

Sexual Minority Youth in Wisconsin: Reported Health Behaviors and Protective Factors, 2007-2011

Anneke Mohr, MPH, MSW and Akbar Husain, MPH, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

What is the Youth Risk Behavior Survey?

- ▶ The YRBS is a national health survey coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), administered at the state and local level every other year.
- ▶ Middle schools and high schools across the state are randomly selected to participate. Classes within those schools are then randomly selected to complete the survey.
- ▶ The survey consists of core questions and optional questions
- ▶ In 2007, WI added a question about **same-sex sexual contact**
- ▶ In 2011, WI added a question about **sexual identity**
- ▶ In 2011, 15 states and 10 districts asked questions to identify sexual minority status (based on sexual behavior or identity)
- ▶ Currently no state asks about gender identity



For more information, see <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6007.pdf>

"Sexual Minority" can refer to the following:

- Behavior**
 - Men who have sex with men (MSM)
 - Women who have sex with women (WSW)
- Attraction**
 - Attracted to same sex or both sexes
- Sexual identity**
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or questioning (LGBQ)
- Gender identity**
 - Transgender (born male, identify as female or born female, identify as male)
 - Genderqueer (identify as neither female nor male)



ABSTRACT

We used data from the 2007, 2009, and 2011 high school Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to identify health behaviors and protective factors among sexual minority youth in Wisconsin. We narrowed our analysis to the health focus areas identified in the state health plan, Healthiest Wisconsin 2020. Significant disparities exist between sexual minority youth and sexual majority youth for all health focus areas. Improving protective factors is one way to potentially reduce risk behaviors.

METHODS

- ▶ We combined three years of data (2007, 2009, 2011, N=7,571) to look at risk behaviors for youth with same-sex sexual contact
- ▶ Only youth who reported sexual contact (N=4,288) were included in the combined 2007-2011 analysis
- ▶ All youth (N=2,707) were included in the 2011 sexual identity analysis
- ▶ We used SAS 9.2 to create weighted frequencies and adjusted odds ratios comparing behaviors among sexual minority youth to sexual majority youth controlling for grade in school and sex

RESULTS

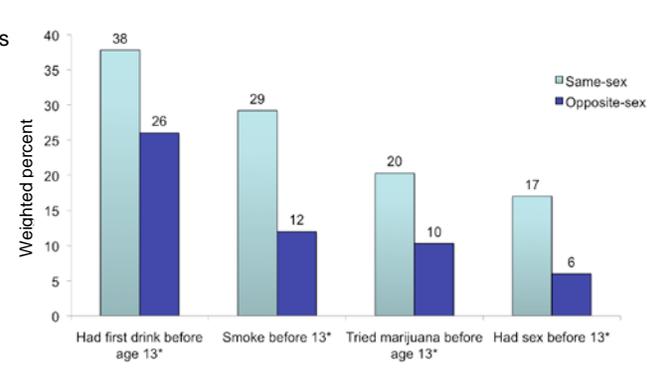
10%* of sexually active high school students in WI report **same-sex sexual contact**
9%** of high school students in WI identify as **lesbian, gay, bisexual, or unsure**

Students with same-sex sexual contact have...

- 5** times greater odds of **attempting suicide** and getting injured in a fight
- 4** times greater odds of having sex before the age of 13
- 3** times greater odds of **skipping school because they feel unsafe**
- 2** times greater odds of **using marijuana or smoking cigarettes**
- 1/2** the odds of **feeling they belong at school**

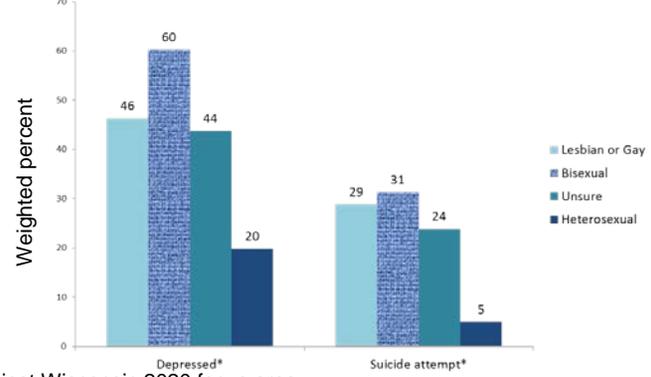
*13% and **15% in Milwaukee

Figure 2. Early initiation of risk for sexual minority youth, 2007-2011



*Statistically significant difference between students with same-sex and opposite-sex only sexual contact with 95% CI
 Source: Wisconsin YRBS

Figure 3. Mental health of LGBQ youth, 2011

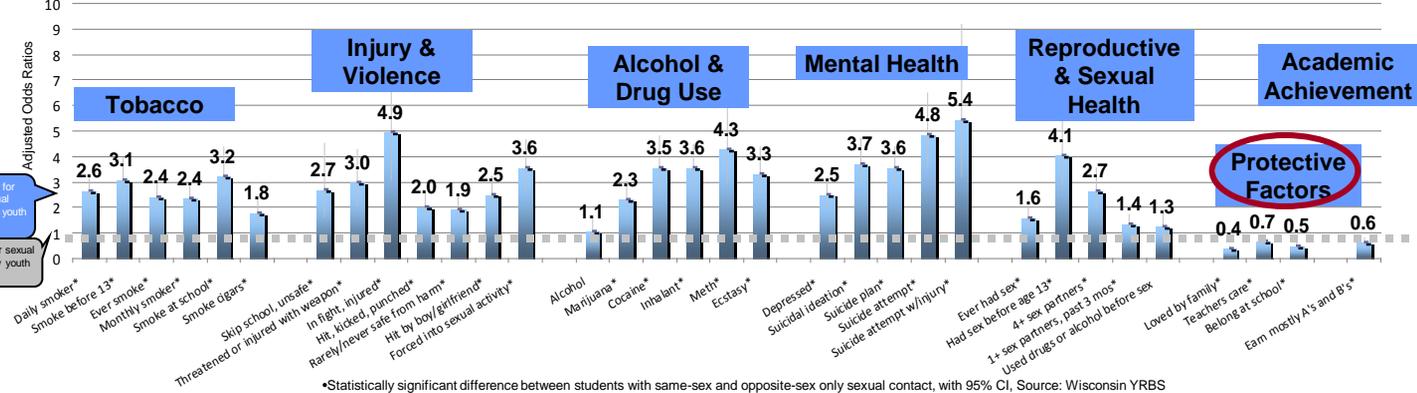


What is Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 (HW2020)?

- A ten-year state health plan with two goals:
- To improve health across the lifespan
 - To reduce health disparities among:
 - Racial and ethnic minorities
 - People with disabilities
 - People of low socio-economic status
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals
- For more information, see <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/hw2020>



Figure 1. Adjusted odds ratios for sexual minority high school youth by Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 focus area



*Statistically significant difference between students with same-sex and opposite-sex only sexual contact, with 95% CI, Source: Wisconsin YRBS

Recommendations

- ▶ Schools, families, and communities should **address stigma, discrimination, family disapproval, social rejection, and violence** that many sexual minority youth face
 - ▶ Agencies and schools should **adopt policies and practices to create a safe and supportive environment** for sexual minority youth (e.g., Gay-Straight Alliance, Safe Zones, comprehensive bullying/harassment policy, and LGBT library resources)
 - ▶ Staff at **schools and community agencies should be trained** so they understand the needs and concerns of sexual minority youth and can implement effective programs and services
- Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/SexualMinorityYouth/>

We would like to acknowledge Mari Gasiorowicz, Emily Holder, Gary Hollander, Chitra Karki, Ron Gangnon, and the Michigan YRBS team for their assistance
 For more information, see <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lgbthealth> or contact anneke.mohr@dhs.wisconsin.gov