

2011 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Data Brief, May 2013: Women's Health Week

Women's Health Week

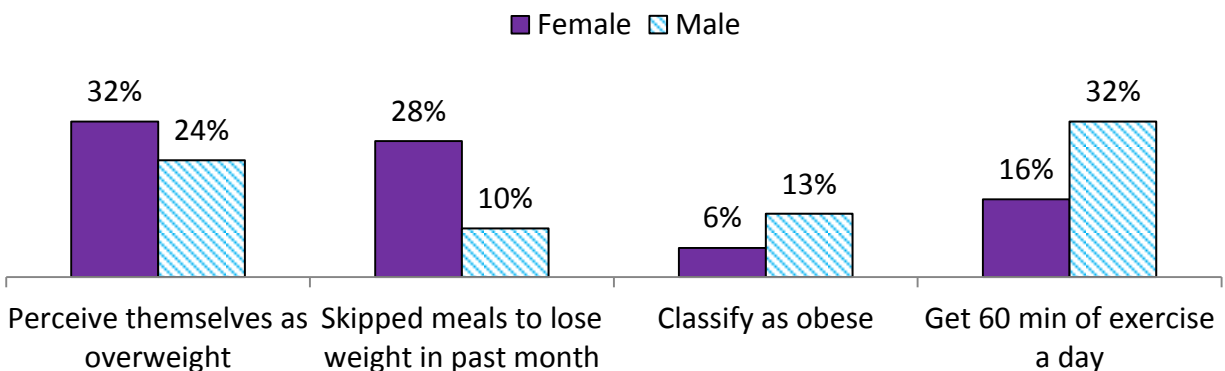
National Women's Health Week is a weeklong health observance coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office on Women's Health. According to HHS, the week is meant to bring together communities, businesses, government, health organizations, and other groups in an effort to promote women's health and its importance. It empowers women to make their health a priority and encourages them to take steps to improve their physical and mental health and lower their risks of certain diseases.¹

In the 2011 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 49% of the student respondents identified as female. This data brief reviews some of the differences found in behaviors and health by sex for high school students in grades 9-12.

Body Image and Weight: Female students were more likely to report perceiving themselves as overweight and skipping meals to lose weight. Male students were more likely to report a height and weight that classified them as obese and more likely to report at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day.

These differences are interesting because, female students appear to be more concerned about being overweight than male students even though male students are twice as likely to be obese. However, female students are also more likely to skip meals, an unhealthy response to weight concerns, and less likely to exercise, a healthy response to weight concerns.

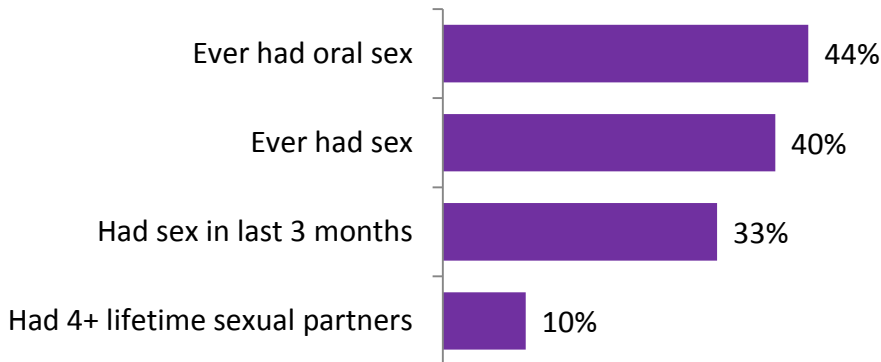
Figure 1. Percent of students (9-12 grade) reporting weight-related behaviors by sex, VT YRBS 2011.



¹ US Department of Health and Human Services: <http://womenshealth.gov/nwhw/>
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Sexual Behavior: Almost half (44%) of all female students and about two-thirds (63%) of all 12th grade female students reported having oral sex. Forty percent of female students reported ever having sexual intercourse, and of those 33% had sexual intercourse in the past three months. About one in seven female students (14%) who had sex in the past three months did not use an effective form of birth control (condoms or hormonal).

Figure 2. Percent of female students (9-12 grade) reporting sexual behaviors, VT YRBS 2011.

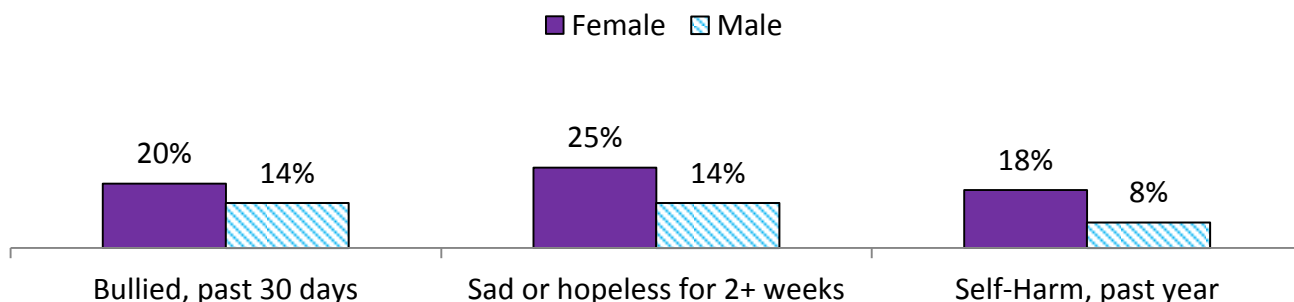


Less than 1 in 10 (8%) of female students reported ever being physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to.

Female Students and Drunk/Drugged Driving: Female students reported fewer instances of driving under the influence of alcohol (F 5%, M 9%) or marijuana (F 10%, M 16%), but similar instances of riding with a driver who was under the influence of alcohol (F 21%, M 21%) or marijuana (F 23%, M 26%) compared to their male peers.

Mental Health: Female students are more likely to report being bullied, feeling sad or hopeless and purposeful self-harm compared to their male peers.

Figure 3. Percent of students (9-12 grade) reporting mental health indicators, VT YRBS 2011.



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