



Rhode Island Data Brief

Kids at Risk (2011 RI High School Health Risks)

Health compromising behaviors adopted during adolescence often translate into poor health status later in adulthood. Therefore, early recognition of these behaviors, and intervention efforts, are critical to improving the Public's health. The purpose of this Brief is fivefold: 1) to identify unfavorable risk factors among RI high schoolers (Chart 1), 2) to see how RI students compare to their peers across the country (Chart 1), 3) to see if RI risks have improved or worsened over time (Chart 2), 4) to see if there are any gender differences in risks (Chart 3), and 5) to see if there is any difference in risks by grade level (Chart 4). The findings are intended to inform interested parties and stimulate further research.

Twenty one measures¹ are examined, comprising seven areas of vulnerability (i.e., drugs & alcohol, injury, mental health, sex, tobacco, violence, and weight). Any differences in values (over time or between groups), were statistically 'significant' at the 95% confidence level.² Lastly, with the exception of the 'lesbian, gay or bisexual' measure, all others are unfavorable indicators, so lower/declining values are preferred (i.e., are 'better').

Drugs & Alcohol: Twenty six percent (26%) of students use marijuana, and the rates increase by grade level (20% to 34%, 9th to 12th grade). Seventeen percent (17%) of kids abuse Rx and/or non-Rx drugs. More boys than girls abuse these drugs (19% vs. 14%), and the rates increase by grade level (13% to 21%, 9th to 12th grade). Drinking is lower in RI than the nation (34% vs. 39%). Drinking rates improved from 2007 to 2011 (43% to 34%), but they increase unfavorably by grade level (23% to 45%, 9th to 12th grade).

Injury: RI students are less likely to not wear bike helmets than their national peers (78% vs. 88%). Ten percent (10%) of kids do not wear seat belts, and 7% drive after drinking. Drinking and driving, however, improved from 2007 to 2011 (10% to 7%).

Mental Health: Fifteen percent (15%) of students have a long-term emotional disability. Psychological depression is less common in RI than the nation (25% vs. 29%). Girls are more likely to suffer from depression than boys (32% vs. 18%), and 9% of students attempt suicide.

Sex: Eight percent (8%) of students identify themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual, with more girls than boys doing so (10% vs. 5%). Thirty percent (30%) of kids are sexually active, and sexual activity increases by grade level (17% to 45%, 9th to 12th grade). Twelve percent (12%) of students used no protection during their last sexual encounter.

Tobacco: RI students are less likely to smoke than their national peers (11% vs. 18%). Nine percent (9%) of kids are heavy smokers. Use of any tobacco product is also lower in RI than the nation (18% vs. 23%). More boys than girls use tobacco products (23% vs. 13%), and tobacco use increases by grade level (13% to 23%, 9th to 12th grade).

Violence: Fighting is less common in RI than the nation (24% vs. 33%). Boys are more likely to fight than girls (30% vs. 17%), and fighting decreases by grade level (27% to 18%, 9th to 12th grade). Dating violence improved from 2007 to 2011 (14% to 8%). Sexual assault (i.e., rape) also improved from 2007 to 2011 (10% to 7%). Girls are more likely to be victims of rape than boys (8% vs. 5%).

Weight: Eleven percent (11%) of students are obese, and 12% are not physically active. Four percent (4%) of kids don't consume fruits or vegetables, and boys are more likely to have poor nutrition than girls (5% vs. 3%).

Despite the considerable improvement in certain risk measures (e.g., drinking, dating violence, rape), current rates remain unacceptably high (e.g., suicide, smoking, obesity). For public health to improve and healthcare costs to moderate, these factors need to be addressed through concerted, committed effort.

Key Findings

Six (of 21) measures were better in RI than the nation. No measure was worse

Four (of 21) measures improved in RI (2007 to 2011). No measure worsened.

Girls did better than boys on four measures, and boys did better on three measures.

Five measures worsened from the 9th to 12th grades, and one measure improved ('physical fighting').

¹ Data are from RI's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, part of a biennial national survey of public high school students on the major causes of disease and injury morbidity and mortality (contact Bruce Cryan, 401-222-5111, www.health.ri.gov/data/youthriskbehaviorsurvey/)

² As the RI-YRBS is a sample survey, if the 95% Confidence Intervals of two values do not overlap, one may conclude (with 95% certainty) that there was a 'real' difference between the two values (i.e., the difference was not likely due to sampling bias)

Chart 1: RI & U.S. (2011 High School Health Risks)

* statistically significant differences

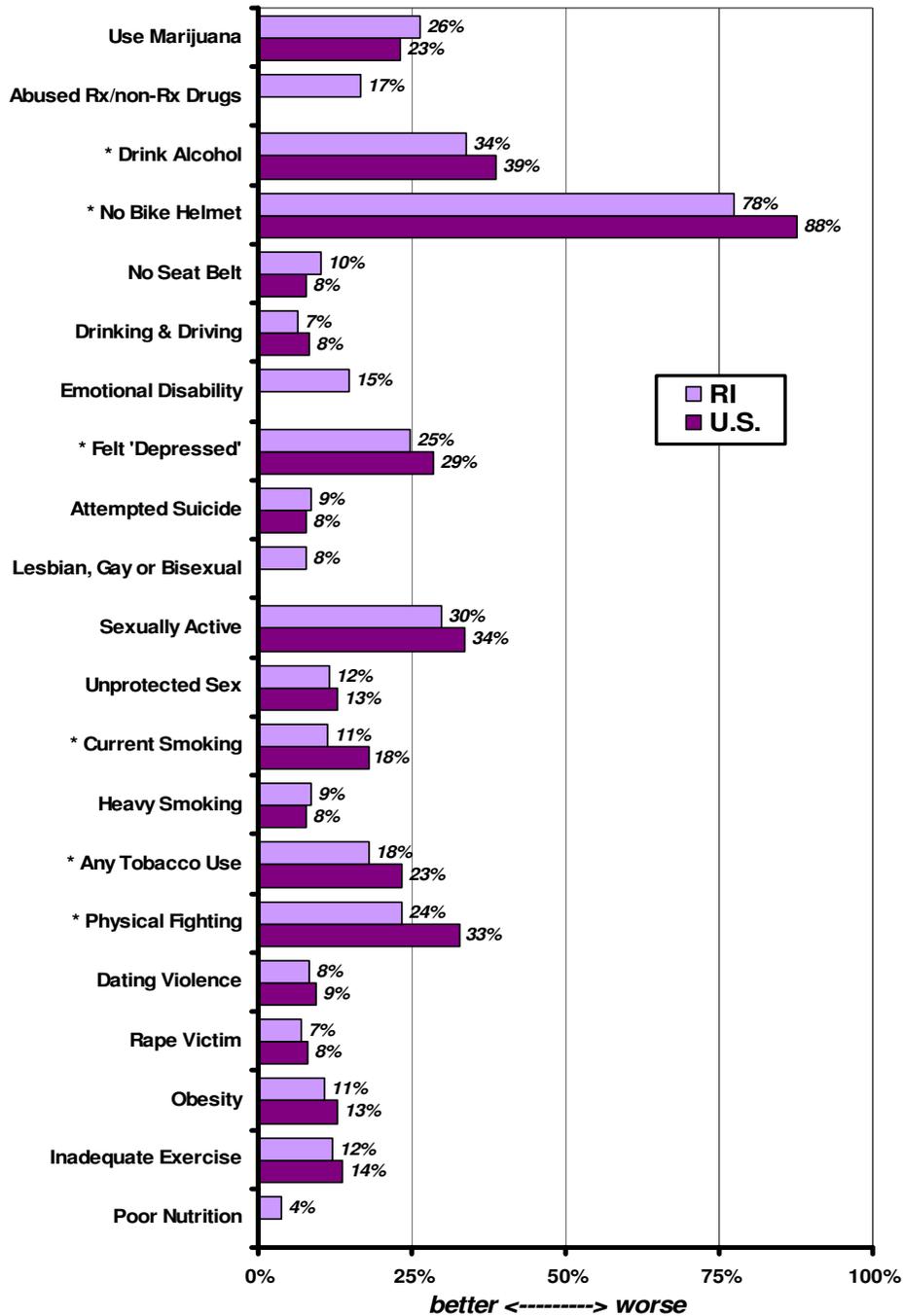


Chart 2: 2007 & 2011 (RI High School Health Risks)

* statistically significant changes

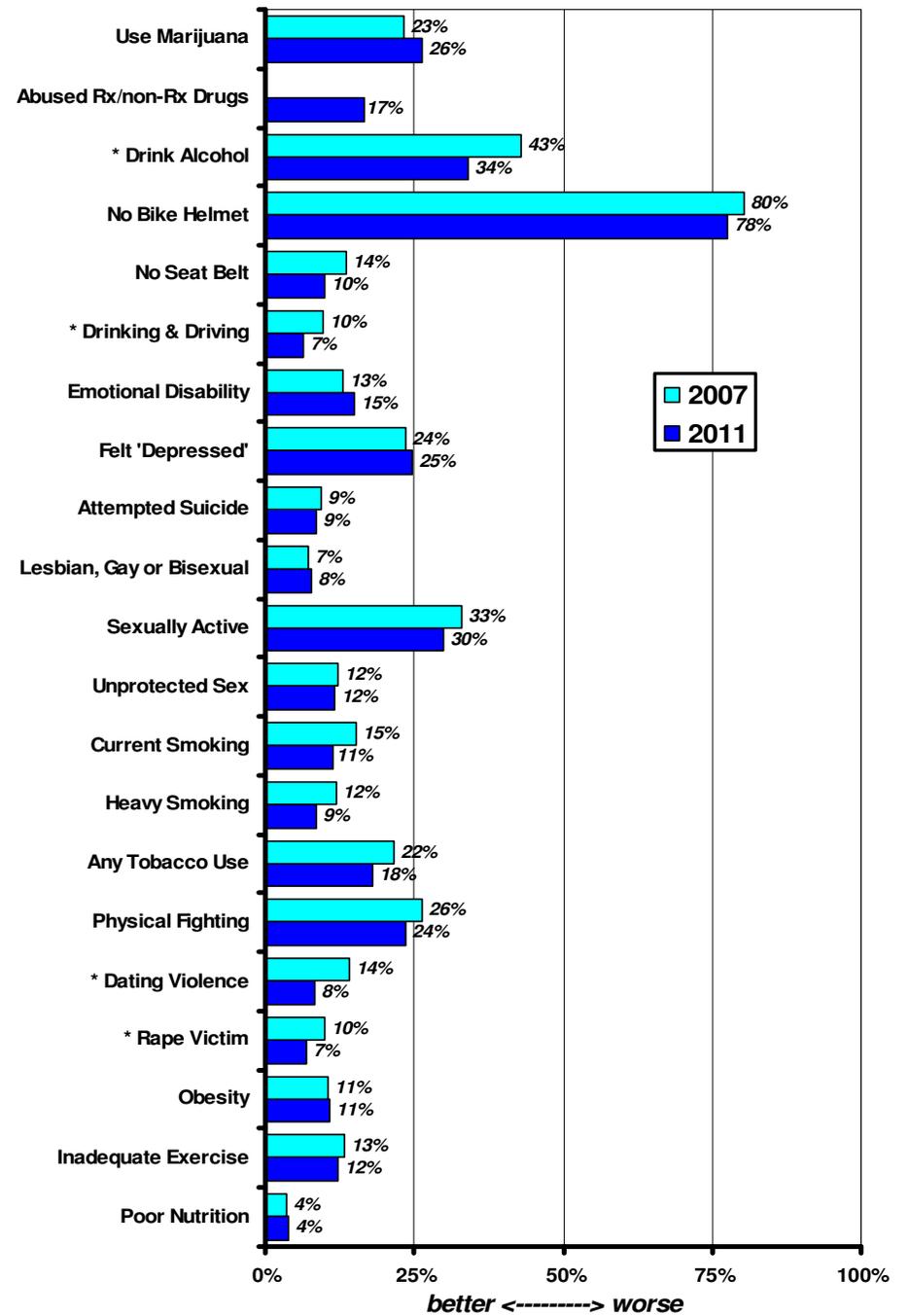


Chart 3: Male & Female (RI 2011 High School Health Risks)

* statistically significant differences

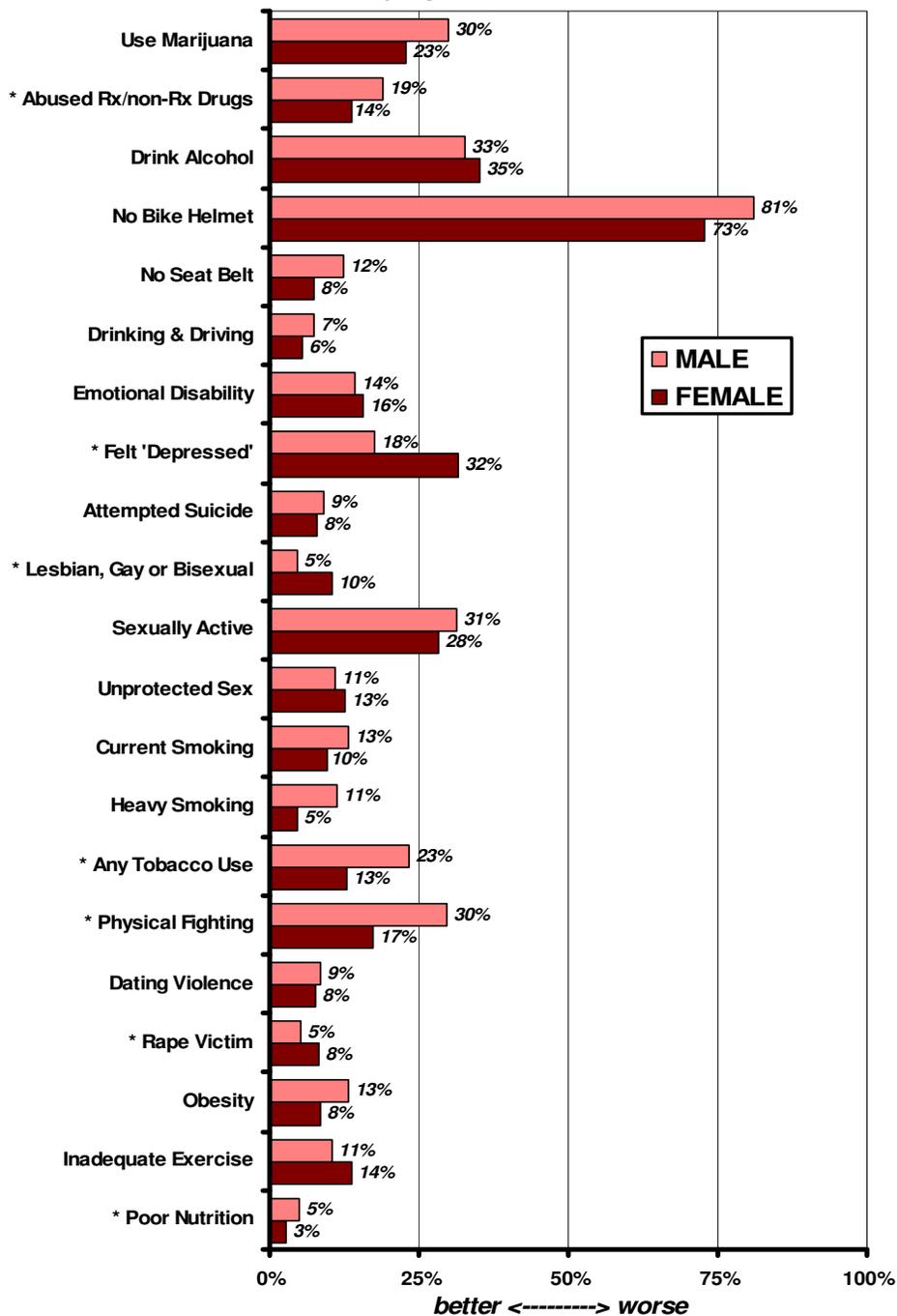


Chart 4: 9th & 12th Grade (RI 2011 High School Health Risks)

* statistically significant differences

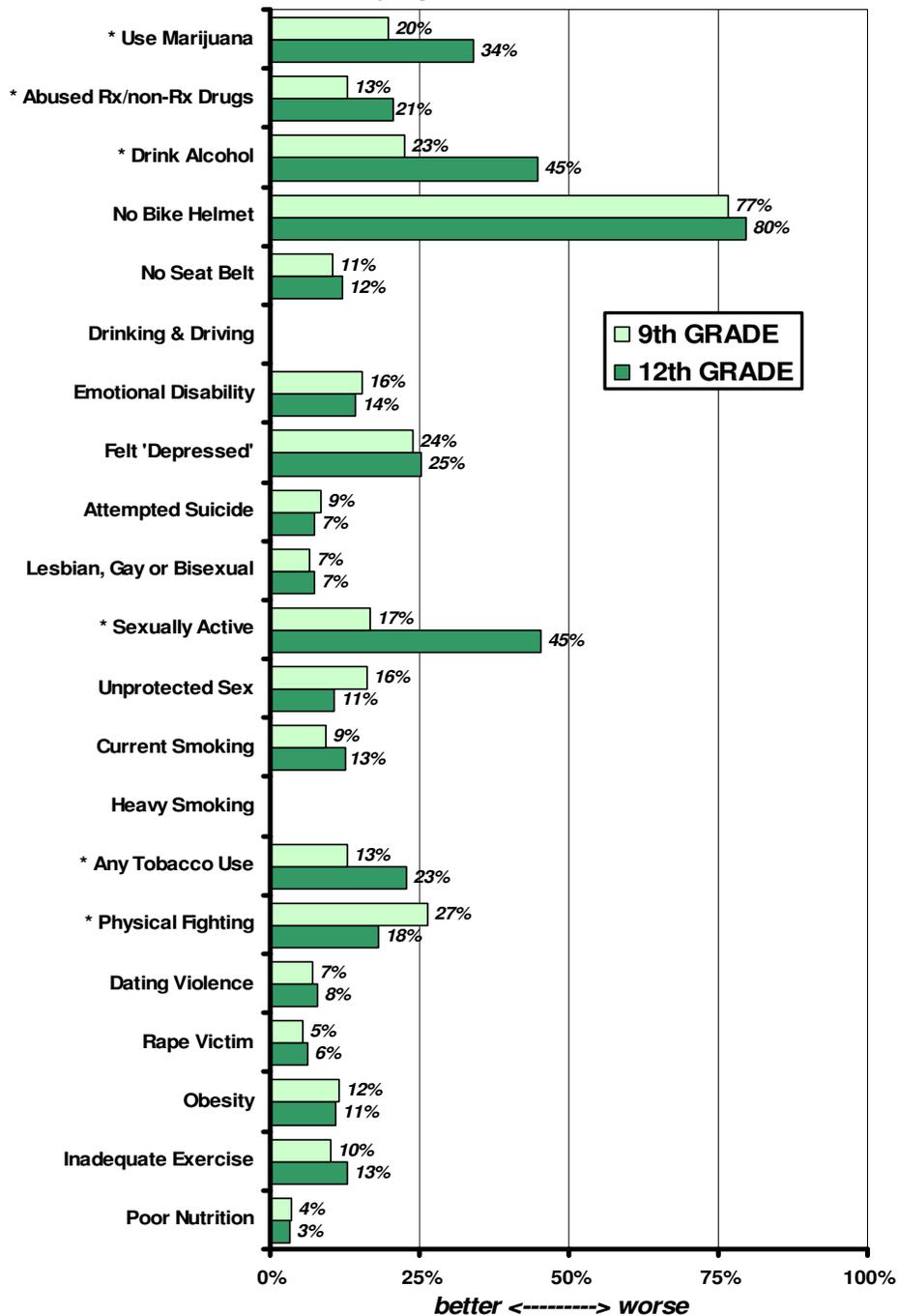


Table 1: HIGH SCHOOL HEALTH RISK DATA

Measure	Description	RI-2011			US-2011			RI-2007			RI-2011			RI-2011									
		Values	95% CIs		Values	95% CIs		Values	95% CIs		MALE	95% CIs		FEMALE	95% CIs		9th GRADE	95% CIs		12th GRADE	95% CIs		
DRUGS & ALCOHOL	Use Marijuana	1+ times, past mo.	26.3%	23.5%	29.4%	23.1%	21.5%	24.7%	23.2%	19.6%	27.3%	30.0%	26.7%	33.6%	22.7%	18.8%	27.2%	19.8%	16.3%	23.9%	34.0%	28.9%	39.6%
	Abused Rx/non-Rx Drugs	1+ times, ever	16.6%	15.3%	17.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18.9%	17.0%	20.8%	13.8%	12.0%	15.5%	13.0%	10.9%	15.0%	20.6%	17.4%	23.8%
	Drink Alcohol	1+ days, past mo.	34.0%	31.3%	36.8%	38.7%	37.2%	40.3%	42.9%	39.3%	46.6%	32.6%	29.2%	36.3%	35.2%	32.3%	38.3%	22.6%	18.8%	26.9%	44.8%	42.1%	47.5%
INJURY	No Bike Helmet	never/rarely wore, past yr.	77.5%	70.9%	82.9%	87.5%	85.0%	89.7%	80.4%	74.8%	84.9%	81.0%	75.4%	85.5%	72.7%	63.5%	80.3%	76.7%	67.9%	83.6%	79.8%	70.8%	86.5%
	No Seat Belt	never/rarely wore, past yr.	10.1%	7.7%	13.2%	7.7%	6.5%	9.1%	13.7%	11.1%	16.6%	12.4%	9.6%	15.9%	7.5%	5.4%	10.3%	10.5%	8.5%	13.0%	12.1%	7.7%	18.3%
	Drinking & Driving	1+ times, past mo.	6.5%	5.3%	7.9%	8.2%	7.6%	8.8%	9.8%	8.5%	11.4%	7.3%	5.9%	9.1%	5.5%	4.3%	6.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
MENTAL HEALTH	Emotional Disability	for 6+ mos.	14.9%	13.3%	16.6%	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.9%	11.3%	14.7%	14.2%	12.6%	16.0%	15.6%	13.4%	18.2%	15.5%	12.3%	19.3%	14.3%	11.3%	17.8%
	Felt 'Depressed'	for 2+ wks., past yr.	24.6%	22.8%	26.5%	28.5%	27.2%	29.7%	23.6%	20.8%	26.7%	17.6%	15.7%	19.6%	31.5%	28.9%	34.2%	23.9%	20.6%	27.6%	25.2%	20.8%	30.3%
	Attempted Suicide	1+ times, past yr.	8.7%	7.3%	10.4%	7.8%	7.1%	8.5%	9.3%	7.8%	11.2%	9.1%	7.5%	11.0%	8.1%	6.5%	10.0%	8.5%	6.8%	10.6%	7.4%	5.3%	10.2%
SEX	Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual	sexual self-identity	7.7%	6.6%	9.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.2%	5.5%	9.6%	4.7%	3.5%	6.3%	10.4%	9.0%	11.9%	6.7%	5.1%	8.6%	7.4%	5.2%	10.4%
	Sexually Active	1+ partner, past 3 mos.	29.8%	26.4%	33.4%	33.7%	31.8%	35.7%	33.1%	30.0%	36.4%	31.2%	27.3%	35.5%	28.4%	25.4%	31.7%	16.8%	13.4%	20.9%	45.2%	38.4%	52.1%
	Unprotected Sex	no protection, last encounter	11.6%	8.6%	15.6%	12.9%	11.6%	14.2%	12.2%	10.0%	14.8%	10.9%	9.1%	13.0%	12.5%	7.2%	20.7%	16.2%	11.2%	22.7%	10.8%	6.3%	18.1%
TOBACCO	Current Smoking	on 1+ days, past mo.	11.4%	9.0%	14.4%	18.1%	16.7%	19.5%	15.1%	11.7%	19.3%	13.3%	9.8%	17.7%	9.6%	7.6%	12.1%	9.4%	6.9%	12.6%	12.7%	9.8%	16.2%
	Heavy Smoking	10+ on days smoked, past mo.	8.6%	5.0%	14.6%	7.8%	6.3%	9.7%	12.0%	8.0%	17.6%	11.4%	6.0%	20.7%	4.7%	1.7%	11.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Any Tobacco Use	cigs, cigars, smokeless past mo.	17.9%	14.6%	21.7%	23.4%	21.8%	25.1%	21.6%	17.5%	26.4%	23.3%	18.4%	29.1%	12.8%	10.5%	15.5%	13.0%	10.2%	16.4%	22.9%	17.8%	28.8%
VIOLENCE	Physical Fighting	1+ times, past yr.	23.5%	21.8%	25.3%	32.8%	31.5%	34.1%	26.3%	23.1%	29.8%	29.7%	27.0%	32.5%	17.3%	15.0%	19.9%	26.5%	23.5%	29.8%	18.0%	14.8%	21.7%
	Dating Violence	hit by boy/girlfriend, past yr.	8.2%	7.5%	8.9%	9.4%	8.6%	10.3%	14.0%	12.1%	16.2%	8.6%	7.0%	10.6%	7.6%	6.4%	8.9%	7.2%	6.0%	8.6%	8.1%	5.8%	11.2%
	Rape Victim	forced intercourse, ever	6.9%	6.0%	7.9%	8.0%	7.3%	8.8%	10.1%	8.6%	11.9%	5.2%	4.4%	6.2%	8.3%	7.1%	9.7%	5.4%	4.2%	6.9%	6.2%	4.6%	8.1%
WEIGHT	Obesity	> =95 th percentile for BMI	10.8%	8.8%	13.3%	13.0%	11.7%	14.4%	10.6%	8.6%	12.9%	13.2%	10.1%	17.1%	8.4%	6.3%	11.1%	11.5%	8.9%	14.8%	10.9%	8.3%	14.3%
	Inadequate Exercise	not active for 60+ min., past wk.	12.1%	9.7%	14.9%	13.8%	12.8%	14.8%	13.3%	10.9%	16.1%	10.5%	8.4%	12.9%	13.8%	10.8%	17.4%	10.1%	7.5%	13.7%	13.0%	9.8%	17.0%
	Poor Nutrition	no fruit or veggies, past wk.	3.9%	3.2%	4.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.6%	2.7%	4.4%	5.0%	4.0%	6.0%	2.7%	1.9%	3.5%	3.7%	2.6%	4.7%	3.3%	2.0%	4.7%

'n/a' not applicable/available, data were either not collected, the sample was too small to be statistically valid ('heavy smoking' by grade), or not a meaningful comparison ('drinking & driving' by grade)