

## **TIP SHEET**

### **Presenting the Data**

**Now that you've got the data, don't confuse yourself and the community by using them inappropriately. These tips present ways to state your case, using data that will be clear and accurate.**

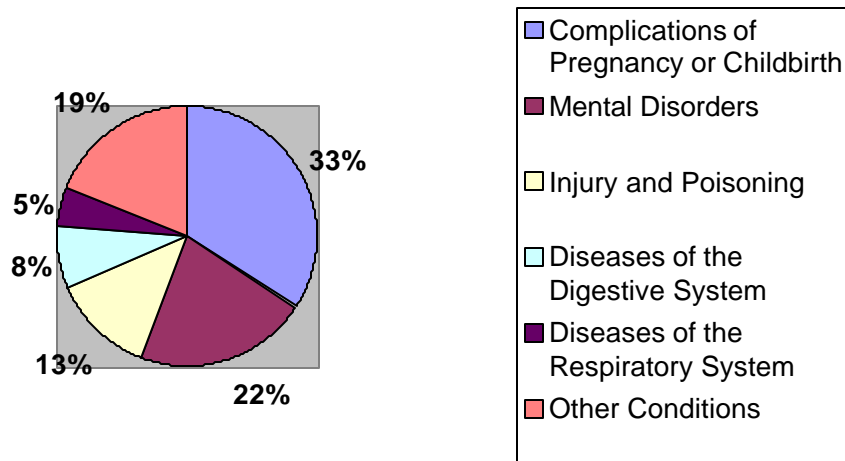
- ~ Avoid using tables with lots of numbers. They are fine as a reference tool, but they should not be used in a presentation.**
  - ~ When comparing yourself with other populations, it is better to use percent/proportions instead of total numbers. Never do this if you are only using data for one year. Average at least three years before comparing. Use numbers when you are estimating number of people who will use a particular program. Then you will be able to determine whether it is a cost-effective program.**
  - ~ Present your data in terms that "speak loudly" to the population. Use number of events per minute or day.**
  - ~ Take percents/proportions or rates and translate them into a situation that strikes close to home for the audience.**
  - ~ Proportions represent the percent of the population-they do not mean rates. Therefore, it is incorrect to take a percent, 20% of all people, and call that a rate. Rate is the number of events per multiplier.**
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## Using Graphs

Some information may be most effectively displayed in a graph format. The following are examples of different graphs that can be used to analyze and interpret your data:

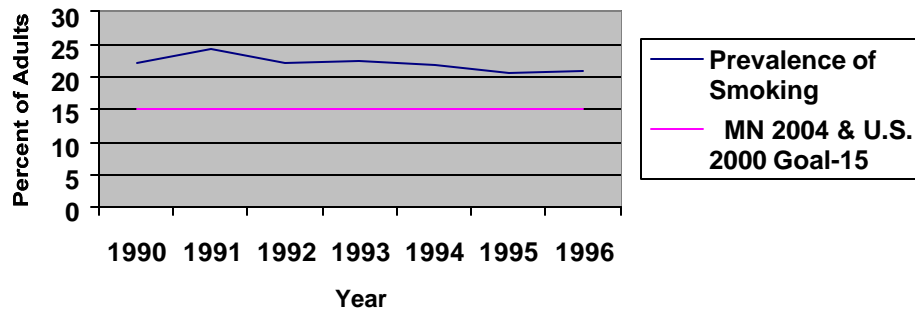
- **Pie Charts**: used when you want to demonstrate proportions

**Five Leading Causes of Hospitalization  
As a Percent of All Discharges, 1998**



- **Line Graphs**: used when you want to show change across time

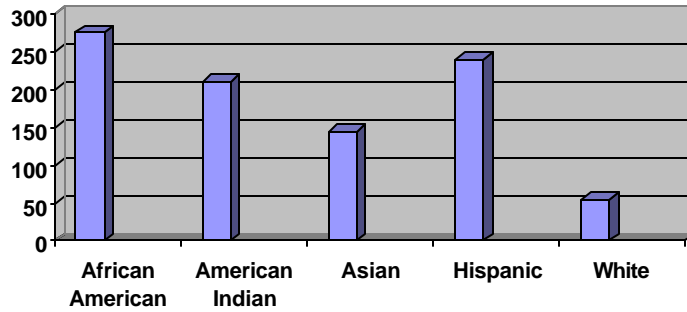
**Prevalence of Cigarette Smoking Among Adults**



*Source: Minnesota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 1998*

- **Bar Graphs:** used when you want to show differences among different groups of people.

Teen pregnancy among 18-19 year olds rate per 1,000 females by race/ethnicity, Minnesota 1994-1998



Source: MDH, Center for Health Statistics. Rates are calculated per 1,000 females in each group.