

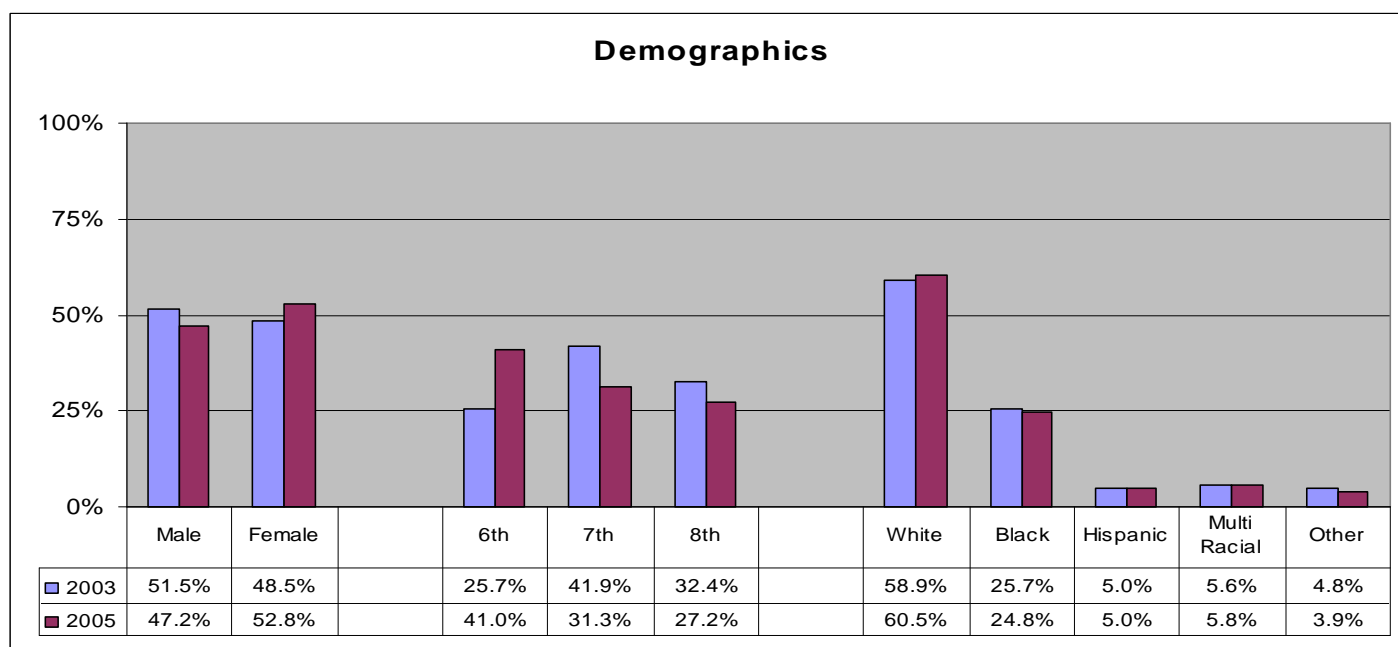
2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Middle School Report

In April of 2005, the Safe Schools, Healthy Students Grant Initiative and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), administered the Youth Risk Behavior Survey over a two week period. The CDC collected data from two area New Hanover County middle schools. The Project Director of Safe Schools Healthy Students randomly selected 5 classrooms within each of the middle schools not surveyed by the CDC. This 49 question survey assessed health risk behaviors that contribute to some of the leading causes of death and injury among adolescents. Some of the specific areas of interest included violence-related behaviors, tobacco use, alcohol use, psychological health, sexual behavior, and other drug use. The responses to these topics were then compared to the 2003 YRBS which was administered across North Carolina. As can be seen in the table below, a greater number of schools and students participated in the 2003 North Carolina study as compared to the 2005 New Hanover County study. Due to the unequal number of students participating, direct comparisons between years could not be conducted.

	Number of Schools Participating	Number of Students Participating
2003*	51	2,553
2005	7	619

*Data collected across the entire state of North Carolina.

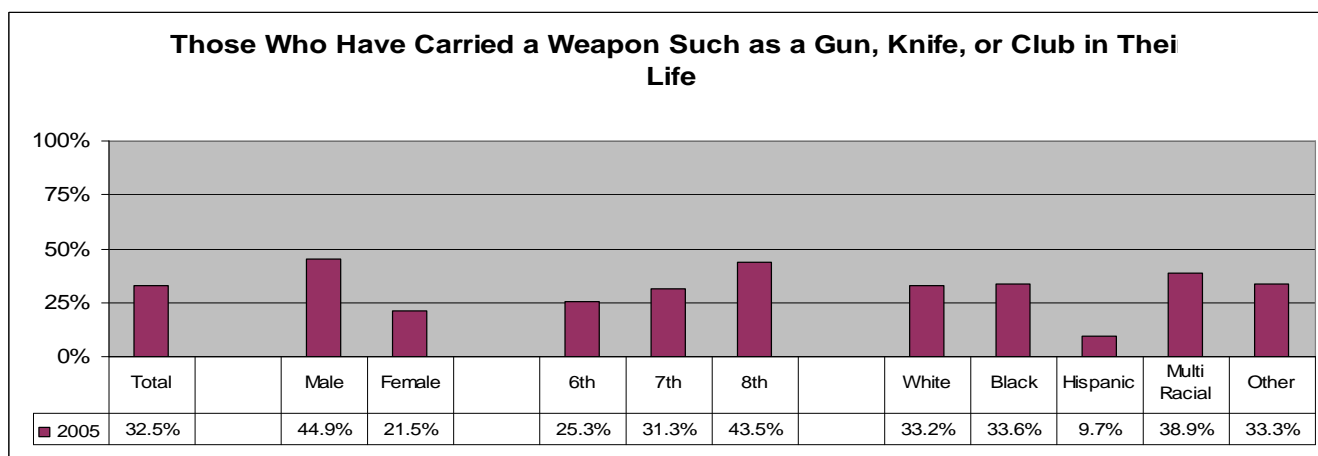
Each question was analyzed on several dimensions including, gender, grade, ethnicity, and the overall percentage of students who endorsed the question. Summative statements were then made highlighting differences between 2003 and 2005 responses as well as differences among the dimensions. The graph below reflects the demographic breakdown of those participating in 2003 and those participating in 2005.



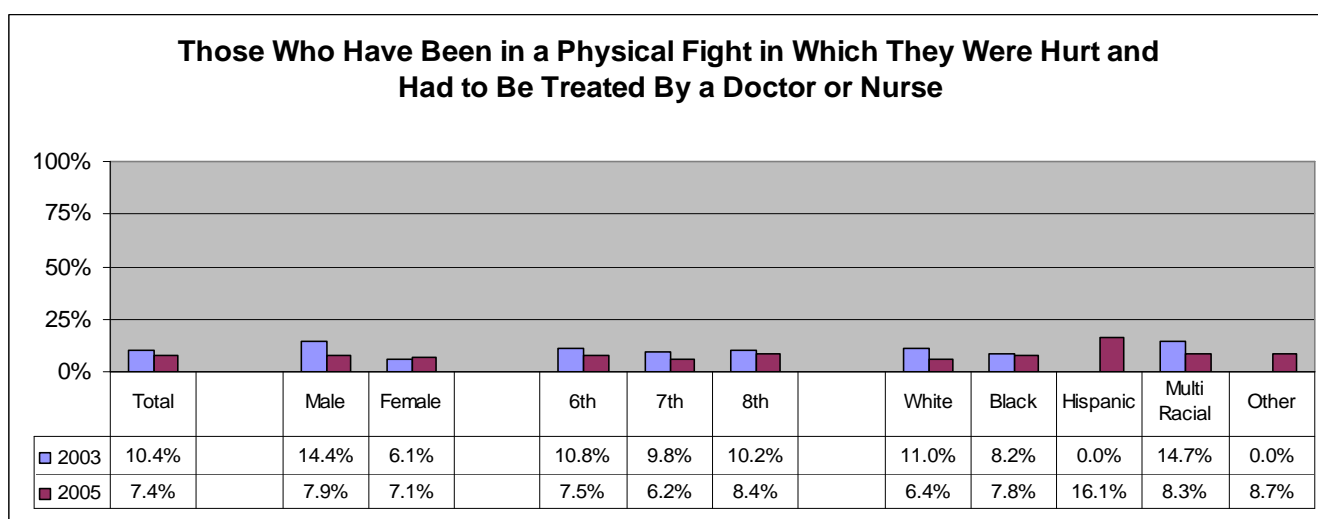
- In 2005, 6th graders were over represented when compared to the 2003 North Carolina data.
- There was a similar breakdown of males and females in both studies.

Violence Related Behavior

Recent statistics show injury and violence are the leading cause of death among youths aged 5-19 (CDC, 2005). Youth under the age of 18 are twice as likely as adults to be victims of serious violent crimes and three times as likely to be victims of assault (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2000). Children between the ages of 14 and 15 report more serious fighting at school and involvement in physical fights with the intent of seriously hurting another than any other age range (SAMHSA, 2005). Despite these statistics, recent years have shown a decrease in the percentage of youth who carry a weapon and those who feel unsafe at school (School Crime & Safety, 2004). The graphs below reflect several questions regarding fighting, carrying a weapon, physical assault, and safety in schools.

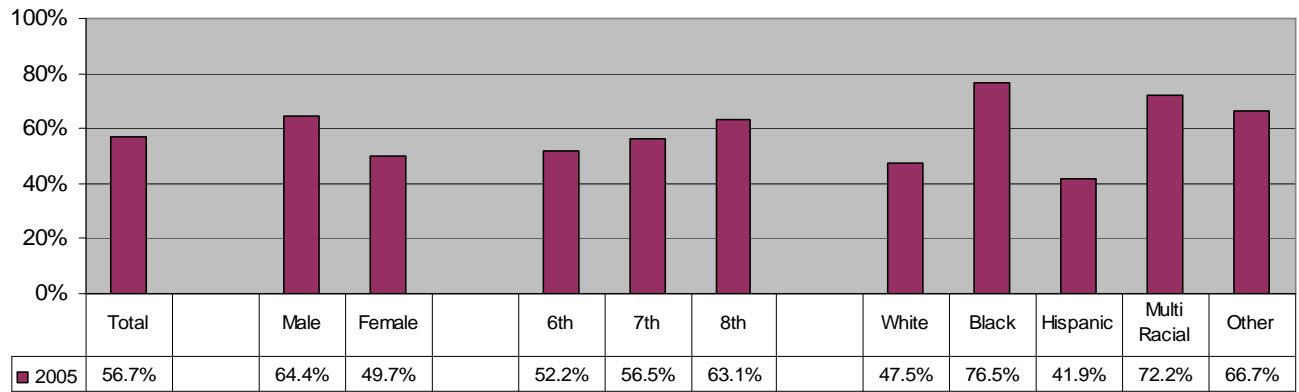


- This question was not asked in 2003.
- One in three students indicated that they had carried a weapon in their life.
- Those of Hispanic origin were the least likely to carry a weapon than any other ethnic group.
- The percent of middle school students who reported they carried a weapon steadily increased from 6th graders to 8th graders.



- A very small percentage of students indicated that an injury that they sustained in a fight required medical treatment.
- In New Hanover County, report by gender was similar as opposed to the 2003 NC state data where males were more than twice as likely to report an injury.

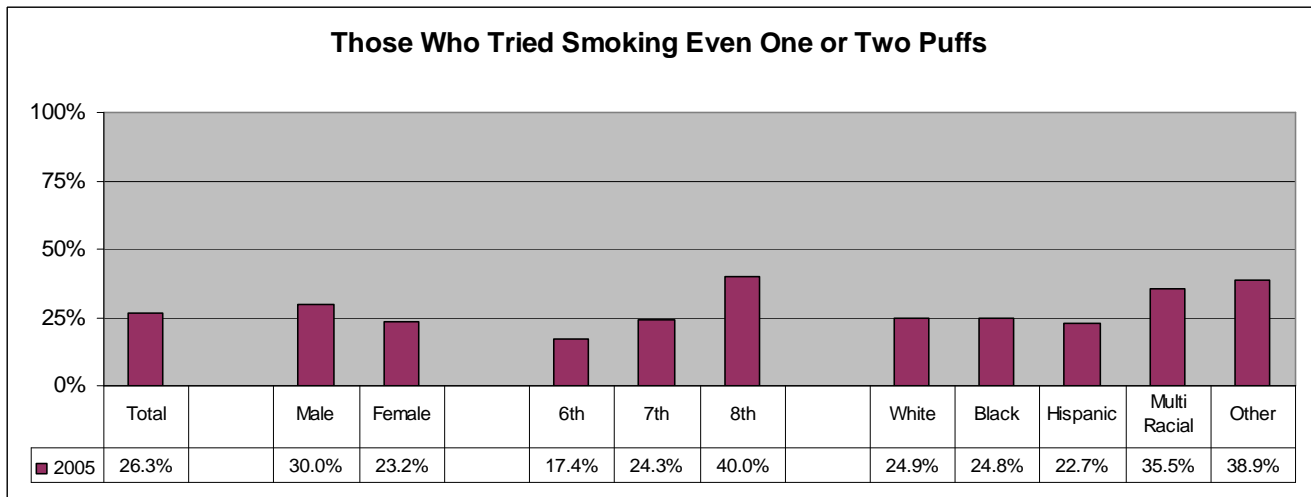
Those Who Have Been in a Physical Fight



- This question was not asked in 2003.
- More than half of middle school students indicated that they had been in a physical fight.
- The percent of students who reported fighting steadily increased from 6th grade to 8th grade.

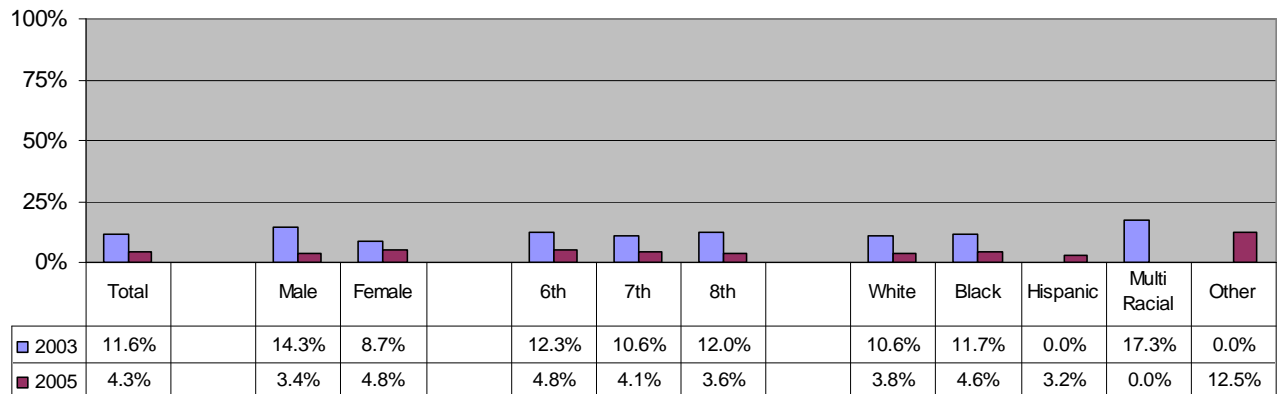
Tobacco Use

Consistently identified as the single most preventable cause of premature death in the United States, cigarette smoking continues to attract nearly five thousand American youths daily (CDC, 2005). Of this number, approximately 2,000 become daily smokers. Despite programs created to deter America's youth from experimenting with this deadly habit, cigarette smoking continues to be a popular activity with high school students. Tobacco use in adolescence has been associated with several other health risks, including higher risk of sexual activity and alcohol use (CDC, 2005). The following graphs reflect questions regarding frequency of cigarette smoking, age at which smoking started, and use of other tobacco products.



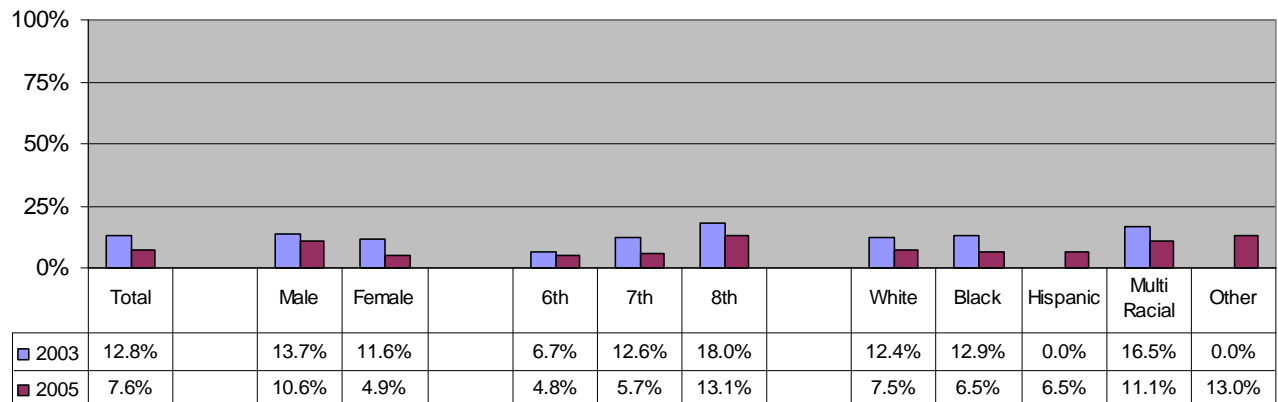
- This question was not asked in 2003.
- Over one in four middle school students in New Hanover County reported that they tried smoking a cigarette.
- More males than females reported they tried smoking.
- The percent of students who reported trying cigarettes steadily increased from 6th grade to 8th grade.

Those Who First Smoked a Cigarette Prior to Age 11



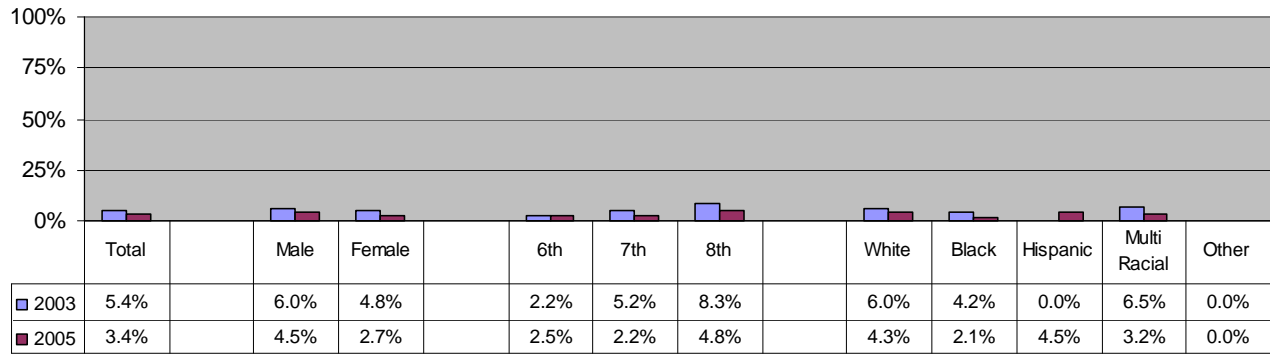
- A much smaller number of students in New Hanover County reported they started smoking prior to age 11 when compared to the students' responses in the 2003 North Carolina data.
- Interestingly, slightly more females reported that they first smoked before age 11 than did males in New Hanover County.
- The percent of students in New Hanover County who reported smoking cigarettes before age 11 decreased from 6th graders to 8th graders, which is a reverse trend of the previous question of those who tried smoking.

Those Who Have Smoked in the Last 30 Days



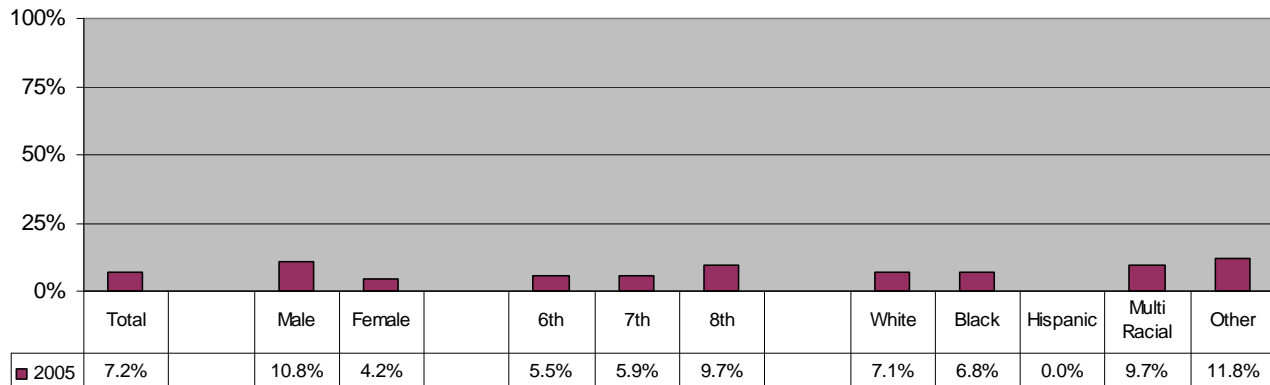
- When comparing the 2003 North Carolina students' report of cigarette smoking, fewer students in 2005 New Hanover County reported they smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days.
- Trends appear similar across the two groups; more males reported they currently smoke compared to females.
- There is also a steady increase in the number who smoke by grade (the higher the grade, the greater the percentage who reported smoking).

Those Who Smoked 2 or More Cigarettes On the Days They Did Smoke During the Past 30 Days



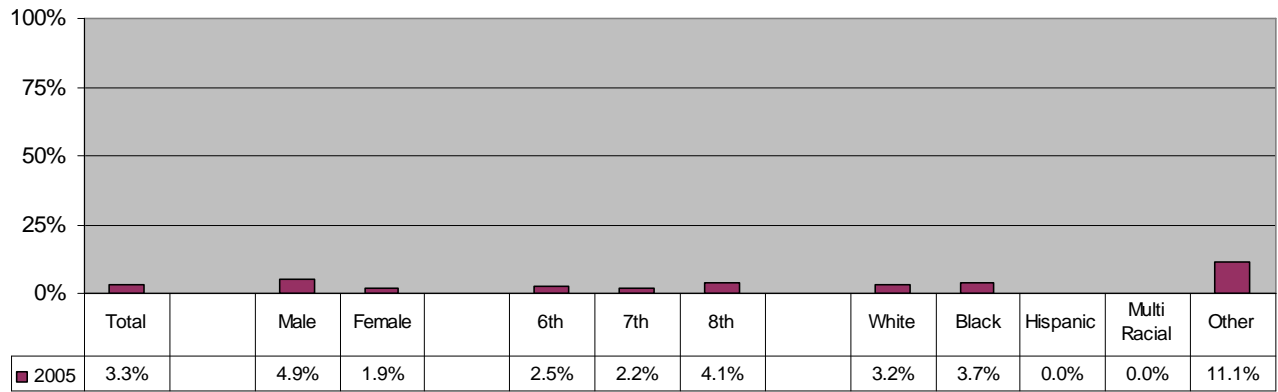
- It appears that less than half of those who smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days (see previous graph) smoked more than 1 cigarette a day.
- The greatest percentage of students who reported they smoked two or more cigarettes a day were 8th graders.

Those Who Have Smoked Daily (At Least One Cigarette Every Day for 30 Days)



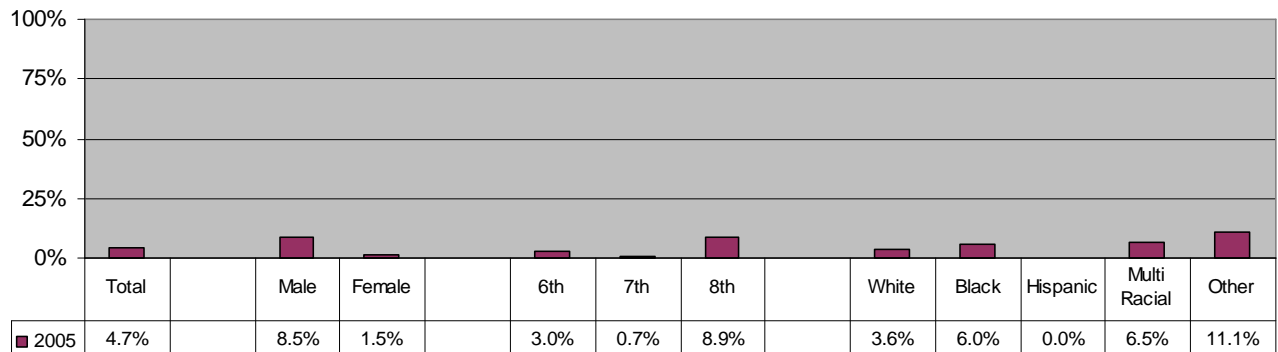
- This question was not asked in 2003.
- More than twice as many males as females reported that they smoked daily.
- More 8th graders reported daily smoking than did 6th and 7th graders.

Those Who Used Chewing Tobacco, Snuff, or Dip During the Past 30 Days



- This question was not asked in 2003.
- A very small percent of students indicated they used chewing tobacco or snuff in the last 30 days.
- Again, more males reported they used these alternative tobacco products compared to females.

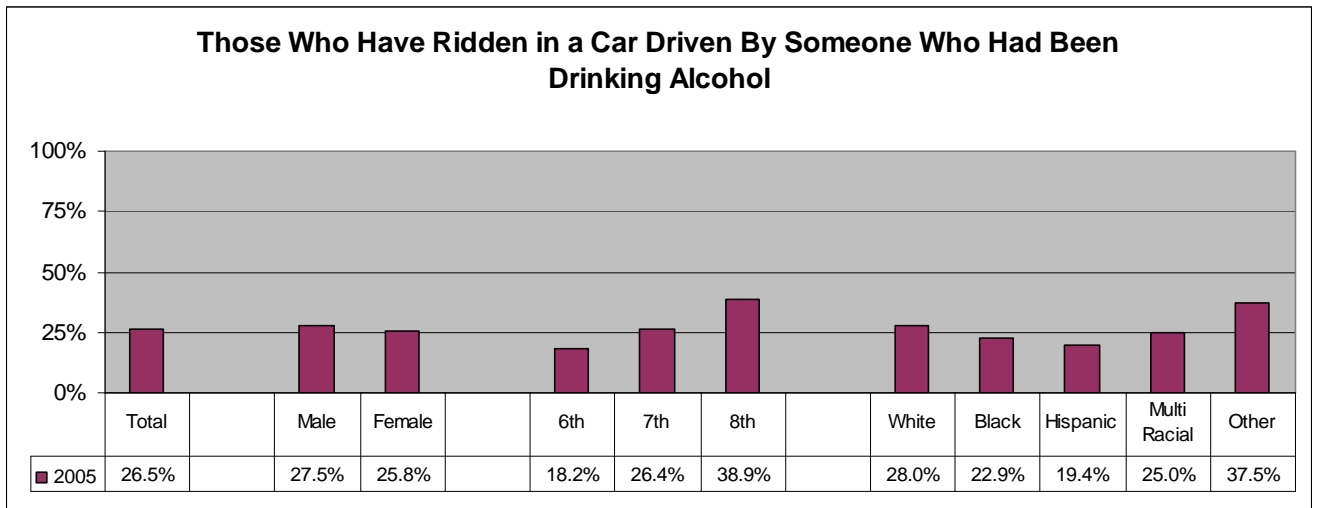
Those Who Smoked Cigars, Cigarillos, or Little Cigars During the Past 30 Days



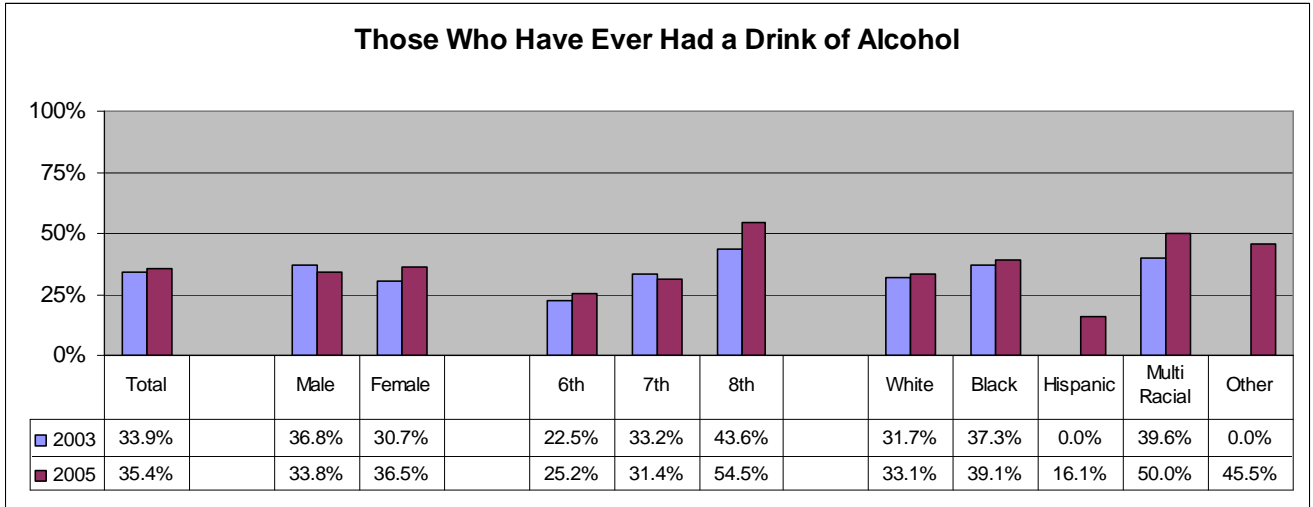
- This question was not asked in 2003.
- A small percent of students reported smoking cigars; males who were in 8th grade mostly reported this activity.

Alcohol Use

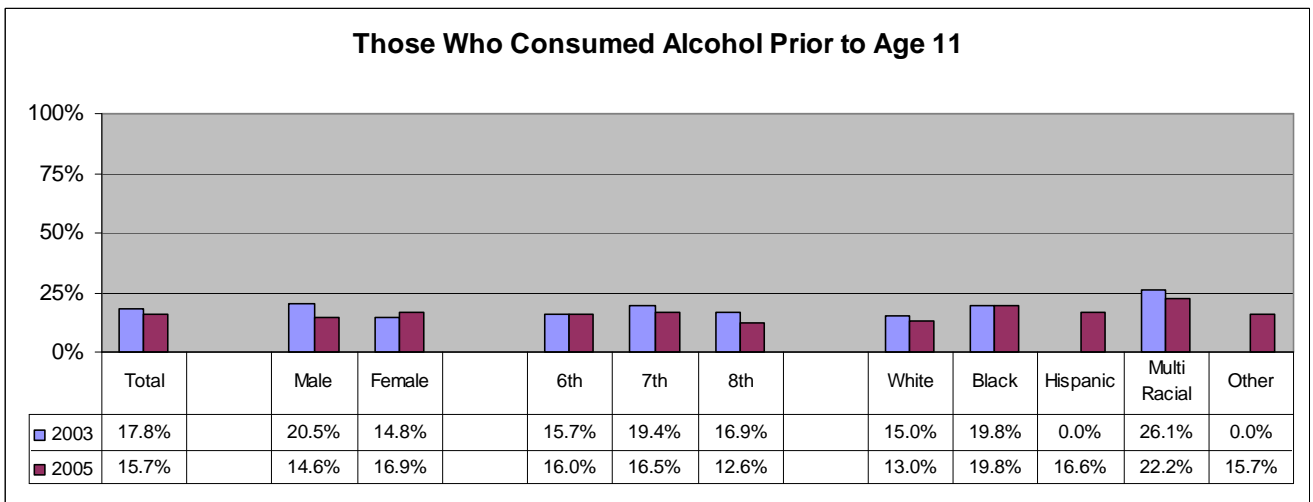
Underage drinking continues to be a serious problem with today's youth. Approximately eleven million youth in the United States report drinking alcohol, many consuming five or more drinks in a row (AMA, 2005). Research indicates that early alcohol use may precipitate numerous problems including drug use, sexual promiscuity, and criminal activity (AMA, 2005). The graphs below represent questions regarding recent alcohol consumption, frequency of consumption, and drinking and driving.



- This question was not asked in 2003.
- Over one in four students reported they had been a passenger in a car driven by someone under the influence of alcohol.
- The percent of students who reported this behavior steadily increased from 6th to 8th graders.



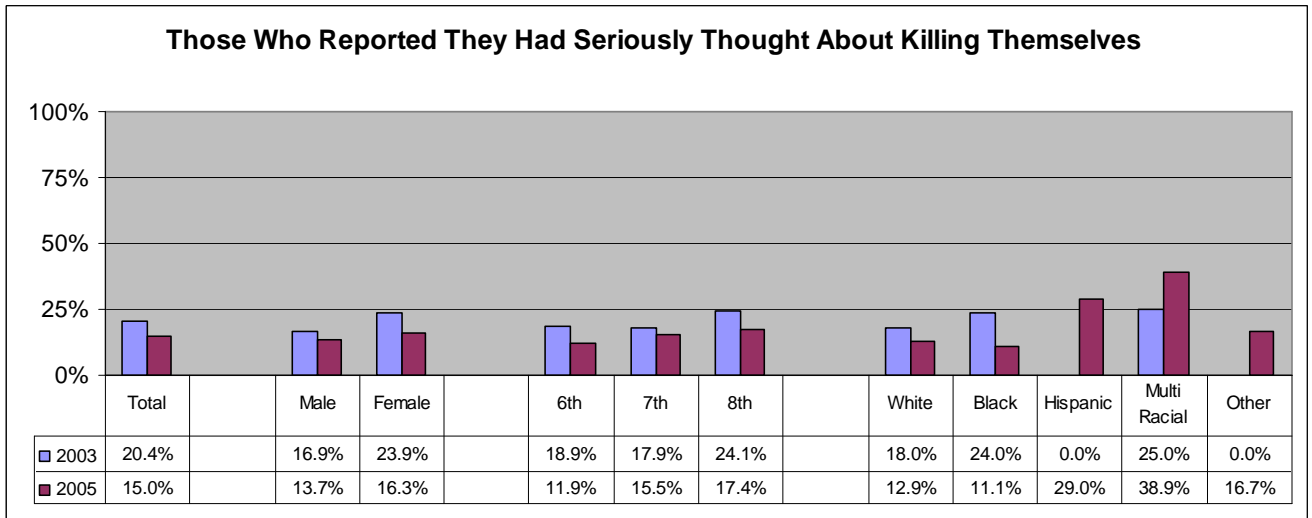
- One in three students reported they have had a drink of alcohol.
- Overall, the percentage of students who reported ever having a drink of alcohol steadily increased from 6th to 8th graders.
- Males and females in New Hanover County reported similar alcohol use.



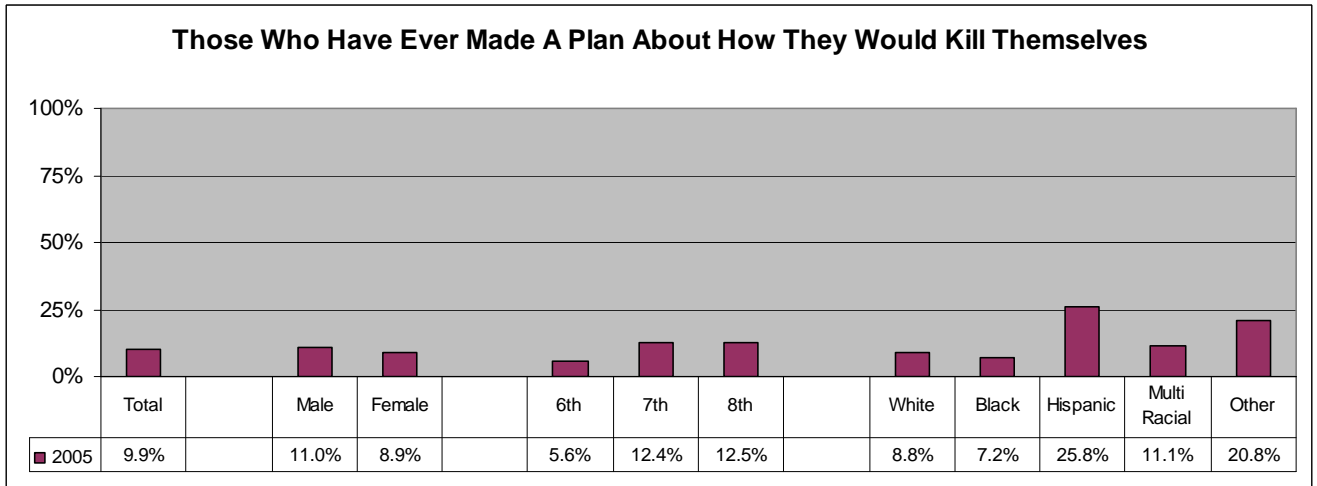
- Approximately one in six students who reported they drank alcohol started before the age of 11.
- A similar percent of males and females reported drinking alcohol before the age of 11.

Psychological Health

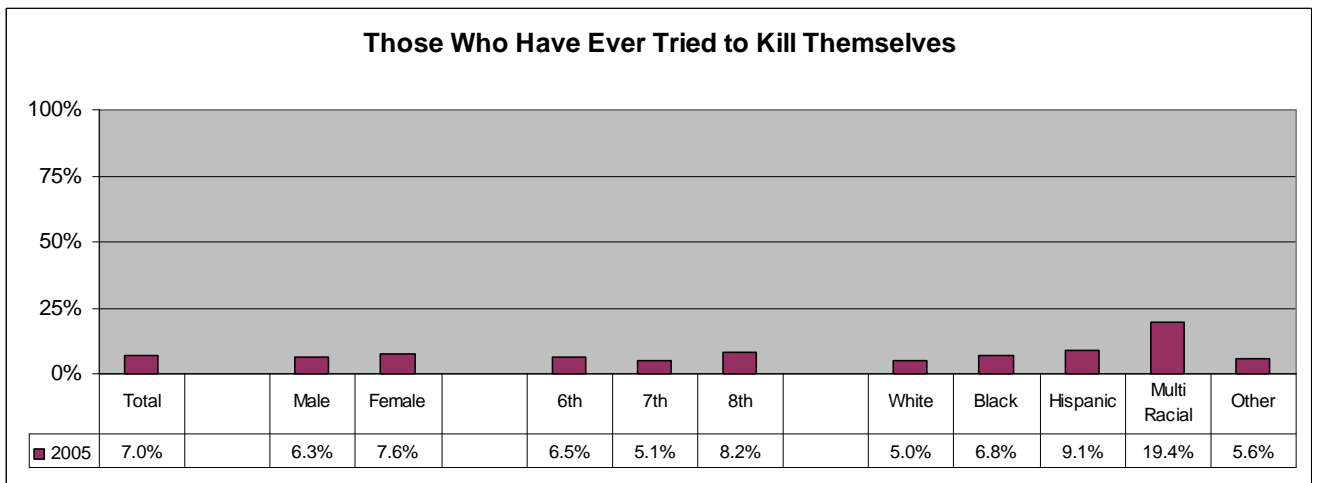
It is estimated that 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 (NIMH, 2005), with approximately one out of every ten children in the United States experiencing psychological problems severe enough to interfere with daily functioning (NIMH, 2001). According to the Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health (1999), of the children who are in need of mental health services, seven in ten are not served. Also, suicide rates in youths have continued to rise over the last 10 years (CDC, 2001). The graphs below indicate reported mood and self harmful behaviors among youth.



- One in seven New Hanover County middle school students reported they had serious thoughts of suicide.
- A higher percent of Multi Racial and Hispanic ethnicities reported they had suicidal thoughts when compared to White and Black student responses.
- Slightly more females than males reported thinking about suicide.
- The percent of students who reported serious thoughts of suicide steadily increased from 6th to 8th graders.



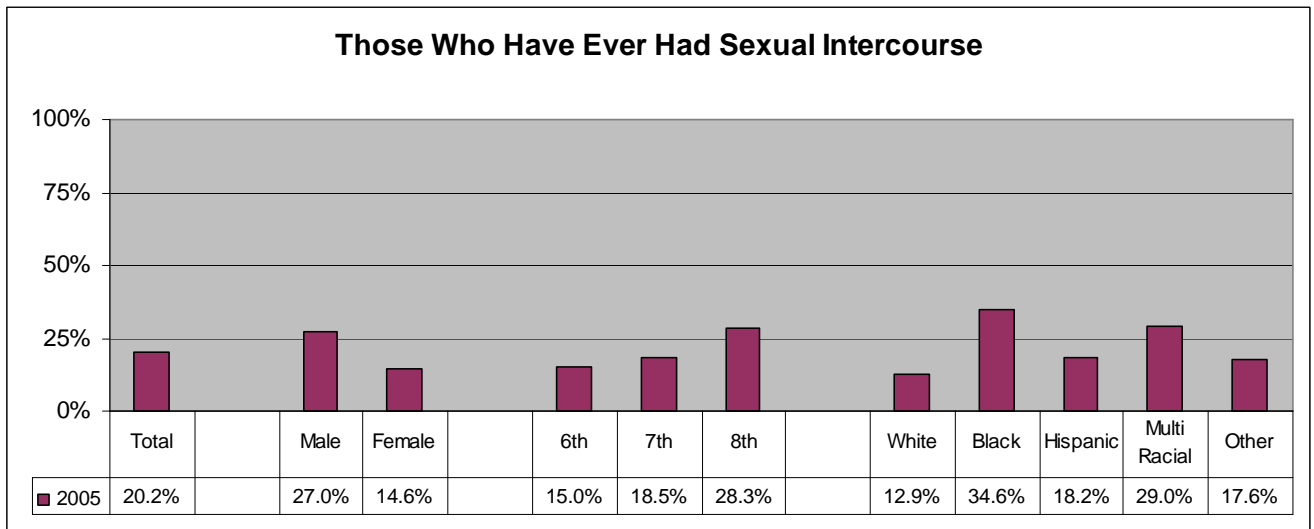
- This question was not asked in 2003.
- One in ten middle school students reported they had a plan to commit suicide.
- More than twice the percent of 7th and 8th graders compared to 6th graders reported they had made a plan to commit suicide.
- Over one in four Hispanic students reported they had a plan to commit suicide.



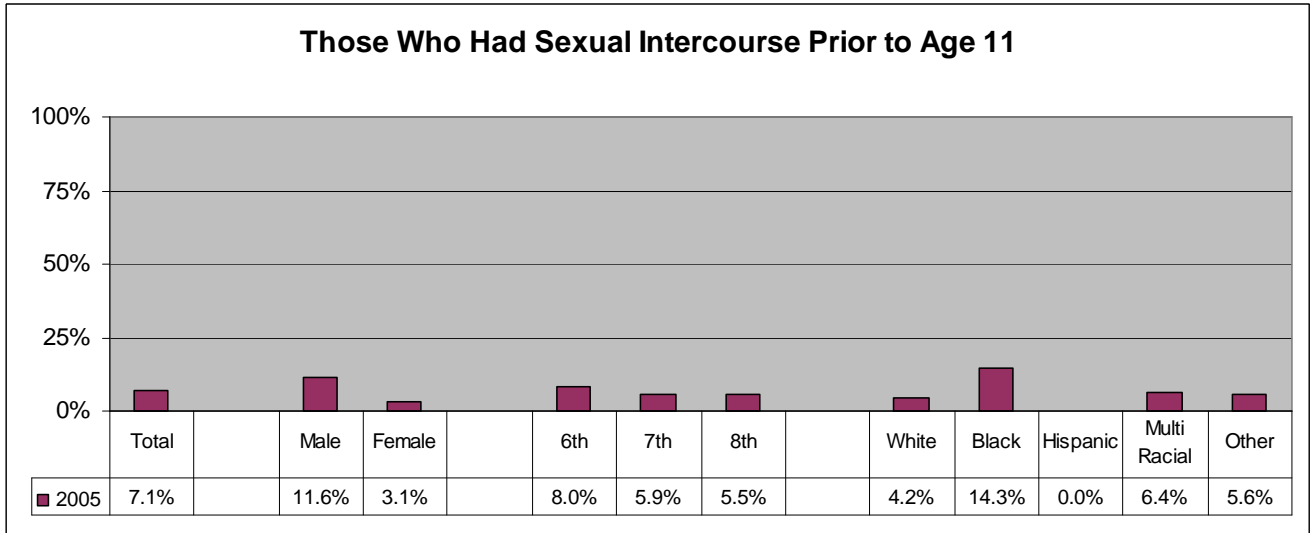
- This question was not asked in 2003.
- A small percentage of middle school students reported they had acted on their suicidal thoughts.
- One in five students of Multi Racial ethnicity indicated they attempted suicide.
- Slightly more females reported they had attempted suicide compared to male students.

Sexual Behavior

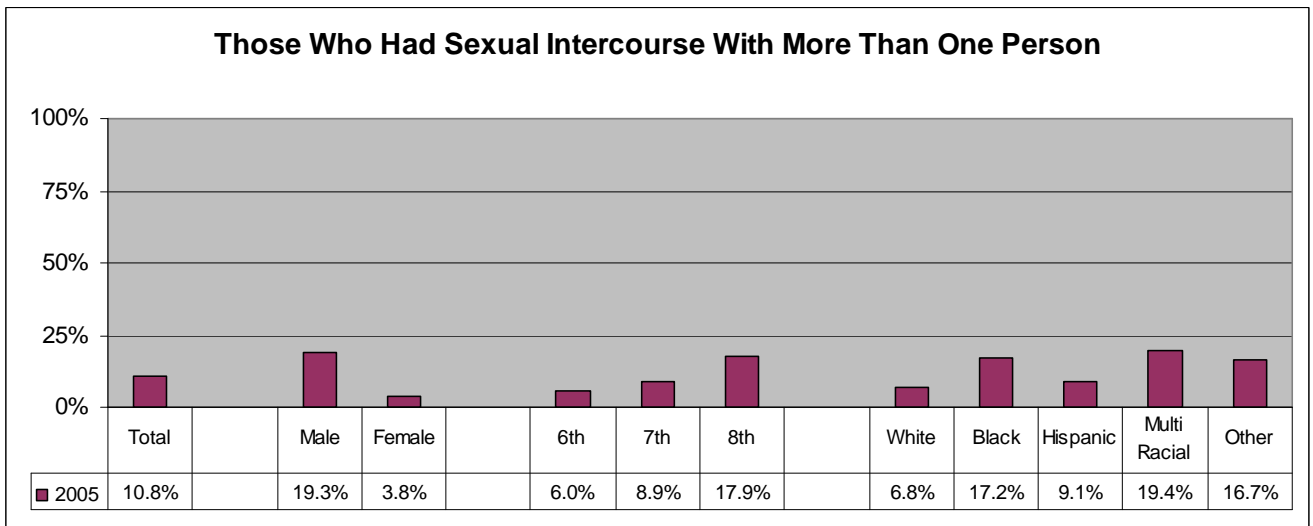
According to the CDC (2003), approximately 47% of high school students are sexually active; this puts them at risk for multiple problems including HIV, unplanned pregnancy, and a variety of other sexually transmitted diseases. Despite these high numbers, rates of teen pregnancy have steadily declined since 1991. Each year there are approximately 15 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases, with a quarter of these occurring in youths. The graphs below reflect student responses to questions about sexual activity and methods of birth control in youths.



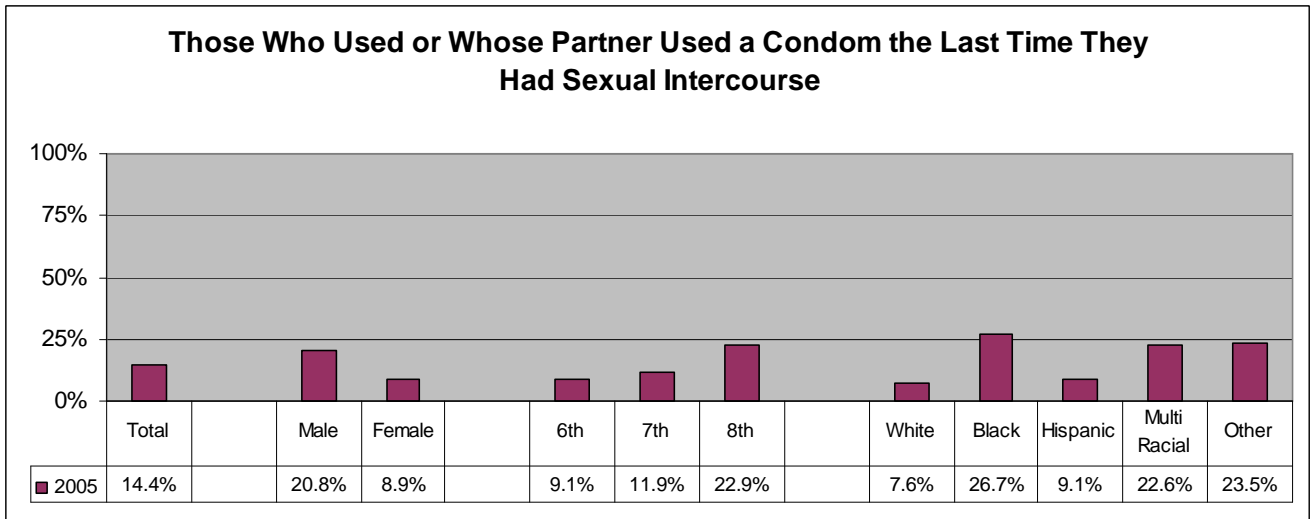
- This question was not asked in 2003.
- One in five middle school students reported they had sexual intercourse.
- The percent of middle school students who reported they had engaged in sexual intercourse steadily increased from 6th to 8th graders.



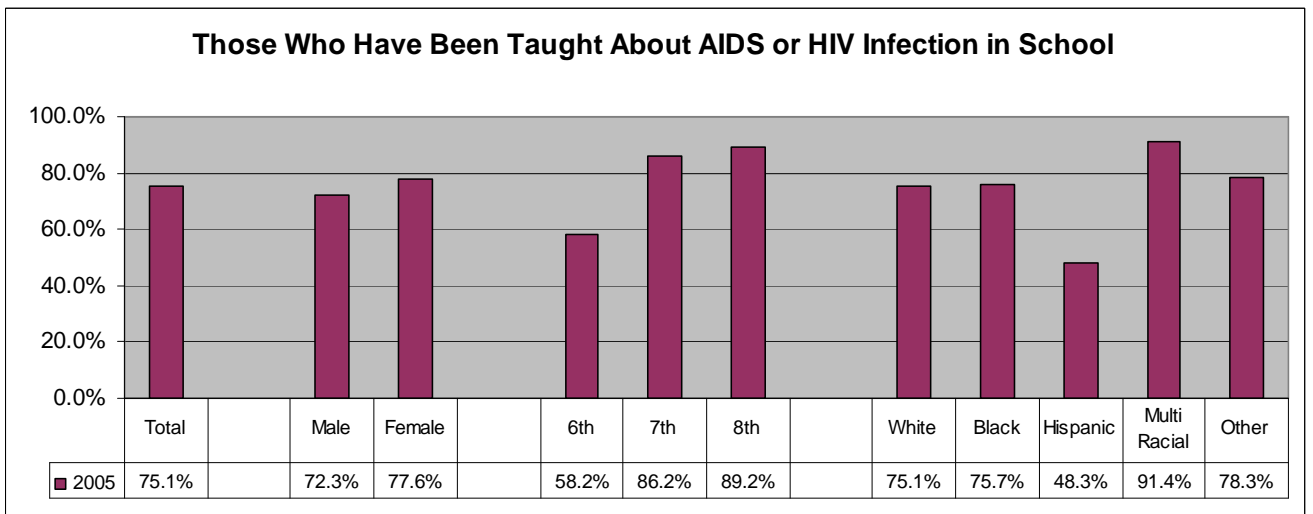
- This question was not asked in 2003.
- A small percent of middle school students reported having intercourse before age 11.
- Almost four times as many males reported they had sexual intercourse prior to age 11 than females.



- This question was not asked in 2003.
- Over one in ten middle school students have had intercourse with more than one person.
- There was a steady increase in the percent of students who reported having intercourse with more than one person from 6th to 8th graders.
- Almost five times as many males as females reported having sexual intercourse with more than one person.



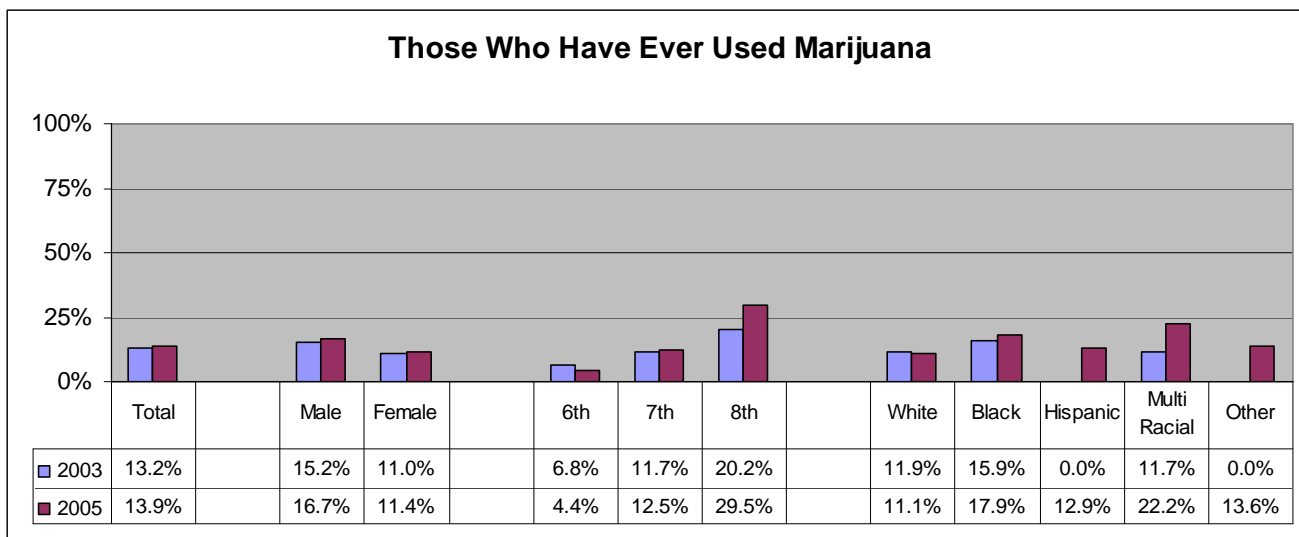
- This question was not asked in 2003.
- There was a steady increase in the percent of middle school students who reported using a condom the last time they had intercourse from 6th to 8th graders.
- When they last had sexual intercourse, males reported using a condom twice as often as females.



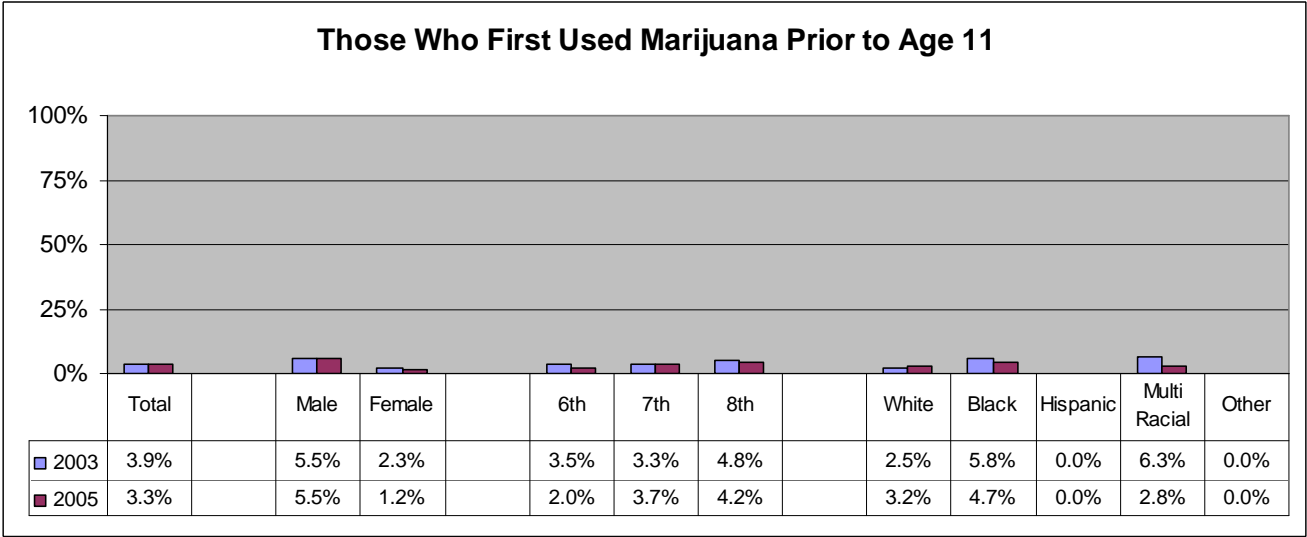
- This question was not asked in 2003.
- Three out of four middle school students reported they have been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school.
- Fewer Hispanic students reported they had been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school than any other ethnic group.
- There was a steady increase in the percentage of middle school students who reported they were taught about AIDS/HIV from 6th to 8th graders.

Other Drug Use

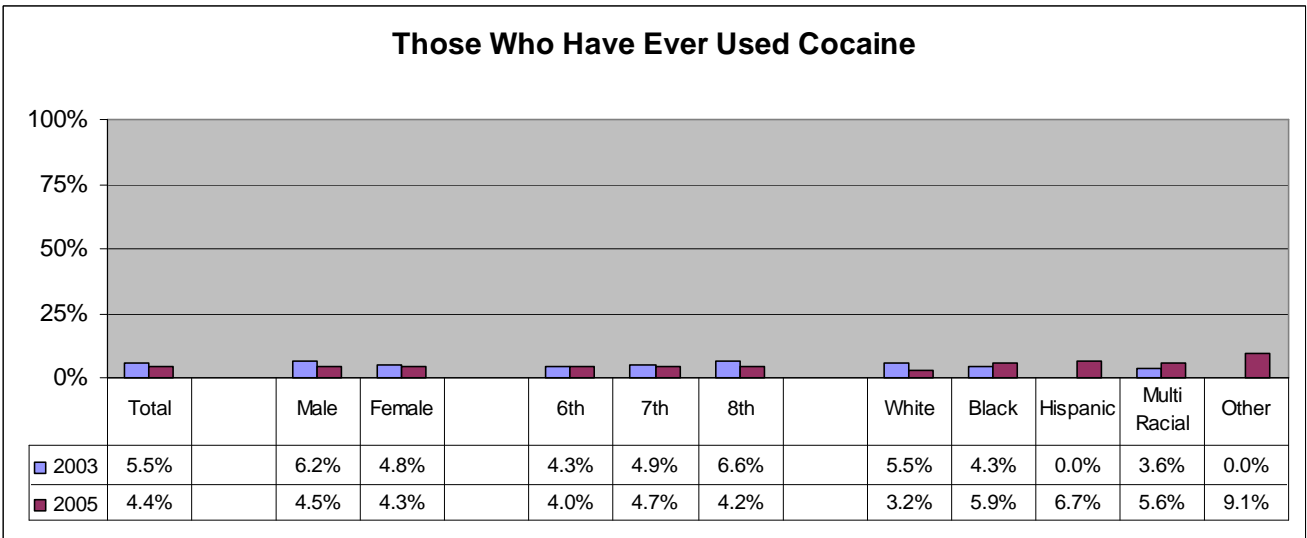
Along with alcohol use, marijuana, inhalants and so called "club drugs" are the most frequently used drugs among youths in the United States (SAMHSA, 2000). Despite a steady decline in the number of children experimenting with such drugs, recent statistics provide evidence that the problem is not completely solved. National statistics show the average age a child starts experimenting with marijuana is 12 years old (CDC, 2002). Forty-four percent of 14 to 15 year olds have been offered illegal drugs and 55% reported knowing a drug dealer (SHEU, 2000). The graphs below reflect student responses to questions regarding frequency of drug use, age at which drug use started, and specific types of drugs used.



- One in seven middle school students reported they had used marijuana.
- There was a steady increase in the percent of middle school students who reported using marijuana from 6th to 8th graders.

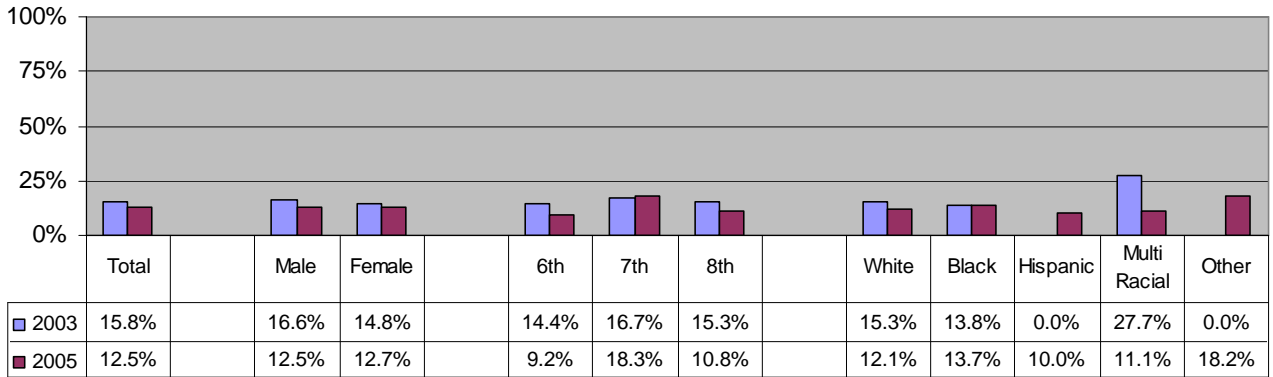


- Very few middle school students reported they used marijuana prior to age 11.



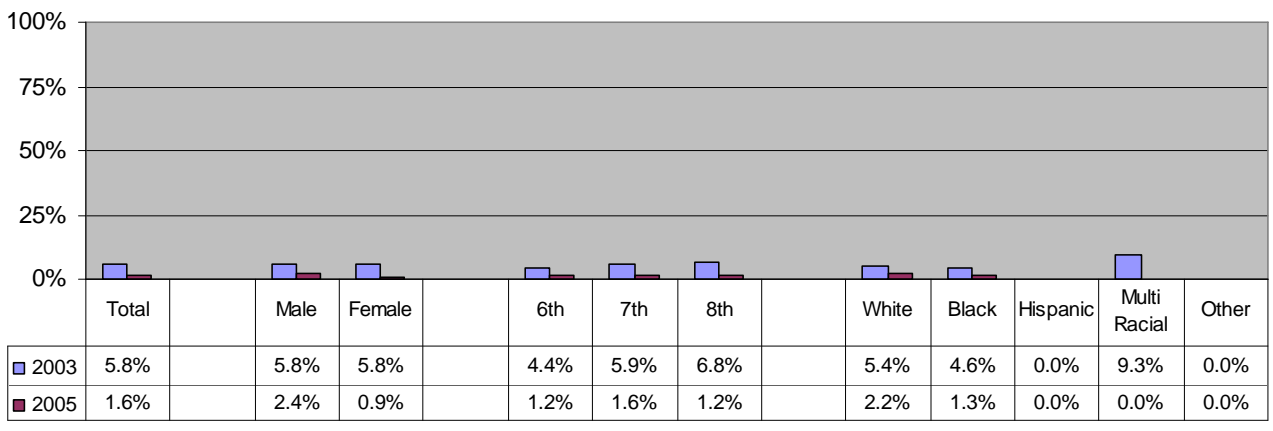
- A small percent of middle school students reported they used cocaine.

Those Who Have Ever Sniffed Glue, Breathed the Contents of Spray Cans, or Inhaled Any Paints or Sprays to Get High



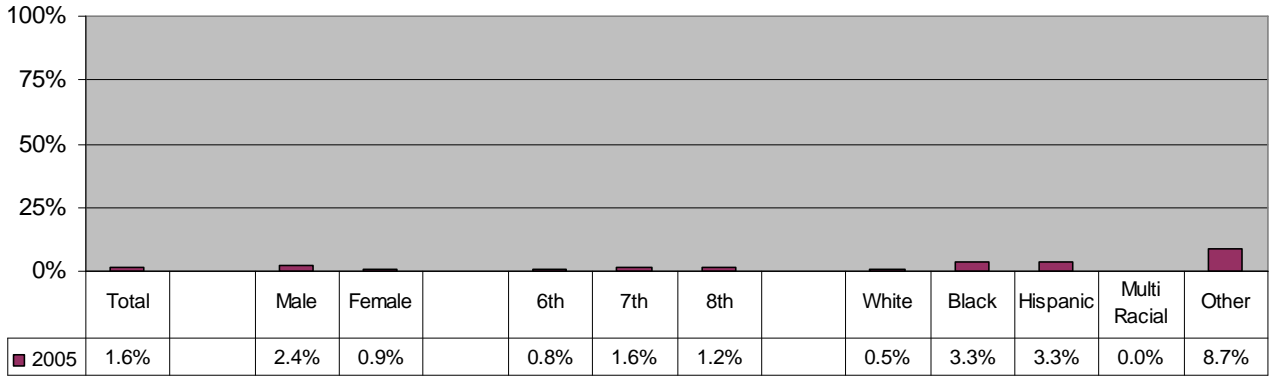
- One in eight New Hanover County middle school students reported they had sniffed glue or inhalants in order to get high.
- Males and females in New Hanover County equally reported getting high by sniffing glue or breathing contents of a spray can, paints or other sprays.
- Seventh graders were more likely to sniff products to get high compared to 6th and 8th graders.

Those Who Have Ever Used Steroids



- A small percentage of students reported having ever used steroids in both 2003 and 2005.

Those Who Have Ever Used a Needle to Inject Any Illegal Drug Into Their Body



- This question was not asked in 2003.
- A very small percent of middle school students reported having used a needle to inject any illegal drug into their body.