

# ALCOHOL USE

U.S. HEALTHY PEOPLE<sup>2</sup>

YEAR 2000 GOALS

- 4.6 Reduce the percentage of young people age 12-17 who have used alcohol in the past month to:12.6%
- 4.7 Reduce the percentage of high school seniors engaging in recent occasions of heavy drinking of alcoholic beverages to: no more than 28%

The next five questions measure the age of initiation of drinking and the frequency of drinking and heavy drinking among Oregon high school students.

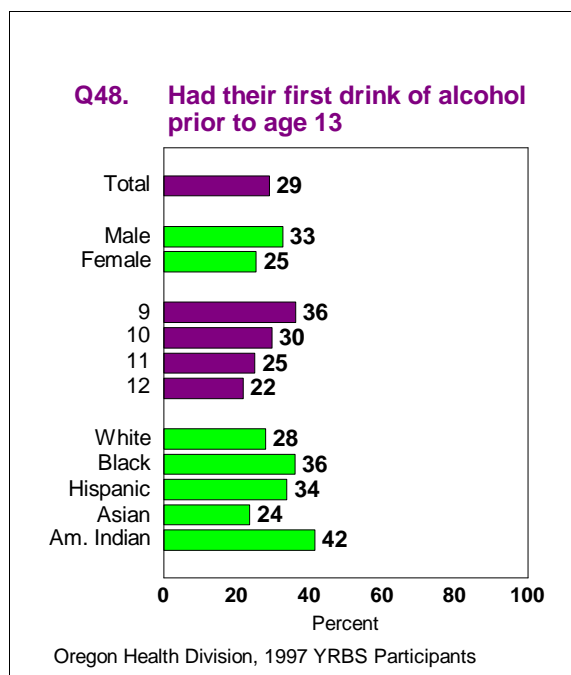
Alcohol is a major factor in approximately half of all motor vehicle crashes, suicides, and homicides — which are the leading causes of death and disability among young people.<sup>32</sup> Heavy drinking among youth has been linked conclusively to physical fights, destroyed property, academic and job problems, and trouble with law enforcement authorities.<sup>3</sup> In the 1995 adult Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 55 percent of 18 to 24 year-old Oregonians were current drinkers (during the last 30 days). Among those who were current drinkers in that survey, 56% reported drinking five or more drinks at one sitting in the previous 30 days.<sup>4</sup>

## WHAT OREGON STUDENTS REPORTED

### **Q48. How old were you when you had your first drink of alcohol other than a few sips?**

Twenty-nine percent of Oregon YRBS participants had their first drink of alcohol, other than a few sips, prior to age 13, including *significantly* more males (33%) than females (25%). As grade increased, drinking before age 13 *significantly* decreased. *Significantly* fewer Asian students (24%) and *significantly* more African American (36%), Hispanic (34%) and American Indian (42%) students drank alcohol before age 13.

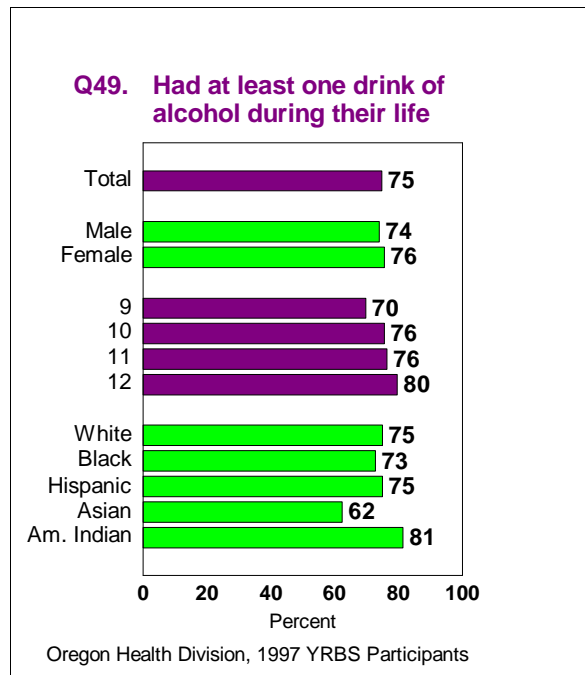
In 1995, 32 percent of students participating in the national YRBS reported having their first drink before age 13.



**Q49. During your life, on how many days have you had at least one drink of alcohol?**

Seventy-five percent of Oregon YRBS participants had at least one drink of alcohol during their life. There was no statistically significant difference by gender. As grade increased, the number of students who drank alcohol *significantly* increased. *Significantly* fewer Asian students (62%) and *significantly* more American Indian students (81%) ever drank alcohol.

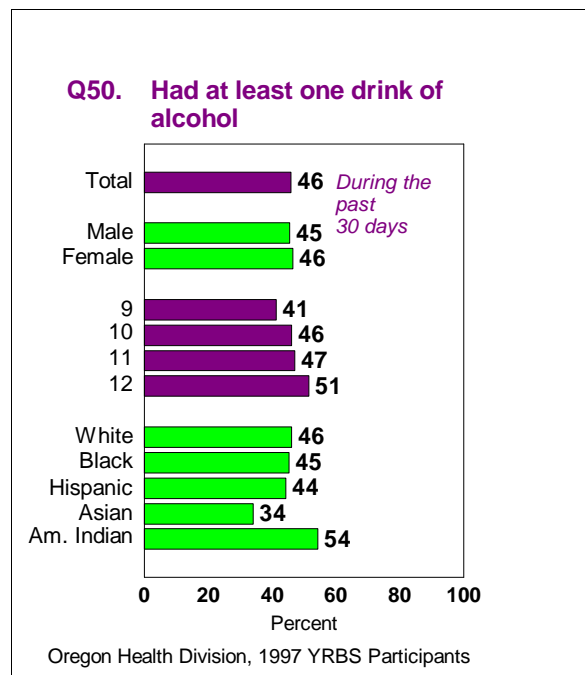
In 1995, 80 percent of students participating in the national YRBS reported having at least one drink in their life.



**Q50. During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?**

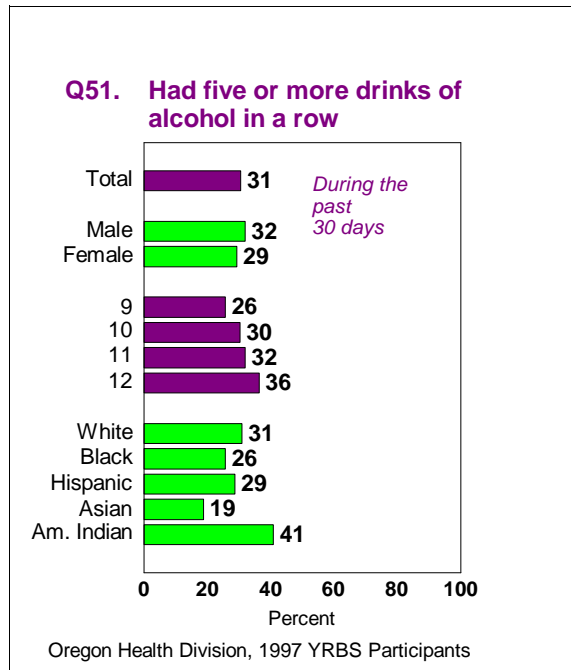
Forty-six percent of Oregon YRBS participants had at least one drink of alcohol during the 30 days prior to the survey. There was no statistically significant difference by gender. As grade increased, the number of students who drank alcohol in the past 30 days *significantly* increased. *Significantly* fewer Asian students (34%) and *significantly* more American Indian students (54%) drank alcohol during the previous month.

In 1995, 52 percent of students participating in the national YRBS reported drinking during the 30 days prior to the survey.



**Q51. During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours [i.e., binge drinking].**

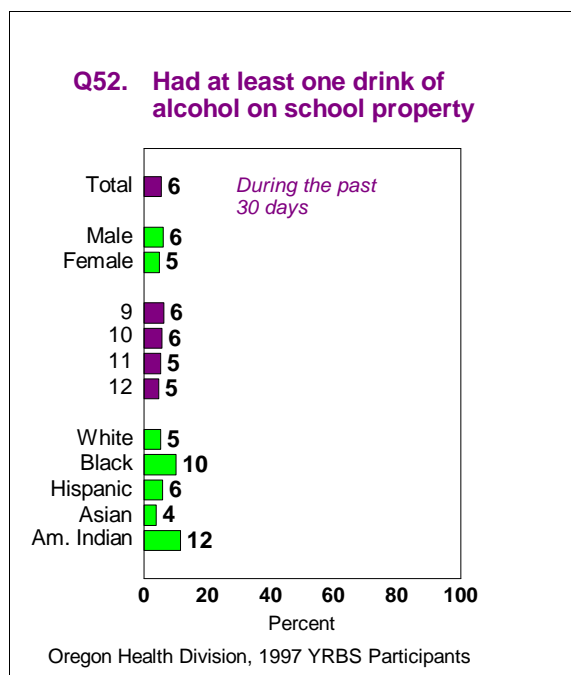
Thirty-one percent of Oregon YRBS participants had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, during the 30 days preceding the survey. *Significantly* more male (32%) than female students (29%) drank five or more drinks in a row. Binge drinking increased *significantly* by grade level. By twelfth grade, 36 percent of students binge drank within the past 30 days. *Significantly* fewer Asian students (19%) and *significantly* more American Indian students (41%) binge drank.



In 1995, 33 percent of students participating in the national YRBS reported binge drinking.

**Q52. During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol on school property?**

Six percent of Oregon YRBS participants had at least one drink of alcohol on school property during the 30 days preceding the survey. *Significantly* more male students (6%) than female students (5%) reported they drank on school property. As grade level increased, the number of students reporting drinking on school property *significantly* decreased. *Significantly* more African American (10%) and American Indian (12%) students drank alcohol on school property.



In 1995, six percent of students participating in the national YRBS reported drinking on school property during the 30 days prior to the survey.

## WHAT OREGON STUDENTS WROTE

I'd just like to say that I'm very concerned about some friends of mine. They are sexually active, but that's not what I'm worried about. They constantly have parties and get drunk. They don't have their licences yet but they have still messed up other people's lives because of their drinking. They don't care about school and I'm losing them personally. I'm really scared! They don't know what they're doing.

[Things] could be improved by having a School Based Health Center. If there is a problem [kids] can just go there. Also, they could get this thing called Alateen and have meetings for kids who have or their parents have a drinking problem.

I know I don't have to drink and I probably could do without using pot, too, but a lot of times that is my escape from this screwed up society.

I have only had one half a glass of wine on my 16th birthday.

I think [kids] need alcohol education and more sex education for prevention. Once you start, its very hard to stop. [We] need to prevent these things.

I think teens have such an easy access to drugs and alcohol at stores. People don't ask for ID.

After taking this survey I felt like a Miss Goody Two-Shoes. I guess it was because I was taught at an early age that drugs and alcohol are not the greatest things for you, is the reason why I don't do bad things. Or maybe I'm just not stupid enough to lower my standards.

In my opinion, more health education programs and so called "prevention" programs are not what people my age need to keep them from making bad life choices (i.e., using drugs or having sex when they aren't ready). Instead of investing a lot of money in these programs, which don't really influence kids' choices, invest money in things like art and sports programs that will give kids real reasons not to get involved in bad activities.

On thing I feel I'm going to be pressured into doing is drinking.