compared to white, non-Hispanic students. In the 2009 YRBS, 7 percent of Vermont public school students in grades 8-12 identified as being part of a minority group, defined as American Indian, Asian, Black, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or multiple races.

We reviewed the survey responses of these two groups to ascertain important differences. Based on the size of the differences between the two groups and the potential for current or future issues resulting from the behaviors, we identified four areas of concern: substance use and sexual activity before age 13; personal safety and personal harm; use of birth control; and parental involvement in discussions about school and substance use.

Personal Safety and Harm

Racial or ethnic minority students had significantly higher rates of personal safety and personal harm behaviors than white non-Hispanic students did. Minority students were twice as likely to report driving after drinking or using marijuana, and nearly three times as likely to report a suicide attempt.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Rarely or never wear safety belt when riding in a car	17	7	*
In past 30 days:			
Drove after drinking	15	6	*
Drove after marijuana use	20	11	*
In past 12 months:			
In a physical fight	40	26	*
Purposefully hurt self by cutting or burning	21	14	*
Felt sad or hopeless for at least 2 weeks	29	20	*
Made suicide plan	16	9	*
Attempted suicide	11	4	*

Tobacco, Alcohol, or Marijuana Use

Minority students were significantly more likely to report using cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana before age 13 than white non-Hispanic students. They were also more likely to report smoking cigarettes or using marijuana in the past 30 days. There were no differences in alcohol consumption between white and minority students.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Before age 13:			
Smoked whole cigarette	20	11	*
Drank alcohol (other than sips or tastes)	31	18	*
Used marijuana	17	8	*
In past 30 days:			
Smoked cigarettes	24	15	*
Drank alcohol	42	35	
Binged on alcohol (5 or more drinks in a row)	27	20	
Used marijuana	30	21	*

Sexual Behavior

Racial or ethnic minority students were significantly more likely to report having sex ever or before 13. Among the sexually active, minority students were more likely to report not using birth control or not being sure of the type of birth control used, and to have used drugs or alcohol before last sex. There was no significant difference in reported condom use at last sex among the sexually active.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Had sex ever	47	39	*
Had sex before age 13	15	4	*
Among sexually active:			
Used drugs or alcohol before last sex	36	19	*
Used condom for last sex	59	66	
Used no birth control or not sure of birth control	23	9	*

Exercise and Nutrition

Racial or ethnic minority students were more likely to eat five servings of fruit and vegetables and consume at least one serving of soda per day. Other comparisons were not significantly different.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Active for at least 60 minutes on 5 of the last 7 days	45	45	
Watch TV, use computer, or play video games for 3 or more hours on an average school day	44	38	
Overweight or obese	27	26	
Ate breakfast every day in the past week	42	43	
Ate 5+ fruits and vegetables every day	32	22	*
Drank at least 1 serving of milk per day	54	58	
Drank at least 1 serving of soda per day	31	21	*

Assets

Racial or ethnic minority students were significantly less likely to report that their parents talk to them about school at least weekly. There were no other significant differences in asset questions.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Parents talk to you about school at least weekly	67	78	*
Participate in clubs 1+ hours per week	29	27	
Volunteer 1+ hours per week	41	42	
Get mostly As or Bs	74	79	
Agree or strongly agree that students help decide what goes on in school	48	51	
Agree or strongly agree that you matter to your community	44	47	

Attitudes and Perceptions about Alcohol Tobacco, and Marijuana Use

Racial or ethnic minority students were significantly less likely to report parental disapproval of cigarette, alcohol, or marijuana use. Minority students were also less likely to think it is wrong or very wrong for their peers to smoke or to think people risk harm from smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day. There were no significant differences in perceived substance availability or knowing an adult who used or sold drugs.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Wrong or very wrong for someone your age to:			
Smoke cigarettes	66	73	*
Drink alcohol	45	50	
Smoke marijuana	57	64	
Parents would think it is wrong or very wrong for you to:			
Smoke cigarettes	85	92	*
Drink alcohol	72	80	*
Smoke marijuana	81	89	*
Think people risk great risk of harming themselves (physically or otherwise) if they:			
Smoke one or more packs of cigarettes a day	59	68	*
Drink one or two alcoholic beverages nearly every day	28	25	
Smoke marijuana regularly	40	43	
Easy or very easy to get:			
Cigarettes	66	68	
Alcohol	65	67	
Marijuana	58	57	
Know one or more adults who used drugs	58	56	
Know one or more adults who sold drugs	40	32	

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For the YRBS Data Brief archive, visit: http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/data_briefs.aspx