

Birth Rates

Despite an overall decrease in teen birth rates in Minnesota between 1990 and 2004, the Hispanic/Latino population aged 15 to 19 experienced a 23.7% increase in their teen birth rates.¹ This is in contrast to national data which indicates that the birth rate in Hispanic/Latino girls (15-19 years) decreased 17% from 1990 to 2002.²

Furthermore, in 2004, in Minnesota there were 17.3 teen births per 1,000 non-Hispanic white girls (15-19 years) compared to 115.2 births per 1,000 Hispanic/Latino girls (15-19 years).¹ Within the U.S. Hispanic/Latino population, births to Mexican-American teens (15-19 years) decreased to 82.6 per 1,000 girls in 2004 compared to 104.6 per 1,000 girls in 1991.³

Contraception and Abstinence

2003 data reports that Hispanic/Latino teens were less likely to use a condom or other form of contraception consistently or at all compared to their white or African American counterparts (57%, 63%, and 73%, respectively).⁴

In 2002, 47% of 15-19 year old females and 46% of males reported being sexually experienced while among Latino teens, 40% of females and 56% of males reported being sexually experienced.⁵

Studies have found that Hispanic/Latino adolescents report less access to information about human sexuality, contraceptives and prevention of high-risk behavior in comparison to other racial groups.^{5,6}

Population Increase

In 2000, an estimated 1.4 million girls between the ages of 15 and 19 were Hispanic/Latino. Approximately 66% of the population are of Mexican descent.⁷ By the year 2020, one in five teens will be Hispanic/Latino and by 2050 approximately one quarter of the U.S. population will be Hispanic/Latino.⁸

“The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the Hispanic population grew from 9% in 1990 to 12.5% 2000. This change is a 57% increase in the Hispanic population. Over one third of that population is under the age of 19, compared with just a quarter for non-Hispanics.”⁹

Minnesota is seeing a rapid increase in the Hispanic/Latino population as well. According to the Hennepin County Census data, Minneapolis has experienced a 269.3% increase of Hispanic/Latinos (7,900 people in 1990 to 29,175 in 2000). St. Paul's Hispanic/Latino population rose by 97.9% (11,476 people in 1990 to 22,175 in 2000) while the rest of Minnesota saw a 172.8% increase (26,016 people in 1990 to 70,964 in 2000).¹⁰

Access to Services

About 1.1 million Hispanic/Latino children are uninsured, compared with 806,000 white, 703,000 black, and 95,000 Asian children.¹¹ In addition to insurance, barriers such as poverty, transportation, and lack of a regular source of care are some of the major obstacles for Hispanic/Latino children to access health care.

“Despite the fact that threats to health and education (i.e., teen pregnancy, suicide attempts, alcohol and drug abuse and self-reported gun possession) are highest for [Hispanic/Latina] girls, fewer prevention or treatment services reach them than reach girls in any other racial or ethnic group.”¹²

“There are few resources available for local, community-based health and wellness programs aimed at [Hispanic/Latino] youth. Across the board, community programs that serve [Hispanic/Latino] youth and families tend to be compromised by a scarcity of Spanish-speaking workers trained to deliver culturally competent outreach and support services.”¹³

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Drop-out Rates

“Hispanic/Latino students now make up the largest minority group in the school age population in the country. Yet they lag behind their white and Asian peers on most measures of achievement: test scores, college completion, and drop out rates.”¹⁰ In 2003, 15% of teens who dropped out of high school were Hispanic/Latino adolescents, compared to 8% African American and 6% white non-Hispanic teens.¹³

The educational achievement for Hispanic/Latinos continues to lag far behind non-Hispanic whites. In 2000, only 27.9% of Hispanics over 25 years old were high school graduates, compared to 34.1% of non-Hispanic whites.¹⁰

White students were far more likely than students of other racial/ethnic groups to be involved in team athletic activities at school and benefit from the discipline, teamwork and mentoring that sports and other school activities can provide.¹⁴

Over two-thirds of Minnesota’s 6th and 9th graders from each racial/ethnic group reported that they plan to go to college. However, Hispanic/Latino 9th graders reported the highest rate of skipping (23%) among all racial/ethnic groups. Frequent skipping is often an early warning sign that a student may eventually drop out of school.¹⁵

Acculturation

“Greater acculturation among [Hispanic/Latina] girls is linked to an increased likelihood of adolescent sexual activity, pregnancy and parenthood. Acculturation is also tied to lower educational ambitions and higher likelihood of dropping out of school.”¹³

Second and third generation Hispanic/Latina youth have higher pregnancy rates than first generation Hispanic/Latina youth, with some evidence that those that are foreign-born may have stronger ties to traditional values regarding sexual relationships.

However, additional research suggests that as Hispanic/Latina women reach higher levels of educational attainment, especially college level, their fertility patterns resemble those of college level non-Hispanic/Latina white and African American women.⁷

Parent-Youth Communication

“[Hispanic/Latino] teens tend to acculturate more quickly than their parents, resulting in a cultural divide that may impede successful communication between parent and child.”¹³

Research reveals some indication that Hispanic/Latino parents communicate less with their children about sexuality, and Hispanic/Latino children report receiving less information about sex from their parents than non-Hispanic/Latino children do.^{6,8} “Mothers typically do not discuss sex with their daughters. Furthermore, churches typically do not discuss alarming teen pregnancy rates with parents.”¹⁵

According to a survey released in the May 2006 Latina Magazine, 82 percent of parents of Latino teens say they have talked with their teen about sex; however, 45 percent of Latino teens (14-18 years) have said they have never had this conversation with their parents.^{16,17}

¹ Centers for Health Statistics, Minnesota Department of Health, 2006.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002 Natality Data Set, 2004.

³ Vital Statistics Report, NCHS, 2002.

⁴ Grunbaum JA et al. Youth risk behavior surveillance, United States, 2003. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summaries* 2004; 53(SS-2):1-95

⁵ National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. *Bridging Two Worlds: How Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs Can Better Serve Latino Youth*. 2006.

⁶ Child Welfare League of America. Press Release, 1999.

⁷ US Bureau of the Census. Current Population Reports. Series P-25-1130, *Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, 1995-2050*

⁸ Alan Guttmacher Institute. *Teenage Pregnancy: Overall Trends and State by State Information*, 1999. Cited in Mayden B et al. *First Talk: A Teen Pregnancy Prevention Dialogue among Latinos*, 1999.

⁹ National Public radio. “Educating Latinos: A NPR Special Report.” November 25, 2002.

¹⁰ Hennepin County Census Data, Sept 25, 2001.

¹¹ Journal of the Medical Association, July 3, 2002.

¹² The National Alliance for Hispanic Health, *The State of Hispanic Girls*, Washington, DC, 1999.

¹³ Shore, R. Kids Count Indicator Brief: *Reducing the High School Dropout Rate*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005.

¹⁴ The Urban Coalition, *Getting It All Together: The Health and Well-Being of Minnesota’s Youth*, St. Paul, MN, August 1998.

¹⁵ USA Today, *Bad News for Hispanic Girls*, April 20, 2001.

¹⁶ The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, *New Survey Highlights Disconnect Between Latino Parents and Teens in Talking About Sex*, April 2006.