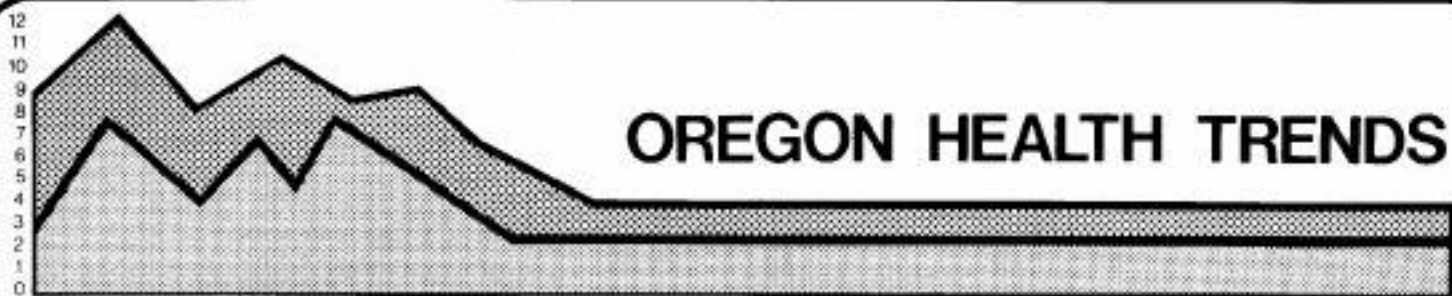


# OREGON HEALTH TRENDS



Center for Health Statistics (503) 731-4354  
 STATE OF OREGON • HEALTH DIVISION • DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

## Sexual Activity Decreasing Among Oregon Teens Age 15-17: Survey Results, 1999

SERIES NO. 58  
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### INTRODUCTION.

Three of the U.S. Healthy People 2000 objectives, federally designated health goals, are to:

- 1) raise the age of first sexual intercourse;
- 2) among students who have had sexual intercourse, increase the proportion who abstain from sexual intercourse for the previous three months; and
- 3) increase the percentage of sexually active unmarried teens who use contraception, especially combined with barrier protection against disease.<sup>1</sup>

Oregon's progress in meeting the U.S. Healthy People 2000 goals is measured by the Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS).<sup>2</sup> This survey asks teens about a variety of risk behaviors, including questions about sexual activity and use of birth control (see methodology on page 2.) These national goals

are important for Oregon because state-wide vital records and public health data show that sexually active Oregon teenagers are at risk for early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

This report summarizes the results of the questions about sexual activity and birth control use from the 1999 YRBS, documents the status of Oregon's teen sexual activity and birth control use with respect to Healthy People 2000 goals, and presents trends for Oregon's teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease rates.

### RESULTS.

Measuring Oregon teens in terms of these national goals, the following trends are seen between 1991 and 1999:

- 1) the age of first sexual intercourse is rising for Oregon teens,
- 2) the proportion of teens who have had sexual intercourse and are currently abstinent is decreasing, and

*(Continued on Page 3)*

Table 1. Healthy People 2000 Goals				Oregon 1999 YRBS Participants Age 15-17
5.4	Reduce the percentage of adolescents who have engaged in sexual intercourse:	before age 15 to:	<=15%	15%
		before age 17 to:	<=40%	33%
5.5	Increase the percentage of ever sexually active adolescents aged 17 or younger who abstained from sexual activity for the previous three months to:		>=40%	33%
5.6	Increase the percentage of sexually active unmarried people aged 19 or younger who use contraception, especially combined methods effectively preventing pregnancy and providing barrier protection against disease:		>=90%	76%

### Methodology

The Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), is a voluntary and anonymous biennial survey of high school students. The YRBS was administered in spring of 1999 to 22,913 Oregon students in grades 9-12. To more closely match national goals this article looks at responses of 18,462 survey participants age 15-17. Though the volunteer sample was not random, the sample has been weighted to account for school size and socioeconomic level and grade. For further information, see the *1999 Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey Summary Report* at 'www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/chs/yrebsdata.htm'. The survey included the following questions about sexual behavior.

**76. If a classmate, your same age and gender, asked you for your advice about whether to start having sexual intercourse, what would you probably say?**

- |                              |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| a) Wait until you're married | 33.7% |
| b) Wait until you are older  | 39.0% |
| c) Go ahead and do it        | 27.4% |
- N=17,734

**77. What percentage of your classmates, your same age and gender, have had sexual intercourse? Would you guess:**

- |                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| a) Less than 20% | 15.0% |
| b) 20%-29%       | 13.5% |
| c) 30%-39%       | 17.0% |
| d) 40%-49%       | 14.2% |
| e) 50%-59%       | 15.0% |
| f) 60%-69%       | 11.5% |
| g) 70%-79%       | 7.7%  |
| h) more than 80% | 5.9%  |
- N=18,107

**78. Have you ever had sexual intercourse?**

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| a) Yes | 34.9% |
| b) No  | 65.1% |
- N=17,990

**79. How old were you when you had sexual intercourse for the first time?**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a) I have never had sexual intercourse | 65.1% |
| b) 11 years old or younger             | 2.0%  |
| c) 12 years old                        | 1.8%  |
| d) 13 years old                        | 3.7%  |
| e) 14 years old                        | 7.8%  |
| f) 15 years old                        | 10.2% |
| g) 16 years old                        | 7.1%  |
| h) 17 years old or older               | 2.2%  |
- N=17,985

**80. When did you first go to a medical office or clinic to get a method for preventing pregnancy?**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a) I have never had sexual intercourse                 | 64.8% |
| b) Before my first sexual intercourse                  | 5.4%  |
| c) Less than 1 month after my first sexual intercourse | 3.0%  |
| d) 1 to 3 months after my first sexual intercourse     | 2.4%  |
| e) 4 to 12 months after my first sexual intercourse    | 2.2%  |

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| f) more than 12 months after my first sexual intercourse | 2.5%  |
| g) I have never gone                                     | 19.7% |
- N=17,766

**81. During your life, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a) I have never had sexual intercourse | 65.1% |
| b) 1 person                            | 15.1% |
| c) 2 people                            | 6.9%  |
| d) 3 people                            | 4.4%  |
| e) 4 people                            | 2.4%  |
| f) 5 people                            | 1.6%  |
| g) 6 or more people                    | 4.5%  |
- N=17,989

**82. During the past 3 months, with how many people did you have sexual intercourse?**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a) I have never had sexual intercourse                             | 65.0% |
| b) I have had sexual intercourse, but not during the past 3 months | 11.5% |
| c) 1 person  | 18.4% |
| d) 2 people  | 2.8%  |
| e) 3 people  | 1.0%  |
| f) 4 people  | 0.3%  |
| g) 5 people  | 0.2%  |
| h) 6 or more people  | 0.7%  |
- N=18,055

**83. Did you drink alcohol or use other drugs before you had sexual intercourse the last time?**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a) I have never had sexual intercourse | 64.9% |
| b) Yes                                 | 9.5%  |
| c) No                                  | 25.6% |
- N=18,024

**84. The last time you had sexual intercourse, did you or your partner use a condom?**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a) I have never had sexual intercourse | 65.0% |
| b) Yes                                 | 21.2% |
| c) No                                  | 13.8% |
- N=17,940

**85. The last time you had sexual intercourse, what one method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy?**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a) I have never had sexual intercourse     | 65.8% |
| b) No method was used to prevent pregnancy | 5.0%  |
| c) Birth control pills                     | 5.5%  |
| d) Condoms                                 | 17.9% |
| e) Birth control shot (Depo Provera)       | 2.0%  |
| f) Withdrawal                              | 2.5%  |
| g) Some other method                       | 0.6%  |
| h) Not sure                                | 0.8%  |
- N=17,805

**86. How many times have you been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant?**

- |                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| a) 0 times         | 95.8% |
| b) 1 time          | 2.9%  |
| c) 2 or more times | 0.5%  |
| d) Not sure        | 0.8%  |
- N=18,193

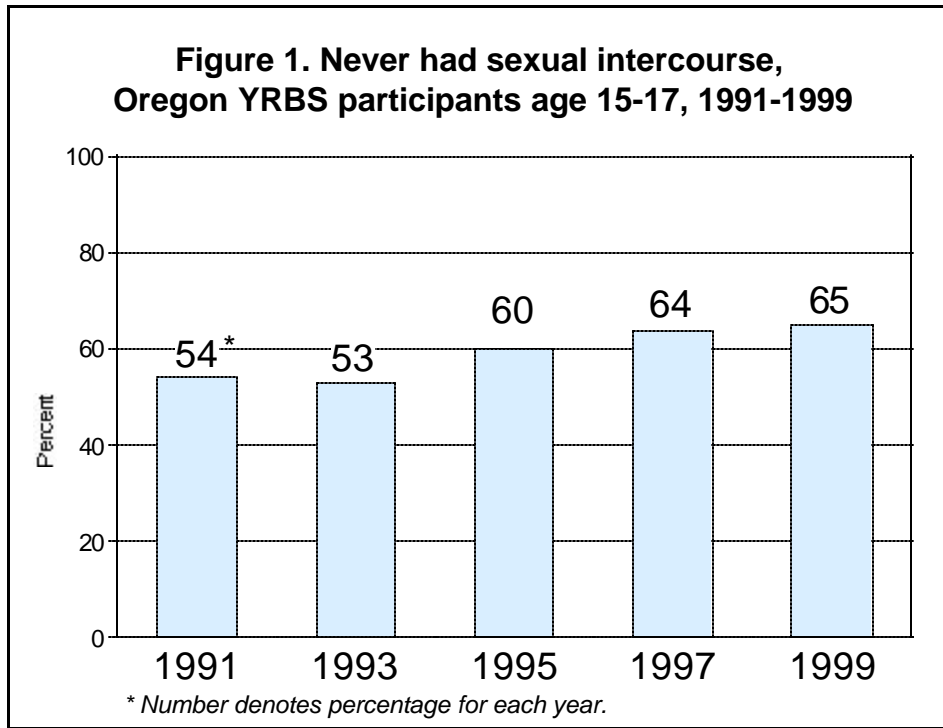
*In addition, there were two questions about sexual abuse:*

**26. Have you ever been forced to have sexual intercourse when you did not want to?**

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| a) Yes | 5.9%  |
| b) No  | 94.1% |
- N=18,193

**27. Other than forced sexual intercourse, have you ever been touched sexually when you did not want to be touched?**

- |        |       |
|--------|-------|
| a) Yes | 18.2% |
| b) No  | 81.8% |
- N=18,374



3) the proportion of sexually active teens who used a method of birth control the last time they had sex is increasing.

**Healthy People Objectives compared to 1999 YRBS results.**

Table 1 shows a comparison between the Healthy People 2000 Objectives and the results of the 1999 Oregon YRBS.

**• Increasing the age of first sexual intercourse and delaying the age of first sexual intercourse until at least 15 years.**

Among the 18,462 Oregon high school students age 15-17 years who participated in the 1999 YRBS, nearly two-thirds (65%) reported not yet having sexual intercourse. This percentage is a 21 percent increase from 1991 when 54 percent of students age 15-17 reported never having intercourse (Figure 1).

U.S. Healthy People 2000 Objective 5.4 is to reduce the percentage of adolescents who have engaged in sexual intercourse before age 15 to 15 percent or less.

Oregon female YRBS participants age 15-17 have met the U.S. Healthy People 2000 Goal of delaying first sexual intercourse until at least age 15.

Among YRBS participants age 15-17, 16 percent of the males and 15 percent of the females reported sexual intercourse before age 15 (Figure 2).

Female YRBS participants in this age group met that goal. Participants in the largest schools (with enrollments greater than 1,200) and in schools with the highest socio-economic status (SES) ranking also met this goal.<sup>3</sup>

Though the smallest schools, with enrollments of less than 100, had the highest percentage of students reporting intercourse before age 15, that percentage dropped 20 percent from 1997 (20% in 1999 vs. 25% in 1997).

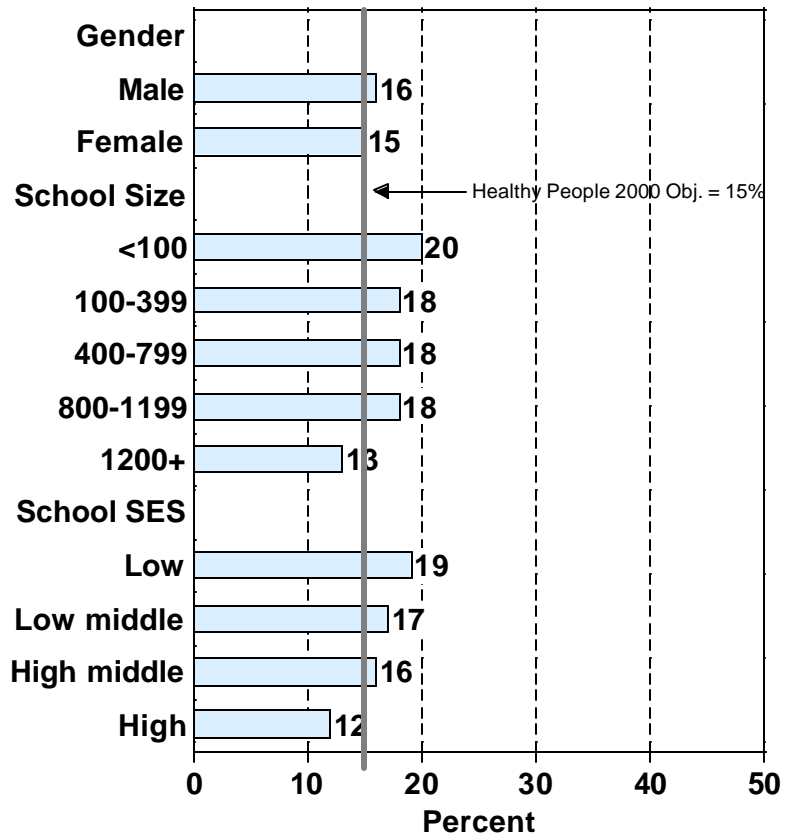
An increasing majority of YRBS respondents age 15-17 would advise their classmates of the same age and gender to postpone having sexual intercourse until they were older or married. This improvement is not the result of a change over time in the age distribution of the survey respondents.

The percentage of YRBS students age 15-17 who report they would advise a classmate, of the same age and gender, to wait to have sexual intercourse increased from 62 percent to 73 percent between 1995 and 1999. (The question was not asked prior to the 1995 survey.)

The percentage of 1999 respondents who would advise waiting to have intercourse was generally lower among older students (76% at age 15 vs. 70% at age 17). Among students who never had intercourse, 85 percent at age 15 advised waiting compared to 81 percent at age 17.

However, among students who ever had intercourse, the percentage who would advise waiting was higher among older students (49% at age 15 vs. 58% at age 17). The increase in reported abstinence advice from older students who were ever sexually active occurred for both males and fe-

Figure 2. Had sexual intercourse before age 15: Oregon YRBS participants age 15-17, 1999



\* Number denotes percentage who had sexual intercourse before age 15.

SES = School's socio-economic status

males. Among those who ever had intercourse, at age 15, 30% of the males and 68% of the females, and at age 17, 36% of the males and 77% of the females, would advise waiting.

- **Abstaining from sexual intercourse.**

U.S. Healthy People 2000 Objective 5.5 is to increase the percentage of ever sexually active adolescents aged 17 and younger who abstain from sexual activity during the previous three months to at least 40 percent.

The proportion of teens who have had sexual intercourse and are currently abstinent is decreasing. Current abstinence (during the three months prior to completing the survey) among 1999 YRBS participants age 15-17 who ever had intercourse was 33 percent. This included 39 percent of male students and 28 percent of female students who ever had sexual intercourse. This is a 12 percent decrease from 1991 when the percentage was 37 percent.

- **Using birth control and condoms.**

The third U.S. Healthy People 2000 Objective is to increase the percentage of sexually active unmarried people aged 19 and under who use contraception, especially combined with barrier protection, to 90 percent.

Sexually active Oregon teens age 15-17 have made a modest increase in their use of birth control. (An exact comparison to the U.S. Healthy People 2000 Objective is not possible because of the difference in the age groups.)

**Birth control.** Approximately three-fourths (76%) of sexually active YRBS respondents used a contraceptive method (birth control pill, Depo-Provera®, or some other method not including withdrawal) the last time they had sexual intercourse.

The percentage of sexually active YRBS participants age 15-17 who used a method of birth control (birth control pills, Depo-Provera®, or some method other than withdrawal) increased from 71 percent in 1991 to 76 percent in 1999. Between 1991 and 1999, the use of birth control increased from 73 percent to 78 percent among sexually active males and from 70 percent to 75 percent among sexually active females.

**Condoms.** Condoms were used by 61 percent of sexually active 1999 YRBS participants age 15-17 during the last time they had intercourse (69% of the males and 54% of the females). The overall percentage who used condoms increased from 58% in 1991 to 61% in 1999. Between 1991 and 1999, condom usage increased from 61 percent to 69 percent among sexually active males while usage among sexually active females stayed the same.

**Other survey findings.**

- **Early sexual intercourse is associated with involvement in other risk behaviors.**

Compared to students who reported never having intercourse, students who reported intercourse before age 15 were 6.3 times as likely to also report making a suicide attempt resulting in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse in the past 12 months (5.0% vs. 0.8%) (shown as "suicide injury" in Table 2). In the previous 30 days, students who had intercourse before age 15 were also 4.4 times as likely to have used marijuana, 4.2 times as likely to have smoked cigarettes, and 1.9 times as likely to have stayed away from school because they felt unsafe. In the past year, students who had intercourse before age 15 were 3.1 times as likely to have been threatened or injured at school.

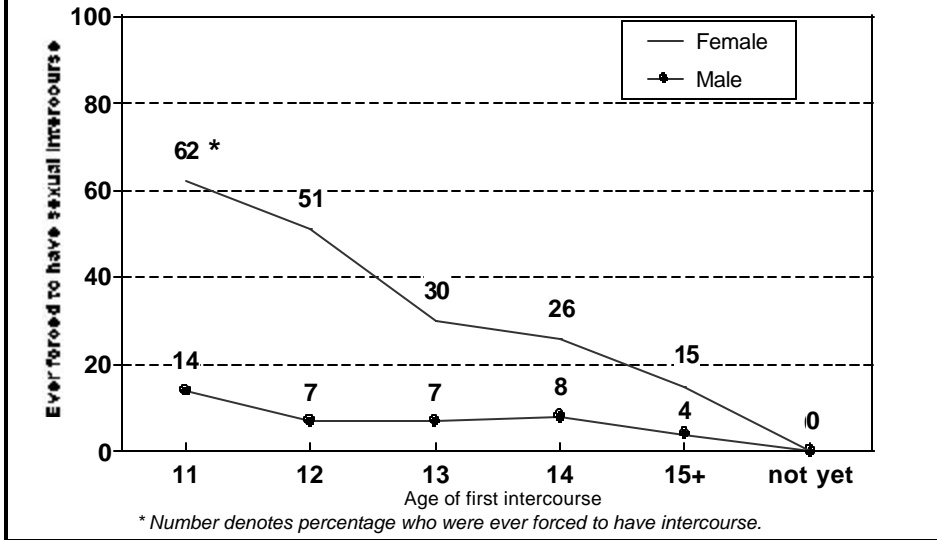
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**Table 2. Age of first sexual intercourse by other characteristics, 1999 Oregon YRBS participants age 15-17, column percentages of characteristic in row label**

Characteristic	Total		Total			Male			Female		
	N	Col %	Never	15+	<15	Never	15+	<15	Never	15+	<15
			N=11,711	N=3,461	N=2,813	N=5,864	N=1,522	N=1,437	N=5,847	N=1,939	N=1,376
<b>Total</b>	17,985	100	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
<b>Victimization at school: past year</b>											
Harassed: unwanted sexual attention	3,930	23	19	28	32	8	13	18	30	39	46
Harassed: perceived sexual orientation	1,245	7	6	8	11	7	9	12	5	7	9
Threatened or injured	1,130	7	4	8	14	6	12	20	3	4	7
Afraid to go to school: past month	1,256	9	7	11	14	6	10	13	9	12	15
<b>Fighting and abuse: past year</b>											
Treated for a fight injury	432	2	1	3	8	1	5	10	1	1	5
Hit or hurt by boyfriend or girlfriend	1,247	10	6	13	18	6	15	17	5	11	19
Hit or hurt by adult family member	2,494	14	11	16	23	9	14	19	13	18	27
<b>Sexually abused: ever</b>											
Forced to have sexual intercourse	1,037	6	1	11	20	-	4	9	2	15	33
Other forced sexual touching	3,178	18	13	26	33	4	9	15	21	38	52
<b>Mental health and suicide</b>											
Diagnosed w/ depression, anxiety or eating disorder: ever	1,459	9	6	13	17	4	7	11	8	18	23
Depressed more than two weeks: past year	4,356	24	19	31	39	14	23	28	24	38	50
Considered suicide: past year	2,996	17	12	22	29	8	15	20	17	27	37
Attempted suicide: past year	1,117	7	4	10	15	2	6	8	6	13	22
Suicide injury: past year	295	2	1	3	5	1	1	3	1	4	7
<b>Drug abuse: past month</b>											
Binge drank	5,271	29	17	49	57	18	54	61	16	45	53
Drove drunk	1,678	9	4	18	19	5	24	23	4	14	16
Smoked tobacco	4,291	24	12	41	51	12	39	47	12	43	55
Used marijuana	3,906	21	11	35	48	12	39	50	10	32	45
<b>Attitudes and beliefs about sexual intercourse</b>											
Would advise a peer to "go ahead and do it"	4,797	27	18	41	51	29	63	71	7	23	31
Believe 50%+ of peers have had intercourse	7,009	40	29	60	60	23	54	56	36	65	64
<b>Possible "protective factors"</b>											
Ate breakfast w/family 6+ days in the past week	8,158	46	51	38	33	58	44	42	45	33	25
Ate dinner w/family every day past week	4,819	27	31	18	21	36	22	27	27	16	15
Have four or more caring adults can talk to	4,499	27	29	23	21	29	26	24	29	21	18
On a sports team during the past 12 months	10,820	59	61	57	53	65	64	63	58	52	42
Watched TV <5 hours on average school day	16,656	94	95	96	92	93	94	88	96	97	95
Volunteered weekly during the past month	11,097	64	69	58	51	61	50	45	77	64	57
<b>Other</b>											
Worked for pay 25+ hrs/week: past month	1,578	10	7	16	13	8	17	14	6	15	11
Diagnosed w/ learning disorder: ever	910	5	5	5	8	6	7	11	3	4	6

Percents in this table refer to the proportion of students identified in the column head at the top of the table, who reported the characteristic or behavior in the row header. Comparisons should be made across the rows among the various groups. For example using the first row and ninth column, 30% of females who never had sexual intercourse had been harassed in the past year with unwanted sexual attention or comments compared to 46% of females (in the last column) who had engaged in sexual intercourse before they were 15 years old.

**Figure 3. Percent who were ever forced to have sexual intercourse by age of first intercourse, Oregon YRBS participants age 15-17, 1999**



**• A large percentage of students who reported having sexual intercourse at an early age also reported a history of sexual abuse.**

The YRBS did not ask if the first sexual experience was consensual, but of the two percent (N=371) of students age 15-17 who reported having first sexual intercourse before age 12, 62 percent of the females and 14 percent of the males reported ever being forced to have sexual intercourse. Among these students who had intercourse before age 12, an additional nine percent of the males and 11 percent of the females reported at some time “being touched sexually when they did not want to be touched” (without intercourse).

As age of first sexual intercourse increased, the percent of students who reported forced sexual intercourse decreased. Among students who reported first sexual intercourse between age 15 and 17, the percentage reporting ever being forced to have intercourse dropped to 15 percent of the females and four percent of the males (Figure 3).<sup>4</sup>

**• Oregon teens and pregnancy.**

Among female and male YRBS respondents age 15-17, three percent were involved in a pregnancy.

Among female YRBS respondents age 15-17, 391 of the females (4.3%) were ever pregnant, representing 12 percent of the females who reported ever having sexual intercourse. Of the females who reported ever being pregnant, 11 percent had been pregnant more than once.

Among male YRBS respondents age 15-17, 201 males (2.5%) reported ever getting someone pregnant and another 113 (1.3%) reported they were “not sure”. Among males who ever had sexual intercourse, seven percent of males reported they were involved in a pregnancy and another four percent that they were not sure. Of the males who reported they had been involved in a pregnancy, 23 percent had been so more than once.

**• Other risk behaviors associated with pregnancy**

Among the YRBS respondents, those who reported involvement in a

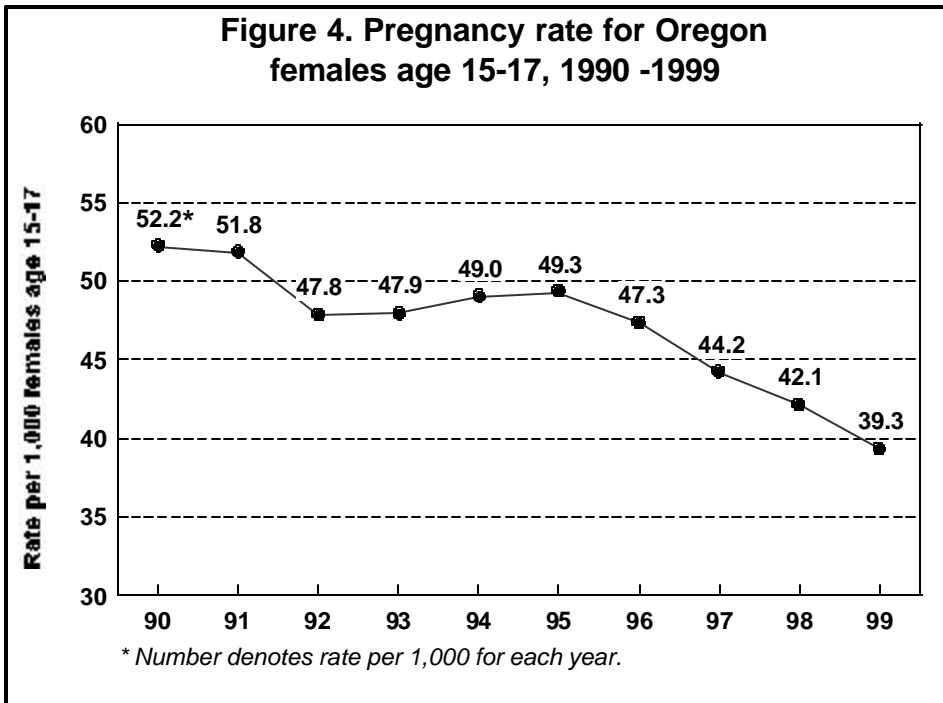
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**Table 3. Sexual activity and pregnancy by other risk factors, 1999 Oregon YRBS participants age 15-17, column percentages of characteristic in row label**

Characteristic	Total		Total			Male			Female		
			Never had sex	Had sex: Never Preg-nancy	Preg-nancy	Never had sex	Had sex: Never Preg-nancy	Preg-nancy	Never had sex	Had sex: Never Preg-nancy	Preg-nancy
	N	Col %	N=11,715	N=5,518	N=592	N=5,873	N=2,626	N=201	N=5,842	N=2,892	N=391
Total	17,825	100	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %	Col %
<b>Victimization at school: past year</b>											
Harassed: unwanted sexual attention	3,879	23	19	28	38	8	14	25	30	41	45
Harassed: perceived sexual orientation	1,209	7	6	9	11	7	10	15	5	8	9
Threatened or injured: past year	1,087	6	5	9	15	6	14	27	3	5	9
Afraid to go to school: past month	1,237	9	7	12	17	6	10	17	9	13	17
<b>Fighting and abuse: past year</b>											
Treated for a fight injury	414	2	1	4	10	1	6	16	1	2	6
Hit or hurt by boyfriend or girlfriend	1,207	10	6	13	27	6	14	31	5	13	25
Hit or hurt by adult family member	2,461	14	11	18	28	9	15	28	13	21	29
<b>Sexually abused: ever</b>											
Forced to have sexual intercourse	1,002	6	1	13	33	1	5	15	2	19	43
Other forced sexual touching	3,140	18	13	28	44	4	10	24	21	43	55
<b>Mental health and suicide</b>											
Diagnosed w/ depression, anxiety or eating disorder: ever	1,440	9	6	13	25	4	8	18	8	18	29
Depressed more than two weeks: past year	4,293	24	19	33	48	14	24	34	24	41	56
Considered suicide: past year	2,940	16	12	24	35	8	17	23	16	30	41
Attempted suicide: past year	1,084	7	4	11	23	2	6	13	6	15	28
Suicide injury: past year	287	2	1	3	10	1	2	6	1	4	11
<b>Drug abuse: past month</b>											
Binge drank	5,175	29	17	52	55	18	56	70	16	48	48
Drove drunk	1,634	9	4	18	21	5	22	37	4	15	12
Smoked tobacco	4,224	24	12	44	57	12	42	55	12	47	58
Used marijuana	3,825	21	11	40	44	12	43	52	10	37	40
<b>Attitudes and beliefs about sexual intercourse</b>											
Would advise a peer to "go ahead and do it"	4,682	27	18	45	41	29	66	65	7	27	27
Believe 50%+ of peers have had intercourse	6,899	40	29	59	72	23	54	71	35	64	72
<b>Possible "protective factors"</b>											
Ate breakfast w/family 6+ days in the past week	8,105	46	51	36	30	58	44	32	45	29	29
Ate dinner w/family every day past week	4,790	27	31	20	16	36	25	21	27	16	13
Have four or more caring adults can talk to	4,465	27	29	22	19	29	25	20	29	20	19
On a sports team during the past 12 months	10,754	59	61	57	44	65	65	60	58	50	35
Watched TV <5 hours on average school day	16,536	95	95	95	93	93	92	90	96	97	94
Volunteered weekly during the past month	11,045	64	69	55	55	61	48	55	77	62	54
<b>Other</b>											
Work for pay 25+ hrs/week during the past month	1,556	10	7	14	18	8	15	18	6	13	18
Diagnosed w/ learning disorder: ever	899	5	5	6	10	6	9	15	3	4	8

Percents in this table refer to the proportion of students identified in the column head at the top of the table, who reported the characteristic or behavior in the row header. Comparisons should be made across the rows among the various groups. For example using the first row and ninth column, 30% of females who had never had sexual intercourse had been harassed in the past year with unwanted sexual attention or comments compared to 45% of females (in the last column) who had ever been pregnant.





pregnancy reported the riskiest behaviors. Table 3 shows behaviors that are associated with sexual activity and pregnancy.

Compared to students who reported never having intercourse, students who reported ever being pregnant or getting someone pregnant were:

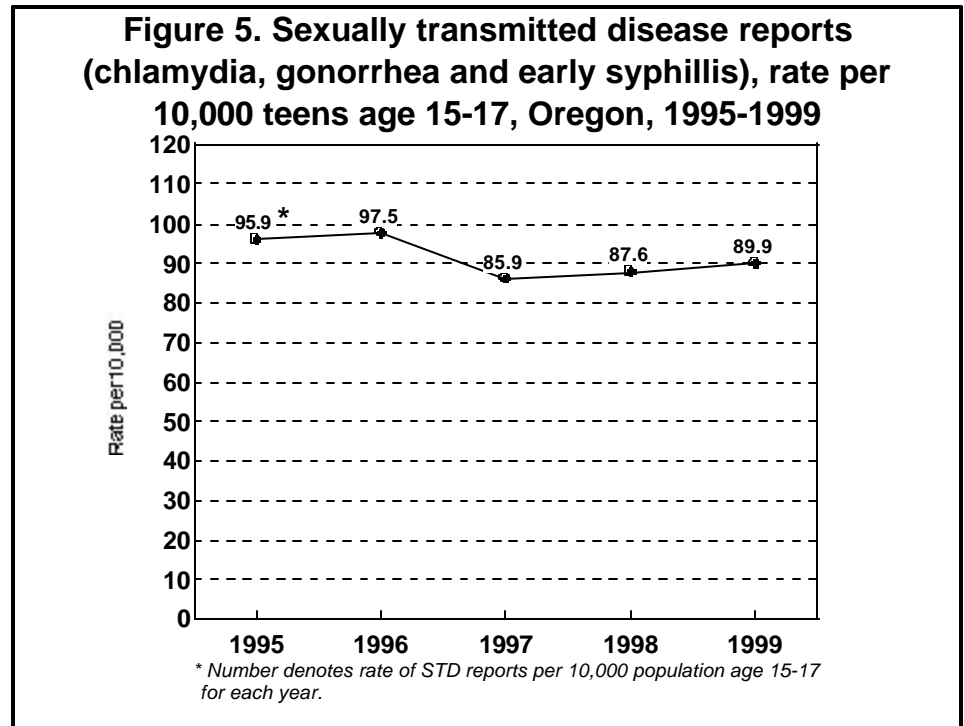
- 12.3 times more likely to report being treated for a suicide injury during the past year (9.8% vs. 0.8%);
- 9.9 times more likely to report being treated for an injury from a fight in the past 12 months (9.9% vs. 1.0%);
- 4.7 times more likely to report driving after drinking alcohol during the past 30 days (20.6% vs. 4.4%);
- 4.6 times more likely to report smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days (56.8% vs. 12.3%);
- 3.4 times more likely to report being injured or threatened at school in the past 12 months (15.3% vs. 4.5%);

- 3.3 times more likely to report binge drinking alcohol during the past 30 days (55.4% vs. 16.8%).

#### DISCUSSION.

According to survey results, Oregon has made some progress towards two of the three U.S. Healthy People 2000 Objectives concerning teens' sexual activity and use of birth control. First, sexual intercourse is being delayed, and youth are encouraging their peers to wait. A modestly larger proportion of sexually active teens are using birth control, including condoms. However, the proportion of teens who have had sexual intercourse and are abstinent is decreasing. Oregon has met the Healthy People 2000 objective about delaying initiation of sexual activity. But, clearly, more progress needs to be made.

Meeting these goals is important because statewide vital records and public health data show that Oregon's sexually active teenagers are at risk for early pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease:



1) In 1999, there were 2,810 pregnancies to Oregon teens age 15-17, including 1,796 births. The teen pregnancy rate among teens 15-17 has decreased 25 percent since 1990, from 52.2 to 39.3 per thousand females age 15-17 (Figure 4). In 1999, over half (59%) of the births were paid for by public assistance.

2) In 1999, there were 1,217 reported chlamydia cases and 110 reported gonorrhea cases occurring to Oregonians age 15-17, a combined rate of 89.9 cases per 10,000 Oregonians age 15-17. The combined sexually transmitted disease rate in this age group has dropped six percent since 1995 when the rate was 95.9 per 10,000 (Figure 5). Since 1998, however, there has been a one-year increase of two percent. The one-year increase may be partially the result of increased testing because of increased funding from the Family Planning Expansion Program. It is essential to prevent these infections because chlamydia and gonorrhea in adoles-

cent women can lead to serious complications including pelvic inflammatory disease, tubal pregnancies, and infertility.<sup>5</sup>

Oregon has six strategies outlined in the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Action Agenda 2000.<sup>6</sup> No single program will work with all adolescents. The plan calls for a curriculum that promotes abstinence and helps youth develop skills to identify and resist pressures that lead them into premature sexual involvement, while continuing to assist sexually active youth avoid pregnancy.

Strategies from the Oregon Action Agenda 2000 include:

- 1) promoting abstinence and helping youth develop skills to identify and resist pressures that lead them into premature sexual involvement,
- 2) promoting positive community values and norms,
- 3) making abstinence education available to all youth,

- 4) teaching life skills to resist pressure to engage in premature sexual involvement, while continuing to assist sexually active youth by:
- 5) providing timely education, outreach and access to contraceptive services, and
- 6) promoting a positive involvement of males in reproductive health responsibilities.

Recent research supports the Oregon Department of Education's policy endorsing a comprehensive approach to **sex education**.<sup>7</sup>

It is important for students to learn about YRBS results. Students' direct interaction with their own self-reported data may be a useful classroom-based approach to help correct student misperceptions regarding sexual activity among their peers. Students are likely to overestimate the proportion of their classmates who have ever had intercourse or who are currently sexually active. Abstinence among teens can be supported and encouraged when students realize that the belief that "everyone is doing it" is not true. In a similar manner, using students' self-reported data could also be applied to support other positive teen sexuality norms: waiting until older to engage in sexual intercourse and, if sexually active, to use a condom.

Forced sexual contact and sexual intercourse should be of grave concern to educators, clinicians, service providers and law enforcement. It generates an underlying question about the treatment of the child in the family setting. Data from a 1992 study by Boyer and Fine in Washington state looked at childhood sexual abuse, adolescent pregnancy, and child maltreatment by adolescent parents.<sup>8</sup> Of 535 young women who became preg-

nant before age 19, 44 percent had been raped, and 11 percent became pregnant as a result of the rape. Of these teens, 55 percent had histories of sexual abuse (molestation, rape, or attempted rape). In data from the 1999 Oregon YRBS, of 393 girls age 15-17 who reported ever being pregnant, 43 percent reported they had ever been raped and 54 percent reported ever being sexually abused.

Oregon has made progress toward the U.S. Healthy People 2000 Objectives. For Oregon to have further decreases in the proportion of teens reporting sexual activity and other risk behaviors, and decreases in teen-age pregnancies and teen-age sexually transmitted diseases, it is essential for communities, schools, families, and public health associations to work together with teens.

1. Healthy People 2000 National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives. Full Report, With Commentary. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 919-50212.
2. 1999 Oregon Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Website: <http://www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/chs/yrbs/hs99/yrbs99.htm>.
3. The school SES score is a rank on a composite index consisting of: the percent of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, student mobility rate, student attendance rate, and the level of education of the most educated parent from the Oregon Department of Education's 1998 Statewide Assessment. Rankings were grouped for this report as follows: low = 001-118; low middle = 119-185; high middle = 186-245; and high = 246-311.
4. Among YRBS participants who reported not yet having sexual intercourse, two percent of the females reported ever being forced to have intercourse. Students who answered that they had been "forced to have sexual intercourse" and later that they "never had sexual intercourse" may have based their seemingly conflicting answers on the context of the surrounding questions effecting how they defined sexual intercourse (i.e., questions about violence versus questions about relationships).
5. 1998 Guidelines for the Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. MMWR: vol 47, RR-1.

6. Oregon Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Action Agenda 2000. Oregon Department of Human Services. February 14, 2000.
7. Kirby, Doug. No Easy Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy. A research review commissioned by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Task Force on Effective Programs and Research. Washington, DC, 1997).
8. Boyer D, Fine D. Sexual abuse as a factor in adolescent pregnancy and child maltreatment. *Family Planning Perspectives*. 1992; 24:4-11, 19.



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**May is national Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. Oregon's theme once again is "Bee involved with Teen Pregnancy Prevention".**

**Here are some ideas of what you can do and how you can "bee" involved :**

- **Talk to your children about your core values**
- **Educate your kids about their sexuality and making healthy choices.**
- **Mentor a youth through "Big Brother/Big Sister".**
- **Become a "Lunch Buddy" through a local school.**
- **Become an active member of your local Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition. To find out about the coalition in your community call (503) 945-6111 in Salem or (503)731-3242 in Portland.**

