

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

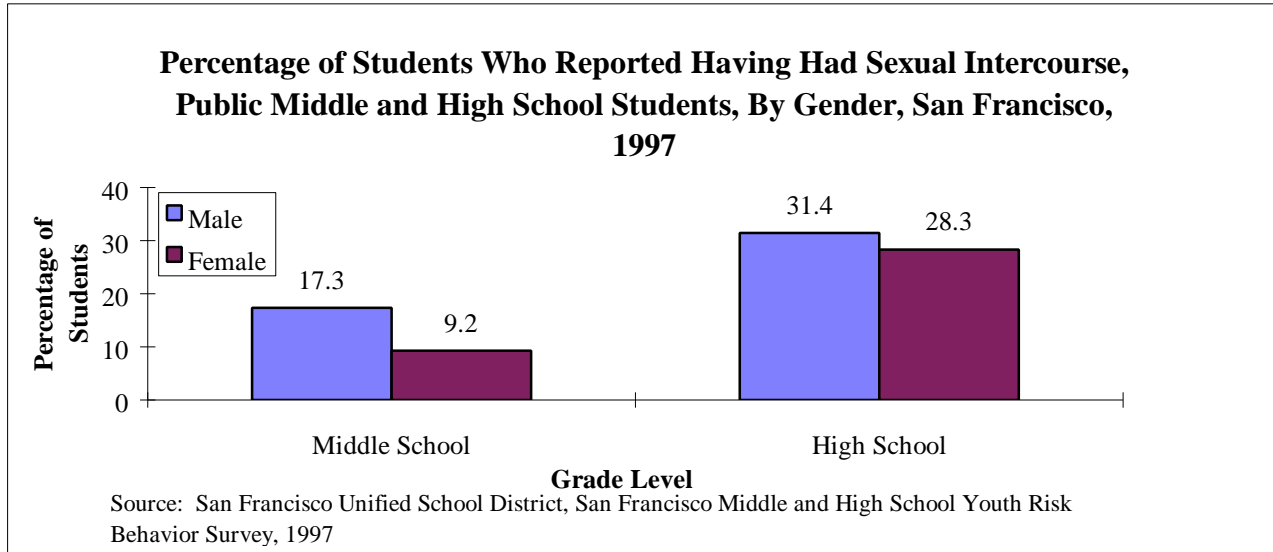
Early sexual activity and multiple sexual partners are associated with unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV infection. Sexual intercourse during the adolescent years, especially first intercourse, is often unplanned, and as a result is often unprotected from STDs and pregnancy by contraception.¹ Alcohol and drug use may contribute to unsafe sexual activity by lowering inhibitions and impairing judgement, especially among adolescents.²

Data Source

This section will present data on patterns of sexual behavior among middle and high school students in San Francisco public schools based on the 1997 San Francisco Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) conducted by the San Francisco Unified School District (in conjunction with the federal Centers for Disease Control). The YRBS asked students to report their lifetime and recent sexual activity including use of contraception and use of alcohol and drugs before sexual activity. Refer to the “Perinatal Health,” “Sexually Transmitted Diseases,” and “HIV/AIDS” sections of this report for additional information on the outcomes of sexual behavior.

Sexual Behavior Among Middle and High School Students

Lifetime and Recent Sexual Activity. In 1997, 14% of San Francisco middle school students reported that they had engaged in sexual intercourse at least once, with males almost twice as likely as females (17% vs. 9%). In 1995, 10% of middle school students reported having had sexual intercourse compared to 16% in 1991.



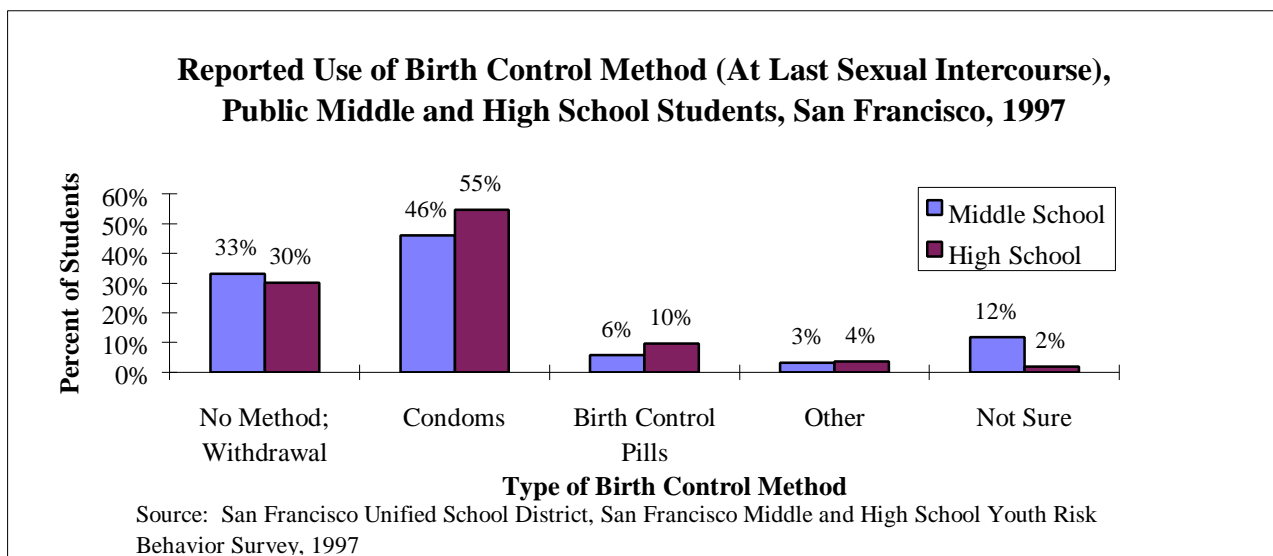
¹ Lowenstein, G. and Fustenberg, F.F. 1991. “Is Teenage Sexual Behavior Rational?” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 21 (12): 957-986. Forrest, J.D. and Singh, S. 1990. “The Sexual and Reproductive Behavior of American Women, 1982-1988.” *Family Planning Perspectives* 22(5): 206-214.

² National Research Council. *Risking the Future: Adolescent Sexuality, Pregnancy, and Childbearing*. D.C.: National Academy Press, 1987.

In 1997, at the high school level, 31% of males and 28% of females reported having engaged in sexual intercourse, compared to the national rate of 53% (1995).³ In 1997, 2.5% of San Francisco male high school students and 1.2% of female high school students reported having had sexual contact with a member of the same gender. Middle school students were not asked about sexual activity with persons of the same gender.

Number of Partners. Among sexually-experienced students, more middle school students (45%) than high school students (39%) reported that they had already had sex with three or more partners.

Use of Contraception; Source for Condoms. Among those stating that they had sexual intercourse, about one-third of middle school students (33%) and high school students (30%) reported using no method of protection or used withdrawal the last time they had sex. Among all contraceptive methods, condoms were the most commonly reported birth control method used by both middle (46%) and high school students (55%). Among middle school students, 12% were not sure of what method was used. Ten percent of high school students and 6% of middle school students reported using birth control pills. Ten percent of high school students and 6% of middle school students reported using birth control pills.



High school students who used condoms said they got condoms from a store (26%), from a condom availability program at school (24%), or from a friend or relative (22%).⁴

Use of Alcohol/Drugs; Pregnancy. Twice as many middle school students (31%) compared to high school students (15%) said they used alcohol or drugs before the last time they had sexual intercourse. Among high school students who said they have had sex, 16% said they have been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant at least once.

³ The national rate for middle school students was not available.

⁴ Middle school students were not asked where they obtained condoms.