



CWHS

Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE 2009 CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Chlamydia and gonorrhea are the most common reportable sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in California and the United States.¹ Adolescents and young adults comprise the majority of all chlamydia and gonorrhea cases in California.¹ Consistent and correct condom use can reduce STD acquisition and transmission. While human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/AIDS prevention education is mandated in California for all students at least once in both middle school and high school, comprehensive sexual health education is authorized but not required.² The relevant legislative code indicates that, if sexual health education is provided, components of this age-appropriate education shall include medically accurate information related to all Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptive and STD prevention methods, practice in negotiation and communication skills, and support for the option of abstinence as a healthy/safe choice.² Preference for comprehensive sexual education was shown to be high (89 percent) among California parents in a recent statewide survey.³ Since 46 percent of U.S. high school students report ever having had sex, education about effective strategies to reduce STD risk is needed. As part of statewide efforts to promote the effective use of condoms to reduce STDs among sexually active adolescents, the California STD Control Branch sought to assess opinions related to the earliest grade level specifically for condom education within STD/HIV education curricula.

In 2009, the California Women's Health Survey 3,882 participants were asked: *What do you think is the earliest grade level where children should be taught in school about the role of condoms in preventing sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV?* Response options included: elementary school, 6th to 8th grade, high school, should not be taught at any grade, don't know/not sure, and refused to answer. Analysis was conducted among all respondents and among the subset of respondents with children ages 6 to 17. Analyses were stratified by respondent age (18-24, 25-34, 35-54, and 55 years or older); race/ethnicity (White, African American/Black, Hispanic, Asian/Other); education (less than high school, high school and technical school without college, college and above); income (200 percent or less of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG), more than 200 percent of the FPG); and region (Northern and Sierra, Greater Bay Area, Sacramento Area, Central Valley, Central Coast, Los Angeles, and Other Southern). Statistically significant results were based on P value less than .05. Responses were weighted by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population.

Results

- Overall, the most commonly reported earliest grade level for teaching condom education was 6th to 8th grade (49.1 percent), followed by elementary school (19.2 percent), high school (12.7 percent), do not know/not sure (1.3 percent), and refused to answer (14.6 percent) (Figure 1). There was no significant variation in

Opinions on the Earliest Grade for School-Based Condom Education, 2009

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Center for Infectious Diseases
Division of Communicable Disease Control
Sexually Transmitted Disease Control Branch
Survey Research Group
Chronic Disease Surveillance and Research Branch

Public Health Message:

The vast majority (68 percent) of California women, including those who are parents of school-age children, support condom education by the eighth grade. These findings suggest that legislation related to accurate information about condom use in STD/HIV curricula would be widely supported.

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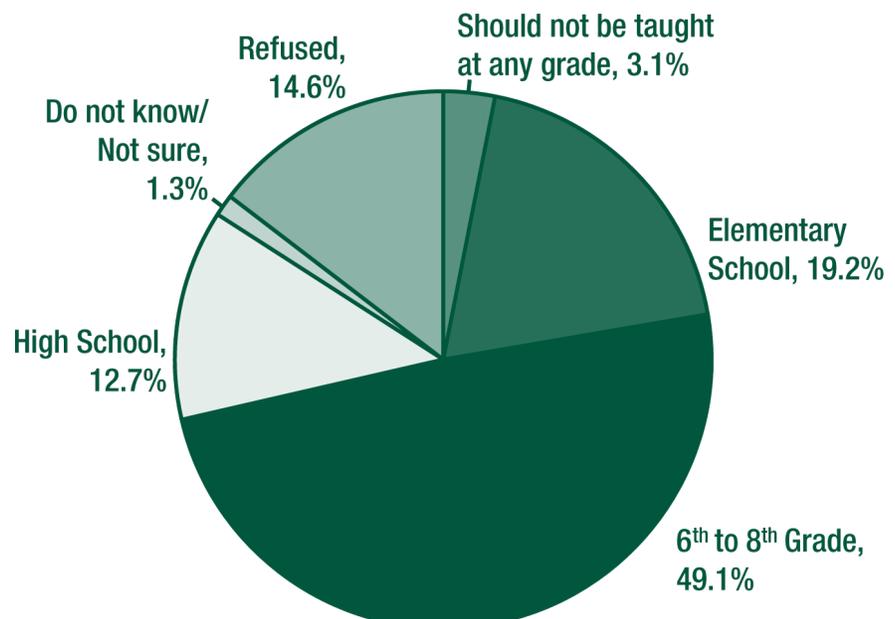
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these proportions by age group of respondents or when the analysis was limited to females with school-age children (ages 6-17).

- A small proportion of respondents (3.1 percent) indicated that condom education should not be taught at any level. The proportion of respondents with this opinion was higher among women ages 55 and older without school-age children (6.6 percent).
- Among respondents answering the question, there was some variation by race/ethnicity in the proportion reporting elementary school as the earliest level for condom education. The highest proportion was reported among African American/Black women (33.0 percent), which was significantly higher than for White women (21.4 percent) and Asian/Other women (19.1 percent), but was not significantly different than the proportion among Hispanic women (25.6 percent).
- In the proportion of respondents supporting lower grade levels, there were no differences by educational attainment, income, or geographic region of the state.

Figure 1

Opinion on the Earliest Grade for School-Based Condom Education, 2009



Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2009

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- 1 California Department of Public Health. Sexually Transmitted Diseases in California, 2009. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/statistics/Documents/STD-Data-2009-Report.pdf> Accessed October 2010.
- 2 California Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Act of 2003. *California Education Code sections 51930-51939*.
- 3 Constantine NA, Jerman P, Huang AX. California parents' preferences and beliefs regarding school-based sex education policy. *Perspect Sex Reprod Health*. 2007;39(3):167-175.
- 4 Eaton DK, Kann L, Kinchen S, et al.; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Youth risk behavior surveillance – United States, 2009. *MMWR Surveill Summ*. 2010 ;59(5):1-142.

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