



2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Summary

Prepared by Mason Emert, MPH – Public Health Epidemiologist
Choctaw Nation Department of Public Health

BACKGROUND: The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) is a bi-annual survey administered by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The survey is performed by participating states among students in grades 9 through 12 and measures health-related behaviors and experiences that affect the overall health and well-being of US youth and adolescents. These results are used by healthcare professionals to identify concerning trends and emerging issues, guiding new public health programs and initiatives aimed towards improving the health of our younger generations.

YRBSS covers topics such as student demographics, youth health behaviors and conditions, substance use, and student experiences. Survey results play a critical role in determining if unhealthy behaviors are emerging, decreasing, or staying the same over time. Responses collected during the survey are completely anonymous and no identifying information is collected. Survey data is free and publicly available by the CDC at www.CDC.gov.

The Choctaw Nation Department of Public Health utilizes YRSS data to review and understand important health trends across the State of Oklahoma and to identify new areas of need to protect the health interests of our younger generations. Upon review of the most recent 2021 survey data, we have compiled a report of important health areas and topics to share and increase public awareness.

We encourage everyone to review these important findings, as we can all play an important role in protecting the public health interests of our younger generations.

Together, we can improve the health and wellbeing of children across the State of Oklahoma and Choctaw Nation Reservation. Together, We're More.

Yakoke (Thank You)!

Rikki LaRoche
Public Health Director
Department of Public Health
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Mason B Emert
Epidemiologist
Department of Public Health
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Trends from 2019 to 2021

Question:	OK 2019	OK 2021	US Average 2021	Oklahoma Trend:	2021 OK Compared to US Avgs
Unintentional Injuries and Violence					
Were ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse	9.0	11.8	8.5	Worsened	Worse
Felt Sad or Hopeless (Almost daily > 2+ weeks and stopped doing usual activities)	38.6	43.5	42.3	Worsened	Comparable

Trends in forced sexual intercourse and feelings of sadness or hopelessness have unfortunately worsened in the State between 2019 and 2021. Compared to national average, forced sexual intercourse is more prevalent in the State of OK, while feelings of sadness and hopelessness among youth in the State are comparable to national averages.

Tobacco Use:					
Ever tried cigarette smoking	34.1	23.3	17.8	Improved	Worse
Currently Smoked Cigarettes (>1 cig within past 30 days)	9.1	4	3.8	Improved	Comparable
Currently Smoked Cigarettes Frequently (>20+ days in past 30 days)	2.4	0.9	0.7	Improved	Comparable
Currently Smoked Cigarettes Daily	1.8	0.6	0.6	Improved	Comparable
Smoked 10+ cigarettes a day	4.5	16.4	9.8	Worsened	Worse*
Ever used electronic vaping products	57.7	44.2	36.2	Improved	Worse
Currently use e-vaping products (at least 1+ time in past 30 days)	27.8	21.7	18	Improved	Worse
Currently using smokeless tobacco (1+ time in past 30 days)	5.7	2.6	2.5	Improved	Comparable
Currently use smokeless tobacco daily	1.9	0.5	0.5	Improved	Comparable

Overall, the majority of trends in tobacco use and smoking behaviors have improved in the State since the 2019 survey year. Among youth engaging in cigarette smoking, there is an alarming increase in the prevalence of those smoking 10+ cigarettes a day. While these trends have improved in the State of Oklahoma, measures such as “ever tried cigarette smoking”, “ever used vaping products”, and “currently using vape products at least once per month” are worse than the national averages.

Alcohol & Other Drug Use

Ever used marijuana	36.3	30	27.8	Improved	Comparable
Ever used heroin *no statistically significant change	0.9	1.9	1.3	Worsened*	Comparable
Ever used methamphetamine *no statistically significant change	1.6	3.1	1.8	Worsened*	Worse*
Ever used ecstasy	2.9	5.3	2.9	Worsened	Worsened

The measure “ever used marijuana” among Oklahoma youth has improved since the 2019 survey. While no statistically significant difference was observed for “ever used heroin” and “ever used methamphetamine” measures, these behaviors should be closely watched. Reported ecstasy use has worsened among Oklahoma youth and is worse than the national average.

Sexual Behaviors

Ever had sexual intercourse	43.3	32.8	30	Improved	Comparable
Had sexual intercourse with 4+ people in lifetime	11.8	6.4	6	Improved	Comparable
Were currently sexually active (within past 3 months of survey)	30.2	22.2	20.7	Improved	Comparable
Were never tested for HIV	89.6	93.6	94.2	Worsened	Comparable
Were not tested for sexually transmitted disease (STDs) (other than HIV)	91.1	94.1	94.8	Worsened	Comparable

Measures surrounding sexual behaviors and activity have greatly improved in among Oklahoma Youth since the 2019 survey period and are comparable to national averages. Testing for HIV and STDs among Oklahoma youth has worsened in the State but remains comparable to national averages. Greater access to testing resources for Oklahoma youth is needed and is a priority for many health entities across the State of Oklahoma.

Dietary Behaviors

Did not eat breakfast during 7 days before survey	19.1	24.3	22	Worsened	Comparable
Did not eat breakfast entire week before survey	75.2	79.7	75	Worsened	Worsened

Oklahoma youth have reported worse breakfast eating behaviors since the 2019 survey. A greater prevalence of Oklahoma youth reported poor breakfast consumption behaviors, with the “did not eat breakfast the entire week before the survey” measure being worse than national averages.

*** = no statistical difference**

Data measures are reported as means

Data Limitations / Implications & Reference

Limitations: While YRBS data serves a valuable role in identifying public health concerns among our youth and adolescents, just as any collected data, it has limitations. First, student participant pools change each year, therefore, the results of each survey can vary based upon the specific student pool surveyed. Survey results are weighted to provide a representative view of the population surveyed, meaning that while participant numbers vary by each state and region, the results are weighted to provide an accurate and comparable measurement.

Implications: The results of YRBS are used by federal, state, tribal, and local health departments to track trends in youth health behaviors. These findings are considered when developing new public health programs and initiatives and when policy changes are sought on various regulatory levels.

Reference:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at: www.cdc.gov/yrbs. Accessed on April 28, 2023.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at: www.cdc.gov/yrbs. Accessed on April 28, 2023.