

Summary of 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

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The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS) is conducted by the CDC biannually to monitor health-risk behaviors of students in grades 9-12. States that choose to conduct the survey are provided with 87 core questions from which they can add and remove items. This report compares health-risk behaviors in heterosexual students to sexual minority students in 2001-2009 among seven states and six large urban school districts. The seven states included were Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin. The cities in which the six urban school districts included Boston, MA, Chicago, IL, Milwaukee, WI, New York City, NY, San Diego, CA, and San Francisco, CA.

To be included in this report, states and cities must have added questions on sexual identity, the sex of sexual contacts, or both, and must have weighted YRBS data based on student sex, grade, and race/ethnicity. The full report can be retrieved from

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss60e0606.pdf>. Although Arizona was not included in this comparison, a full report of Arizona YRBSS data can be retrieved from <http://www.ade.az.gov/sa/health/matrix/2009AZBHTrendReport.pdf>.

Results

Amongst all sites, students in grades 9-12 who identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or unsure of their sexual identity had a higher prevalence of risk behaviors than heterosexual students. Tables 1-4 provide examples of these findings for four risk behaviors related to personal safety, dating violence, rape and sexual activity.

Table 1 – Median and range percentages of high school students grades 9-12 who reported not going to school because of safety concerns by sexual identity for selected sites*, Youth Risk Behavior Surveys, 2001-2009

	Sexual identity			
	Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	Not Sure
% Median	4.8	21.1	12.7	17.4
% Range	3.6-11.4	10.8-30.3	11.1-24.9	11.8-19.6

N=103,044

Selected sites included state surveys from Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont and local surveys from Boston, MA, Chicago, IL, New York City, NY, and San Francisco, CA.

Table 2 – Median and range percentages of high school students grades 9-12 who have been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the 12 months before the survey by sexual identity for selected sites*, Youth Risk Behavior Surveys, 2001-2009

	Sexual identity			
	Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	Not Sure
% Median	10.2	27.5	23.3	19.3
% Range	6.1-13.8	19.1-29.2	17.7-28.0	7.7-29.9

N=88,820

*Selected sites included state surveys from Delaware, Maine, Rhode Island, and Vermont, and local surveys from Boston, MA, Chicago, IL, New York City, NY, and San Francisco, CA.

Table 3 - Median and range percentages of high school students grades 9-12 who have been physically forced to have sexual intercourse by sexual identity for selected sites*, Youth Risk Behavior Surveys, 2001-2009

	Sexual identity			
	Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	Not Sure
% Median	7.2	23.7	22.6	19.8
% Range	5.2-8.4	14.1-31.0	16.6-32.1	10.4-25.3

N=62,042

*Selected sites included state surveys from Delaware, Main, and Rhode Island and local surveys from Boston, MA, Chicago, IL, New York City, NY, and San Francisco, CA.

Table 4 - Median and range percentages of high school students grades 9-12 who drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse by sexual identity for selected sites*, Youth Risk Behavior Surveys, 2001-2009

	Sexual identity			
	Heterosexual	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	Not Sure
% Median	18.7	35.1	29.9	37.9
% Range	14.4-23.9	21.6-48.0	14.2-42.4	27.5-47.6

N=30,355

*Selected sites include state surveys from Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont and local surveys from Boston, MA, Chicago, IL, New York City, NY, and San Francisco, CA.

Limitations of Survey

- The data only includes youth who attended public school, so it is not representative of all persons in the age group. It also included schools only in large urban school districts of selected sites which may not be representative of students in other school districts.
- The data was based on sexual identity and sex of their sexual contacts but not on sexual attraction which might have identified a different group of sexual minority students.
- It is unclear whether students who have taken the survey in the past were able to take the YRBSS each year that their school participates in the survey.
- Data is combined across 5 measurement times (biannually). Each site may not have had data for each year that the data was collected but was still included in the overall analysis.