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National College Health Risk Behavior Survey of Western Washington University Students, Spring, 1995

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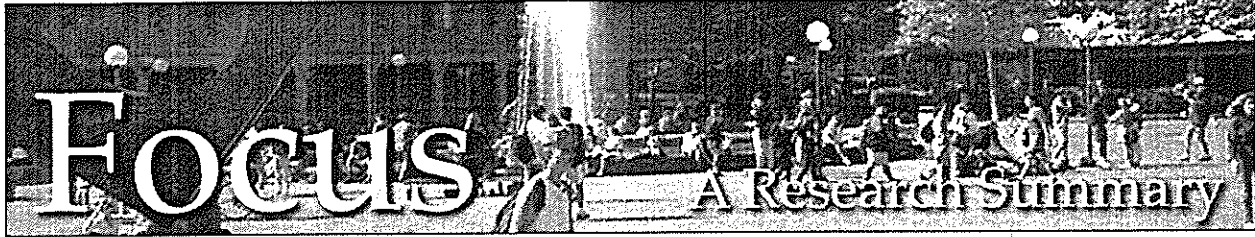
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National College Health Risk Behavior Survey of Western Washington University Students Spring, 1995

Prepared by Gary McKinney, Pat Fabiano, and Joseph E. Trimble

In May, 1995, the National College Health Risk Behavior Survey—developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—was mailed to 1,000 randomly selected Western Washington University students. The final tally of completed forms was 482, a 48.2% survey response rate.

The National College Health Risk Behavior Survey was established by the CDC to monitor the prevalence of behaviors most influencing the health of college students. In addition to Western students, the survey was administered to over 10,000 representative college students nationwide. (Baseline data from that administration was not available at the time of the publication of this report.)

The National College Health Risk Behavior Survey gathers data in six behavioral categories contributing to the leading causes of mortality and morbidity among college students: 1) behaviors that result in unintentional or intentional injuries; 2) use of tobacco; 3) use of alcohol and other drug; 4) sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy

and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection; 5) body weight/nutrition; and 6) physical activity.

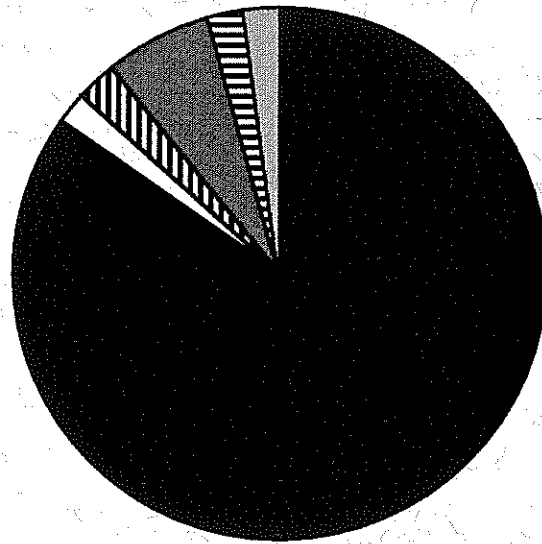
The primary purpose of administering the Health Risk Behavior Survey at Western was to produce baseline data on the status of college student health, especially as it relates to the 29 national health objectives described in *Healthy People 2000: National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives*. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services #91-50212, 1991.) To date no such comprehensive assessment of the overall health of Western students exists. While student utilization rates of health services have been rigorously recorded, and though utilization rates are important for assuring adequate delivery of such services, they do not accurately reflect the health profile of the student body as a whole. Data from the Health Risk Behavior Survey completes the picture of student health at Western and is invaluable to strategic planning processes targeting the most compelling student needs.

Demographics

Stats

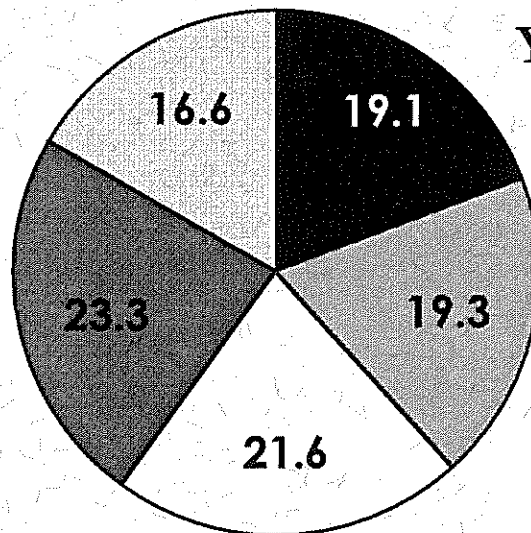
Charts

Most survey respondents were female (56.9% versus 43.1% male). Nearly all were attending Western as full-time students (96.4%). A majority of respondents' fathers (57.8%) and nearly half of respondents' mothers (47.2%) had graduated from college. Another fifth of respondents' fathers (23.5%) and another third of mothers (33.3%) had some education after high school.



Ethnicity

- White (85.3)
- Black (1.9)
- ▨ Hispanic (2.7)
- Asian (6.4)
- American Indian (2.1)
- ▨ Other (2.3)



Year in School

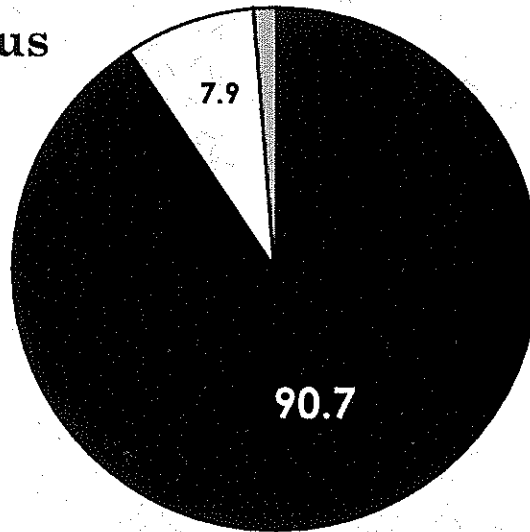
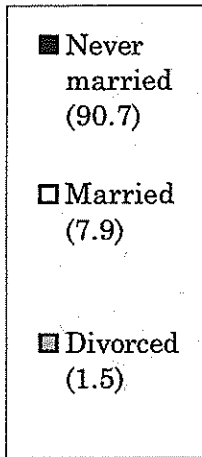
- 1st Year
- ▨ 2nd Year
- 3rd Year
- 4th Year
- ▨ 5th Yr/Grad

Demographics

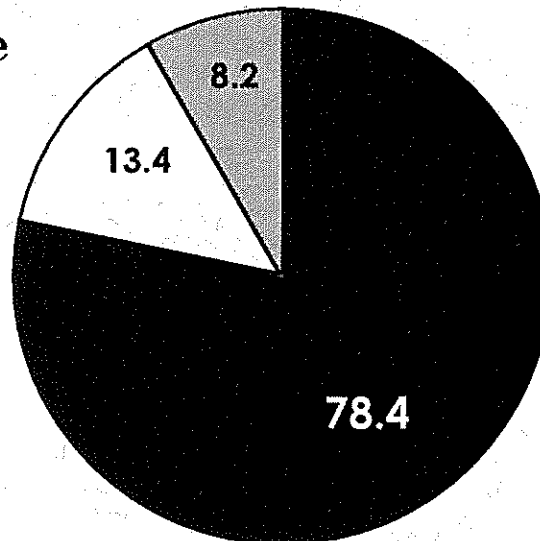
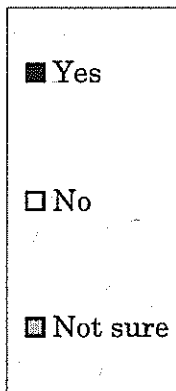
Charts

Stats

Marital Status



Health Care Coverage?



Most respondents lived off-campus or in an apartment (60.4%), while nearly a third lived in college residence halls (31.5%). Nearly a third performed regular and consistent service or volunteer work (30.8%). A majority worked for pay (less than twenty hours a week) on a regular basis (58.9%). Fewer worked for pay twenty hours a week or more (18.0%).

Unintentional Injuries

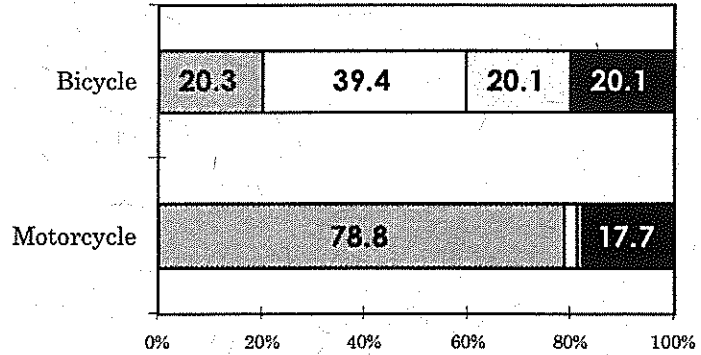
Stats

Charts

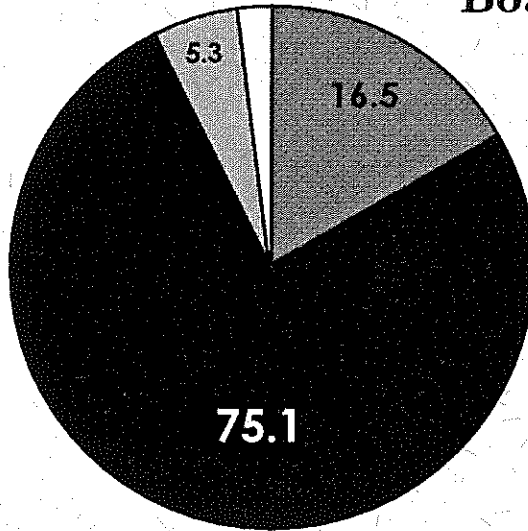
Unintentional injuries are the fourth leading cause of death in the United States, and the leading cause of death among college-age students. For all age groups combined, the leading cause of death from unintentional injury are motor vehicle crashes. Compliance with seatbelt usage was higher when respondents were drivers (80.5% always wore when driving versus 67.1% when riding).

- Usually or always wore
- Rarely or sometimes wore
- Never wore
- Did not ride

Safety Helmet Usage



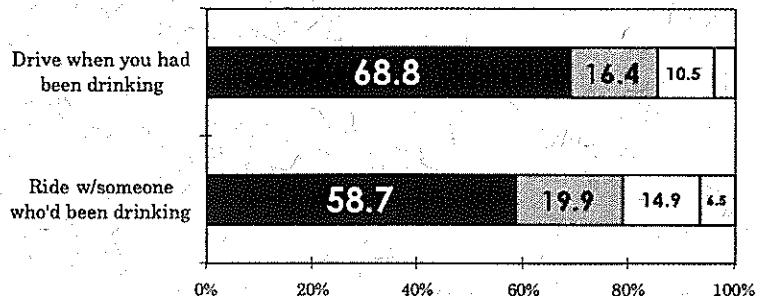
Boating/Swimming and Alcohol



- Did not boat or swim
- Never or rarely drank
- Sometimes drank
- Usually or always drank

- 4 times or more
- 2-3 times
- Once
- Never

"How many times in the past 30 days did you..."

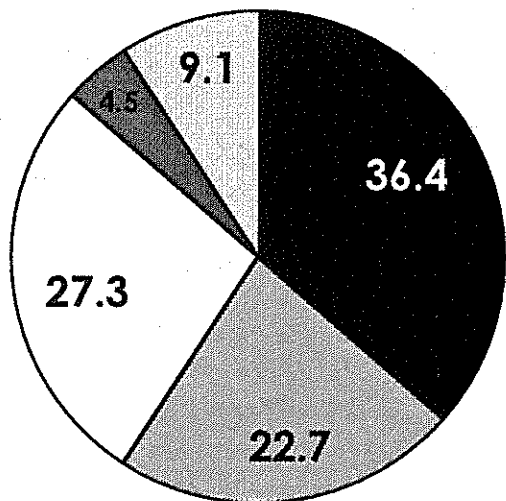
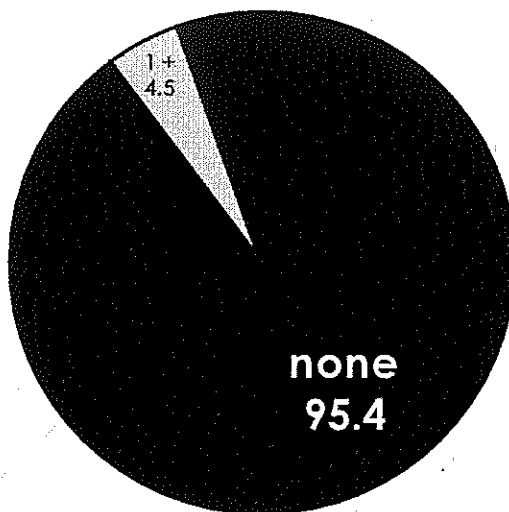


Intentional Injuries

Charts

Stats

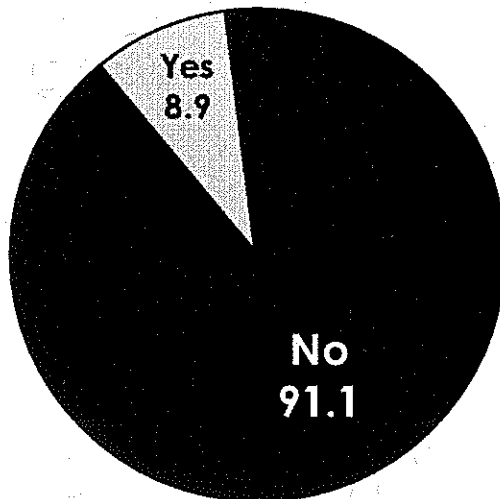
"During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight?"



If You Fought (physically), With Whom?

- Total Stranger
- Friend/acquaintance
- Boy/girlfriend or date
- Spouse/partner
- Family member

"During the past 12 months, did you seriously consider attempting suicide?"



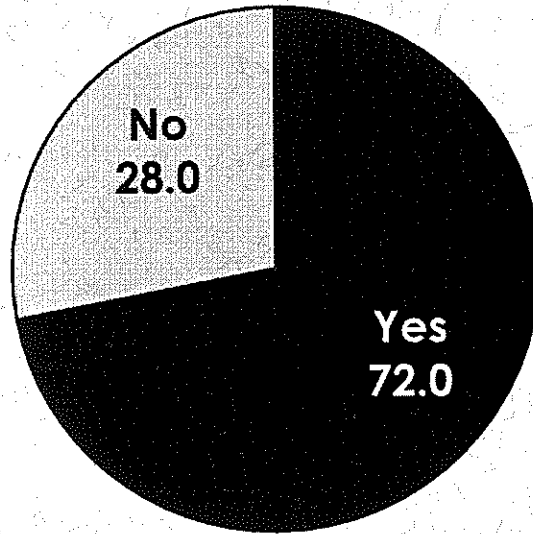
In the United States, intentional injuries, which include suicide, account for more than one-third of all injury-related deaths. Among young people aged 15 to 24, suicide is the third leading cause of death. Besides a potentially lethal health event, attempted suicide is a risk factor for future completed suicide, and usually an indicator of other health problems such as substance abuse or depression.

Tobacco Use

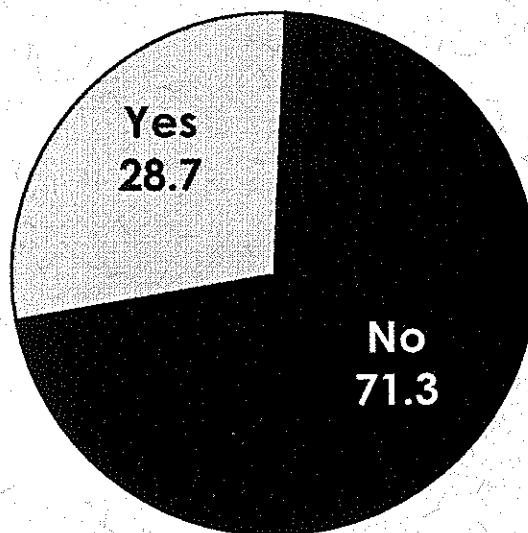
Stats

Charts

Tobacco use is correlated with four of the five leading causes of death in the United States: 1) cardiovascular disease; 2) cancer; 3) cerebrovascular disease; and 4) chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. **Over a quarter of Western students reported smoking in the past 30 days (27.4%), a disturbing figure considering that Western has a “smoke-free” campus, with relatively few “legal” smoking areas.**



"Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?"



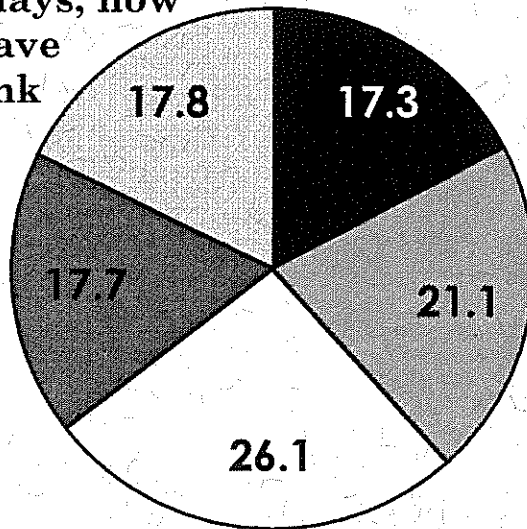
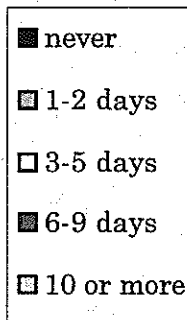
"Have you ever smoked regularly—at least once a day for 30 days?"

Alcohol/other Drug Use

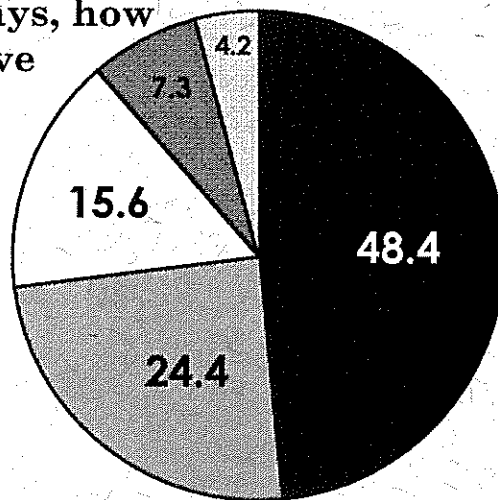
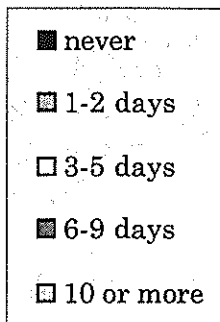
Charts

Stats

"In the past 30 days, how often did you have at least one drink of alcohol?"



"In the past 30 days, how often did you have 5 or more drinks in a row?"



Over half of Western students (54.3%) reported using marijuana sometime during their lives.

Very few, however, reported using cocaine (5.5% used 1-2 times in the past 30 days).

Fewer yet reported using LSD, PCP, Ecstasy,

mushrooms, speed, or Ice (4.6% used 1-2 times in the past 30 days).

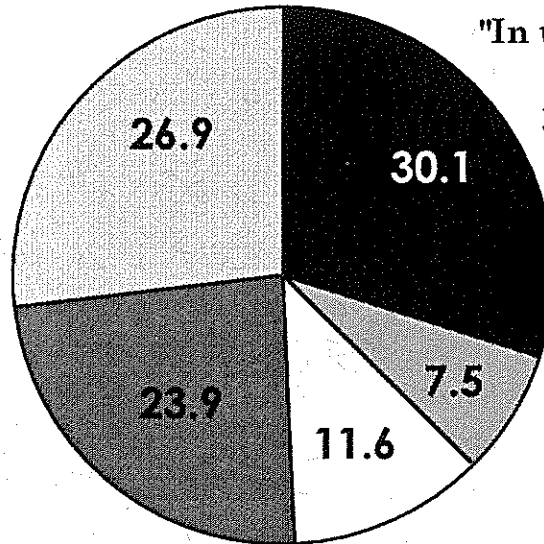
A scant 0.6% reported injecting an illegal drug into their body with a needle.

Sexual Behavior

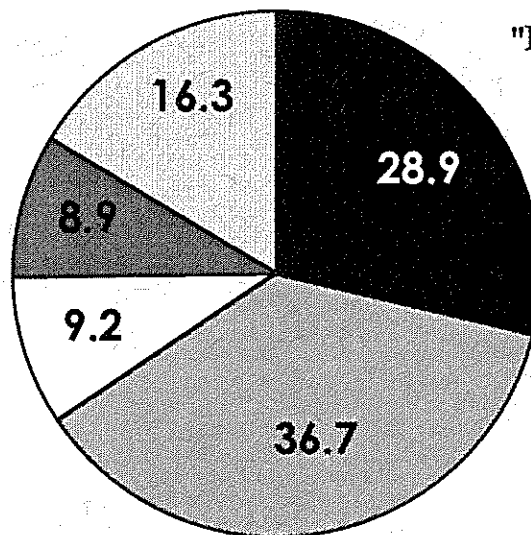
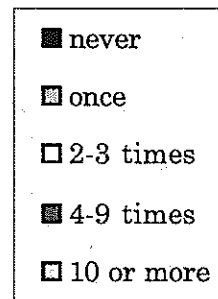
Stats

Charts

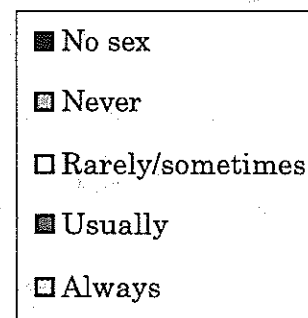
Nearly one fifth (18.4%) of Western students reported they had drunk alcohol or used drugs the last time they'd had sex. When asked how many times they had been pregnant, or gotten someone pregnant, 11.0% of Western students indicated at least once. The last time they had sex, 95.2% indicated they had used birth control, including: pills (38.4%), condoms (28.3%), or other (7.9%).



"In the past 30 days, how often did you have sexual intercourse?"



"In the past 30 days, how often did you and your partner use a condom?"

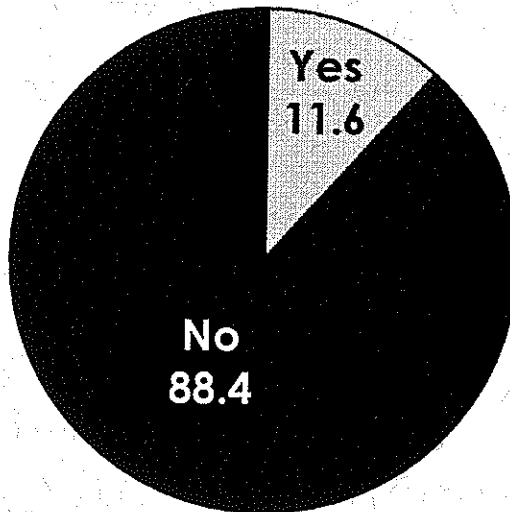


Sexual Behavior

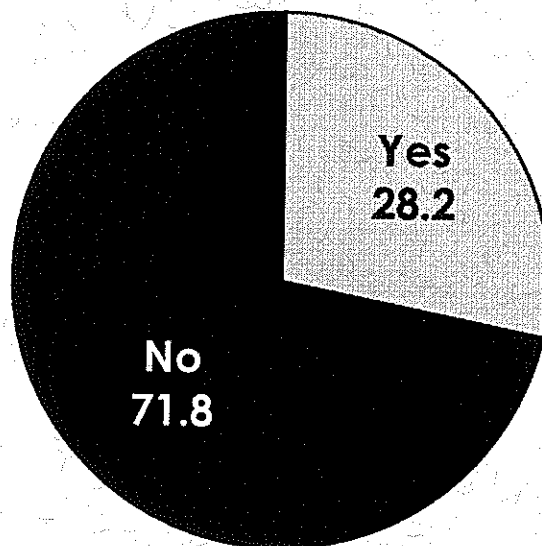
Charts

Stats

"Have you ever been forced to have sexual intercourse against your will?"



"Have you ever been tested for the AIDS virus /HIV infection?"



Most Western students (52.7%) were between the ages of 15 to 18 when they had sexual intercourse for the first time. For those Western students reporting an incident of forced sex, 50.9% indicated that the incident occurred at 16 years old or younger. When asked if they or their partner had used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse, 64.4% indicated they had not.

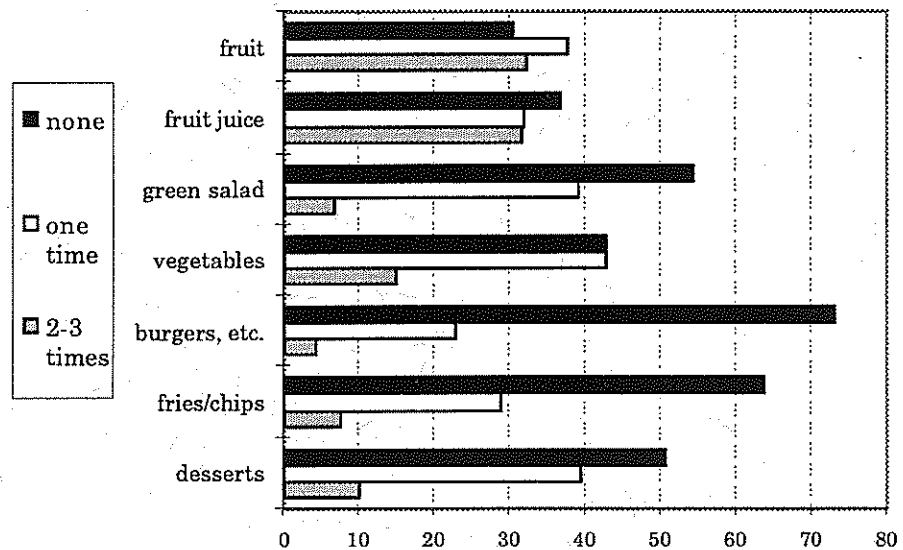
Body Weight & Nutrition

Stats

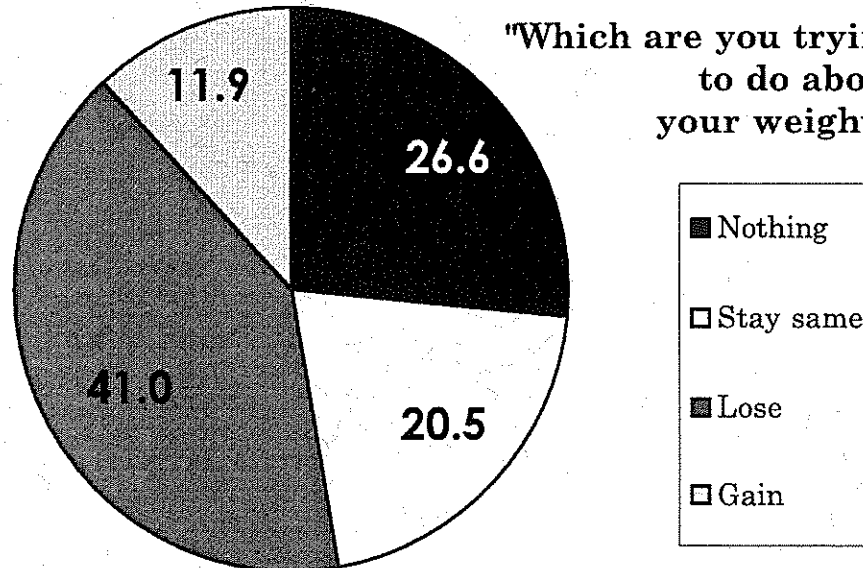
Charts

In the U.S., adolescent females between the ages of 15 to 29 compose 90-95% of all patients with eating disorders. The good news at Western is that 56.0% of students described their weight as "about right," including 50.6% of females and 63.2% of males. However, of students indicating they were trying to lose weight, most were female (61.0% females versus 14.7% male).

"Yesterday, how many times did you eat..."



"Which are you trying to do about your weight?"

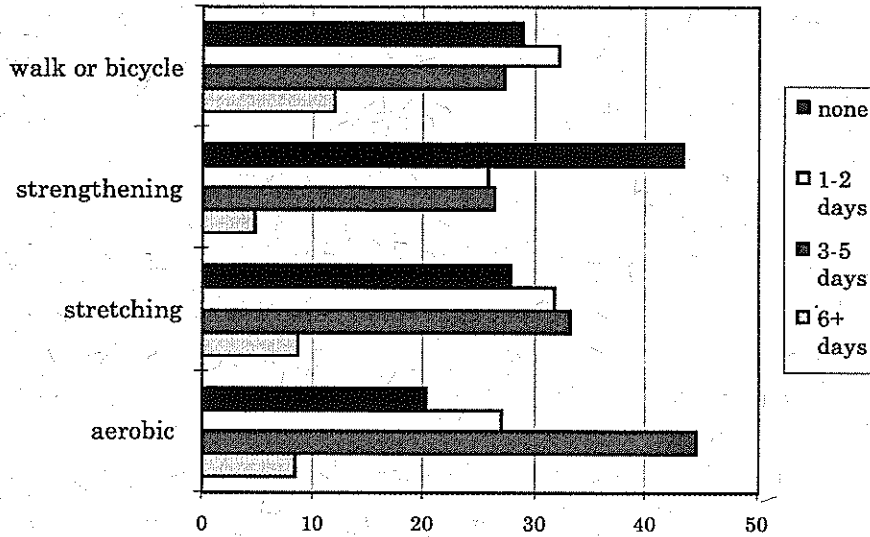


Exercise

Charts

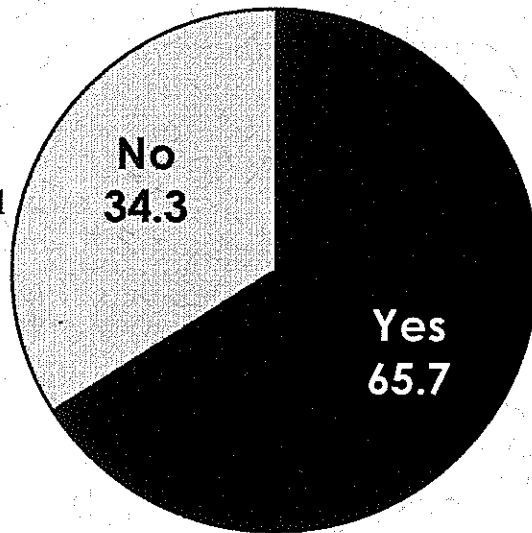
Stats

"On how many of the past 7 days did you do the following exercises?"



Lack of physical activity is an independent risk factor for several long-term negative health outcomes among adults, including: heart disease, obesity, non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, hypertension, colon cancer, and depression. About a quarter of Western students (26.3%) indicated they had participated on a sports team (either varsity, intermural, or extra-mural).

"During this school year, have you been enrolled in a PE class?"



Western's administration of the National College Health Risk Behavior Survey could not have been better timed. In recent months, Donna Shalala, United States Secretary of Health & Human Services, appointed a National Committee on Higher Education and Health of Youth to study the health and health risk behavior of college students, with a particular focus on the interconnectedness of campus and community health issues. Indeed, Western joins a group of innovative schools using the National Health Risk Behavior Survey. Information provided by this survey can be used to more accurately form and effectively administer student health policies and programs.

Western's first comprehensive health survey has established a previously unavailable baseline of health risk behavior data--not of the dire risks faced by a small, unrepresentative (if not importantly needful) sample of students, but of the "average" risks faced by a large, random (and equally if not differently needful) sample of Western students. The survey is also the first usable and published data set that goes beyond alcohol consumption risks to include the myriad of student health risk issues: injuries, tobacco use, sexual behaviors, weight and nutrition, and physical activity.

The next report on student health risk behavior will compare and contrast National College Health Risk Behavior Survey findings at Western with those of the nationwide administration, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The original set of data used in this report is available for additional research through the Primary Prevention and Wellness Center. For additional copies of this report, please see the publishing information below.

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Sociology
MS: 9081

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