

2006 Iowa Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Sexual Violence Module¹

Overview

In calendar year 2006, the Iowa BRFSS survey explored Iowans experiences with sexual violence by asking these questions:

1. Are you in a safe place to answer these questions?
2. In the past 12 months, has anyone touched sexual parts of your body after you said or showed that you didn't want them to or without your consent?
3. In the past 12 months, has anyone exposed you to unwanted sexual situations that did not involve physical touching?
4. Has anyone ever had sex with you after you said or showed that you didn't want them to or without your consent? (*Lifetime experience*)
5. Has this happened in the past 12 months?
6. Has anyone ever attempted to have sex with you after you said or showed that you didn't want to or without your consent, but sex did not occur? (*Lifetime attempt*)
7. Has this happened in the past 12 months?
8. Think about the time of the most recent incident involving a person who had sex with you – OR – attempted to have sex with you after you said or showed that you didn't want to or without your consent? What was that person's relationship to you? (*Stranger, acquaintance, relative, other*)
9. Was the person who did this male or female?

The sample contained 5,133 people who responded to the questions on sexual violence. The analyst eliminated cases with missing responses from the analysis. The data and percentage were weighted to Iowa's population characteristics. The analysis explored weighted prevalence by gender, age groups, education and income, and also stratified the results by gender.

Summary of Results

- From the 5,133 sampled, 3.5% felt unsafe to answer the questions on sexual violence. There were no differences between males and females in this category.
- To the question "past year unwanted sexual touching", 1.4% of females responded "yes". Males were very negligible. Females who were sexually touched were mostly 18 to 24 years old; there were no differences by race, education and income levels.
- Females were more likely to be exposed to unwanted sexual situations than males with significantly different weighted-prevalence of 1.7% vs. 0.6%. There is a difference in the trends according to age groups, education and income levels, although not statistically significant (due to the low sample size). Younger people,

¹ Draft report, Iowa Dept. of Public Health.

and people with low education and income, had a higher prevalence of exposure to unwanted sexual situations.

- Five percent of Iowans have experienced forcible sex during their lifetime. The specific gender prevalence for females (9.1%) was 8 times higher than males (0.8%). The overall prevalence was greater among whites than among minorities, although not significantly different, and among less than \$15,000 year income level than among over \$35,000. There were no major differences either across the ages for females from 18 to 64 years of age, or across income and education levels.
- Of the females who acknowledged forcible sex in their lifetime, 6% stated the event occurred in the past year. They were predominantly white, and between the ages of 35 to 54. Education and income level did not matter².
- The overall weighted-prevalence of forcible sex attempts in 2006 was 3.8%. The gender specific prevalence for females was 5.6 and 1.9% for males. There were no overall or gender specific significant differences by race, age, and education and income levels.
- When assessing the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, 30% of the time the perpetrator is an acquaintance compared to strangers (15%) and relative (1.5%).
- Almost all females reported their most recent perpetrator was male, and the majority of males reported their most recent perpetrators was male. Male victims reported that females were the most recent perpetrator 2/5 of the time.

Conclusions

An estimated 149,100 Iowans will experience forcible sex in their lifetime.

Females are more likely to be victims of sexual violence or attempted sexual violence in Iowa. The youngest, the less educated and poorer are more exposed to sexual touching or unwanted sexual situations.

Forcible sex to females does not discriminate along age groups, racial lines, or education and income levels.

Perpetrators are most commonly acquaintances of the victim, and the vast majority of perpetrators are male, even when the victim is male.

² These results needs to be taken with caution, as the number of respondents in the sample is very low (11 women only)