

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Data Brief

Sexual Identity

This data brief summarizes the recent surveillance report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12 – Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, Selected Sites, United States, 2001-2009*¹.

Vermont was one of seven states included in this surveillance report. From 2001 to 2009, the VT YRBS asked students, "With whom have you had sexual intercourse?" Response categories included "I have never had sexual intercourse," "Females," "Males," and "Females and Males." From 2005 to 2009, the VT YRBS asked students, "Which of the following best describes you?" Response categories included "Heterosexual (straight)," "Gay or lesbian," "Bisexual," and "Not sure." For the analysis, the CDC pooled data across all years for which they were available (Vermont sample size = 36,774).

Overall, 93% of Vermont students in grades 9-12 identified as heterosexual, 1% identified as gay or lesbian, 4% as bisexual, and 2% as not sure. In addition, 39% of Vermont students reported having sexual intercourse with partners of the opposite sex only, 1% reported same sex partners only, 2% reported partners of both sexes, and 58% reported never having sexual intercourse.

The surveillance summary analyzed over 70 risk behaviors by sexual identity and sexual contacts for seven states and six cities. The tables below report results for some behaviors by sexual identity for Vermont only. We encourage you to review the full report to see all of the indicators.

Sexual Risk Behaviors

On all sexual risk behavior measures, gay or lesbian students reported significantly² different rates than heterosexual students. Bisexual students were significantly different from heterosexual students on most behaviors except using alcohol or drugs before last sexual intercourse. Students who identified as "not sure" were significantly different from heterosexuals on most behaviors except having sex in the past 3 months or using a condom before last sexual intercourse.

	Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%
Had sex for the first time before age 13	4	29	15	12
Had sex with four or more person during their life	10	33	30	19
Had sex in the 3 months before the survey	31	47	54	31
Used a condom during last sex (among sexually active)	65	33	48	56
Used alcohol or drugs before last sex (among sexually active)	24	48	33	48

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss60e0606.pdf>

² Statistical differences determined by comparing the confidence intervals for the pooled estimates, which were not adjusted for age, gender, or race/ethnicity

Personal Safety

Students who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or not sure were significantly more likely to report all of the following personal safety risk behaviors than heterosexual students.

	Heterosexual %	Gay or Lesbian %	Bisexual %	Not Sure %
Rarely or never wear a seatbelt	8	23	18	15
Rode in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol, past 30 days	23	37	33	32
Drove after drinking alcohol, past 30 days	8	25	14	18
In a physical fight, past 12 months	24	42	42	34
In a physical fight on school property, past 12 months	11	25	22	18
Hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend, past 12 months	6	25	18	18
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school, past 30 days	4	21	13	17
Felt sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row, past 12 months	19	42	58	38
Made a suicide plan, past 12 months	8	32	38	22
Attempted suicide	4	25	27	17

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual students were significantly more likely to report all substance use behaviors than heterosexual students. Students who identified as “not sure” were more likely to report most behaviors than heterosexuals except any alcohol consumption, binge drinking, or marijuana use in the past 30 days.

	Heterosexual %	Gay or Lesbian %	Bisexual %	Not Sure %
Smoked cigarettes before age 13	11	35	33	20
Smoked cigarettes, past 30 days	17	41	44	26
Drank alcohol before age 13	18	36	36	25
Drank alcohol, past 30 days	41	57	57	39
Had 5 or more drinks in a row, past 30 days	24	38	34	26
Tried marijuana before age 13	8	25	21	15
Smoked marijuana, past 30 days	24	42	43	25

To read the entire report, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss60e0606.pdf>

For more information on the YRBS, contact Erika Edwards, Ph.D., M.P.H. (erika.edwards@ahs.state.vt.us; 802-863-7246). For the YRBS Data Brief archive, visit: http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/data_briefs.aspx