

How Results Can Be Interpreted

Background

Overall, Ohio's 2005 YRBS results are representative of what Ohio's ninth through 12th grade students as a group would have reported. This is because survey results were "weighted," which simply means each participant's answers represented that individual plus some others who were similar to that individual.

Ohio's 2005 YRBS is a "snapshot in time." It highlights the prevalence of risk behaviors reported by Ohio high school students during February – May 2005. These risk behaviors address seven priority areas identified by the CDC as the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among youth in the United States. These priority areas include intentional and unintentional injuries; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual activity that leads to pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV; nutrition; physical activity; and positive youth behavior.

Answers in this survey were only as accurate as students' reporting. Each student interpreted the terms in each question according to his or her own definitions. For instance, is a pocket knife a "weapon"? What area does "on school property" include?

In some cases, the findings could under- or over-report behaviors. Some students chose not to answer certain questions, which means that all students surveyed were not represented in every response. However, enough students responded to survey questions to enable Ohio to compare its results to other states in the county.

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