



Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Chronic diseases are leading causes of disability and death in the United States, and they account for more than 70.0 percent of the nation's annual medical care costs.¹ Asthma is a chronic lung disease that causes wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing, and chest tightness.² In 2004, the Office of Women's Health sponsored questions in the annual California Women's Health Survey (CWHS) asking respondents whether they had ever been told by a health care professional that they had asthma, and whether they still had the disease.

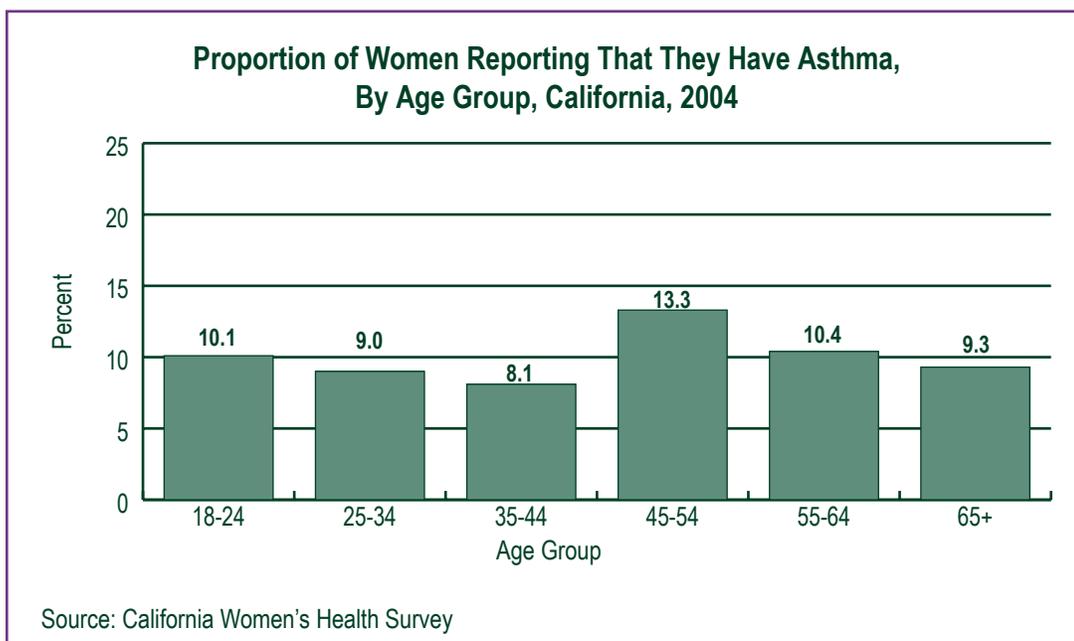
Approximately 15.5 percent of 4,269 respondents reported a diagnosis of asthma in their lifetime. Of those, 64.2 percent said that they still had asthma (9.9 percent of all the respondents). Asthma rates varied significantly by race/ethnicity, disability status, and age group.³ The following is data from respondents who said that they still had asthma:

- The highest proportion of asthma diagnosis occurred among Black/African American respondents (14.8 percent), followed by White (11.4 percent), Asian/Other (8.2 percent), and Hispanic respondents (6.6 percent).
- About 42.8 percent of respondents with asthma reported having physical, mental, or other emotional problems, compared with 17.3 percent of respondents who did not have asthma.
- Rates of asthma were higher for smokers (11.7 percent) than for women who had never smoked (9.0 percent).
- Respondents with asthma were distributed among all age groups (see graph).

Asthma Among Adult California Women, 2004

California Department of Health Services
Office of Women's Health

Public Health Message: Nearly ten percent of California women indicated that they had asthma. Asthma diagnosis was distributed among all age groups. Black/African Americans, tobacco smokers, and respondents with physical, mental, or other emotional problems had higher rates of asthma. These groups could be targeted for outreach and educational efforts about asthma.



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Asthma Among Adult California Women, 2004

- 1 Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The burden of chronic diseases and their risk factors: National and state perspectives. Atlanta, GA: United States Department of Health and Humans Services, CDC, 2004.
- 2 www.cdc.gov/asthma/faqs.htm.
- 3 $p < 0.05$, chi-square test.

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