



Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods
at Case Western Reserve University

2016 Cuyahoga County Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Depressive Symptoms and Suicide

Introduction

The Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods (PRCHN) at Case Western Reserve University has administered the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in school districts throughout Cuyahoga County since 2000. The YRBS is a cross-sectional tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to track adolescent risk behavior over time. In spring of 2016, the PRCHN conducted the YRBS among 7th and 8th grade students in Cuyahoga County middle schools. A more detailed description of the methodology is available at our website, <http://prchn.org/yrbs.aspx>.

This brief report presents results from the 2016 Cuyahoga County Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, with a particular focus on Depression and Suicide. In this brief report, we present:

- [Overall Prevalence](#)
- [Regional Prevalence](#)
- [Demographic Prevalence](#)
- [Trend Report](#)

Data for similar behaviors can be found at our website, <http://prchn.org/yrbs.aspx>.

Depression and Suicide

Mental illness encompasses a variety of diagnosable disorders that occur when there are alterations in the thinking, mood, or behavior of a person that result in distress or impaired functioning.ⁱ Some mental illnesses include symptoms of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.ⁱⁱ

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the development of mental health issues given that the period of adolescence is a critical time for mental, social, and emotional development. Ultimately, many mental illnesses first surface during adolescence; 20% of adolescents in the United States have a diagnosable mental illness and nearly 70% do not receive the necessary care.ⁱⁱⁱ

Overall Prevalence

The following table summarizes depression and suicide among the 13,261 middle school students who completed the 2016 Cuyahoga County YRBS. Prevalence estimates and 95% confidence intervals were computed for all variables.

Risk Behavior	% (95% Confidence Interval)
Felt sad or hopeless (Almost every day for two weeks or more in a row, during the 12 months before the survey.)	22.4 (21.9-22.9)
Seriously considered attempting suicide (During the 12 months before the survey.)	12.8 (12.4-13.2)

Regional Prevalence

The table below represents depression and suicide by the six regions of Cuyahoga County. This division was conducted to provide a geographic representation of the prevalence of different risk behaviors in Cuyahoga County. In 2014, we were able to weight to 5 of 6 regions in Cuyahoga County. The column under Outer Ring—West does not include data because school participation within this region was insufficient to permit weighting.

Risk Behavior	CMSD- East % (95% CI)	CMSD- West % (95% CI)	Inner Ring-East % (95% CI)	Inner Ring-West % (95% CI)	Outer Ring-East % (95% CI)	Outer Ring-West % (95% CI)
Felt sad or hopeless (Almost every day for two weeks or more in a row, during the 12 months before the survey.)	23.9% (21.9-26.2)	27.8% (25.4-30.2)	22.3% (21.6-23.1)	29.2% (28.3-30.0)	19.5% (18.0-21.1)	N/A
Seriously considered attempting suicide (During the 12 months before the survey.)	15.4% (13.4-17.7)	16.2% (14.3-18.3)	13.8% (13.2-14.5)	16.1% (15.2-17.0)	11.1% (10.1-12.2)	N/A

Demographic Prevalence

The tables below allow for further comparisons of depression and suicide between demographic groups. Data are presented by gender, race/ethnicity, and grade level. A statistically significant difference exists between groups if the 95% confidence intervals do not overlap.

Felt sad or hopeless			
Category	%	CI	
Gender			
Female	30.8	30.1	- 31.5
Male	14.4	13.9	- 15.0
Race/Ethnicity			
White	21.2	20.8	- 21.5
Black	22.3	21.3	- 23.4
Hispanic	33.8	30.7	- 37.1
Other/Multiple	25.5	23.9	- 27.2
Grade			
7th	20.4	19.7	- 21.0
8th	24.2	23.5	- 24.8
Total	22.3	21.8	- 22.8

Seriously considered attempting suicide			
Category	%	CI	
Gender			
Female	18.4	17.8	- 19.1
Male	7.5	7.1	- 7.9
Race/Ethnicity			
White	11.1	10.8	- 11.4
Black	14.1	13.3	- 15.0
Hispanic	21.1	18.1	- 24.4
Other/Multiple	15.6	14.4	- 16.7
Grade			
7th	12.2	11.5	- 12.9
8th	13.0	12.5	- 13.5
Total	12.6	12.2	- 13.0

Cuyahoga County Trend Data

The following table presents the prevalence of depression and suicide among Cuyahoga County middle school students in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016. The prevalence for each year is given (when available), with 95% confidence intervals below.¹

Cuyahoga County, 2008	Cuyahoga County, 2010	Cuyahoga County, 2012	Cuyahoga County, 2014	Cuyahoga County, 2016
Intentional self-harm (Such as cutting or burning self; during 12 months before survey.)				
N/A	13.8% (12.8-14.8)	14.4% (13.6-15.2)	15.2% (14.5-15.9)	N/A
Felt sad or hopeless (Almost every day for two weeks or more in a row, during the 12 months before the survey.)				
N/A	21.1% (19.8-22.3)	20.1% (19.2-21.1)	21.3% (20.5-22.1)	22.4% (21.9-22.9)
Seriously considered attempting suicide (During the 12 months before the survey.)				
15.0% (13.9-16.0)	13.3% (12.3-14.3)	13.5% (12.8-14.3)	13.9% (13.3-14.6)	12.8% (12.4-13.2)
Attempted suicide (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)				
8.6% (7.9-9.4)	9.8% (9.0-10.7)	8.7% (8.0-9.3)	9.8% (9.3-10.4)	N/A

¹ The YRBS questions with two or more data points over 2008-2016 are included. The new 2014 questions are not included for the purpose of demonstrating trends. For those questions not asked in 2014, refer to the PRCHN archives at www.prchn.org/asp for more detailed information.

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Partners & Funding

This work is funded either in whole or in part by a grant awarded by the Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Child and Family Health Services, Child and Family Health Services Program as a sub-award of a grant issued by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) under the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, grant award number B04MC26688, and CFDA number 93.994 and Am. Sub. H.B. 59, and by Cooperative Agreement #U87PS004165-02 from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent School Health (CDC-DASH).

This work was also funded by Cooperative Agreement Number 1-U48-DP-005030 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the PRCHN and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

This work was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Case Western Reserve University, Protocol #2012-274.



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- ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. 1999. Rockville: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institutes of Mental Health.
- ⁱⁱ Schwarz, SW. (2009). *Adolescent Mental Health in the United States*. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, 2009.