



Violence Related Behaviors Health Risks Among Rhode Island Public High School Students *1997 through 2005*

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is an anonymous and voluntary survey among random samples of high school students in over 50 states, territories, and municipalities nationwide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed the YRBS to monitor risk behaviors for the major causes of mortality, disease, injury, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. In the spring of 1997, 2001, 2003 and 2005, Rhode Island (RI) administered the YRBS to 1,528, 1,392, 1,814 and 2,362 adolescents, with response rates of 60%, 63%, 66%, and 71% respectively. Weighted findings are representative of 9th to 12th grade public high school students statewide and can be used to make important inferences concerning health-risk behaviors. The RI Departments of Health, Education, and Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals provide funding and other support for the YRBS.

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KEY FINDINGS

Weapon Carrying

The percentage of all high school students who carried a weapon dropped significantly from 18% in 1997 to 12% in 2005, as did the percentage for males alone from 28% to 20%. The rate for females carrying weapons varied up and down between 8% and 3% from 1997 to 2005, but appeared to decline overall. Females were consistently much less likely than males to carry weapons. There were no major differences in weapon carrying by grade level in 2005.

Physical Fights

Between 1997 and 2005, the percentage of high school students who were in a physical fight over the past year showed a significant decline (35% to 28%), with significant decreases as well for males and, especially, females. Males (37%) were almost twice as likely as females (20%) to be in a fight in 2005. There appeared to be a greater tendency for students in 9th and 10th grades to be involved in fighting than students in 11th and 12th grades in 2005. The percentage of students injured in a fight who were treated by a doctor or nurse remained stable at 5%-6% from 1997 to 2005. Males were much more likely than females to need treatment, with rates of 7% versus 2%, respectively, in 2005. Twelfth graders appeared more likely to need treatment than did younger students in 2005.

Violence on School Property

The rate of carrying a weapon on school property varied between 8%-5% from 1997 to 2005, but appeared to be declining. Similar trends existed for male and female high school students, but boys remained consistently much more likely than girls to bring a weapon to school, with rates of 7% and 2%, respectively, in 2005. Differences by grade level were negligible in 2005. The percentage of students threatened or injured with a weapon on school property was stable at 8%-9% from 1997 to 2005. Males were consistently twice as likely than females to have been threatened or injured, with rates of 11% and 6%, respectively, in 2005. Rates declined steadily across grades with younger students more likely than older ones to have been threatened or injured on school property in 2005.

The rate for physical fights on school property appeared to decline slightly from 14% to 11% between 1997 and 2005. There was a significant decline in the same period for males (19% to 15%), who were consistently about twice as likely than females to have been in a fight (15% versus 7%, respectively, in 2005). Younger students appeared more likely than older ones to have been in a fight in 2005. The percentage of students who did not go to school at least once in the past month because they felt unsafe was stable at 6% across years, except for an apparent spike in 2001 (10%). There seemed to be only slight differences by sex for 1997 to 2005 and by grade level in 2005.

Sexual Violence

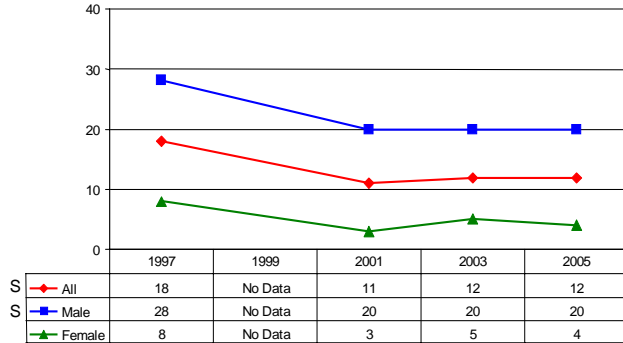
The percentage of high school students who reported being hit or hurt on purpose by their boy/girlfriend remained stable (8%-10%) from 2001 to 2005, as did the rate for students being forced to have sexual intercourse (6%-8%). Males were consistently more likely than females to have been hit or hurt, whereas rates by sex were similar for forced sexual intercourse across surveys. Ninth graders seemed less likely to be hit or hurt in 2005, whereas rates for forced sexual intercourse were relatively stable across grades at 5%-7% in 2005.

Violence Related Behaviors

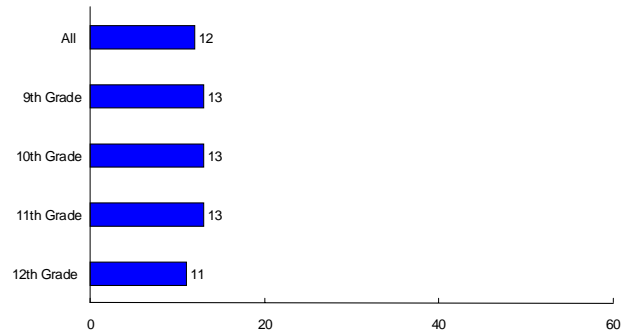
Risk Behavior: Weapon Carrying

Rationale: Approximately nine out of ten homicide victims in the United States are killed with a weapon such as a gun, knife or club. Homicide is the second leading cause of death among all youth aged 15 to 19 years (9.5 per 100,000) and is the leading cause of death among black youth aged 15 to 19 years (33.2 per 100,000).

Percentage of RI high school students who carried a weapon such as a gun, knife or club on one or more of the past 30 days - YRBS



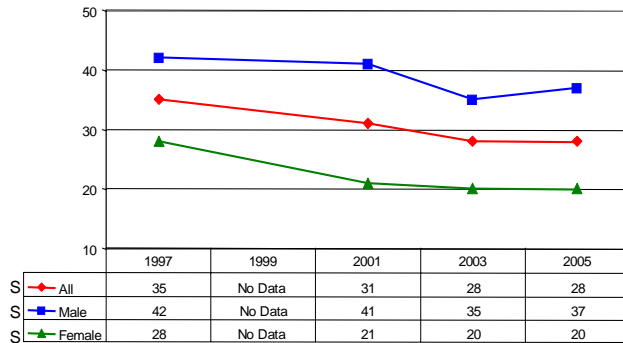
Percentage of RI high school students who carried a weapon such as a gun, knife or club on one or more of the past 30 days - 2005 YRBS



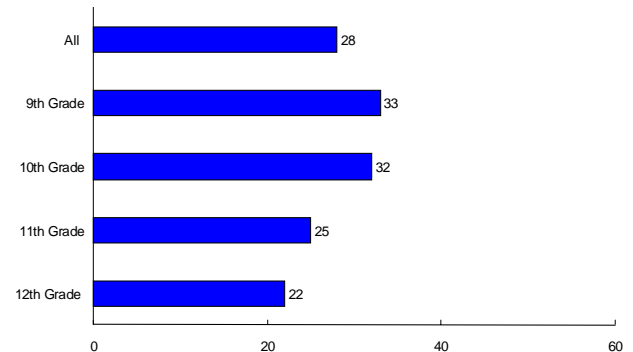
Risk Behavior: Physical Fights

Rationale: Physical fighting is an antecedent for many fatal and nonfatal injuries. In 2005, 36% of high school students in the United States reported that they had been in a physical fight anywhere.

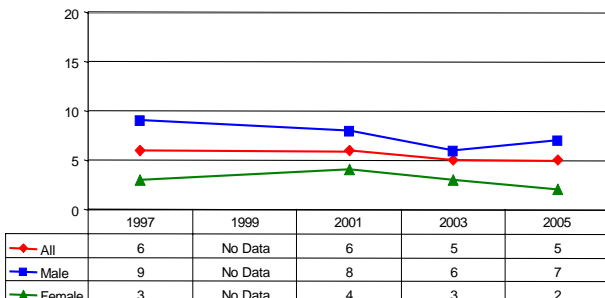
Percentage of RI high school students who were in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months - YRBS



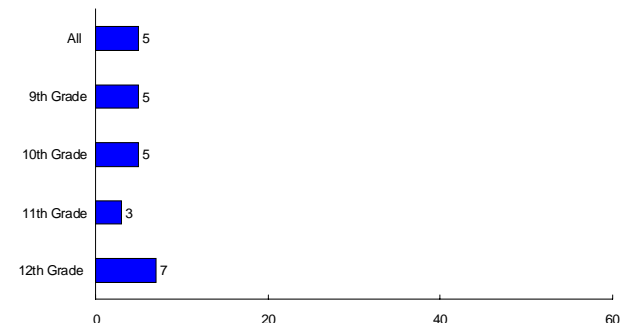
Percentage of RI high school students who were in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months - 2005 YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who were injured in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months and had to be treated by a doctor or a nurse - YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who were injured in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months and had to be treated by a doctor or a nurse - 2005 YRBS



Note: An "S" next to the line graph legend box denotes a statistically significant linear change.

Source: 1997 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=1528)

2003 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=1814)

2001 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=1392)

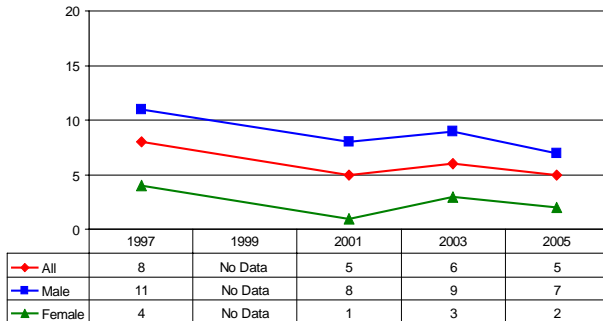
2005 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=2362)

Violence Related Behaviors

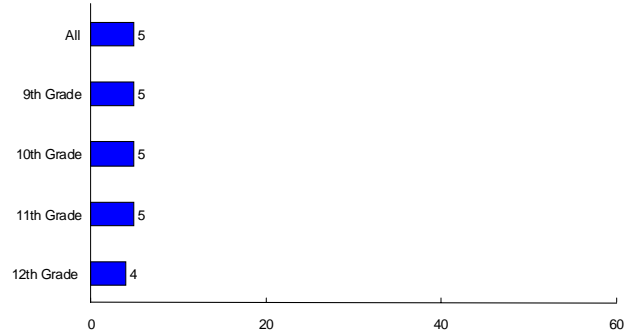
Risk Behavior: Violence on School Property

Rationale: Nearly 100% of school districts in the United States have a policy prohibiting weapon possession or use by high school students on school property. Nationally, the rate for weapon carrying (e.g. a gun, knife, or club) among high school students on school property declined from 12% to 7% between 1993 and 2005. In 2005, 14% of high schools students nationwide had been in a physical fight on school property, and 6% of students did not go to school on at least one day in the past month because they felt unsafe at school or traveling to or from school.

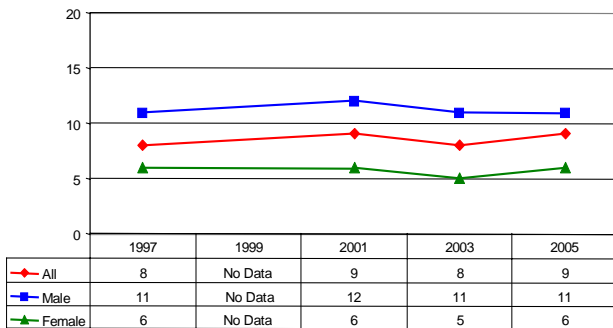
Percentage of RI high school students who carried a weapon such as a gun, knife or club on school property on one or more of the past 30 days - YRBS



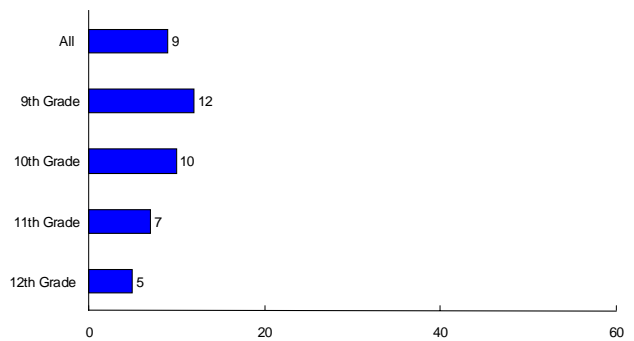
Percentage of RI high school students who carried a weapon such as a gun, knife or club on school property on one or more of the past 30 days - 2005 YRBS



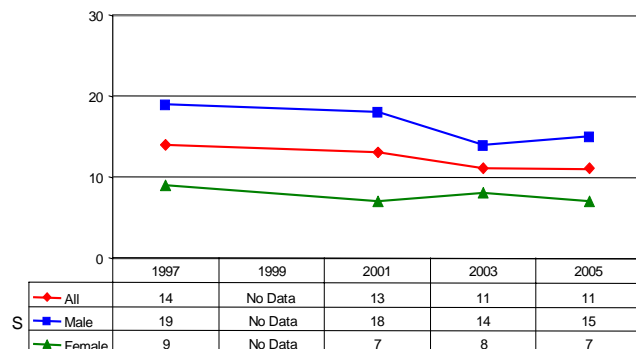
Percentage of RI high school students who have been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times during the past 12 months - YRBS



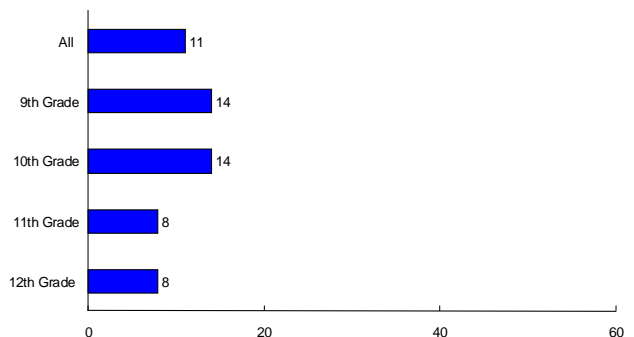
Percentage of RI high school students who have been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times during the past 12 months - 2005 YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who were in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the past 12 months - YRBS



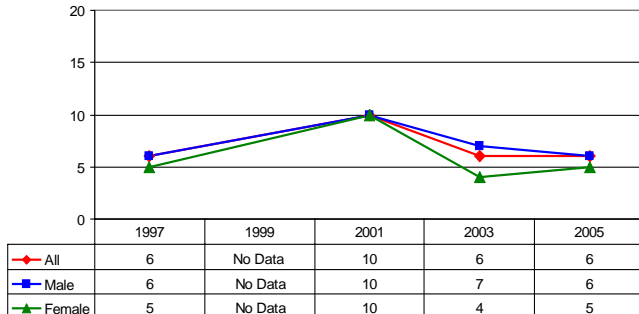
Percentage of RI high school students who were in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the past 12 months - 2005 YRBS



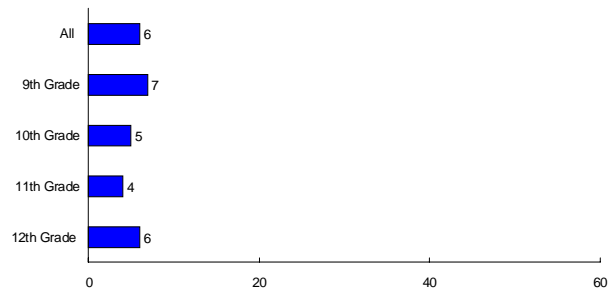
Violence Related Behaviors

Risk Behavior: Violence on School Property (Continued)

Percentage of RI high school students who did not go to school on one or more of the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school - YRBS



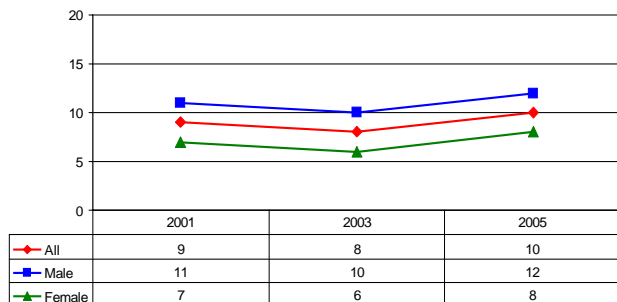
Percentage of RI high school students who did not go to school on one or more of the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school - 2005 YRBS



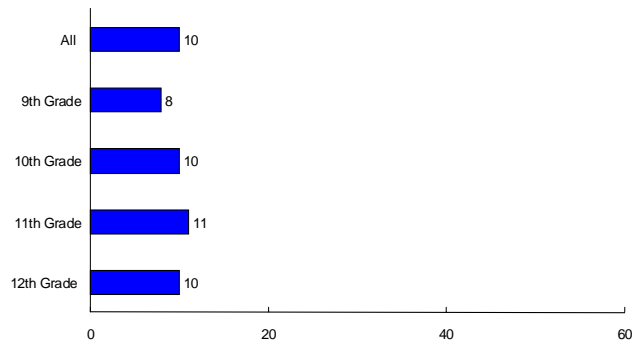
Risk Behavior: Sexual Violence

Rationale: Intimate partner abuse victimization is associated with participation in other high risk behaviors. In 2005, 9% of high school students nationwide had been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend on one or more occasions in the past year. Forced sexual intercourse is associated with negative psychosocial and mental health consequences. In 2005, 8% of high school students nationwide had ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to.

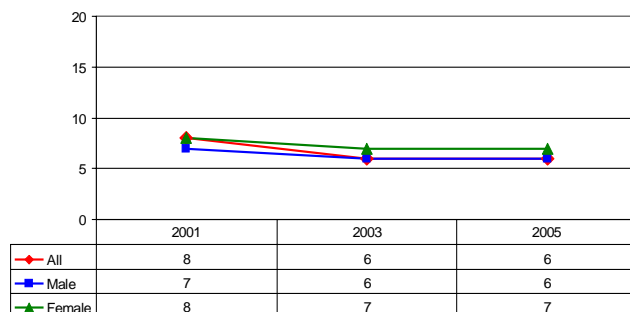
Percentage of RI high school students who were hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past 12 months - YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who were hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past 12 months - 2005 YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who have ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to - YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who have ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to - 2005 YRBS

