

# **YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND ATTEMPTS**

## **Results from the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Students**

### **What is the purpose of this table?**

This table shows how suicidal thoughts and attempts are associated with a wide variety of risk behaviors (like drinking) and social/personal conditions (like school environment and emotional distress). It is very important to remember that this table can only tell us how two variables are associated with each other. It cannot by itself tell us if one variable “causes” or “predicts” the other. For example, suicide attempts and smoking are highly related. Students who report an attempted suicide are more likely to be smokers than are students who report neither suicidal thoughts nor attempts. But the table provides no information as to whether suicide attempts and smoking are causally related, or whether both feed on each other, or whether there are other factors in the person’s social or personal life that contribute to both suicide attempts and smoking.

### **What is the Minnesota Student Survey?**

This table is based on responses by 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to questions on the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey, which is conducted every three years by the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, Human Services, and Public Safety. Nearly all public school districts in the state participate. All 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in these districts are asked to take the survey. Students can choose not to take the survey, and parents can deny permission for their child to participate. Over three-fourths (76%) of all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in regular public schools participated in the survey. However, students who were absent from school on the survey date or who have dropped out are not included in the results. Also, students in area learning centers, alternative schools, and juvenile correctional facilities are surveyed separately, and their results are not included in this table. Statewide and county results from the survey can be found on the web at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/mss>.

### **How should I read the table?**

Ninth grade students are divided into three groups: those who reported no suicide thoughts or attempts in the past year, those who reported suicidal thoughts but no attempts, and those who reported that they did try to kill themselves in the past year. The first numbers to appear at the top of the table are the number of students in each of the three groups who completed the survey. The table compares results for these three groups. For example, under alcohol, we see that 20.0 percent of students with no thoughts or attempts said that they drank alcohol at least once in the past 30 days. In contrast, 36.5 percent of students with suicidal thoughts/no attempts and 58.4 percent of those who reported a suicide attempt said that they drank alcohol in the past 30 days.

Date: January 26, 2009

Prepared by: Pete Rode, Center for Health Statistics, Minnesota Department of Health

Phone: (651) 201-5942; E-mail: [peter.rode@state.mn.us](mailto:peter.rode@state.mn.us).

**YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL FACTORS  
ASSOCIATED WITH SUICIDE THOUGHTS AND ATTEMPTS IN PAST YEAR  
Results from the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey  
STATEWIDE**

	Suicide thoughts or attempts in the past year?		
	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
<b>Number of Students</b>	39,653	6,566	1,820
<b>TOBACCO PRODUCTS</b>			
Percent who smoked cigarettes on one or more days in the past 30 days	8.5%	21.8%	44.9%
Percent who smoked cigarettes on 20 or more days in the past 30 days	2.5%	6.1%	17.6%
Percent who used <u>any tobacco products</u> in the past 30 days	11.1%	24.4%	48.2%
<b>ALCOHOL</b>			
Percent who drank alcoholic beverages on one or more occasions in last 30 days	20.0%	36.5%	58.4%
Percent who drank alcoholic beverages on three or more occasions in last 30 days	7.8%	17.0%	33.8%
Percent who consumed five drinks in a row on at least one occasion in past two weeks (binge drinking)	10.1%	20.9%	41.1%
<b>MARIJUANA</b>			
Percent who used marijuana or hashish on one or more occasions in last 30 days	7.4%	16.0%	34.5%
Percent who used marijuana or hashish on three or more occasions in last 30 days	4.3%	9.3%	22.5%

	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
<b>OTHER DRUGS</b>			
Percent who have used others drugs besides tobacco, alcohol or marijuana on one or more days in the past 30 days	2.7%	9.5%	27.2%
Percent who have used the following drugs at least once during the last 12 months:			
-- Sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans or inhaled other gases or sprays in order to get high	2.0%	8.1%	24.0%
-- LSD, PCP or other psychedelics	1.7%	5.3%	18.4%
-- MDMA ("ecstasy")	1.4%	4.3%	16.4%
-- "Crack" (cocaine in chunk or rock form) or cocaine in any other form	1.4%	4.0%	15.0%
-- Heroin	0.6%	1.8%	8.6%
-- Methamphetamine (meth, glass, crank, crystal meth, ice)	0.8%	2.4%	10.6%
-- Stimulants like Benzedrine or diet pills not prescribed for you, or that you took to get high	1.6%	6.2%	21.2%
-- Your own or someone else's ADHD or ADD drugs to get high	2.0%	6.6%	21.2%
-- Your own or someone else's OxyContin, Vicodin or other pain relievers to get high	2.2%	7.4%	23.7%
-- Tranquilizers or sedatives not prescribed for you, or that you took to get high	1.0%	3.5%	13.1%
<b>PEER DISAPPROVAL</b>			
Percent whose close friends would disapprove if they smoke a pack of cigarettes a day	87.5%	78.2%	62.1%
Percent whose close friends would diisapprove if they had five or more alcoholic drinks once or twice a week	79.2%	67.3%	52.5%
Percent whose close friends would disapprove if they smoked marijuana once or twice a week	84.4%	73.1%	57.6%
Percent whose close friends would disapprove if they used other drugs once or twice a week	90.5%	82.6%	68.4%

	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
<b>PERCEPTION AND DISCUSSION OF RISK</b>			
Percent who see "great risk" if someone smokes a pack of cigarettes a day	71.7%	64.0%	49.2%
Percent who see "great risk" if someone has 5 or more alcoholic drinks once or twice a week	55.7%	48.5%	40.1%
Percent who see "great risk" if someone smokes marijuana once or twice a week	64.2%	53.3%	41.4%
Have talked with at least one parent about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol and drugs in last 12 months	51.0%	43.6%	36.7%
<b>SEXUAL ACTIVITY</b>			
Percent who have had sexual intercourse one or more times in lifetime	15.3%	29.2%	53.9%
Percent who have been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant	1.5%	2.9%	11.5%
<b>SUICIDE ATTEMPTS AND SELF-HARM</b>			
Percent who intentionally hurt themselves (cutting, burns) during the past year	5.8%	38.8%	78.6%
Percent who thought about killing themselves during the past year	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percent who tried to kill themselves during the last year	N/A	N/A	N/A

	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
<b>EMOTIONAL DISTRESS AND HEALTH</b>			
Percent who have felt under great amount of stress or pressure in last 30 days	8.5%	31.8%	50.2%
Percent who have felt sad "all the time" or "most of the time" in last 30 days	7.5%	38.2%	61.1%
Percent who have felt very discouraged or hopeless in last 30 days	6.8%	43.8%	67.1%
Percent who have felt nervous, worried or upset "all the time" or "most of the time" in last 30 days	8.5%	33.5%	55.2%
Percent who agree that they get lots of headaches, stomachaches or sickness	32.7%	57.3%	72.1%
Percent who agree that they are often irritable and angry	21.5%	51.5%	65.6%
Percent who agree that they have many fears and are easily scared	15.9%	29.2%	38.0%
Percent who agree that they often have trouble concentrating	35.4%	59.8%	71.5%
Percent who agree that they are restless and cannot stay still for long	34.6%	54.2%	65.2%
Percent who agree that they often have trouble getting to sleep and staying asleep	28.3%	52.9%	66.3%
Percent who agree that they do things before they think	39.3%	55.3%	64.1%
Percent who agree that they are often unhappy, depressed or tearful.	10.8%	50.2%	70.9%

	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
<b>GAMBLING</b>			
Percent engaging in the following gambling activities "about once a month" or "weekly" or "daily":			
-- Played cards for money	13.1%	12.3%	22.7%
-- Bet money on games of personal skill like pool, golf or bowling	12.4%	11.2%	21.7%
-- Bet money on sports teams	9.5%	8.3%	16.6%
-- Bought lottery tickets or scratch offs	4.0%	5.5%	15.8%
-- Gambled in a casino	1.3%	1.8%	9.8%
-- Gambled for money online	1.9%	2.5%	12.1%
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b>			
Percent who exercised hard (hard enough to make you sweat or breathe hard) for at least 20 minutes on three or more days of past week	74.0%	66.5%	61.6%
Percent who were physically active for total of 30 minutes on five or more days of past week	57.5%	47.7%	44.1%
<b>DIET AND EATING BEHAVIORS</b>			
Percent who had five or more servings of fruit, fruit juices or vegetables yesterday	18.3%	16.7%	19.4%
Percent who drank the following beverages yesterday:			
-- three or more glasses of milk	33.3%	27.1%	24.7%
-- one or more glasses of 100% fruit juice	56.9%	51.2%	52.8%
-- one or more glasses of fruit juice drinks	47.9%	46.2%	51.5%
-- one or more glasses of pop or soda	51.4%	56.4%	64.1%
-- one or more glasses of sports drinks	39.2%	33.5%	42.2%
Percent who have done any of the following in last 12 months to lose weight or control weight:			
-- Fast or skip meals	13.4%	35.9%	49.7%
-- Smoke cigarettes	1.9%	7.9%	22.3%
-- Exercise	51.0%	56.5%	51.6%
-- Use diet pills or speed	1.4%	5.4%	18.4%
-- Eat healthier	41.9%	47.5%	37.0%
-- Vomit on purpose after eating	1.6%	7.3%	22.2%
-- Use laxatives	0.7%	1.8%	7.1%

	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
<b>SCHOOL AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT</b>			
Percent who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	14.6%	15.9%	22.2%
Percent who have changed schools one or more times since the beginning of the school year	4.2%	6.0%	11.7%
Percent who like school "very much" or "quite a bit"	48.9%	36.8%	27.6%
Percent who plan to go to college	90.2%	85.8%	74.8%
Percent who have skipped or cut full days of school one or more times in last 30 days	18.3%	28.7%	45.8%
Percent who say that "all" or "most" of their teachers are interested in them as a person	40.9%	27.6%	24.5%
Percent who say that "all" or "most" of their teachers show respect for the students	76.2%	64.6%	51.7%
Percent whose two most frequent grades are A's and B's	63.8%	50.4%	32.3%
Percent whose two most frequent grades are C's, D's and/or F's	13.1%	21.2%	36.4%
<b>THREATS, VIOLENCE, PROPERTY DAMAGE AND DRUG OFFERS AT SCHOOL</b>			
Percent who say that the following has happened to them on school property in last 12 months:			
-- A student threatened you	18.4%	35.4%	49.6%
-- A student pushed, shoved or grabbed you	39.4%	56.8%	65.9%
-- A student kicked, bit or hit you	22.1%	36.0%	47.5%
-- A student touched, grabbed, or pinched you in a sexual way	18.8%	36.6%	53.1%
-- A student made unwanted sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks toward you	24.8%	46.0%	59.0%

	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
Percent who had property stolen or deliberately damaged on school property one or more times in last 12 months	31.1%	44.3%	53.4%
Percent who were offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property in last 12 months	12.7%	24.3%	42.0%
Percent who did not go to school at least one day in last 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on the way to school	3.7%	8.5%	23.9%
Percent who were made fun of or teased in a hurtful way by other students, once a week or more often in last 30 days	9.3%	24.5%	34.9%
Percent who made fun of or teased another student in a hurtful way, once a week or more often in last 30 days	11.5%	19.5%	28.3%
<b>VIOLENT, RUNAWAY, AND DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR</b>			
Percent who hit or beat up another person one or more times in last 12 months	22.6%	35.8%	50.4%
Percent who carried a weapon on school property at least one day in last 30 days	4.9%	11.7%	25.1%
Percent who ran away from home at least once in last 12 months	5.9%	21.2%	51.5%
Percent who damaged or destroyed property one or more times in last 12 months	15.0%	29.4%	45.9%
Percent who took something from a store without paying one or more times in last 12 months	16.3%	32.3%	52.0%

	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
<b>VEHICLE SAFETY</b>			
Percent who "always" wear a seat belt when they ride in a car	59.8%	50.1%	41.8%
Percent who "often" ride with friends after the friends have been using alcohol or other drugs	3.1%	7.9%	21.1%
Percent who drove a motor vehicle after using alcohol or drugs in past 12 months	3.2%	7.8%	17.5%
<b>GENERAL HEALTH</b>			
Percent who had their last physical exam three or more years ago	12.2%	15.0%	20.6%
Percent who have a physical condition or problem that has lasted at least 12 months	11.1%	18.0%	26.5%
Percent who have a mental or emotional health problem that has lasted at least 12 months	6.0%	27.5%	52.6%
Percent who have ever been treated for a mental or emotional health problem	8.2%	23.1%	42.5%
Percent who have ever been treated for an alcohol or other drug problem	2.0%	5.6%	18.2%
Percent who have ever been told by a doctor or nurse that they have asthma	16.8%	21.0%	26.7%
Overweight status:*			
-- Normal weight or underweight	78.7%	73.5%	70.0%
-- At risk of overweight	12.8%	15.3%	16.1%
-- Overweight	8.5%	11.2%	13.9%
Percent who think they are overweight	19.6%	37.6%	43.2%

\*CDC definition based on body-mass index

	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>			
Percent who live with:			
-- Two parents	71.7%	64.7%	53.2%
-- Sometimes with mother, sometimes with father	8.3%	10.0%	9.9%
-- One parent	17.2%	22.2%	29.3%
-- Neither parent (ie. Lives with relatives, foster family, other adults, alone....)	2.7%	3.0%	7.6%
Gender:			
-- Male	51.4%	35.7%	32.9%
-- Female	48.6%	64.3%	67.1%
Percent low family income (receive free or reduced-price lunch at school)	21.6%	26.4%	35.5%
<b>RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS, ADULTS AND FRIENDS</b>			
Percent who say parents care about them "very much"	83.5%	55.6%	39.2%
Percent who can talk to father about problems "most of the time" or "some of the time"	68.8%	44.6%	34.2%
Percent who can talk to mother about problems "most of the time" or "some of the time"	83.8%	66.1%	54.7%
Percent who feel the following adults care about them "very much" or "quite a bit"			
-- Teachers or other adults at school	44.7%	24.1%	18.7%
-- Church or spiritual leaders	56.2%	38.3%	28.3%
-- Other adults in your community	42.3%	23.5%	18.0%
-- Other adult relatives	88.6%	70.6%	53.8%
Percent who feel that their friends care about them "very much" or "quite a bit"	77.6%	63.0%	53.2%

	No thoughts or attempts	Thoughts, but no attempts	Attempted suicide
<b>PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE</b>			
Has any adult in your household ever hit you so hard or so often that you had marks or were afraid of that person? (Percent saying "yes")	7.3%	23.6%	43.1%
Percent who experienced some form of unwanted or forced sexual touching	4.7%	14.2%	34.6%
<b>DATE VIOLENCE</b>			
Percent saying that someone they were going out with hit, hurt, or threatened them, or made them feel afraid	4.7%	13.6%	32.6%
Percent saying that someone they were going out with forced them to have sex or do something sexual when they did not want to	4.0%	10.7%	30.2%
Percent who have ever physically or sexually hurt someone they were going out with	1.7%	5.4%	14.7%
<b>FAMILY ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROBLEMS</b>			
Percent who say that alcohol use by a family member has repeatedly caused family, health, job or legal problems	12.6%	26.1%	39.7%
Percent who say that drug use by a family member has repeatedly caused family, health, job or legal problems	8.4%	18.7%	33.0%
<b>PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES</b>			
Percent who participate in the following activities once or twice per week or more often:			
-- fine arts activities (band, choir, dance, etc.)	47.4%	50.0%	43.5%
-- private lessons (music, dance, etc.)	20.4%	20.4%	20.0%
-- club or community sports teams	39.4%	30.2%	25.7%
-- school sports teams	50.6%	37.6%	28.2%
-- hobby and academic clubs (chess, etc.)	9.1%	10.2%	9.2%
-- community clubs and programs (4-H, park and rec, community education, etc.)	7.6%	6.7%	8.4%
-- mentoring programs	4.4%	5.0%	5.6%
-- religious activities (services, education, youth group, etc.)	43.6%	39.0%	30.1%

	<b>No thoughts or attempts</b>	<b>Thoughts, but no attempts</b>	<b>Attempted suicide</b>
<b>PARTICIPATION IN PERSONAL ACTIVITIES</b>			
Percent who spend 6 or more hours per week doing homework	29.5%	26.8%	20.5%
Percent who spend 3 or more hours per week reading for pleasure	21.7%	26.2%	26.1%
Percent who spend 6 or more hours per week watching TV, DVDs or videos	47.7%	49.4%	47.2%
Percent who spend 6 or more hours per week playing computer or video games	29.3%	33.7%	36.1%
Percent who spend 3 or more hours per week talking on the phone or text messaging	44.3%	58.6%	69.5%
Percent who spend 3 or more hours per week on online activities (e-mail, instant messaging, blogging, web surfing, etc.)	51.4%	63.5%	66.2%
Percent who spend one or more hours per week doing volunteer work or community service	33.7%	31.1%	33.1%
Percent who spend 11 or more hours per week working for pay	7.4%	8.9%	13.3%
Percent who spend 11 or more hours per week "hanging out"	32.6%	38.0%	45.7%

Source: Tables prepared by the Center for Health Statistics, Minnesota Department of Health, based on data from the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey.

For more information: Contact Pete Rode, Minnesota Department of Health, (651) 201-5942.

Date Prepared: January 26, 2009