Youth Risk Behavior Survey
For
College Students

Health Promotion and Prevention Services
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USC
Youth Risk Behavior Survey
for College Students

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Methodology

Background Information

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey for College Students (YRBS-C) conducted in May 1995 on the campus of the University of Southern California (USC), was adapted from that of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It was developed by the CDC primarily to determine behavioral risk factors among youth. The 112 questions that were asked reflected areas such as unintentional and intentional injuries, tobacco use, alcohol and drug use, sexual behaviors, dietary behaviors and exercise behaviors.

Methods

The YRBS-C was randomly mailed to 1,000 people, of which 373 responses were received (37.3%). The survey packet included a cover letter, survey, scantron sheet, return envelope and post card. The scantron sheets were coded numerically for confidentiality as well as to ensure that names could not be linked to answers given by the respondents.

A cash prize was offered as an incentive to complete and return the surveys. The post cards were separated from the surveys upon receipt to further secure confidentiality. They were then used for the sole purpose of determining the recipient of the cash prize.

Data was then collected and analyzed to determine some of the risk behaviors among the students at USC. The information obtained from the analysis will assist the Health Promotion and Prevention Services Department assess the needs of the USC student population.
Demographics

Gender of survey respondents

- 51% Male
- 49% Female

Ethnicity

- 58.2% White
- 11.2% Hispanic
- 3.3% Asian
- .3% American Indian
- 27% Black

The ages of the respondents ranged from 16-40+. The majority of the respondents (54.8%) were 16-24 years old, 27.8% were 25-29, while 17.4% were 30+ years old.
Demographics

Marital status

- 3.8% Never married
- 19.7% Married
- 76.5% Divorced

Health care coverage

- 6.8% Yes
- 19.5% No
- 73.8% Not sure

A majority of the respondents indicated that they were 5th Yr/Grad students (43.0%). The remaining students were 1st Yr (12.1%), 2nd Yr (13.2%), 3rd Yr (14.8%) and 4th Yr (17.0%).
Unintentional/Intentional Injuries

Safety Helmet Usage

- Did not ride: 44
- Never: 43.2
- Rarely or Sometimes: 5.9
- Usually or always: 6.8

"How many times in the past 30 days did you..."

- Never: 66.1
- Once: 14.4
- 2-3 times: 13.3
- 4 or more times: 6.3

74.5% of the respondents indicated that they **always** wore seatbelts when driving. 70.5% said they **always** wore seatbelts as a passenger.
Unintentional/Intentional Injuries

"During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight?"

- 6%
- 94%

"With whom did you fight?"

- Total stranger (30)
- Friend/aquaintance (30)
- Boyfriend/girlfriend (5)
- Spouse/domestic partner (7.5)
- Family member (20)
- Other (7.5)

In the past 12 months, 9.4% of the respondents indicated that they had seriously considered attempting suicide.
Tobacco Use

"Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?"

- 33.2% Yes
- 66.8% No

"Have you ever smoked regularly—at least once a day for 30 days?"

- 20.1% Yes
- 79.8% No

- Among students who smoke, approximately 39% reported they tried to quit smoking cigarettes during the past six months.
- 3.2% of all students reported using chewing tobacco and/or snuff during the past 30 days.
"In the past 30 days, how often did you have at least one drink of alcohol?"

31% never
22.2% 1-2 days
19.9% 3-5 days
14.3% 6-9 days
12.5% 10 or more

"In the past 30 days, how often did you have 5 or more drinks in a row?"
Drug Use

"During your life, how many times have you used cocaine?"

86.9%

2.8%

4%

1.4%

4.9%

none 1 or 2 times 3-9 times 10-19 times 20 or more times

Marijuana Use During the Past 30 Days

72.7%

16%

4.7%

3.3%

3.3%

none 1 or 2 times 3-9 times 10-19 times 20 or more times

- Over a tenth of all students (14.5%) reported using cocaine.
- 15.6% of the students reported using LSD, PCP, Ecstasy, mushrooms, speed, or Ice.
- A scant 0.3% reported injecting an illegal drug into their body with a needle.
Sexual Behavior

Please note that the following results reflect the sexual behaviors of the respondents that indicated that they have had sex (76%). For this survey, sexual intercourse was defined as vaginal or anal sex.

"In the past 30 days, how often did you have sexual intercourse?"

- 50% never
- 2.7% once
- 13.3% 2-3 times
- 16.9% 4-9 times
- 17.1% 10 or more

"In the past 30 days, how often did you and your partner use a condom?"

- 48.8% No sex
- 28.7% Never
- 4.8% Rarely/sometimes
- 6.4% Usually
- 11.3% Always
Nearly one fifth (21.7%) of USC students reported they had drunk alcohol or used drugs the last time they'd had sex.

When asked how many times they had been pregnant, or gotten someone pregnant, 24.6% of the respondents indicated at least once.

64.5% of the respondents that have engaged in sexual intercourse indicated that they did not use a condom the last time they had sex.

6.7% of the respondents indicated that they have been forced to have sexual intercourse against their will.

32.8% of the sample indicated that they have been tested for the AIDS virus/HIV infection.
"Yesterday, how many times did you eat...?"

- 29.3% of the respondents indicated that they ate a hamburger, hot dog or sausage; 36.9% ate french fries or potato chips; and 54.7 ate cookies, doughnuts, pie, or cake.

- More than half of the respondents ate fruit or drank fruit juice yesterday (59.2%, 59.1% respectively). 38.9% indicated that they ate a green salad, and 68.7% ate cooked vegetables.

**Weight Perception**

- Underweight: 18.5% (Males), 12% (Females)
- Right weight: 53.8% (Males), 46.7% (Females)
- Overweight: 27.8% (Males), 41.2% (Females)
Exercise Behaviors

"Which are you trying to do about your weight?"

- 27% Nothing (27)
- 23% Lose (40)
- 40% Stay same (23)
- 10% Gain (10)

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"On how many of the past 7 days did you do the following exercises?"

- Aerobic:
  - None: 5.1
  - 1-2 days: 19.2
  - 3-5 days: 33.3
  - 6+ days: 42.4

- Stretching:
  - None: 6
  - 1-2 days: 15.4
  - 3-5 days: 30
  - 6+ days: 55

- Strengthening:
  - None: 3
  - 1-2 days: 17.1
  - 3-5 days: 25
  - 6+ days: 55

- Walk or Bicycle:
  - None: 7.4
  - 1-2 days: 16.3
  - 3-5 days: 26.7
  - 6+ days: 49.6

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- 10.4% of the respondents said that "yes" they have been enrolled in a PE class this year.
- 53.3% of the females versus 26.6% of the males indicated that they were trying to lose weight.
Some Last Words

The University of Southern California's Health Promotion and Prevention Services (HPPS) department offers a variety of programs to assist students with coping and adapting to college life. The following is a partial list of programs and services offered through HPPS:

- Anonymous HIV testing
- Drug and Alcohol education classes
- Free condom distribution
- Nutrition classes
- Pregnancy counseling
- Safer Sex 2000
- Stress Management counseling

We also have a variety of pamphlets and videos for students to use as a resource.

The results from the YRBS-C study conducted at the University of Southern California will help to evaluate current programs as well as assess for future ones. It is our intention to remain a primary source for health education and promotion among the students and the University.