

YOUTH VIOLENCE

DESCRIPTION:

All death and hospitalizations due to injuries inflicted by another person with the intent to injure or kill by any means among youth ages 10-24.



Washington State Goal Statement

To decrease deaths and hospitalizations due to youth violence

National Healthy People 2010 Objectives

- Reduce physical fighting among adolescents in grades 9 through 12 in the past 12 months from 36% in 1999 to 32% by 2010
- Reduce weapon carrying on school property during the past 30 days among adolescents in grades 9 through 12 from 6.9% in 1999 to 4.9% by 2010

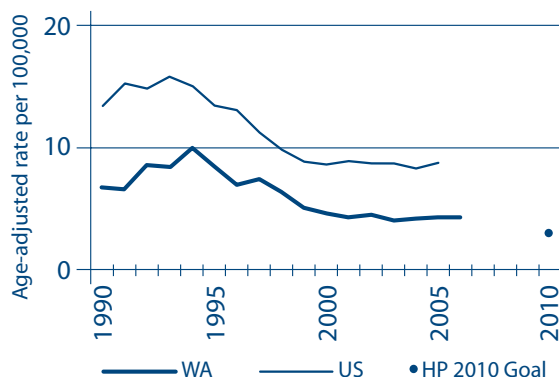
Statement of the Problem in

Washington State

Washington State Data

Homicide rates among 10- to 24-year-olds are lower in Washington State than they are nationally. In 2005, the national homicide rate among 10- to 24-year-olds was 8 per 100,000 and 4 per 100,000 in Washington. Homicide rates among 10- to 24-year-olds declined from 1995 to 2000 and have remained stable since 2000. Federal

Homicides Among Youth Ages 10-24
Washington State & United States Death Certificates, 1990-2006



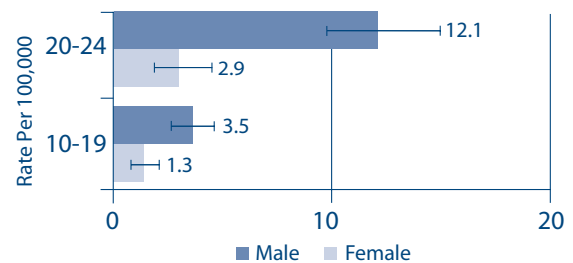
and local gun control efforts, changes in drug markets, and economic shifts from high unemployment to the stronger economy of the late 1990's may explain these declines.¹

Age and Gender

From 2004-2006 among youth ages 10-24, 79% of the state's residents who died from homicide were male. Males 20-24 years old had the highest homicide rate.

Homicides Among Youth Ages 10-24

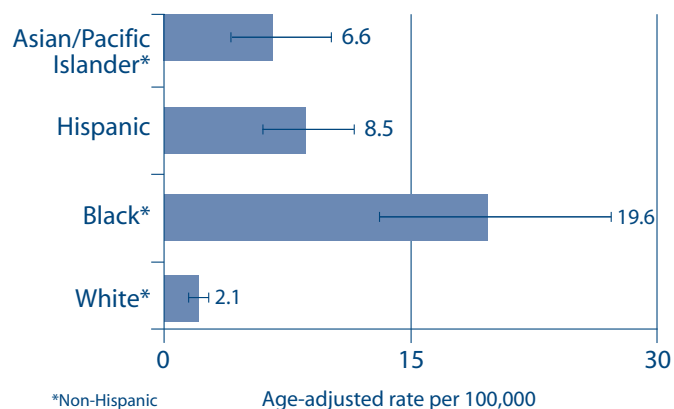
Age and Gender
Death Certificates, 2004-2006



Race and Ethnicity

From 2004-2006, homicide rates among 10- to 24-year-olds were highest for Blacks, followed by Hispanics, and Asian and Pacific Islanders. American Indians and Alaska Natives had fewer than 20 homicides. The chart does not include this group. Individual and neighborhood race and social and economic characteristics are important determinants of homicide rates.² Additionally, several studies have shown that the higher homicide rate among Blacks either disappears or is reduced after adjusting for social and economic factors.^{3,4}

Homicides Among Youth Ages 10-24
Race and Hispanic Origin
Death Certificates, 2004-2006



Healthy Youth Survey Data

Weapon carrying

In the 2006 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, 6% of 8th grade students (about 5,400 students), 9% of 10th grade students (about 8,400 students), and 9% of 12th grade students (about 8,100 students) reported carrying a weapon on school property in the past 30 days. There was an increase in reported weapon carrying on school property among 10th graders from 2004.

Gang membership

In the 2006 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, 9% of 8th graders (about 8,100 students), 10% of 10th graders (about 9,300 students), and 7% of 12th graders (about 6,300 students) reported being a member of a gang in the past 12 months. An increased number of 10th and 12th graders reported being a member or a gang in the past year compared to 2004.

Bullying

In the 2006 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, 32% of 6th grade students, 28% of 8th grade students, 23% of 10th grade students, and 16% of 12th grade students reported being bullied in the last month. This is consistent with results from 2002 and 2004.

Among 10th graders in 2006, about 15% were bullied or harassed or intimidated in the past 30 days because of their race, ethnicity or national origin; about 14% because of their religion; about 21% because of gender; about 13% because of perceived sexual orientation; and about 10% because of a disability. About 12% 10th graders reported being bullied in the past 30 days via a computer or cell phone.

Based on the Healthy Youth Survey data, Washington youth who are bullied are at increased risk for using drugs and alcohol, being depressed, being suicidal,

engaging in violent or unsafe behaviors, and having a lower quality of life.

The majority of youth who are bullied report psychological consequences including a drop in grades, increased anxiety, and loss of friends or social life.⁶ The bullies themselves are also at risk of depression, and have lower academic achievement.⁶

Physical fighting on school property

In the 2006 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, fighting on school property decreased with increasing grade level: 16% of 8th grade students (about 14,500 students), 12% of 10th grade students (about 11,200 students), and 6% of 12th grade students (about 5,500 students) reported having had this experience.

Conflict resolution

The 2004 Healthy Youth Survey data show that as grade levels increased, resolving conflicts by talking about them increased. About 44% of 8th grade students, 51% of 10th grade students, and 63% of 12th grade students reported often resolving conflicts by talking about them.

Perpetrator Data

Most homicides are committed by someone known to the victim.¹ In Washington, 76% of children were killed by someone they knew.⁷ In the majority of cases, the perpetrator is a family member, friend, or acquaintance. Based on homicide arrest statistics, homicide perpetrators as a group are similar to homicide victims with respect to age, gender, race, and ethnicity. An intimate partner, current or former spouse, or boyfriend commits one-third of female homicides.⁸

Quality of Life

Youth violent crime can seriously affect the quality of life for victims and their families. In addition, people living in communities with high crime rates often suffer from fear, anxiety, and a loss of freedom as people restrict their activities to avoid becoming victims of violence. Society also pays for violence through expenditures for police and criminal justice interventions, social services, and preventive educational activities. Exposure to community violence can be traumatic for children, and children exposed to community violence might be at risk for depression, interpersonal problems, or academic difficulty. However, exposure to community violence is associated with other risk factors such as poverty, so the causal relationships are not known.⁹

Youth who show high levels of aggression throughout childhood and adolescence are themselves at higher risk for a variety of outcomes that affect the quality of life including low educational attainment, persistent unemployment, poor physical health, alcohol and drug abuse, unintentional injury, depression, suicide attempts, relationship conflict, spouse abuse, and neglectful and abusive parenting as adults.^{10, 11}

They also are at increased risk of being killed or permanently maimed.¹²

Violence Prevention

Identifying and understanding risk and protective factors related to youth violence is a cornerstone of effective prevention. A risk factor increases the probability that a person will engage in violent behavior, and a protective factor decreases the negative impact of risk factors. Risk and protective factors that predict youth violence are developmentally specific. Interventions must take into account that different risk and protective factors are especially relevant at different ages. Risk and protective factors are typically grouped across five domains:

- Individual
- Family
- Peers
- School
- Community

There are complex relationships among the risk factors both within and across domains. As children develop, the relative importance of risk factors and domains changes. Studies have shown that risk factors have additive effects. As a youth's exposure to risk factors increases, the impact of risk factors dramatically increases. For example, if a youth is exposed to six or more risk factors at age 10, the likelihood of that youth becoming violent by age 18 is 10 times greater than if the youth is exposed to only one risk factor.¹³ Many of the known risk factors might not be causal but perhaps function as markers of groups at high risk for violent behavior.

Risk Factors for Youth Violence¹⁴

Individual factors

- Chronic physical aggression
- Hyperactivity
- Concentration problems
- Restlessness
- Early initiation of violent behavior
- Involvement in other forms of antisocial behavior,

such as stealing, destruction of property, and delinquency.

- Beliefs and attitudes favorable to deviant or antisocial behavior.

Family factors

- Parental criminality
- Living in poverty
- Child abuse and neglect
- Poor family management practices, such as harsh, lax or inconsistent discipline
- Low levels of parental involvement
- Parent-child separation

School factors

- Academic failure
- Low bonding to school

Peer-related factors

- Gang membership
- Delinquent siblings
- Delinquent peers

Community and neighborhood factors

- Community disorganization (for example, presence of crime, drug-selling, gangs and poor housing)
- Viewing large amounts of television violence
- Neighborhood adults involved in crime
- Exposure to violence and racial prejudice

Protective Factors for Youth Violence¹⁵

The research evidence identifying protective factors is not as extensive or rigorous as that for risk factors. The following protective factors have at least preliminary research support

Individual protective factors

- Intolerant attitude toward deviance
- School achievement and success
- Positive social orientation

Family protective factors

- Connectedness to family or adults outside of the family
- Ability to discuss problems with parents
- Perception that parents have high expectations for school performance
- Frequent shared activities with parents
- Consistent presence of a parent

Peer/school protective factors

- Commitment to school
- Involvement in social activities

Evidence-Based Strategies

School-level Intervention: establishing norms or expectations for behavior

This intervention consists of school wide efforts to redefine norms for behavior and to signal appropriate behavior. Two examples of this type of program are the Bullying Prevention Program and the Safe Dates Program.¹⁶

The Bullying Prevention Program targets elementary, middle, and high school students and consists of school wide, classroom and individual components to target bullying. The implementation of this program led to large reductions in bullying and victimization among students.¹⁶

The Safe Dates Program aims to change the norms around dating violence among adolescents. The program includes school activities such as a theater performance, a 10-session curriculum, and a poster contest; and community activities such as special services for adolescents in abusive relationships and community service provider training. The students in this program reported less psychological abuse and violence from their current dating partner.¹⁷

Family/parent interventions: child-parent training

Child-parent training interventions are classified into two groups: parent-focused interventions, such as home visiting programs, and child-focused with parent training components, which focus mainly on child training during school or daycare.

Home visiting programs during pregnancy and early childhood for parents at risk of abuse (such as low-income, young single mothers) try to improve parenting skills and to provide social support. Some home visiting programs have reduced violent behaviors among youth,¹⁸ but findings are inconsistent in regard to youth violence. These programs have shown positive effects of reducing child abuse.¹⁹

The Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers Program is a child-focused intervention with parent training, which is an intervention to prevent conduct problems among adolescents, including antisocial behavior and involvement with delinquent peers. The

program is designed for elementary school students in areas with high rates of juvenile delinquency. The program has classroom, playground, and parenting components. The students in this program showed less physical aggression on the playground.¹⁶

Individual intervention: instructing students using cognitive-behavioral methods

Instructional programs that use cognitive-behavioral methods try to engage the students by using strategies such as the use of cues, feedback, rehearsal, and role-playing. Two examples of this type of program are I Can Problem Solve and the FASTTrack.

I Can Problem Solve uses cognitive training to help children as young as four find solutions to problems and consider consequences to their behavior. It is a school-based program in which teachers work with small groups of children to improve these skills. The children who received the training had higher scores on the skills test.¹⁶

FASTTrack targets elementary school students with the goal of preventing conduct problems, poor social relations, school failure and all precursors of subsequent criminal behavior. The program involves training for parents in family management practices, frequent home visits, social skills coaching for students, academic tutoring, and a classroom instructional program. In an evaluation, the program had positive effects on child social cognitive skills, problem behavior, and other antisocial and aggressive behaviors.¹⁶

Family/parent interventions: therapeutic foster care

Therapeutic foster care programs serve youth who do not require secure institutionalization but cannot live at home because of behavioral or emotional problems. Foster parents receive special training to provide a structured environment for learning social and emotional skills. These programs reduced subsequent violent crime by about 70% for up to a year.²⁰

Promising or Experimental Strategies

Family/parent Interventions: family-focused interventions

Family interventions, including programs such as Functional Family Therapy and Multisystemic Therapy, show promise for children and adolescents who already show relatively severe aggressive tendencies or other problem behaviors. These interventions teach parenting skills and foster improvement in relationships among family members. In a recent review, seven out of eight well-conducted studies of Multisystemic Therapy found positive effects on at least one outcome measure, such as arrests, incarceration, or self-reported delinquency. However, the largest and most rigorous study found no differences, so that more research is needed.²¹

Community Intervention: public housing voucher programs

The goals of voucher programs for public-housing residents, in which tenants are given vouchers they can use to rent housing in the private market in any location, are to de-concentrate poverty and improve employment, education, and other opportunities for the poor by allowing them to live in more economically and socially mixed communities. Voucher programs are an effective intervention for improving household safety and reducing families' exposure to violence.¹⁶

(See the Firearms, Violence Against Women, and Child Maltreatment Chapters.)

For More Information

Washington State

Department of Health, Health of Washington State
www.doh.wa.gov/HWS

Harborview Injury Research and Prevention Center
<http://depts.washington.edu/hiprc/>

Washington State Healthy Youth Survey
www3.doh.wa.gov/HYS/

Washington State Childhood Injury Report. Homicide and Assault Chapter
www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/emstrauma/injury/pubs/wscir/default.htm

National

The Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research, SAVIR (formerly the National Association of Injury Control Research Centers, NAICRC)
www.naicrc.org

Committee for Children
www.cfchildren.org

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center
www.safeyouth.org/scripts/index.asp

Preventing Violence Through Education, Networking, and Technical Assistance
www.prevent.unc.edu

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/yvfacts.htm
**and Best Practices for Youth Violence Prevention:
A Sourcebook for Community Action**
www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/bestpractices.htm

Injury Free Oklahoma: Strategic Plan for Injury and Violence Prevention, February 2004
www.health.state.ok.us/program/injury/index.html

Partnership Against Violence Network (PAVNET)
www.pavnet.org

The Prevention Institute
www.preventioninstitute.org/home.html

Blueprints for Violence Prevention. Model Programs
www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/overview.html

Mothers Against Violence in America
www.mavia.org

National Organization for Parents of Murdered Children, Inc.
www.pomc.com

Endnotes

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