

## Sexual Health of Young Latinos in the U.S.

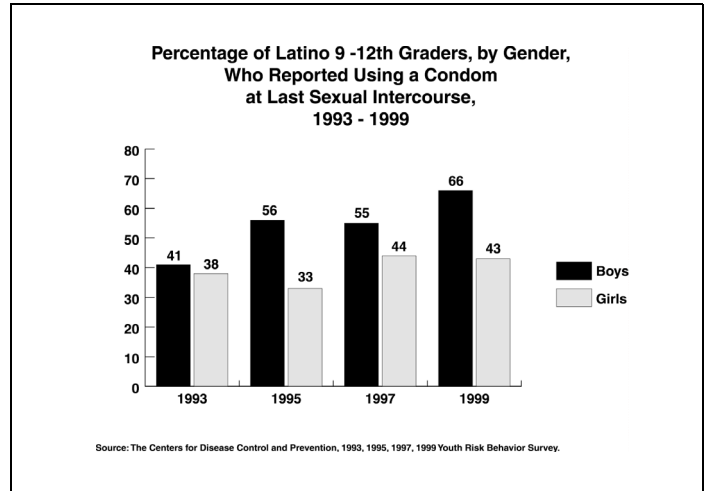
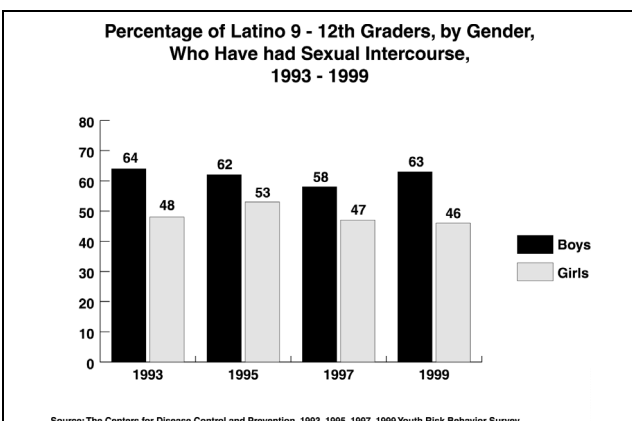
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Today, close to half of Latino<sup>1</sup> high school students in the U.S. are sexually active, a rate comparable to that among youth overall.<sup>2</sup> Teen pregnancy rates, while declining, remain high among Latinos.<sup>3</sup> HIV/AIDS has also disproportionately impacted the population. Latino teens now account for approximately 20 percent of reported AIDS cases among their age group, while representing 14 percent of the population.<sup>4</sup> Rates for other even more prevalent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are also higher among Latinos.<sup>4</sup>

Many young Latinos are concerned and want to know more about sexual health issues, including how to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS. More than half of Latinos age 18-29 (59%) say they are personally worried about becoming infected with HIV and many want more information, including where to go to get tested (60%) and how to talk with a partner (50%).<sup>5</sup>

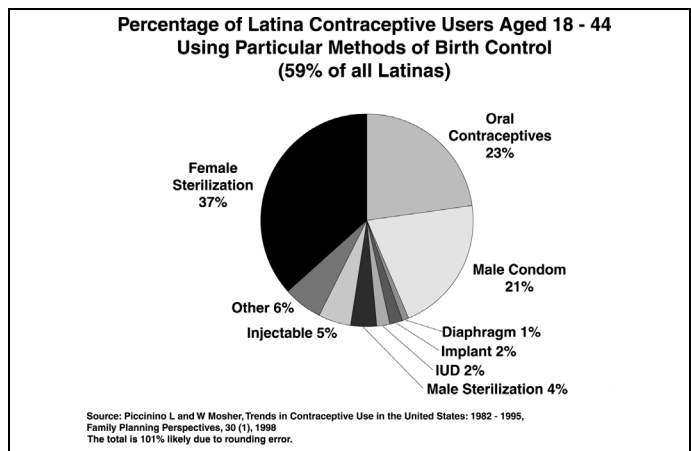
### Teen Sexual Activity

- Forty-five percent of 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade Latino *females* (Latinas) (45.5%) have had sex, compared with 44.8 percent of white females and 66.9 percent of African American females in the same grades.<sup>6</sup>
- Sixty-three percent of 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade Latino *males* (62.9%) have had sex, compared with 45.4 percent of white males and 75.7 percent of black males in the same grades.<sup>6</sup>
- About nine percent of Latino 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders (9.2%) had sex before age 13, compared with 5.5 percent of whites and 20.5 percent of African Americans in the same grades.<sup>2</sup>



### Contraceptive Use

- Among currently sexually active<sup>7</sup> 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders, 55.2 percent of Latinos reported using a condom the last time they had sex, compared with 55 percent of whites and 70 percent of African Americans in the same grades.<sup>2</sup>
- Among currently sexually active<sup>7</sup> 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders, 7.8 percent of Latinos reported that either they or their partner were using oral contraceptives as a birth control method the last time they had sex, compared with 21 percent of whites and 7.7 percent of African Americans in the same grades.<sup>2</sup>
- Overall, fifty-nine percent (59%) of Latinas aged 15 to 44 use some form of birth control, including sterilization, compared with 66 percent of white females and 62 percent of African American females in the same age group.<sup>8</sup>



## Pregnancy and Births

- The *pregnancy rate* for Latina teens aged 15-19 is 148.7 per 1000 teens. The pregnancy rates for white and African American teens of the same age are 65.1 and 170.4, respectively. Among Latina teens under age 15, the pregnancy rate is 3.9 per 1000 compared with 1.1 and 7.7 for whites and African Americans the same age.<sup>3</sup>
- Pregnancy rates for Latina teens aged 15-19 declined 11 percent between 1994 and 1997. Pregnancy rates declined more among white (26%) and African American teens (23%) than among Latinas during the same time period.<sup>3</sup>
- The *birth rate* for Latina teens aged 15-19 is 97.4 per 1000 teens, which is higher than the birth rates for white and African American teens the same age: 36.0 and 90.8, respectively. Among younger Latinas under age 15, the birth rate is 2.3 per 1000 compared with 0.4 and 3.4 for whites and African Americans the same age, respectively.<sup>3</sup>
- Latinas in the U.S. have between four and five pregnancies during their lifetimes (average: 4.7), of which 2.6 are wanted births.<sup>9</sup> By comparison, white females average 2.8 pregnancies, 1.6 of which are wanted births; and African American females average 5.1 pregnancies, of which 1.8 are wanted births.<sup>3</sup>
- The *unintended pregnancy rate* for Latinas aged 15-44 is 69 per 1000 females, almost two times the rate for white females (36 per 1000), but less than the rate of 99 per 1000 for African American females the same age.<sup>10</sup>

## HIV/AIDS

- Latino adolescents have been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Although Latino youth represent approximately 14 percent of U.S. teenagers, they accounted for 20 percent of new AIDS cases reported among those aged 13-19 in 2000.<sup>4</sup>
- Overall, AIDS is the fourth leading cause of death among Latinos aged 25 to 44. AIDS is the second leading cause of death among African Americans and the fifth leading cause of death for whites in the same age group.<sup>11</sup>
- Forty-nine percent (49%) of Latinos aged 18-29 say AIDS is a "very" serious problem for people they know. Even more (59%) say they are personally concerned about becoming infected with HIV/AIDS.<sup>5</sup>
- Fifty-nine (59%) percent of Latinos aged 18-29 report having ever been tested for HIV.<sup>5</sup> These findings may overstate somewhat the actual rate of HIV testing among Latinos. For example, of those who say they have been tested, 12% believe incorrectly that HIV testing is a routine part of an exam.<sup>5</sup>

## Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

*There are an estimated 15.3 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the U.S. each year.<sup>12</sup> Two-thirds of all new STD cases occur among people under the age of 25.<sup>13</sup> Every year, 3 million teens--about 1 in 4 sexually active teens—is infected.<sup>6</sup>*

- There were 2,564.2 reported cases of chlamydia per 100,000 Latinas aged 10-19, compared with 1,190.8 cases among white and 7,786.3 cases among African American

females the same age. There were 371.2 reported cases of chlamydia per 100,000 Latino males aged 10-19, compared with 100.6 cases among white and 1,256.2 cases among African American males the same age.<sup>6</sup>

- The gonorrhea rate among Latinos increased from 67.4 cases per 100,000 people in 1997 to 75.3 in 1999.<sup>14</sup> There were 320.8 reported cases of gonorrhea per 100,000 Latinas aged 10-19, compared with 218.2 cases among white and 3,851.7 cases among African American females the same age. There were 155.5 reported cases of gonorrhea per 100,000 Latino males aged 10-19, compared with 41.7 cases among white and 2,075.9 cases among African American males the same age.<sup>6</sup>

## References

<sup>1</sup>The U.S. Census uses the term "Hispanic" as a statistical category for people from Spanish-speaking countries. "Latino" is interchangeable with "Hispanic" in this fact sheet.

<sup>2</sup>MMWR June 9, 2000, 49(SS05);1-96, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—U.S. 1999.

<sup>3</sup>Ventura SJ et al., Trends in Pregnancy Rates for the United States, 1976-97: An Update, National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 49, Number 4, June 6, 2001.

<sup>4</sup>CDC, HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents L265 slide series (through 2000).

<sup>5</sup>Kaiser Family Foundation, Latinos' View of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic at 20 Years Findings from a National Survey, November 2001.

<sup>6</sup>MacKay AP, Fingerhut LA, Duran CR, Adolescent Health Chartbook. Health, United States, 2000. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2000.

<sup>7</sup>The Youth Risk Behavior Survey defines "currently sexually active" as having had sexual intercourse during the three months prior to the survey interview.

<sup>8</sup>Piccinino L and W Mosher, Trends in Contraceptive Use in the United States: 1982-1995, Family Planning Perspectives, 30(1), 1998.

<sup>9</sup>National Vital Statistics Reports defines a birth as "wanted" if the mother said that, at or before the time she became pregnant, she wanted to have another child.

<sup>10</sup>Henshaw S, Unintended Pregnancy in the United States, Family Planning Perspectives, 30(1), 1998, 26, 28.

<sup>11</sup>NCHS, National Vital Statistics Report, 48(11), July 24, 2000.

<sup>12</sup>American Social Health Association and Kaiser Family Foundation, Sexually Transmitted Diseases in America: How Many Cases and at What Cost?, 1998.

<sup>13</sup>Eng, TR, and Butler, WT, eds, The Hidden Epidemic: Confronting Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1997.

<sup>14</sup>CDC, Tracking the Hidden Epidemics, Trends in STDs in the United States, 2000.

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