

BAHAMAS YOUTH HEALTH SURVEY

**Health Information and Research Unit
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Table of Contents

	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
Acknowledgements	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	4
3. Who are the Teens	11
4. School and Its Role in the Life of Young People	19
5. The Adolescent in the Family	63
6. Mental Health	85
7. Violence and Illegal Activities	122
8. Physical Health, Health Care Services and Nutrition	146
9. Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs	172
10. Sexuality and Sexual History	180
11. Recommendations	194

List of Tables

	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
Section 3: Who Are the Teens	15
• (Tables 3-1 – 3-5)	
Section 4: School and Its Role in the Life of Young People	37
• (Tables 4-1 – 4-19)	
Section 5: The Adolescent in the Family	76
• (Tables 5-1 – 5-5)	
Section 6: Mental Health	102
• (Tables 6-1 – 6-9)	
Section 7: Violence and Illegal Activities	133
• (Tables 7-1 – 7-9)	
Section 8: Physical Health, Health Care Services and Nutrition	156
• (Tables 8-1 – 8-7)	
Section 9: Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs	178
• (Tables 9-1 – 9-2)	
Section 10: Sexuality and Sexual History	188
• (Table 10-1)	

List of Figures

	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
Section 3: Who Are the Teens	18
• (Figure 3-1)	
Section 4: School and Its Role in the Life of Young People	57
• (Figures 4-1 – 4-12)	
Section 6: Mental Health	112
• (Figures 6-1 – 6-19)	
Section 7: Violence and Illegal Activities	141
• (Figures 7-1 – 7-9)	
Section 8: Physical Health, Health Care Services and Nutrition	165
• (Figures 8-1 – 8-11)	
Section 9: Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs	179
• (Figures 9-1 – 9-2)	
Section 10: Sexuality and Sexual History	190
• (Figures 10-1 – 10-8)	

1. Introduction

Bahamian adolescents are faced with various challenges that seem to only grow with subsequent generations and which the adults of today, drawing on their own experiences, are only partially aware of. To compound the required pressures of school work, adolescents are bombarded with their budding sexuality, physical changes, the desire to conform to peers and yet be different, strained relationships with adults, and a growing, but still immature understanding of their individuality and self-awareness. These universal challenges that every young person face are reflected in common behaviour patterns, and while most pass through these years to emerge as healthy adults, others succumb.

In the Bahamas, population estimates for 1997 show that persons under the age of 20 years accounted for 39% of the total population, with youths between 10 and 19 years alone comprising almost one fifth.

Persons are essentially healthier and living longer, due in part to the reduction of certain communicable diseases, improved diets, and a higher standard of living. As a result, the leading causes of death and morbidity in youth have certainly changed over the last half-century, with current morbidity and mortality statistics revealing that the crux of health issues affecting young people is due, primarily, to risky behavioural choices.

These observances have certainly not escaped the attention of local health authorities, as considerable resources, both human and financial, have been directed toward the youth for the prevention of Injuries due to violence and traffic accidents, teen pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Infections, AIDS and substance abuse. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that problems still remain.

The leading causes of teen deaths in 1997 were homicides and motor vehicle accidents, with males accounting for the large majority. The leading cause of admissions (other than birth-related) to public hospitals among 10-19 year olds was injuries.

While the teenage birth rates have continued the decrease that began in 1980, the fact remains that sexual activity in this group has not decreased. Of particular concern is the higher rate of new HIV infections and deaths from AIDS in adolescent females, as compared to their male peers. There is an escalation of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's), hospital stays for females are mainly due to pregnancy and childbirth complications, and there is evidence to suggest that abortion rates are on the increase. Further, 9 out of every 10 teen births are to single mothers, adding to the social challenges of an already vulnerable segment of the population.

With regards to the mental health status of our youth, available information show that young Bahamians are suffering from depression, psychosocial, and other mental health disorders, with almost one third of all outpatient visits to The Community Counselling and Assessment Centre being patients 20 years and younger. Marijuana use among adolescent males is again on the rise, and there is a recent trend toward an increase in designer drug use observed in the region.

Other health issues include obesity, which stems from poor nutritional habits, and Acute Respiratory Infections, another leading cause of inpatient hospital visits among teens.

As a result, the ***Caribbean Youth Health Survey*** was developed under the sponsorship of PAHO, in association with the WHO Collaborating Centre in Adolescent Health at the University of Minnesota, U.S.A. Along with the Bahamas, participating countries included the majority of the English speaking countries of the Caribbean. The purpose of the survey was to gather a wide variety of health-related information from the viewpoint of the adolescents themselves. Questionnaires were therefore self-administered and confidential. It was anticipated that the results would help to explain many of the observed behaviour patterns, and reveal new concerns. Teachers, health professionals, parents, policy-makers, social workers, and anyone interested in the health of Bahamian youth may find some of the data surprising, even shocking, but the

overall purpose is to affect some change, however small, that can further enrich the health of our youth.

Section 2

Methodology

2. Methodology

2.1. Objectives

The intent of the survey was to provide a complete assessment of the health status, problems and concerns of adolescent girls and boys, as part of an assessment of needs and priorities for youth-oriented programs at the community and national level. It is anticipated that schools will use survey feedback for curriculum revision (particularly in health and social science classes), for planning needed school interventions, for developing health and social service programs, and as a general means for informing parents and community members of the needs of their youths.

The designed followed that of a general population based survey that targeted school aged children.

2.2. Sample Selection

2.2.1. Selection of Islands

The selection of islands included in the survey was based on a combination of convenience and economics. Chosen were the 7 most populated islands of the Bahamas that were all easily accessible. Together these islands accounted for approximately 96% of the total population (1990 Census), 85% to New Providence and GB alone. These figures should be higher for the school aged population however since many Family Island students migrate to New Providence to attend the "better" schools.

These 7 islands included New Providence, Grand Bahama, Abaco, Andros, Eleuthera, Exuma and Long Island. In addition, because the other islands are geographically located more to the centre and north of the archipelago, one of the Southernmost and less populated islands, Cat Island, was also selected to be included in the survey.

The 7 islands originally selected were then divided into three main strata: New Providence; Grand Bahama; and the Family Islands. Cat Island was not included with the other Family Islands that made up the third stratum but was analyzed separately in order to provide a contrast to that island group.

2.2.2. Selection of Grade Levels

The decision was made early on to include the private as well as the public schools in the survey. This was important because in the Bahamas approximately one-fifth of all secondary school students were enrolled in private schools, too large a population to ignore. In addition, due to the suspected socioeconomic differences between the two, the sample design allowed for the results from both the Public and Private schools to stand alone or to be representative of the various populations in the event of the

existence of any differences. With the exception of a few very small and scattered schools, all of the private schools were located on the islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama. As a result, the selection of private schools was limited to these two islands. For the data from the private schools in the other islands to be meaningful, the entire population at the selected grade levels would have had to be included, too expensive a proposition for such a small population.

The original intention was to draw a representative sample from each of grades 7 through 12. This proved to be too expensive and thus the decision was made to limit the number of grade levels to include in the survey. To allow for a fairly broad age representation and to be consistent with the methodology used in other Caribbean countries, the decision was made to include grade levels 7, 9 and 11. Schools that had students at the grade 7 level were categorized as Primary, All Age and Post Primary. Grade 9 students were schooled in All Age, Post Primary and Secondary Schools. Grade level 11 students were found only in All Age and Secondary Schools.

2.2.3. Required Number of Students/Sample Size Calculation

The number of grades 7, 9 and 11 was obtained from each school in the country along with the total number of students at that grade level. This was then used to construct a sampling frame for each strata, for public and private schools (public only in the Family Islands), from which the required sample size was calculated. Once calculated, an additional 20% was added to account for non-attendance on the day of the survey as well as incomplete responses. The actual calculation or Power Analysis was completed with the use of EPI-INFO. The formula used was:

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{n}{(1-(n/\text{population}))}$$

$$n = \frac{Z*Z(P(1-P))}{(D*D)}$$

The following values were used for all calculations.

Expected Frequency	50%
Worst Acceptable	45%
Confidence Level	95%

2.2.4. Required Number of Classes/Sampling Units

The sampling units for the survey were classes and once selected the intent was to survey the entire class. To facilitate the selection process, three grids containing the actual number of grades at each level for public and private schools for the three strata, and the total number of students at each grade level were prepared. This was used to calculate the average class size at each grade level, separately for the Public and Private sectors, for each stratum.

$$\text{Average Class Size} = \frac{\text{Total No. of Students}^1}{\text{Total No. of Grades}^2}$$

Once the average class size at the different grade levels for both Public and Private schools in each of the three strata was calculated, the total number of required classes was then calculated by dividing the desired number of young people within each grade by the average class size at that grade level. Again, this was done separately for Public and Private schools in each stratum.

$$\text{Total Number of Required Classes} = \frac{\text{Total Sample Required} + 20\%}{\text{Average Class Size}}$$

2.2.5. Selection of Classes

For the actual selection of classes in New Providence and the Family Islands, the schools were listed geographically (separately for public and private in NEW PROVIDENCE) and a sampling fraction applied after the initial random selection at each grade level. The sampling fraction was calculated as found below.

$$\text{Sampling Fraction} = \frac{\text{Total No. of Classes at each Grade Level}}{\text{Total No. of Required Classes}}$$

The initial class selected from the list was determined by randomly selecting a number between 1 and the sampling fraction.

In Grand Bahama, as a result of the small number of classes that made up the sampling frame, a simple random method that selected one class at a time without replacement was employed until the target number of grades was selected.

Example: For New Providence Public Schools Grade 7, a sample size of 336 was required. This number was increased by 20% resulting in a target sample of 396 students. The average class size for public schools grade 7 was 28 students. The target sample of 396 was then divided by 28 resulting in a need for 14 classes to be sampled at the grade 7 level. Further, there were 83 total classes at this level. To select the desired number of classes, the 83 classes were divided by 14 indicating a sampling fraction of 6. The number 5 was then selected as the random number between 1 and 6 resulting in the 5th of the 83 classes being selected as the first class to be included in the survey. All subsequent classes were selected when the number 6 (sampling fraction) was applied to the initial random selection.

2.2.6. Selection of Sub-sample

In order to write a National Report in the absence of appropriate weighting of the data, the decision was made to select a representative sub-sample from the original sample. The initial step involved the calculation of the required sample size for the total population of students in the Bahamas at the selected grade levels. This involved summing up all students in the three strata at grades 7, 9 and 11. Using EpilInfo, a required sample size was calculated at a Confidence level of 99.9%.

The next step was to determine the proportion of the required sample to be contributed by each grade level, type of school and strata. This was achieved by dividing the population at each level by the total students in the three grades and then applying this to the total required sample.

The next step involved the random selection of the predetermined number from each of the 15 files representing separate populations. For this SPSS was used. Once files of the 15 sub-samples were selected, these files were then aggregated into one main file from which the analysis was performed. This sub-sample reflected the number of students in the overall student population proportionate to island, public versus private, and grade level.

2.3. Data Collection

Data collection in New Providence and Grand Bahama commenced the week of 27th May 1997. In order to minimize disruption to the established routine, the mechanism for administering the survey was tailored to each school. The majority of the classes, however, was scheduled to be surveyed during "Health and Family Life" classes. All of the classes were pre-selected and, as a result, the Survey Officers', who were not

school personnel, had only to identify the correct class and then follow the in-class procedure.

Questionnaires were distributed to each member of the class present at the time of the survey along with pencils. General information about the survey as well as instructions on how to complete the questionnaires were then verbally given to the class by the Officers who were all trained to give consistent instructions and guidance. The questionnaires were self-completed and in the event assistance was required it was given with the knowledge that confidentiality was of primary importance. Teachers were allowed to remain in the classrooms to ensure that order was kept. They were not, however, directly involved in the administration of the survey. Students were encouraged to concentrate so as to complete the survey within the time allowed although schools were quite accommodating with respect to time. There were no questions in the survey which required the students to identify themselves and once completed surveys were taken immediately to the Ministry of Health for processing. To further ensure that the identities remained confidential neither the individuals who administered the survey nor school personnel were allowed to examine the completed questionnaires.

While the students were completing the survey, the survey officers were responsible (with the assistance of the teacher) for completing Survey Summary Sheets. These sheets were designed to collect information relative to class size, attendance on the day of the survey, number of questionnaires distributed and completed.

The survey was quite comprehensive with information collected on a wide range of health issues relevant to youth throughout The Bahamas. These included (i) Demographics: Who are the Teens; (ii) School and its Role in the Life of Young People; (iii) The Adolescent in the Family; (iv) Mental Health; (v) Violence and Illegal Activities; (vi) Physical Health, Health Care Services and Nutrition; (vii) Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs; (viii) Sex and Sexuality; and (ix) Protecting Young People from Harm.

Although respondents could have both refused to participate and/or leave blank any question in the survey they preferred not to answer, they were encouraged to answer all relevant questions in order for the results of the survey to be as accurate and meaningful as possible.

However, as a result of several of the private church affiliated schools disapproval and the impact that such a large percentage of non-respondents would have had on the overall representativeness, the decision was made to omit the section on Sex and Sexuality from the questionnaires administered to the 7th Graders. In addition, one school did not allow its 11th graders to complete this section and all attempts to get parental consent in this case failed.

2.4. Data Handling

To ensure the best quality data as was possible, three levels of editing were employed: (i) editing of the questionnaires prior to data entry; (ii) data checks built into the data entry files; and (iii) editing of the data after it had been entered. Editing of the questionnaires began even while data collection was ongoing. Questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency and all necessary codes applied. Survey forms were deleted when the majority of the questions were not answered or when too many mistakes that appeared to be deliberate were apparent. The decision rules are found in Appendix...

Data entry was completed with the use of the Data Entry module of SPSS-PC Version 3. This software allowed all variables on each data file to have built in upper and lower limits to ensure that no data that may have been out of range was entered. In addition, skip and fill rules were also inserted to take away the need for the data entry personnel to remember to skip when required. Cleaning of the computerized data, the third level, was necessary for consistency checks.

2.5. Data Analysis

The software utilized was SPSS-PC (Version 3) for DOS. Multivariate analyses were limited primarily to a maximum of three variables due to the numerous topic areas and potential predictor variables. Statistical tests utilized included Chi-square for cross-tabulations, t-tests and ANOVA for testing differences between group means. The non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used for the ordered variables. Any significant relationships reported were based on a p-value of .05 or less. This report represents a national summary of the results.

Section 3

Who are the Teens

3. Who are the Teens

3.1. Demographics

Of the total 2007 students included in the sub-sample, 51% were male and 49% female. Ages ranged from 11 to 19 years, with an overall average of 14 years. The average age of males (14 years) was only slightly higher than that of females (13.7 years). Almost half (47%) of the students fell within the age range of 13 to 15 years while 29% were 11 to 12 years old and one-quarter (25%) were in the age group 16 to 19 years (Table 3-1).

Three of every four students (74.7%) were from the public school system with the proportions slightly higher for grades 7 (35.8%) and 9 (34.9%) than for grade 11 (29.3%). Two-thirds (67.6%) attended school in New Providence while Grand Bahama accounted for an additional 18.4%. The remaining 14% were selected from schools in Abaco, Andros, Eleuthera, Exuma and Long Island (Table 3-1).

3.2. Religion and Spirituality

Approximately 95% of the students included in the survey considered themselves as members of a religious denomination. Just over one-third (37%) were professed Baptist, while Church of God (15%), Anglicans (13%) and Catholics (13%) were the other commonly mentioned denominations. Only 5% reported that they did not belong to any religious group (Table 3-2; Figure 3-1).

Over one-third (37%) of the students thought themselves as "somewhat" religious when asked "Do you think of yourself as a religious or spiritual person?". Approximately one of five (18%) considered themselves "very religious", and 16%, "not at all" religious. There were no significant gender differences in this area (Table 3-2).

An inverse relationship exists with students' self perception of spirituality and age. As age increased, the less students thought of themselves as spiritual or religious. Of those who described how religious they were, 36% of 10 to 12 year-olds indicated that they were "very religious." Likewise, 24% of students 13 to 15 years old and 17% of those 16 to 19 years old group also classified themselves in the same category.

Bahamian students still attend religious services relatively frequently, with half of them having attended religious services more than six times within the past three months. A little more than one out of five (22%) attended one to three times, and 13% had attended church four to six times. Fifteen percent (15%) indicated that they had not attended any religious services in the past three months (Table 3-2). There were no significant gender or age differences.

A very interesting finding was the observed relationship between the frequency of attendance at religious services and self-perception of spirituality (Table 3-3). Although there was an obvious increase in the percentage of students who attend services

frequently when self perception moves from those who considered themselves "not at all religious" to "somewhat religious", this apparent association was not observed between the "somewhat religious" and the "very religious" groups. Of those who considered themselves "not at all religious", 38.1% attended services more than six times in the past three months. This percentage increased considerably to 53.6% in the "somewhat religious" group and then only slightly to 60.9% in the "very religious" group.

3.3. Socioeconomic Status

Attempts were made to assess some level of socio-economic status by using the indicators: (i) parents' possession of a college degree; and (ii) whether there was running water in the students' homes. In this case, parents possession of a college degree did not result in a very good measure as a large percentage of students (40%) did not know if their parents achieved this level of education (Table 3-4). Twenty-one percent (21%) responded that neither parent has a college degree, 16%, both parents, 14%, their mother, and 10% reported that their father has a degree.

Eight-four percent (84%) of the students reported have running water in their homes or, conversely, almost one out of six (16%) did not.

Section 3

(Tables and Charts)

TABLE 3-1

**PROPORTION (%) OF GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS
BY GENDER AND AGE, ALL BAHAMAS**

Demographics of Students Surveyed	All Students	Males	Females	Age (Years)		
				10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16 19 yrs
Total Students Surveyed	100	50.7	49.3	28.5	46.6	24.9
Island						
New Providence	67.6	69.5	66.0	66.9	68.7	66.5
Grand Bahama	18.4	17.1	19.4	19.5	16.8	19.9
Abaco	4.2	3.9	4.3	3.8	4.3	4.4
Eleuthera	2.3	2.0	2.6	1.7	3.2	1.2
Andros	3.9	3.7	4.0	5.6	3.2	3.2
Exuma	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.2
Long Island	2.2	2.2	2.2	1.0	2.1	3.6
Grade						
Grade 7	35.8	35.6	36.0	99.0	15.1	2.4
Grade 9	34.9	33.6	36.0	1.0	69.1	9.6
Grade 11	29.3	30.8	27.9	0	15.8	88.0
Age						
10 to 12 years	28.5	25.5	31.6	100.0		
13 to 15 years	46.6	47.2	46.2		100.0	
16 to 19 years	24.9	27.3	22.3			100.0
Type of School						
Public	74.7	75.2	73.9	76.3	73.6	74.9
Private	25.3	24.8	26.1	23.7	26.4	25.1

TABLE 3-2

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF VARIOUS RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF STUDENTS
BY GENDER AND AGE, ALL BAHAMAS**

Religious Aspects	All Students	Males	Females	Age		
				10-12 years	13-15 years	16 -19 years
Religion						
Anglican	13.3	13.2	13.5	* 19.9	14.1	15.9
Catholic	12.7	12.8	12.3	9.2	13.4	15.5
Methodist	3.3	3.0	3.7	3.5	3.5	2.9
Baptist	36.8	37.3	36.4	35.2	38.1	36.3
Church of God	15.3	14.8	16.0	22.5	12.1	13.1
Other	13.5	12.8	14.3	13.4	15.4	10.2
None	4.9	6.0	3.9	6.3	3.5	6.1
Do you think of yourself as a religious or spiritual person?						
No, not at all	15.8	17.3	14.1	* 14.7	15.4	17.6
Yes, somewhat	36.9	38.3	35.6	25.0	39.4	45.8
Yes, very religious	17.6	15.6	19.5	22.1	17.6	12.6
I don't know	29.7	28.7	30.8	38.2	27.6	23.9
In the past three months, how often did you go to religious services?						
Never	15.4	17.1	13.6	16.7	14.2	16.2
1-3 Times	21.6	23.7	19.5	20.4	19.1	27.7
4-6 Times	12.8	11.8	13.8	11.9	13.0	13.6
More than 6	50.2	47.4	53.0	51.1	53.7	42.6

* Statistically significant association exist between gender and/ or among the age groups for these variables with p value set at <= 0.05.

TABLE 3-3

**PROPORTION (%) OF LEVEL OF RELIGIOSITY
BY FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Frequency of Church Attendance Within Past Three Months	Level of Spirituality/ Religiosity		
	Not at All Religious	Somewhat Religious	Very Religious
Never	30.2	8.7	11.2
One to Three Times	23.7	22.0	21.7
Four to Six Times	7.9	15.7	6.2
More than Six Times	38.1	53.6	60.9

*Statistically significant association (using Tau-C) exists with p value set at <= 0.05.

TABLE 3-4

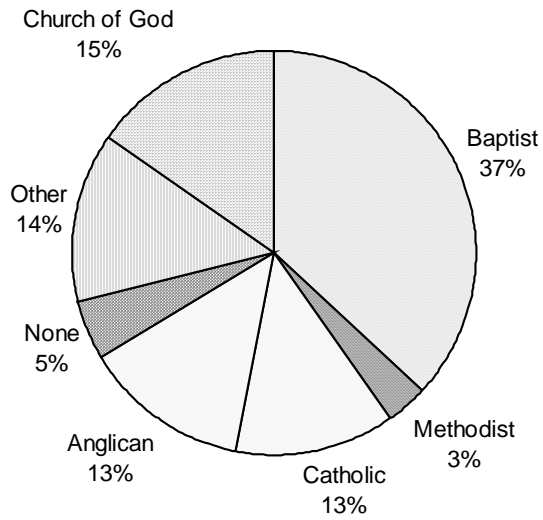
**PROPORTION (%) OF CERTAIN MEASURES OF
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, BY GENDER AND AGE,
ALL BAHAMAS**

Measures of Socioeconomic Status	All Students	Males	Females	Age		
				10-12 years	13-15 years	16 -19 years
Does/ Did your mother or father have/ had a college degree?						
Yes, my mother	14.3	* 17.8	10.7	* 14.0	13.6	16.0
Yes, my father	9.5	8.9	10.1	7.2	11.3	8.8
Yes, both	16.0	17.4	14.7	18.6	14.3	16.0
No, neither	20.6	15.5	25.8	10.4	23.5	27.3
Don't know	39.6	40.5	38.6	49.8	37.3	31.9
Is there running water inside your house?						
No	15.8	17.1	14.7	* 20.7	14.1	13.1

* Statistically significant association exist between gender and/ or among the age groups for these variables with p value set at <= 0.05.

FIGURE 3-1

DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS AMONG STUDENTS SURVEYED



Section 4

School and Its Role in the Life of Young People

4. School and Its Role in the Life of Young People

4.1. Kind of Student

Seven out of ten (69%) Bahamian students described themselves as "in the middle" when asked "What kind of student are you?" (Figure 1). One quarter (25%) considered themselves "above average," and 6% "below average". More males considered themselves as "in the middle" or average students (73% versus 66% for females) (Table 4-21) while females were more likely to consider themselves as above average (29%) when compared to their male counterparts (20%).

With respect to age, there was an inverse association with those who considered themselves above average students. While 31% of those 10 to 12 years old reported that they were "above average," only 23% of persons 13 to 15 years old and 20% of those aged 16 to 19 years old placed themselves in this category table 1; (Figure 4-2).

4.2. Effort in Schoolwork

When questioned on how hard they try on their schoolwork, Bahamian students were equally likely to report that they tried hard but not as hard as they could (48%) and that they always tried very hard to do their best (48%) (Figure 4-4). Four percent responded that they did not try very hard.

A gender difference was observed, as little more than half (53%) of the females reported that they always tried very hard to do their best, while two out of five (43%) males responded similarly (Figure 4-4).

As with the age differences in how students gauged themselves, similar to the association observed for perception of type of student, an inverse association was observed between age and school endeavour. It appeared that students in the youngest age group tried harder than the older students in their schoolwork. Two-thirds (66%) of 10 to 12 year olds reported that they always tried hard to do their best, while 44% of 13 to 15 year olds and 36% of the oldest group indicated the same (Fig 4-3).

Not surprisingly, the harder students tried on their schoolwork, the higher they rated themselves.

4.3. How Much Students Liked School

When asked, 49% of the students responded that they "like school very much" (Table 4-1). Thirty-six percent (36%) liked school somewhat, 11% did not like school, and 4% hated school.

There were no gender differences observed, however, once again an inverse association with age was apparent in that the older students became, the less they liked school (Table 4-1). Three out of five 10 to 12 year olds (61%) indicated that they liked school "very much;" this decreased to 38% among 15 to 19 year-olds. Looking at the other extreme, when combining students who liked school with those who did not, 14% of 10 to 12, 13% of 13 to 15, and 20% of 15 to 19 year olds fell in this group.

The more students liked school, the harder they tried in their schoolwork. This association was true for both genders, with the relationship being slightly stronger for females. Sixty-two percent (62%) of students who liked school very much indicated that they always tried very hard on their schoolwork, as compared to approximately a third in each of the other response categories.

4.4. College Plans

A total of 9 out of 10 (90%) Bahamian students were planning to go to college, 55% right after high school, and 35% a while after high school (Table 4-1). Twice as many males as females had no college plans.

Plans to attend college also diminished as age increased (Table 4-1). Two out of three (66%) 10 to 12 year olds, compared to 46% of 16 to 19 year olds, planned to attend college right after high school. Similarly, 8% of 10 to 12 year-olds, 10% of 13 to 15 year-olds, and 13% of 16 to 19 year-olds did not plan to go to college.

4.5. Learning and Behaviour Problems

4.5.1. School Discipline

Three out of five students (60%) were disciplined in school by methods such as detention and/or suspension at least once in their lives (Table 4-1). As for the likelihood of being disciplined, the difference is not very substantial. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of males and 52% of females have received school punishment, making males only 1.3 times more likely to receive discipline than females.

It was interesting to note that as young as 10 to 12 years of age, already almost half of the students had been disciplined (Table 4-1). This rose to 66% among those 16-19 years old.

There was no difference between students who had been disciplined and those who had not in the way they rated themselves (below, middle, or above average students). Differences do exist, however, between those who received and did not receive school discipline in relation to how hard they tried on their schoolwork, and for females in particular, the extent to which they liked school.

Generally, the harder students reported trying on their schoolwork, the less likely they were to have been disciplined. Eighty-four percent (84%) of those who do not try very hard, 68% of students who try hard but not as hard as they could, and half (50%) of those who always did their best responded that they been disciplined.

Similarly, females who liked school more were disciplined less. Forty-six percent (46%) of females who liked school very much, compared to 65% of females who hated school had been disciplined. For males, liking school was not related to school discipline (not shown).

4.5.2. Trouble with Homework

Six of ten students (60%) reported that they “sometimes” had trouble getting homework done (Table 4-1), with another 14% having trouble getting homework done most of the time, while 27% have never experienced problems completing their homework. Neither gender nor age distinctions emerged.

How students assessed themselves was associated with having homework troubles. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the self-reported below average students, 15% of those who considered themselves middle students, and 7% of those who rated themselves as above average, had trouble getting homework done most of the time. This relationship was slightly stronger for females.

4.5.3. Problems with Reading

Most of the students did not report any problems when asked "Is keeping up with your schoolwork hard because you have trouble reading?" (Table 4-1;Figure 4-5;). Only four percent "often" had problems keeping up due to reading difficulties as compared with 14% who "sometimes" experienced these problems.

While there were no age differences, it appeared that males had more problems keeping up with schoolwork than females. With "often" and "sometimes" combined, 21% of males, and 14% of females reported difficulties keeping up due to reading problems. As expected, associations were observed with students who having trouble reading and getting homework done.

As a consequence, a greater proportion of students who had trouble keeping up with schoolwork due to reading difficulties have attended special learning and behaviour problem classes (24%) than those with no difficulties (7%).

4.5.4. Relationships with Teachers

Little more than half of the students (58%) got along with their teachers "most of the time" as compared to "sometimes" (37%) or "never" (5%) (Table 4-1, Figure 4-6). Among the students, males were more likely to report never getting along with their teachers (8%) than females (3%). No age differences were observed.

An overwhelming majority (81%) of students reported that their teachers expected them to do "very well" (Table 4-1). Sixteen percent (16%) think their teachers expect them to do "okay," and 2%, "not well at all". A slight difference was observed with males and females apparently feeling differently about their teachers' expectations, however. Seventy-six (76%) of males, as compared to 88% of females, thought their teachers expected them to do very well.

There were age differences as well, in that the higher the age group, the lower was the level of teachers' expectations. While nine out of ten (90%) 10 to 12 year olds reported that their teachers expected them to do very well, this decreased to 71% among 16 to 19 year olds.

As for teachers forming a close relationship with the students, three out of four students (76%) have reported that in the past year, at least one teacher got to know them really well. There were no real age or gender differences.

In response to the direct question of how much they felt their teachers cared about them, most of the students responded that they felt their teachers cared about them "a lot" (40%), or "some" (39%). Eighteen percent (18%) thought their teachers cared about them "very little". There were no gender differences. As for age, however, over half (52%) of the students 10 to 12 years old thought their teachers cared for them "a lot," while around a third (32%-37%) of the older groups felt the same.

4.5.5. Classes for Learning and Behaviour Problems

One out of ten (10%) students attended classes for learning and behaviour problems (Table 4-1). There were no differences in age or gender.

Among female students, their self-assessment and degree of effort placed into schoolwork were associated with whether they attended special classes. Thirty percent (30%) of females who do not try very hard on their schoolwork, 11% who try hard but not their best, while 7% who always do their best reported attending special classes. Similarly, a third (33%) of below average females, compared to only 10% of middle and 3% of above average females have attended special classes.

The more students liked school, the less they reported attending special classes. Around 9% of students who generally liked school attended learning and behaviour problem classes, while 13% of students who did not like school, and 22% of those who

hated school reported likewise. This association was not significant when examined by gender.

4.6.1. Associations With Teacher-Student Relationships

This survey suggests that teachers can play an important role in many aspects of students' school life. This is true especially for how much students liked school, their efforts placed in schoolwork, and to a lesser extent, their college plans, how they measured themselves as students, whether they received school discipline, and trouble they encountered in completing homework.

Of those who never get along with their teachers, only 55% liked school, compared to 87% of the students who generally got along ("sometimes" and "always" combined) with their teachers (Table 4-4).

How hard students try on their schoolwork was also associated with teacher-student relationships (Table 4-2). Students who think their teachers have low expectations of them do not try very hard on their schoolwork - 24% of them reported that they do not try very hard on their schoolwork. Conversely, a meagre 3% each of the two sets of students whose teachers have "high" or "okay" expectations also indicated not trying very hard.

Getting along with teachers also goes hand in hand with school endeavour (Table 4-4). Three percent (3%) of students who get along with their teachers did not try very hard on their schoolwork, while a substantial 20% of the students who never got along with their teachers also put little effort into their work.

Whether a teacher got to know a student well, and whether students got along with their teachers was not associated with college plans, how students measured themselves, nor with school discipline. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of students whose teachers had high expectations received some form of school discipline, as compared to 70% and 71% respectively of those whose teachers had okay or low expectations (Table 4-2).

Thirteen percent (13%) of students who got along with their teachers had difficulty finishing their homework most of the time (Table 4-4) while those who never got along with their teachers were twice as probable (28%) to have frequent difficulty with this task.

Difficulty with reading had an unexpected relationship with getting to know teachers well (Table 4-3). Twenty percent (20%) of those whom a teacher had gotten to know very well reported reading problems, ("often" and "sometimes" combined - 18% of students) while 11% of those who indicated that no teacher had gotten to know them very well had reading trouble. This may reflect efforts on the teachers' part in forging stronger relationships with students who apparently have reading difficulties.

As for college plans, 76% of the low expectation group, 85% of the medium group, and 92% of the high expectation group intend to go to college (Table 4-2).

4.7. School Sponsored Extra-Curricular Activities

Forty-eight percent (48%) of students participated in organized activities after school (Table 4-1, Fig 4-7) on an average of three days a week. The majority, 44%, use only one to two days of the week for these activities.

Males and females were equally likely to engage in extracurricular activities (Table 4-1). Older students, however, were more apt to engage in these pursuits than younger students; three out of five (60%) 16 to 19 year olds, compared to 43% to 45% of the younger age sets participate in after-school ventures. Students 10 to 12 years old, however, spent an average of four days on extracurricular activities, one day more than the 3-day average of the older groups.

Most students (68%) would not mind doing these activities in order to graduate. While it made no difference to 15% of them, 17% minded if the activities were made mandatory.

Student participation in organized activities had no bearing on how often they had trouble getting their homework done. In spite of this, of students who were involved, the more days spent on their pursuits, the more prone they were to have trouble finishing their homework. Eight percent (8%) of those who took part in activities one to two days per week, 14% of those involved three to four days, and 19% who spent at least five days doing organized activities reported they had trouble getting homework done "most of the time". This association, however, was not substantial.

4.8. Relationship with Parents

Half (50%) of the students reportedly received "a lot" of attention on their schoolwork from their parents (Table 4-1). Twenty-nine percent (29%) reported "some, but not a lot" of attention while 21% got "not very much" or no attention at all from parents with their schoolwork.

There was no difference between males and females, but as students got older the less parental attention they received with their schoolwork (Table 4-1). Three out of five (61%) 10 to 12 year olds, as compared to nearly half (48%) of 13 to 15 year olds, and two out of five (40%) of 16 to 19 year olds reported getting much attention from their parents.

For ease of presentation, parental attention was grouped into two types, namely those who received a lot or some attention (78%) and not very much to none at all (22%). Differences in these two groups were apparent in many school aspects (Table 4-5).

Half (51%) of the students with a lot/some parental attention did their best on their schoolwork, as did over a third (38%) of those with little or no attention. The extent to which parents showed interest in their children's schoolwork was associated with college plans. Most students, regardless of the level of parental involvement, had plans to go to college, but differences were clearer when looking at those with no plans for attending college. Only 8% of students who received a lot/some attention, *versus* 19% of students with little or no attention, were not going to college. Students who got little or no parental concern with their schoolwork were therefore more than twice as liable not to attend college.

One out of ten students (10%) with little or no parental attention thought of themselves as below average students, compared to one out of twenty (5%) students with a lot/some attention. The two groups comparably think of themselves as "middle" students.

Having trouble completing homework was also associated with parental attention given to schoolwork. Students with little/no attention were almost twice as prone to have difficulties in finishing their homework most of the time (21%), compared to those with more attention (12%).

Parental concern made a difference in their children's' reading problems. Sixteen percent (16%) of students with a lot/ some attention, compared to a quarter (26%) of students with little/no attention indicated having reading problems. While 15% of students with little/ no parental attention attended classes for learning or behaviour problems, there were also 9% with a lot/some attention who did the same.

Most students generally have an amiable relationship with their teachers, and results show that parental attention made a difference in student- teacher relationships. Students with little or no parental concern were twice as likely to never get along with their teachers (8%) as those whose parent(s) exhibited some or a lot of involvement with their children's schoolwork (4%).

The results also showed that with regards to how hard students tried with their schoolwork, how they assessed themselves, and trouble they had completing homework, students who received no attention and those who reported receiving "a lot," exhibited similar responses. Those with no parental concern at all were the most probable to report not trying very hard on their schoolwork; they rated themselves as below average students, and reported having frequent difficulty in completing homework. However, when looking at the other extreme, this group of students was similar to those with much attention. Students with either a lot of attention or none at all were the most apt to try their very best in their schoolwork (56% [no attention], 59% [a lot]), rate themselves as above average students (25% [no attention], 30% [a lot]), and never have homework problems (25% [no attention], 31% [a lot]).

4.9. Role of Nutrition

It is well documented that eating breakfast before going to school every morning enhances performance and alertness, among other factors important to students. As for The Bahamas, it was shown that 17% of students never eat breakfast, 34% do so once to twice a week, while only 23% eat breakfast every day. Breakfast eaters were placed into two groups -- those who ate less than three times per week (51% of students) and those who ate at least three times a week (49%) - and tested for differences in school variables.

There were distinctions between the two groups of breakfast eaters in (i) how hard they usually tried on their schoolwork, (ii) how they assessed themselves, and (iii) the difficulty they had in getting homework done (Table 4-6).

Among those who tried hard on their schoolwork, 54% ate breakfast at least three times a week, as did 31.3% of students who considered themselves above average and 32% who did not have trouble getting homework done. There were about 10% less persons respectively in each category among students who ate breakfast less frequently than three times per week.

4.10. Role of Mental Health

Many aspects of mental health, namely depression, aggressive thoughts, and suicidal thoughts/attempts, were tested for associations with school life. Some were found for either males or females, but only findings on all students will be reported. Details are shown in Table 4-7.1 and 4-7.2.

Depression and aggressive thoughts appeared to affect students' school life, but only to a limited extent. Suicidal thoughts and attempts did not play a great role in school life, possibly because of a small number of students with suicidal inclinations.

Mental health was not found to be associated students' self -perception, reading problems, and college plans.

4.10.1. Depressed Feelings

The three levels of depression defined were: i) never depressed; ii) depressed sometimes; and iii) depressed often. About 87% of students who sometimes or never felt depressed within the past month reportedly liked school, as did 79% of those who were depressed often (Table 4-7.1).

Feeling depressed sometimes within the past month was the norm (43%) for the students surveyed, but the results show that those who were never depressed were the most probable to always try hard on their schoolwork. Forty-three percent (43%) of

those who were depressed sometimes or many times during the past month reported that they always tried very hard to do their best, as did 56% of those who were never depressed. Students often depressed were least likely to try very hard on their schoolwork.

Depression seemed to affect the completion of homework. Students who were never depressed were the most likely to report never having trouble completing homework (33%). This is compared to 24% who sometimes felt down and 20% of those who frequently suffered these feelings.

A similar difference occurred when looking at whether students attended classes for learning or behaviour problems. There was not a big difference between those who were depressed sometimes and those never depressed when considering whether they attended special classes (9%) or not (8%). Those who were depressed often, however, were almost twice as likely (14%) to have taken learning or behaviour problem classes.

There was some dissimilarity among the three defined levels of depression with regards to whether or not students had ever been disciplined in school. Sixty eight percent (68%) of those depressed many times, 60% of those who were depressed sometimes, and 54% of those who were never depressed within the past month had been disciplined.

4.10.2. Aggressive Thoughts

Students who never felt like hurting or killing someone were the most apt to always do their best in their schoolwork (59%). Both those who sometimes (41%) or usually (36%) felt like hurting or killing someone were equally likely to have shown the same response of always doing their best (41% and 36% respectively). At the other extreme, 5% of students who had aggressive thoughts either sometimes or always were three times more probable to respond that they did not try very hard on their schoolwork as compared to those who never reported aggressive thoughts (2%) (Table 4-7.1).

The degree to which students liked school was also associated with having aggressive thoughts. About 90% of the students who never felt like hurting or killing anyone, 83% who sometimes had aggressive thoughts, and 73% with constant hostile feelings liked school.

Students who had aggressive thoughts sometimes (69%) or almost always (71%) were more likely to report being disciplined in school than those who never had these feelings (46%).

Having hostile feelings seemed to affect relationships with teachers. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of students with no hostile feelings and 95% of those with some of these feelings got along with their teachers, compared to 85% of those with constant aggressive thoughts.

A greater proportion of those who never had aggressive thoughts also had no trouble getting homework done (35%), while 22% of students who usually, and 21% who sometimes had aggressive thoughts reported likewise.

4.10.3. Suicidal Inclinations

Suicidal thoughts and attempts show fewer associations with school life (Table 4-7.2) There were distinctions between those who have suicidal thoughts (26% of students) and those who have attempted suicide (12%) concerning student endeavour, how much students liked school, getting along with teachers, and trouble completing homework.

A greater proportion of students with no suicidal thoughts (87%) reported that they liked school than their more suicidal counterparts (78%). Harboursing suicidal thoughts apparently has some effect with regards to completing homework, but the difference between the two groups is small. Students who harbour suicidal thoughts were less likely to never have trouble getting homework done (19%) than the 30% who never have these thoughts.

Students who have attempted suicide tended not to do their best on their schoolwork compared to those who have not attempted suicide. About a third (36%) of students who have attempted suicide, compared to 49% of those who have not attempted suicide, always tried their best in their schoolwork.

Students who have attempted suicide (10%) were twice as likely to never get along with their teachers than their counterparts (5%).

4.11. Associations With Abuse

Overall, 36% of Bahamian students had ever been verbally/ emotionally abused, 22% physically abused, and 13% sexually abused. By gender, 43% of females and 29% of males reported emotional abuse; 27% of females and 18% of males physical abuse; while 21% of females and 5% of males had ever been sexually abused.

4.11.1 Physical Abuse

There were significant differences between girls who were physically abused and those who were not. This was seen in the level of effort they placed into schoolwork, how well they got along with their teachers, and whether they attended classes for learning/ behavioural problems.

Females physically abused were five times more probable not to try hard on their schoolwork (5%), four times more likely not to get along with their teachers (7%), and

twice as prone to attend learning and behaviour problem classes (16%) than those not abused (1%, 2%, and 7% respectively) (Table 4-8).

Among females, 66% of those who had been abused physically had also been disciplined in school while 48% of those who had not been abused were not ever disciplined in school.

For both male and female students, physical abuse was associated with having trouble completing homework (Table 4-9). The results for males show that 23% of those who had ever been physically abused and 13% not abused recurrently experience trouble finishing homework.

4.11.2 Sexual Abuse

Differences were also observed between girls who had ever been sexually abused and those who were not, when their efforts in schoolwork were examined. Females sexually abused were seven times more inclined not to do their best in school (7%) than those not abused (1%) (Table 4-8). Among the girls, 71% of those who were sexually abused and 49% who were not, had been disciplined in school.

Among the girls, 18% of those who were physically abused, and 15% sexually abused did not have homework problems. This is considerably less than the 31% each of females not physically or sexually abused who also reported no homework difficulties.

4.11.3 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse apparently also affects males when it comes to relationships with their teachers (Table 4-10). Males reporting abuse were twice as prone to never get along with teachers (13%) than those not abused (6%). Fifty-eight percent (58%) of females who had ever been abused emotionally had been disciplined in school, while 48% of those who had not experienced this type of abuse reported likewise (Table 4-8).

When it comes to abused females and homework difficulties, differences are clearer when examining those who never have homework troubles (Table 4-8). Nineteen percent (19%) of females emotionally abused, compared to 34% not abused reported not having homework troubles.

4.12. Influence of Drugs and Alcohol

Almost one out of ten students (8%) indicated having problems with school because of drinking or drug use. Males were almost twice as likely to report school problems from drinking and/or drug use (11% of males, 6% of females). There were no age contrasts.

When asked how often students drank alcohol for the past year, about a third (32%) admitted to drinking daily to monthly (40% of males, 25% of females). Eight percent (8%) admitted to smoking marijuana (weed) (11% of males, 5% of females), and only 1% ever took cocaine. Because of the relatively moderate prevalence of alcohol and smoking weed, differences between abstainers and non-abstainers of these drugs regarding school life were tested.

4.12.1. Alcohol

For all students, school endeavour, how much they liked school, and whether students underwent school discipline were all associated with frequency of alcohol use. Generally students who have drunk alcohol were more likely to report that they do not try very hard on their schoolwork, that they do not like/hate school, and that they were disciplined in school (Table 4-11).

Students who reported drinking alcohol in the past year were three times more likely to place little effort into their schoolwork (7%) than those who abstained (2.5%). They were also half as likely to do their best (29%) than students who did not drink alcohol (57%). Non-abstainers were more likely to dislike school (22%) than abstainers (12%), and were also more inclined to undergo school discipline (75%) than abstainers (52%).

A significant difference for males was revealed between drinkers and non-drinkers in their self-assessment, relationship with teachers, and attending learning/behaviour problem classes (Table 4-12).

A quarter (25%) of male abstainers thought of themselves as above average students, compared to 14% of males who have drunk alcohol. Males who have drunk alcohol were also twice as liable not to get along with their teachers (10%) and attend learning/behaviour problem classes (13%) than non-drinkers (5% and 7% respectively).

4.12.2. Marijuana

Differences in school aspects were also found for marijuana (weed) smokers. Table 4-13 shows that students who have not smoked weed were twice as inclined to rate themselves as above average students (26%) than weed smokers (13%). They were also more likely to have college plans (91%) than smokers (76%); and twice less probable to have taken special classes (9%) than marijuana smokers (21%).

Smoking weed apparently makes males more prone to dislike school or place little effort in schoolwork. They were also more likely to have been disciplined in school, and not get along with their teachers (Table 4-14). Almost five out of ten male non-marijuana smokers (47%) responded that they always do their best in school, while only two out of ten (21%) smokers reported the same. Thirty percent (30%) of male marijuana smokers dislike/hate school, compared to only 12% of males who abstained from weed in the

past year. Sixty-five percent (65%) of males who had never smoked weed in the past year were disciplined in school while 83% of males who had smoked reported likewise. Male weed smokers were also less likely to get along with their teachers (16%), when compared to non-smokers (7%).

Interestingly, having difficulty with reading was more probable for females who smoked weed. Thirty percent of females (30%) who had smoked weed in the past year had trouble reading, compared to 12% of those who had not smoked (Table 4-15).

4.13. Associations with Sexuality

The results show that, generally, sexual activities may play a role in some aspects of school life among female students' (Tables 4-16, 4-17). Differences between sexual abstinence or not for both genders exist only with regard to school endeavour. As for promiscuity, for all students there was a difference in college plans; however, no significant difference was found for each gender

For both genders, students who have had sex tend to try less in their schoolwork than their virgin counterparts. Almost half (45%) of students who never had sex indicated that they always tried their best in their schoolwork, compared to 29% who had sex. Also, the fewer sex partners the students had, the more likely they were to have college plans. About 79% of those who had at least three partners planned to go to college compared to 92.1% who had only one partner.

Females who had sex were less inclined to like school than their female peers who have abstained from sex (Table 4-17). Twenty-seven percent (27%) of females who had sex do not like/ hate school, while 15% of females who did not have sex responded similarly. Continuing, almost three out of four (71%) females who have had sex have also been disciplined in school, a contrast to the 54% of females who never had sex.

Females who did not have sex appeared to be more willing to go to college (96%) than those who have (89%) (Table 4-17). Also, females who never had sex appeared more inclined to get along with their teachers than females who had sex before. One percent (1%) of females who never engaged in sex, compared to 6% of females who did, reported that they never get along with their teachers.

Female promiscuity and some facets of school life also go hand in hand (Table 4-18). Of females who had sex, none with less than three sex partners indicated that they do not try very hard on their schoolwork. On the contrary, one out of five (20%) who reported having had at least three partners placed little effort into their schoolwork.

Females who had more than two sex partners were also more likely to see themselves as below average students (20%) as compared to those who had two or less partners (8%). The same may be said for homework difficulties. One out of five (20%) females

who had more than two partners, 17% who reported two sex partners, and 6% who had one partner had constant difficulties getting homework done.

4.14. Immoral Behaviour and Violence in School

Twenty-two percent (22%) of students have skipped school without an excuse, and 51% have cheated on a test within the last year (Figure 4-8). While males were more likely to have skipped school (28% males, 17% females), both genders were equally likely to cheat on tests. Also, older students were more liable to commit these acts than the younger age set (Figure 4-9); 36% of 16 to 19 year olds, 21% of 13 to 15 year olds, and 13% of 10 to 12 year olds have skipped school. Around seven out of ten (68%) 16 to 19 year-olds, over half of 13 to 15 year-olds (55%), and 30% of 10 to 12 year-olds have cheated on a test.

Thirteen percent (13%) of students have carried a weapon to school during the past month ("sometimes" and "almost all the time" combined), comprising 19% of males, and 6% of females (Figure 4-8). Further, 7% of 10 to 12, 13% of 13 to 15, and one out of five (20%) 16 to 19 year olds have carried weapons to school (Figure 4-9). Sixteen to nineteen year old males were, therefore, the most liable group to carry weapons to school. Males may be more apt to carry weapons to school, but it is interesting to note that females comprised three out of ten (28%) of all students who took weapons to school during the past 30 days.

Carrying a weapon to school was tested with several school variables. For ease of presentation, those who carried weapons "sometimes" and "almost always" were combined to form one group. The two resulting groups are those who never carried weapons to school during the past month, and those who did. The data shows that there is a difference in the two groups of students when it came to many school variables, and particularly for males (Table 4-19).

With regards to attending learning and/or behaviour problem classes, differences were found between females who carried and did not carry a weapon to school in the past month (Table 4-19). Students who carried a weapon to school received less attention from their parents in their schoolwork than their non-weapon carrying peers (Table 4-19). Eighty-one percent (81%) of students who never carried a weapon to school received at least some attention from their parents, compared to 68% of those who carried a weapon to school. This is true for each gender.

For all students, but not significant for each gender, those who carried weapons to school were less likely to be above average students. Sixteen percent (16%) of weapon carriers and 26% of non-carriers reported that they were above average students.

Students who carried a weapon to school were also more likely to have been disciplined in school. Sixty percent (60%) of non-carriers and 77% of carriers have been disciplined. This distinction exists for both males and females.

Students who carried weapons to school were more likely to have trouble completing homework. Twelve percent (12%) of non-carriers and 18% of carriers had problems getting homework done "most of the time". Associations by gender were not significant. There was no difference in weapon carriers and non-carriers to school with regards to reading problems.

Male students who carried a weapon to school (9%) were twice as likely not to try very hard on their schoolwork as compared to those who never carried weapons (4%) (Table 4-20). Looking at the other end of the spectrum, males who did not carry a weapon to school were more apt to try their best in school (46%) than those who did (32%).

A greater proportion of males who carried a weapon did not like school. Twenty-six percent (26%) of carriers indicated that they did not like/hated school compared to 11% of non-carriers.

Males who carried a weapon to school were also more liable not to get along with their teachers. Sixteen percent (16%) of carriers reported that they never got along with their teachers as compared to 6% of non-carriers.

Females who carried weapons to school were almost three times more liable to have attended classes for learning or behaviour problems than those who did not carry weapons (Table 4-20). Eight percent (8%) of females who had never carried a weapon to school in the past month, while 21% of weapon carriers, have attended these classes. There is no difference for males in this area.

College plans were less likely for students who carried a weapon to school in the past month. Ninety-one percent (91%) of students who had never carried a weapon to school intended to go to college, while 84% of weapon-carriers reported the same. This difference was not found for each gender (Table 4-19).

4.15. School-Related Worries and Perceptions

The leading worry of students under the question of "I worry about..." is, surprisingly, passing exams (Figure 4-10); see also Section 6. Twenty percent (20%) worry about this "sometimes," and 65% worry about this "a lot," for a total of 85%. Females worry more about passing exams (90%) than males (81%). There were age differences as well among females only. The older age sets were more concerned about passing exams (both 93%) than 10 to 12 year olds (82%).

A third (34%) of students worry about the fourth leading concern, violence in school, "sometimes," and about a quarter (23%) worry about school violence "a lot". Both genders and each age group were equally likely to worry about school violence.

4.16. Trust in School Authorities

One third of the students (32%) felt that if they tell their teacher their opinions about sex that others in school would find out (Figure 4-11). Twenty-nine percent (29%) of males and 36% of females think this way. Older students were more distrustful than the youngest age set (Figure 4-12). Twenty-two percent (22%) of 10 to 12 year olds, while 37% and 36% of 13 to 15 and 16 to 19 year olds respectively felt distrustful of their teachers regarding discussing sex.

A quarter (25%) reported that others in school would find out if they told their peer counsellor something personal (Figure 4-11). Twenty-one percent (21%) of females and 28% of males responded in this manner. Again, it appears that trust in peer counsellors decreases with age (Figure 4-12). Eighteen percent (18%) of 10 to 12 year olds, 27% of 13 to 15 year olds, and 30% of 15 to 19 year olds felt that their peer counsellor would tell others in school personal issues.

A quarter of school students (24%) also felt that if they tell their guidance counsellor their problems, others in school would find out (Figure 4-11). There were no gender differences, but older students again were more distrustful (Figure 4-12). Seventeen percent (17%) of 10 to 12 year olds, whereas a quarter (25%) of 13 to 15 year olds and 31% of 16 to 19 year olds felt this way.

Section 4

(Tables and Charts)

TABLE 4-1
PROPORTION (%) OF RESPONSES TO VARIOUS SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
BY GENDER AND AGE *
ALL BAHAMAS

School Activities	All Students	Males	Females	10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16-19 yrs
What kind of student are you?						
Below average	6	7.1	4.9	6	4.9	8.1
In the middle	69.4	72.6	66	63.5	71.6	72.2
Above average	24.5	20.3	29.1	30.5	23.4	19.8
How much do you like school?						
I like school very much	49.3	46.9 x	52	61.4	47.9	38.2
I like school some	35.6	39	32	24.2	39.5	41.5
I don't like school very much	11	9.5	12.4	10.5	9.9	13.8
I hate school	4	4.6	3.5	3.9	2.8	6.5
Have you ever been disciplined in school (detention, suspension)?						
Yes	59.6	66.9	52	47.2	63.8	66
Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?						
Yes, most of the time	58.2	55.8	60.9	56.0 x	59.0	59.1
Yes, but only sometimes	36.7	36.7	36.3	39.4	35.4	36.0
No/ never	5.2	7.5	2.9	4.6	5.7	4.9
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?						
Yes, most of the time	13.8	15.4 x	12.1	13.9 x	12.0	17.1
Yes, but only sometimes	59.4	58.8	60.3	55.9	63.1	56.5
No/ never	26.8	25.8	27.6	30.2	24.9	26.4
Is keeping up with your schoolwork hard because you have trouble reading?						
Yes, quite often	3.9	5.1	2.7	5.7 x	3.1	3.2
Yes, sometimes	13.9	16	11.7	16.3	13.3	12.1
No	82.3	78.9	85.7	78.0	83.6	84.6

TABLE 4-1, CONT'D

School Activities	All Students	Males	Females	10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16-19 yrs
Have you ever been in any classes for learning or behaviour problems?						
Yes	9.9	10.2 *	9.3	8.4 *	11.0	9.6
Do you plan to go to college?						
Yes, right after high school	55.4	49.7	61.2	65.6	54.0	46.2
Yes, but not right after high school	34.8	36.7	32.9	24.5	38.1	40.5
No	9.8	13.6	5.9	9.9	7.9	13.4
How much attention do your parents pay to your school work?						
A lot	49.6	49.2 *	50.2	61.3	47.5	40.1
Some, but not a lot	28.9	29.8	27.8	22.6	30.3	33.6
Not very much	16.0	16.7	15.4	12.2	17.2	18.2
None at all	5.4	4.4	6.5	3.8	4.9	8.1
How well do you think your teachers expect you to do?						
Very well	81.6	75.6	87.5	89.7	82.1	71.3
Okay	16.3	21.4	11.2	8.5	15.9	25.9
Not well at all	2.1	3.0	1.2	1.8	2.0	2.8
In the past year, has any teacher gotten to know you really well?						
Yes	75.6	76.4 *	74.6	83.2	72.3	72.9
Do you participate in any organized activities after school?						
Yes	47.8	48.9 *	46.6	45.1	42.9	60.2

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences between males and females and among the age groups exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

× Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 4-2
PROPORTION (%) OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL VARIABLES *
ALL BAHAMAS

Various School Aspects	How well do you think your teachers expect you to do?		
	Very well	Okay	Not well at all
How much do you like school?			
Very much/ Some	86.6	81.8	52.4
Do not like/ Hate	13.4	18.2	47.6
In general, how hard do you try on your schoolwork?			
Not very hard	3.5	3.1	23.8
Hard, but not as hard as I could	43.5	67.7	57.1
Always my best	53.0	29.2	19.0
What kind of student are you?			
Below average	6.0	5.6	14.3
In the middle	65.8	87.0	66.7
Above average	28.2	7.5	19.0
Do you plan to go to college?			
Yes	91.8	84.5	76.2
Have you ever been disciplined in school?			
Yes	57.6	70.3	71.4
Do you "get along" with your teachers?			
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	95.6	93.8	71.4
No/ Never	4.4	6.3	28.6
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?			
Yes, most of the time	13.5	13.9	23.8
Sometimes	57.4	70.3	52.4
Never	29.1	15.8	23.8

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-3

**PROPORTION (%) OF WHETHER A TEACHER GOT TO KNOW STUDENTS WELL
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL VARIABLES *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various School Aspects	In the past year, has any teacher gotten to know you really well?	
	Yes	No
How much do you like school?		
Very much/ Some	87.6	76.4
Do not like/ Hate	12.4	23.6
In general, how hard do you try on your schoolwork?		
Not very hard	3.5	5.0
Hard, but not as hard as I could	45.2	55.0
Always my best	51.2	39.9
Do you "get along" with your teachers?		
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	96.9	88.2
No/ Never	3.1	11.8
Do you have trouble reading?		
Yes	20.0	10.5

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-4

**PROPORTION (%) OF LEVEL OF "GETTING ALONG" WITH TEACHERS
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL VARIABLES *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various School Aspects	Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?	
	Yes	No
How much do you like school?		
Very much/ Some	86.6	54.9
Do not like/ Hate	13.4	45.1
In general, how hard do you try on your schoolwork?		
Not very hard	3.0	19.6
Hard, but not as hard as I could	48.4	35.3
Always my best	48.5	45.1
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?		
Yes, most of the time	13.1	27.5
Sometimes	60.6	39.2
Never	26.4	33.3

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-5
PROPORTION (%) OF LEVEL OF PARENTS' ATTENTION TO SCHOOL WORK
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS

Various School Aspects	How much attention do your parents pay to your school work?	
	A Lot/ Some	Not very much/ None at All
In general, how hard do you try on your schoolwork?		
Not very hard	2.4	8.9
Hard, but not as hard as I could	46.6	53.5
Always my best	51.0	37.6
Do you plan to go to college?		
Yes	92.5	81.5
What kind of student are you?		
Below average	4.9	10.3
In the middle	69.0	70.9
Above average	26.1	18.8
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?		
Most of the time	11.9	20.5
Sometimes	59.7	58.1
No/ never	28.4	21.4
Is keeping up with your schoolwork hard because you have trouble reading?		
Yes	15.5	26.1
Have you ever been in any classes for learning or behaviour problems?		
Yes	8.5	14.9
Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?		
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	95.6	91.9
Never	4.4	8.1

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-6

**PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENT FREQUENCY OF EATING BREAKFAST
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various School Aspects	Frequency of Breakfast Eating	
	Never to Twice a Week	Three or more times/ week
In general, how hard do you try on your schoolwork?		
Not very hard	4.2	3.4
Hard, but not as hard as I could	54.1	42.7
Always my best	41.6	53.9
What kind of student are you?		
Below average	7.9	3.1
In the middle	71.3	65.6
Above average	20.8	31.3
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?		
Yes, most of the time	15.8	9.8
Sometimes	61.6	58.4
No	22.6	31.8

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-7.1
PROPORTION (%) OF DEPRESSION AND AGGRESSIVE THOUGHTS
AMONG STUDENTS, BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS

School Aspects	Feeling Depressed			Aggressive Thoughts		
	Never	Sometimes	Often	Never	Sometimes	Often
In general, how hard do you try on your school work?						
Not very hard	3.6	2.2	6.2	1.5	5.0	5.4
Not as hard as I could	40.7	54.8	50.3	40.0	54.0	58.7
Always my best	55.7	42.9	43.5	58.6	41.0	35.9
How much do you like school?						
Very much/ Some	86.6	86.1	78.8	89.8	82.9	72.8
Do not like/ Hate	13.4	13.9	21.2	10.2	17.1	27.2
Have you ever been disciplined in school?						
Yes	54.2	60.3	68.2	46.3	69.1	71.1
Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?						
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	95.2 *	96.3	92.7	97.0	95.4	84.6
Never	4.8	3.8	7.3	3.0	4.6	15.4
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?						
Yes, most of the time	14.3	11.0	18.2	14.3	11.2	17.6
Sometimes	53.1	64.9	62.0	51.2	67.8	60.4
No	32.6	24.1	19.8	34.5	21.1	22.0
Have you ever been in any classes for learning or behaviour problems?						
Yes	7.7	8.7	14.3	9.7 *	8.5	13.6

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

✕ Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 4-7.2
PROPORTION (%) OF SUICIDAL INCLINATIONS AMONG STUDENTS
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL QUESTIONS
ALL BAHAMAS

School Aspects	Suicidal Thoughts		Suicide Attempts	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
In general, how hard do you try on your school work?				
Not very hard	3.7 ✕	3.5	2.0	3.9
Not as hard as I could	53.7	46.9	61.8	47.1
Always my best	42.6	49.6	36.3	49.0
How much do you like school?				
Very much/ Some	78.4	86.9	78.6 ✕	85.4
Do not like/ Hate	21.6	13.1	21.4	14.6
Have you ever been disciplined in school?				
Yes	62.4 ✕	58.8	62.7 ✕	59.2
Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?				
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	93.4 ✕	95.6	90.1	95.5
Never	6.6	4.4	9.9	4.5
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?				
Yes, most of the time	14.0	12.9	14.7 ✕	12.8
Sometimes	66.7	57.5	61.8	59.6
No	19.3	29.6	23.5	27.6
Have you ever been in any classes for learning or behaviour problems?				
Yes	11.4 ✕	8.9	12.0 ✕	8.9

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

✕ Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 4-8

**PROPORTION (%) OF FEMALE STUDENTS WHO WERE ABUSED
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

School Aspects	Abuse					
	Emotionally Abused	Not Emotionally Abused	Physically Abused	Not Physically Abused	Sexually Abused	Not Sexually Abused
In general, how hard do you try on your school work?						
Not very hard	4.3 *	0	4.5	1.0	6.5	0.9
Hard, but not as hard as I could	49.5	39.9	50.5	40.5	52.2	41.5
Always my best	46.3	60.1	45.0	58.6	41.3	57.7
Have you ever been disciplined in school?						
Yes	58.0	48.2	65.8	48.2	70.7	49.0
Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?						
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	95.7 *	98.0	92.8	98.4	95.7 *	98.0
No/ never	4.3	2.0	7.2	1.6	4.3	2.0
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?						
Yes, most of the time	12.8	11.8	17.1	10.3	17.4	10.8
Sometimes	68.1	54.3	64.9	58.6	67.4	58.4
No	19.1	33.9	18.0	31.1	15.2	30.8
Have you ever been in any classes for learning or behaviour problems?						
Yes	11.2 *	8.7	16.2	7.4	13.2 *	7.7

*Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist with p value set at <= 0.05.

* Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 4-9

**PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS REPORTING PHYSICAL ABUSE OR NOT
BY TROUBLE COMPLETING HOMEWORK *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Do you have trouble getting your homework done?	All Students		Males		Females	
	Physically Abused	Not Physically Abused	Physically Abused	Not Physically Abused	Physically Abused	Not Physically Abused
Yes, most of the time	20.0	11.9	23.1	13.4	17.1	10.3
Sometimes	63.7	58.5	62.8	58.5	64.9	58.6
No	16.3	29.6	14.1	28.1	18.0	31.1

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-10

**PROPORTION (%) EMOTIONAL/VERBAL ABUSE AMONG MALE STUDENTS
BY RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?	Emotionally/ Verbally Abused	Not Emotionally/ Verbally Abused
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	87.4	94.4
No/ Never	12.6	5.6

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-11

**PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE ABSTAINED OR NOT FROM ALCOHOL
DURING THE PAST YEAR, BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various School Aspects	Frequency of Alcohol Drunk During the Past Year					
	All Students		Males		Females	
	Abstained	Did Not Abstain	Abstained	Did Not Abstain	Abstained	Did Not Abstain
In general, how hard do you try on your schoolwork?						
Not very hard	2.5	7	3.5	9.1	1.7	3.4
Hard, but not as hard as I could	40.9	63.9	43.7	63.4	38.6	64.7
Always my best	56.6	29.1	52.8	27.4	59.7	31.9
How much do you like school?						
Very much/ Some	87.7	78.1	88.8	81.3	86.8	73.0
Do not like/ Hate	12.3	21.9	11.2	18.7	13.2	27.0
Have you ever been disciplined in school?						
Yes	52.4	75.3	59.6	78.0	46.5	71.1

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-12

**PROPORTION (%) OF MALE STUDENTS ONLY WHO HAVE ABSTAINED OR NOT FROM ALCOHOL DURING THE PAST YEAR, BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various School Aspects	Frequency of Alcohol Drunk During the Past Year	
	Abstained	Did Not Abstain
What kind of student are you?		
Below average	6.7	6.4
In the middle	68.4	79.7
Above average	24.9	13.9
Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?		
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	94.9	89.6
No /Never	5.1	10.4
Have you ever been in any classes for learning or behaviour problems?		
Yes	7.1	13.3

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-13

PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE ABSTAINED OR NOT FROM SMOKING MARIJUANA ("WEED") DURING THE PAST YEAR BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS * ALL BAHAMAS

Various School Aspects	Frequency of Marijuana ("Weed") Taken During the Past Year					
	All Students		Males		Females	
	Abstained	Did Not Abstain	Abstained	Did Not Abstain	Abstained	Did Not Abstain
What kind of student are you?						
Below average	5.7	5.3	7.1 ×	3.8	4.3 ×	9.1
In the middle	68.2	81.3	71.7	79.2	64.8	86.4
Above average	26.2	13.3	21.2	17.0	30.9	4.5
Do you plan to go to college?						
Yes	91.0	75.7	87.0	76.5	94.8	73.9
Have you ever been in any classes for learning or behaviour problems?						
Yes	8.5	20.8	8.8	20.0	8.2	22.7

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

× Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 4-14

**PROPORTION (%) OF MALE STUDENTS ONLY WHO HAVE ABSTAINED OR NOT
FROM SMOKING MARIJUANA ("WEED") DURING THE PAST YEAR
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various School Aspects	Frequency of Marijuana ("Weed") Taken During the Past Year	
	Abstained	Did Not Abstain
In general, how hard do you try on your school work?		
Not very hard	5.8	5.7
Not as hard as I could	47.7	73.6
Always my best	46.5	20.8
How much do you like school?		
Very much/ Some	87.9	69.8
Do not like/ Hate	12.1	30.2
Have you ever been disciplined in school?		
Yes	64.8	83.0
Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?		
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	93.4	84.3
No/ Never	6.6	15.7

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-15

**PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE ENGAGED IN SEXUAL INTERCOURSE
BY LEVEL OF SCHOOL WORK ENDEAVOUR *
ALL BAHAMAS**

In general, how hard do you try on your school work?	Have You Had Sexual Intercourse?					
	All Students		Males		Females	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Not very hard	5.5	4.4	5.8	7.4	4.9	2.7
Hard, but not as hard as I could	66.0	50.1	65.5	49.3	67.1	50.7
Always my best	28.5	45.4	28.7	43.4	28.0	46.7

**PROPORTION (%) OF SEX PARTNERS
BY COLLEGE PLANS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Do You Plan To Go To College?	Number of Sex Partners		
	1 person	2 Persons	More Than 2 persons
Yes	92.1	92.5	79.4

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-16

**PROPORTION (%) OF FEMALE STUDENTS WHO HAVE ENGAGED IN SEXUAL INTERCOURSE
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various School Aspects	Had Sexual Intercourse	
	Yes	No
How much do you like school?		
Very much/ Some	72.8	85.3
Do not like/ Hate	27.2	14.7
Have you ever been disciplined in school?		
Yes	71.3	54.2
Do you plan to go to college?		
Yes	88.9	96.0
Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?		
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	93.8	98.7
No/ Never	6.2	1.3

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-17

**PROPORTION (%) OF SEX PARTNERS AMONG FEMALES STUDENTS
BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

School Aspects	Sex Partners (%)		
	1 person	2 Persons	More Than 2 Persons
In general, how hard do you try on your school work?			
Not very hard	0	0	20.0
Hard, but not as hard as I could	62.3	83.3	73.3
Always my best	37.7	16.7	6.7
What kind of student are you?			
Below average	7.5	0	20.0
In the middle	64.2	75.0	73.3
Above average	28.3	25.0	6.7
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?			
Yes, most of the time	5.8	16.7	20.0
Sometimes	55.8	66.7	60.0
No	38.5	16.7	20.0

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 4-18

**PROPORTION (%) OF ALL STUDENTS WHO HAVE CARRIED A WEAPON TO SCHOOL DURING THE PAST MONTH, BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various School Aspects	During the past month, did you carry a weapon to school?					
	All Students		Males		Females	
	Never	Yes	Never	Yes	Never	Yes
How much attention do your parents pay to your schoolwork?						
A Lot/ Some	80.5	68.1	81.8	70.0	79.4	60.7
Not Very Much/ None	19.5	31.9	18.2	30.0	20.6	39.3
What kind of student are you?						
Below average	5.7	7.4	6.9 ²	7.6	4.6 ×	7.1
In the middle	68.2	76.9	71.1	78.3	65.6	71.4
Above average	26.1	15.7	22.0	14.1	29.7	21.4
Have you ever been disciplined in school?						
Yes	56.9	77.3	64.1	78.3	50.7	74.1
Do you plan to go to college?						
Yes	91.3	84.0	87.9 ×	81.1	94.3 ×	92.9
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?						
Most of the time	12.3	17.8	13.2 ×	18.9	11.6 ×	11.1
Sometimes	59.7	63.6	58.9	63.3	60.4	66.7
No/ never	28.0	18.6	27.9	17.8	27.9	22.2

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist with p value set at <= 0.05.

× Differences are not statistically significant for each gender.

TABLE 4-19

PROPORTION (%) OF MALE STUDENTS ONLY WHO HAVE CARRIED A WEAPON TO SCHOOL DURING THE PAST MONTH, BY VARIOUS SCHOOL ASPECTS * ALL BAHAMAS

Various School Aspects	Carried a weapon to school during the past month	
	Never	Yes
In general, how hard do you try on your schoolwork?		
Not very hard	4.4	8.7
Hard, but not as hard as I could	49.7	59.8
Always my best	45.9	31.5
How much do you like school?		
Very much/ Some	88.7	73.9
Do not like/ Hate	11.3	26.1
Do you "get along" with most of your teachers?		
Yes, most of the time/ Sometimes	94.5	84.3
Never	5.5	15.7

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

FIGURE 4-1

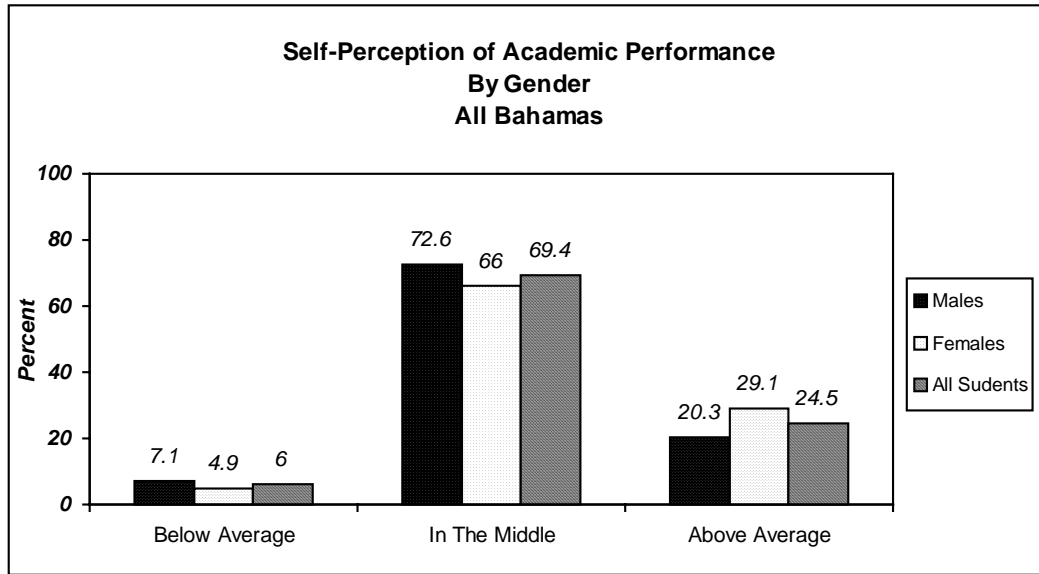


FIGURE 4-2

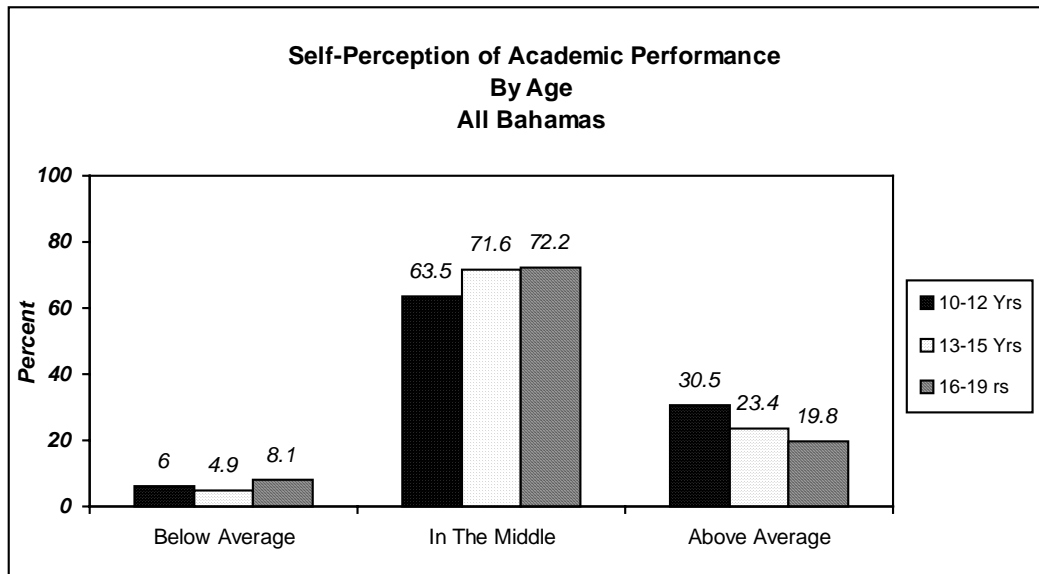


FIGURE 4-3

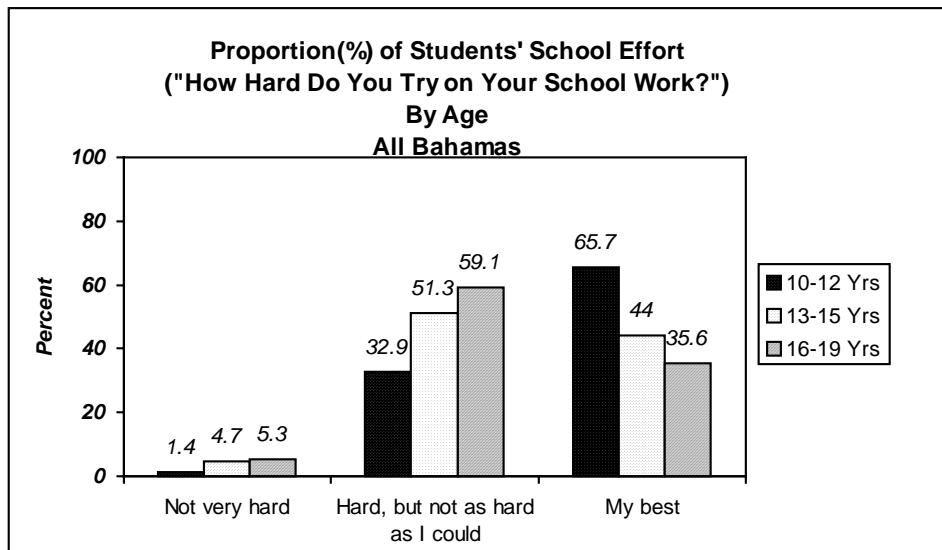


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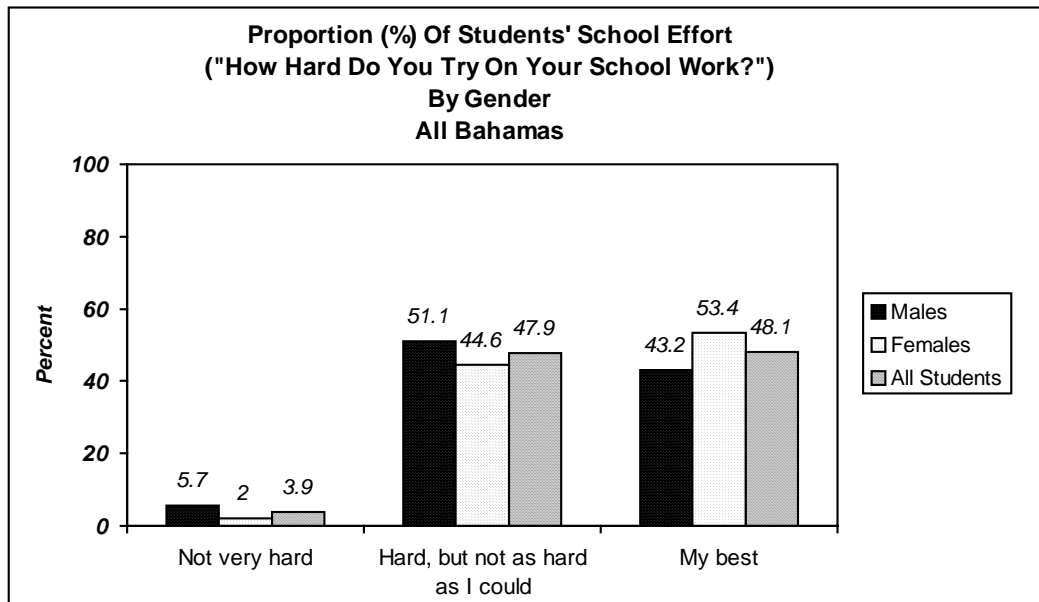


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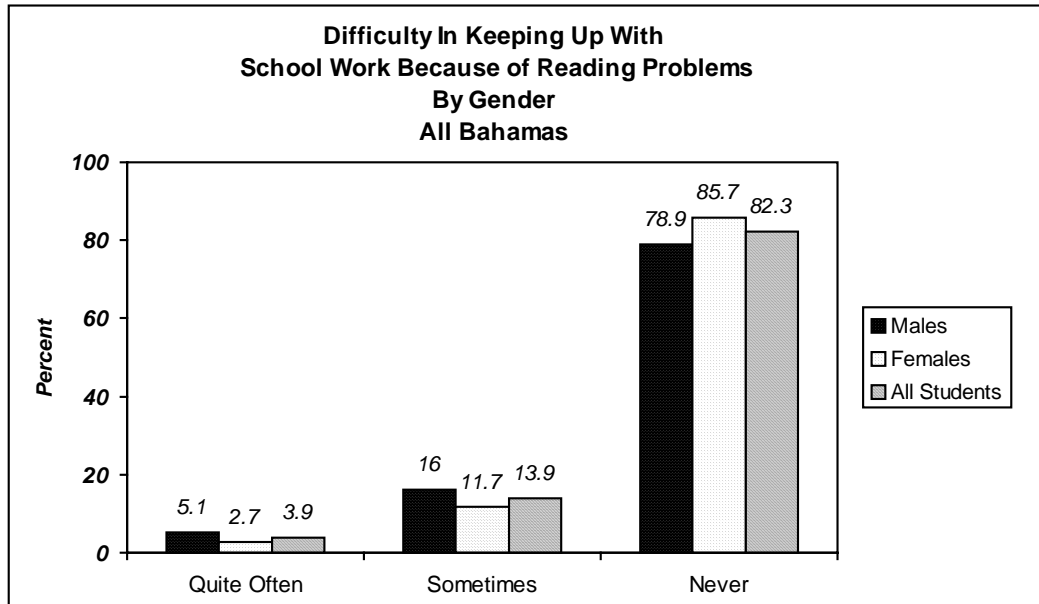


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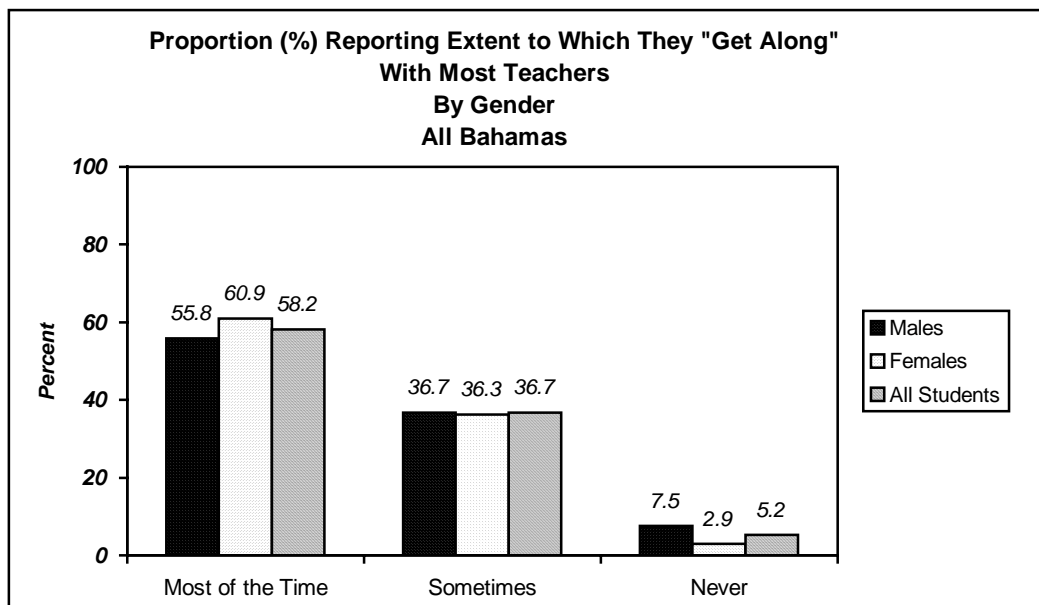


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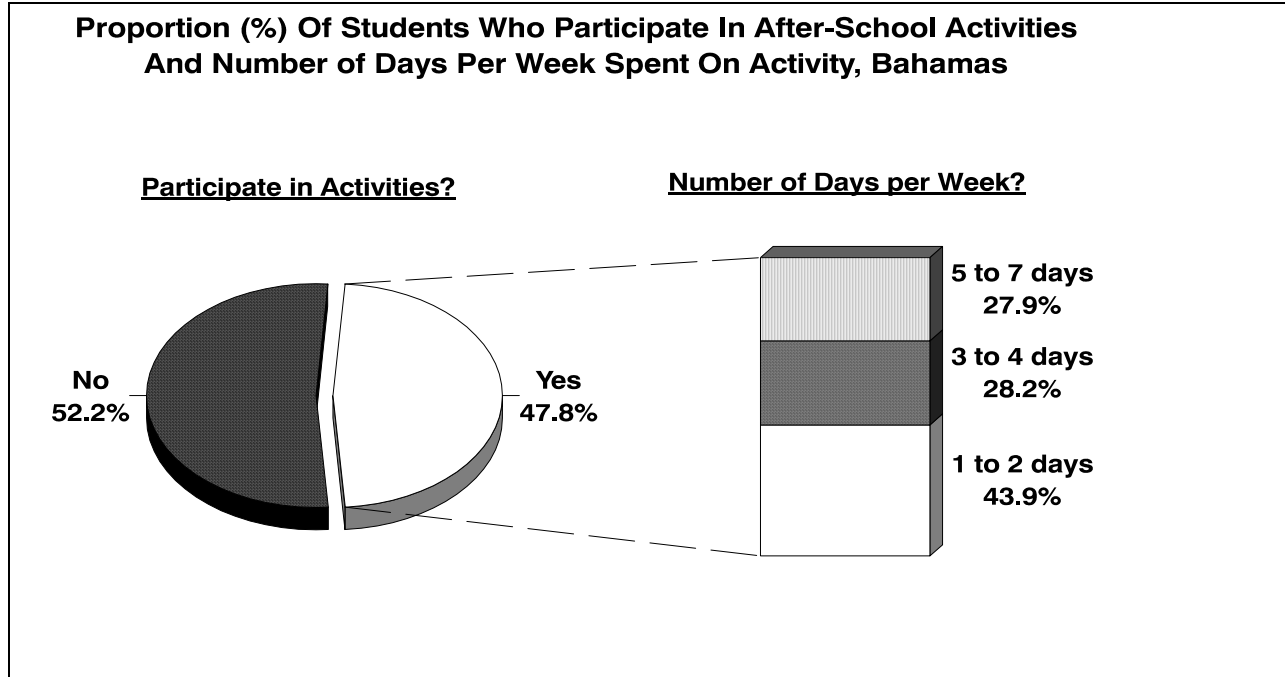


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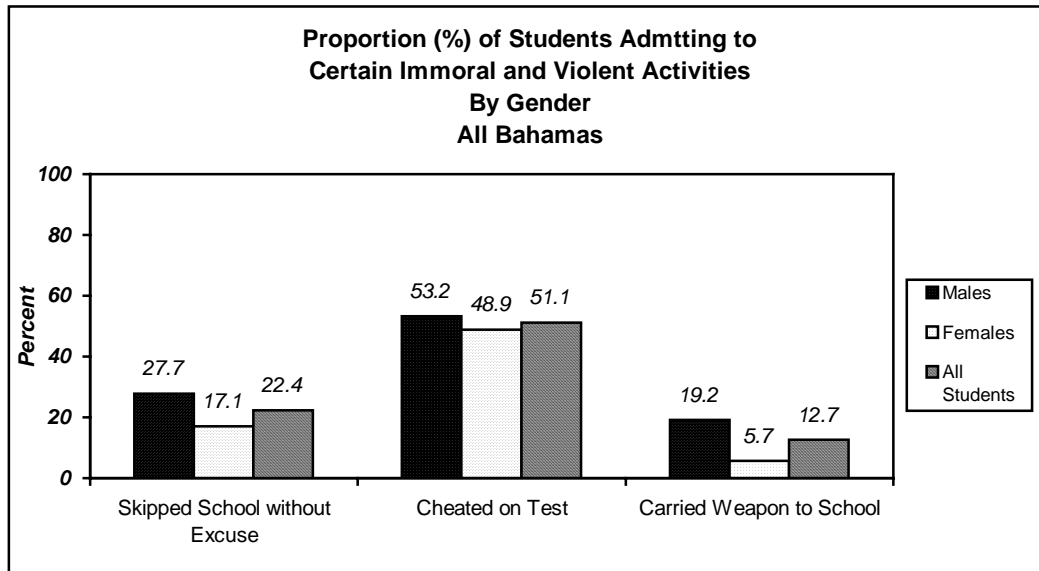


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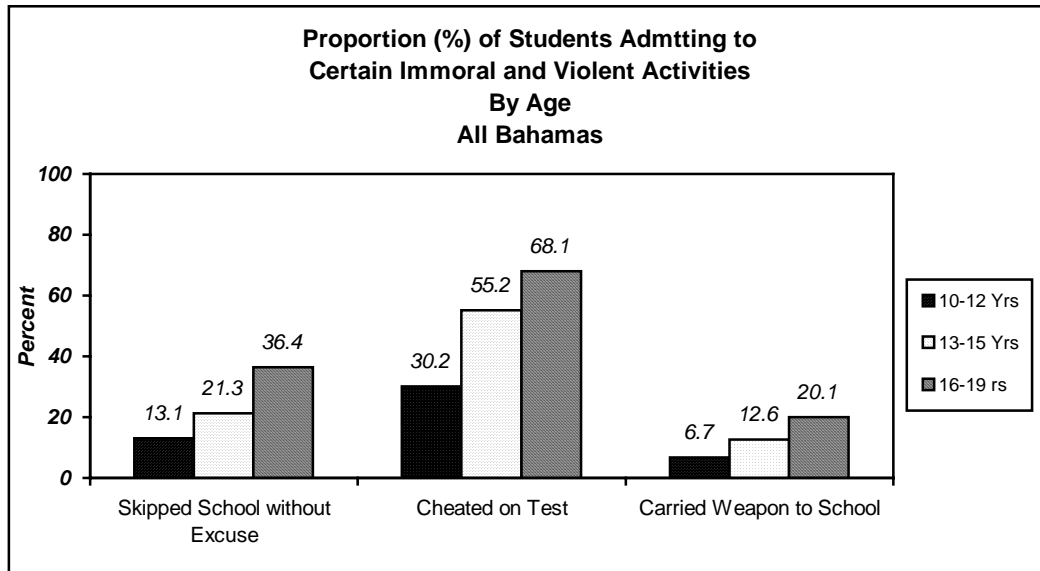


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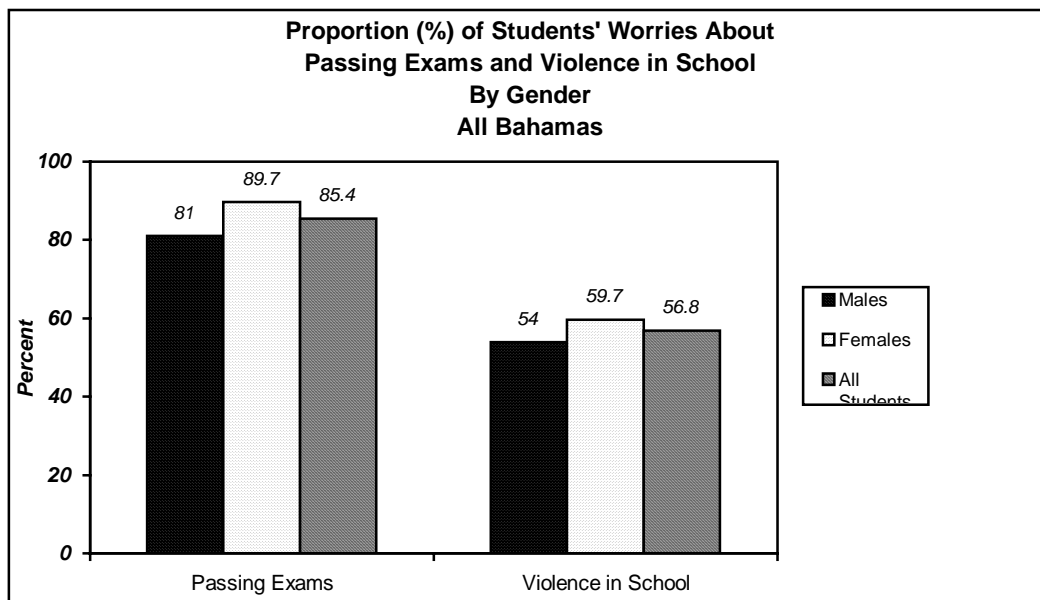


FIGURE 4-11

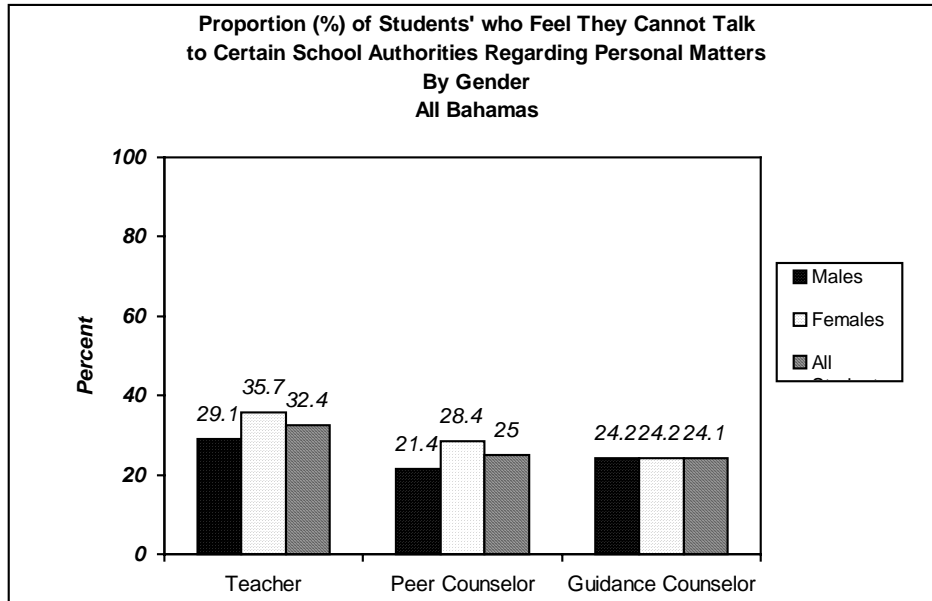
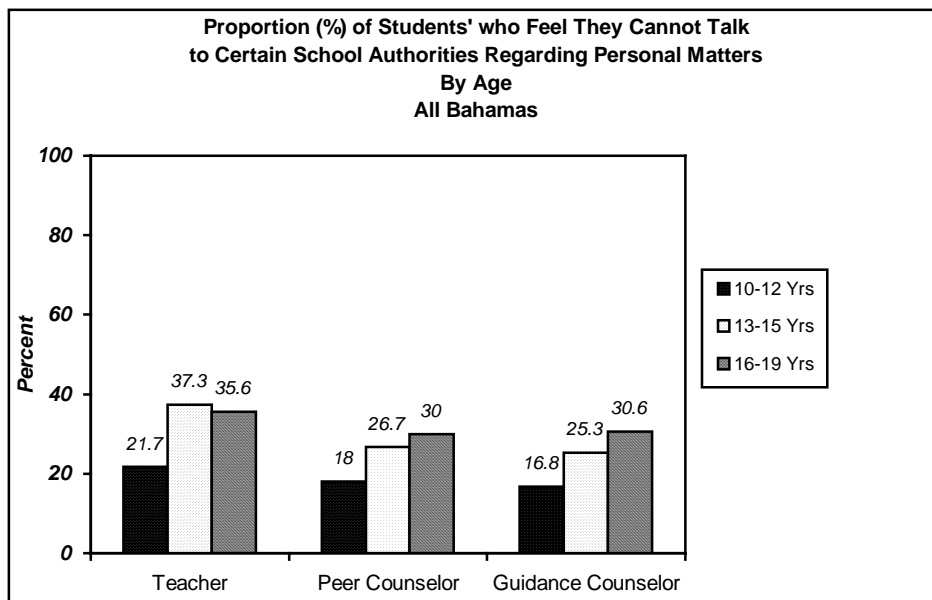


FIGURE 4-12



Section 5

The Adolescent in the Family

5. The Adolescent in the Family

5.1. Family Size

The average (and median) Bahamian student family size, including the student, was six persons. Among the students, 21% indicated having five people in their family. Family size groupings showed that 25% of the students lived in homes with 1 to 3 other persons, 52% with 4 to 6 persons, 17% with 7 to 9 persons, and 6% resided in homes with 10 or more other people (Table 5- 1).

Room-sharing also measured to some extent the crowdedness of a home. Most (97%) of the students usually slept at home, while others slept at other people's homes, on the street or resided at a hostel. On average, students shared their sleeping quarters with one other person. About 31% of the students did not share rooms, 55% shared with 1 to 2 other persons, 12% with 3 to 4 persons, and 3% shared with 5 or more other persons (Table 5-1).

Males shared their rooms with more persons than did female students. Twenty-six percent (26%) of males, compared to only 12% of females, had five or more other persons in their rooms (Table 5-1). To a small extent, as students became older, they shared their rooms with fewer persons.

Family size and the number of persons with whom students shared their rooms were statistically tested with several aspects, including abuse, mental health, violence, whether there was enough food in the house, level of family attention and care, schoolwork attention, trouble completing homework, and worry over home violence and parents leaving. It was found that family size bore no relation to most of these factors. Furthermore, the associations that were found (namely attention from the family, aggression, food in the house, and concern over violence in the home and parents leaving) were not substantial (Table 5-2).

As the number of persons residing with the students increased, the family attention received decreased. This relationship was not very strong, however, as only the group of students from homes with ten or more people was dramatically dissimilar from the others. About a third (36%) of the students who resided in homes with ten or more persons felt they received "a lot " of family attention, compared to approximately half (49% to 58%) of those living with less people. This association was not significant when examined by gender. No such relationship existed with the number of persons with whom students shared their rooms.

Parental attention to their children's schoolwork also diminished as family size increased. Between 16% and 19% of students who lived in homes with six or fewer persons, compared to 28% to 31% living with more, thought they received schoolwork attention "not much/ none at all" from their parents. These results were more pronounced for males. For males, parental attention to schoolwork also was apparently affected by the number of persons with whom they shared their rooms. Males sharing their rooms with at least three other persons were twice as likely to receive schoolwork

attention "not much/ none at all" (32% to 39%) than those sharing with less persons (16% to 18%).

Interestingly, male students who reported aggressive thoughts, i.e., felt like hurting/killing someone, and were living in homes with ten or more other persons were distinct from those living with fewer persons. While 61% to 71% of males in homes with less than ten persons reported having aggressive thoughts (frequent and occasional combined), only 36% of males in homes with ten or more persons reported likewise.

Students who shared their rooms with five or more persons especially, reported being hungry "a lot" because of "no food in the house" (26%), when compared to less than 6.7% of students who did not share a room. A near significant association between family size and food shortage existed for males.

For males, the concern about violence in the home heightened as family size increased. (Table 5-2). At least 30% of the males who lived in homes with more than six other persons indicated that they worried about home violence, as compared to those living with three persons or less (14%). As for room sharing, 17% of students who slept with no-one else in their bedrooms, a third (30% to 34%) of those who shared rooms with one to four persons, and 42% of students who shared rooms with five or more persons, worried about home violence.

Also for males only, as the number of occupants per room increased, apprehension over parents leaving increased as well. Three out of four (73%) males who shared their rooms with five or more persons worried about parents leaving, compared to 28% to 43% of males sharing with less persons.

5.2. Parental Structure

Nine out of ten (89%) students surveyed had their mother living in the same house, but only half (53%) lived with their father there. As for the remaining family, 23% reported that their grandparent(s), 28%, other adult relatives, 11%, adult non-relatives, and 81%, reported other youth such as brothers and sisters, resided with them. There was an age difference with mothers in the home; as age increased, percentages of students with at-home mothers decreased (from 92% to 85%) (Table 5-1).

Half (50%) of the students lived with both parents. Two out of five (39%) had their mother as the only parent at home, while 3%, their father, and 9% did not live with their parents. These results were similar for both genders (Table 5-1).

Interestingly, however, the results suggested a trend that two parent families may be on the decrease. Fifty-five percent (55%) of 10 to 12 year-olds compared to 43% of 16 to 19 year-olds resided with both parents. The results of mothers only and fathers only (among parents) in homes were comparable, but 16 to 19 year olds were more likely to

reside with neither of their parents (12%) than 10 to 12 (7%) and 13 to 15 year olds (8%) (Table 5-1).

When tested for differences in various aspects of the students' life, parental structure played a limited role. The more substantial findings were found with respect to the committing of certain deviant acts (Table 5-3).

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of males who lived with their mother shoplifted, compared to over half (53%) of males who did not reside with their mother. There was no significant difference for females. Also, 6% of students who lived with their mothers, while twice as many (13%) who did not, committed burglary (near significance for each gender).

Males who did not live with their mother were also more likely to have carried a weapon to school (33%) than those who lived with their mothers (17%). A smaller yet significant difference (not significant for each gender) existed for weapon carrying at other times as well - 23% of students with mothers, 32% of students not living with their mothers. Continuing, a quarter (25%) of the students who did not live with their mothers have gang experience, compared to 12% who lived with their mother (significant for both genders).

A greater percentage of students (both genders) who did not live with their mother drank alcohol (50%) than those who resided with their mother (30%). Further, 11% of females not residing with their mother had smoked weed, compared to only 4% of those who resided with their mother.

Other, albeit less obvious, associations were revealed. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of females not living with their mothers frequently felt depressed during the past month, compared to 22% of females residing with their mother. Students (also significant for each gender) received less attention to their schoolwork when not living with their mothers (37% got "not very much/none" attention) than students living with their mothers (19%). Males living with their mothers were less likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse (52%) than males not living with their mothers (78%).

Of sexually abused students (not significant for each gender), the results suggested an increase in the likelihood of being abused by an at-home adult if not living with their mothers (50%) than if residing with their mothers (21%) (Table not shown).

There were no differences in perception of mother's care and communication. Two-parent and mother-only homes were also tested for differences. A father's supposed influence (or lack of it) was similar to that of a mother's, only in this case they were more pronounced for females. Females living in single-parent homes with their mother were more likely to have been in a fight with weapons, shoplifted, and stolen from their parents/family members (11%, 27%, and 28% respectively) than females in two-parent homes (2%, 18%, 19%). These females were also more likely to have carried a weapon to school (8%) than those having both parents at home (3%) (Table 5-3).

Students (significant for females, near significance for males) in single-parent homes were more likely to have carried weapons at other times (29%) than students who resided with both parents (19%). Skipping school was also slightly more likely to occur for students who lived with their mothers only (25%) than those residing with both parents (19%; not significant for each gender).

Female students in homes with no father were twice as inclined to report getting "not very much/none" schoolwork attention from their parents (27%) and to frequently feel depressed (27%) than females who resided with both parents (13% and 17% respectively).

Student perceptions regarding their parents also differed according to a father's presence. While only 7% of students whose father lived with them felt "very little" that their father cared about them, a considerable 26% of students in single-parent homes felt the same. Both males and females expressed similar thoughts. In addition, female students who did not live with their father felt that communication with them were lacking. Forty-two percent (42%) of females who resided with their father, compared to 61% who did not, reported feeling "very little" that they could tell their dad about their problems. Apprehension over parents leaving also increased for females when not living with their father (42%), compared to those in two-parent homes (29%).

Associations with drug use, gang activity, and sexuality were not found with regard to a father's presence.

5.3. Family Relationships

Most (83%) of the students felt that their mothers cared about them "a lot." These thoughts did not apply to the same extent to fathers however. Sixty-three percent (63%) of the students surveyed felt their fathers cared about them "a lot." Similar results were observed for other family members (64%) (Table 5-1).

These sentiments were similar by gender, as seen in Table 5-1. Looking at age however, to a low extent, the older students were, the less they felt that their parents and other family members cared about them.

Examining the extent of parent-student communication, 41% of students felt they could tell their mother and father (33%) a lot about their problems (Table 5-1). While there were no gender differences for talking with their mothers, communication with their fathers seemed to be an easier task for males. Two out of five males (39%), compared to 27% of females, felt that they could talk to their fathers a lot about their problems. As for age differences, the older students were, the less they felt they could talk with their parents.

A quarter (25%) of the students felt they were understood "very little" by family members while 33% thought their family understood them "some," and 34% reported that their family members understood them "a lot,." As for attention, 18% apparently got

"very little," 28% reported receiving "some" while half, 49%, felt their attention was not deficient (Table 5-1).

More males (42%) felt they received family understanding than females (33%). While there were no gender differences for family attention, again there were age differences. The older students were, the less understanding and attention they felt they received (Table 5-1).

Some students may not communicate as they would like with their parents because of lack of trust. Seventeen percent (17%) of all students felt that if they told their parents something personal, others in the neighbourhood would find out.

Looking at family influences on sexuality, of students who had abstained from sex, 68% had done so because "their parents' values are against it." There were no significant gender or age differences.

5.3.1. Associations with Family Relationships

Aspects of mental health, violence/ illegal behaviour, drug and alcohol use, sexuality, and abuse in the home were examined for any differences with regard to students perception of family relationships. Associations were found for all except sexuality, where it turned out that family relations had little to no bearing on whether students had sex, age of first sexual experience, nor promiscuity.

Generally, the more students who thought their parents and other family members cared about, communicated with, and paid attention to them, the lower the percentage who committed acts such as skipping school, cheating on tests, shoplifting, burglary, vandalism, weapon carrying, and joining gangs. While few of these factors were related to the frequency of practicing these activities (See Section 7), many, on the other hand, were with whether or not students had committed them in the first place ("never" or "once or more" during past year). Gender distinctions were also revealed: associations found for males, the majority, tended specifically to be due to the degree of family attention. As for female associations, most pertained to the level in which family members other than parents cared about them. Maternal relationships involving communication and care affected both genders.

When examining males who thought they receive a lot of family attention, 15% fought with weapons 31% shoplifted and 6% burglarised, as compared to 25%, 45% and 16%, respectively, among those who felt they received little attention. Similarly, 9% of males who received a lot of attention, compared to 30% with little attention from their family, had carried a weapon to school and at other times respectively within the past month. Males who received little family attention (25%) were also more likely to have gang experience: than those with much attention (14%).

Females, on the other hand, who reported "very little" that family members other than their parents "cared about them" were more likely to have committed similar activities

(Table 5-4). Unexpectedly, that family members cared somewhat about them were the most likely to have skipped school, 25% been in a fight with weapons and 11% carried a weapon to school during the past month, compared to only 13%, 4%, and 8%, respectively, who thought that their family cared about them "a lot."

Lack of family concern may be a reason why some females did not feel the need to remain at home. Twelve percent (12%) of those whose family cared little, compared to 4% of those who were shown much family concern, had run away from home in the past year. In addition, 10% of those whose family showed them only little to some interest had gang membership, a contrast to the 3% family care was not lacking.

Relationships with their mother especially had an effect on all students when it came to practicing unfavourable activities (Table 5-4). Students who felt they could tell their mother very little about their problems were more likely to have skipped school (28%), cheated on a test (60%), shoplifted (34%), and carried a weapon at times other than school (29%), compared to students who felt they could talk to their mothers a lot (16%, 42%, 25% and 17% respectively). Similarly, among those who felt their mother cared somewhat about them, 24%, 70%, 33% and 41% respectively engaged in those activities among those who felt their mother cared about them a lot, 15.7% skipped school, 50% cheated on a test, 25% shoplifted and 22% had carried a weapon.

The lower the perception of family, the more likely drug use, especially alcohol use. For example, females who thought that their mother 55% and father 38% cared about them somewhat were overwhelmingly more likely to have drunk alcohol in the past year than those with much from each parent (20% and 19%). Again, it appeared that males were more affected by family attention - those who had "a lot" respectively, were the least likely to have drunk alcohol (34%) than males with little to some attention (51%). Similar but less sweeping associations (all with measures of family communication) were found for weed and cigarette smoking as well.

Overall, as level of perceived family care and communication increased, the percentage of students reporting depressed feelings, aggressive thoughts, and suicidal tendencies decreased (See Section 6). Family communication and attention (the focus here), however, appeared to play a greater role with regard to student mental health than how much students thought their parents cared about them. These more substantial relationships, unless otherwise stated, were significant for each gender.

Approximately one quarter (27%, 22%) of the students who felt "very little" that they could talk to their parents about their problems reported frequent depressed feelings. These were more prone to depressed feelings than those who felt they could talk to their mothers (11%) and fathers (14%) about their problems.

Similarly, a third (32%) of the students who felt their family paid "very little" attention to them reported feeling depressed many times during the past month, twice as prone than those who received much attention (14%). These three relationships were similar in strength.

Looking at aggressive thoughts, differences were clearer among those who never had these emotions. One out of three (34%) students who had very little communication with their mother compared to 52% of those with a lot, never felt like hurting or killing someone. As for parental discourse with their fathers, 36% of students who had little communication, and 53% of those students felt they could talk to their fathers a lot about their problems.

Students who indicated receiving "a lot" of family attention were the most likely to not harbour hostile thoughts (53%), compared to those who received very little (29%).

Suicidal tendencies also went hand in hand with level of communication. About a third (36%, 31%) of the students who had little communication with mothers and fathers, respectively had suicidal thoughts, compared to 15% and 18% who reported good communication. The association between talking with and suicidal thoughts was not significant when examined for each gender, however. Almost half (46%) of the students who reported receiving very little family attention, and 17% with a lot of attention, had suicidal thoughts, the latter being about three times more susceptible.

Communication with their mothers was associated with attempted suicide for females only. One out of every five females (23%) who felt they had virtually no communication with their mother attempted suicide, and were three times more prone than those with a lot of communication (7%). Open dialogue with fathers played no role with regard to suicide attempts.

One out of five students (22%) with little family attention tried to kill themselves - about four times as probable than those with a lot of attention (6%).

The reader should note, as with most associations, that precedence should not be assumed with perceptions of family relations and mental health. In other words, mental health may have very well influenced the way students felt about their family, and not vice versa as may be inferred.

If abuse by home adults had taken place, significant differences were found in parental relationships. Females who were emotionally abused by at-home adults were less likely to feel that their mothers (62%) and fathers (48%) cared about them "a lot" and that they could tell dad about their problems (12) than females not abused (80%, 71% and 35% respectively). As for males, when emotional and physical abuse had occurred in the home, communication with mothers apparently suffered; only a quarter compared to little over half of males not abused felt that they could tell their mothers "a lot" about their problems. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of physically abused students (near significance for males only) felt that they could tell dad "a lot" about their problems, which is significantly low compared to 45% of students not abused.

5.4. Family Influence on Schoolwork

Half (50%) of the students received "a lot" of attention from their parents regarding their schoolwork. Twenty-nine percent (29%) reported "some, but not a lot" of attention, 16% got "not very much," while 5% received no attention from their parents with their schoolwork.

There was no difference between males and females, but as students became older, the less attention parents paid to their schoolwork. Three out of five (61%) 10 to 12 year olds, about half (48%) of 13 to 15 year olds, and two out of five (40%) of 16 to 19 year olds reported getting much attention from their parents.

For ease of presentation, parental attention was combined to form two groups, namely those with "a lot and some" attention (79% of students) and "not very much to none at all" (21%) (Table 5-1). Differences in these two groups were apparent with many school aspects (Section 4).

Students who received little to no attention were less likely to have college plans (19%) and do their besting school (38%) than those who got some/ a lot of attention, 38% and 51% respectively. Students with little or no attention also appeared more likely to have indicated being "below average" students (10%), having difficulties completing homework "most of the time" (21%), having reading problems (26%), and never getting along with their teachers (8%), compared to students who received more attention (5%, 12%, 16%, and 4% respectively). In addition, 15% of the students who received "little/ or no" attention, as compared to 9% with at least some attention, attended classes for learning/ behaviour problems.

5.5. Family Problems

5.5.1. Parents' Problems

Seven percent (7%) of students had a parent(s) with problems stemming from mental health, 5% reported that parents had drug problems, 13% violent behaviour, and 17% reported parents with alcohol concerns. There were neither gender nor age distinctions (Table 5-1).

While all parents' problems were interrelated when tested for correlations, parents' problems stemming from drinking and drug use were moderately correlated ($R=.29$) and Additionally, the results had shown that problems due to drinking, drug abuse, and mental health were also moderately correlated with parental problems resulting from violence ($R=0.22-0.25$).

From another point of view, one out of five (20%) students who had parents with drinking problems also had parents with problems from drug abuse. Also, 31%, 54%, and 39% respectively of students with parents who had drinking, drug use, and mental health problems also had problems due to violent behaviour.

A greater proportion of students who reported a parent(s) with problems due to violent behaviour indicated committing violent behaviour themselves (Table 5-5). Interestingly however, more considerable differences were observed for males than for females (Section 7.)

Females showed significant differences with all the violent aspects tested. Among females, (14%) of those whose parents had problems with violence had been in a fight involving weapons and also carried a weapon at times other than school (25%). Respectively, only 5% and 11% of those who reported having no such parents, engaged in the same activities. There were no distinctions in these areas for males.

Students whose parents had violence problems were more likely to have carried a weapon to school in the past month (23%), experienced frequent aggressive thoughts (20%), been injured by a weapon (20%), and had gang experience (24%) than students with no such parents (11%, 8%, 7% and 12% respectively). This association was significant by sex and particularly for females.

Other parental problems may have a detrimental effect on students with regard to violence (Table 5-5). For example, carrying a weapon to school was more likely for males who had parents with drinking (29%) and drug abuse (36%) concerns than males with no such parents (17%, 18%) respectively. Further, students (significant for each gender) were three times more likely to have been injured by a weapon if parents had drug abuse problems (27%) than students whose parents had no such issues (19%). Joining a gang was more probable for females who had parents with drug abuse (19%) or mental health problems (16%) than females having parents without these problems (6% and 7%) respectively.

The results also showed that students who had parents with various problems, especially with violence appeared more liable to commit unfavourable activities, such as skipping school, running away from home, cheating on tests, shoplifting and burglary.

The data further suggested that students reporting parents with problems especially with regard to violence and to a lesser extent, drug abuse, were more likely to take drugs and/or drink alcohol. Students with parents dealing with their drug abuse problems were more likely to have drunk alcohol (64%; significant for females, near significance for males) and smoke marijuana (24%; significant for both genders) than students with no such parents (30%, 7% respectively) for alcohol and marijuana. As for males having parents with violence issues, they were more likely to have taken weed (21%) and cocaine (6%) compared to those with no such parents (10%, 1% respectively) for each substance. Females, on the other hand, with parents who had violence problems were four times as liable to have smoked cigarettes (13%) than females with no such parents (3%). Drinking alcohol was also more likely for students (near significance for females only) with parents dealing with violence (41%) than those with no such parents (31%).

Students with parents addressing various issues also appeared more prone to mental health problems (Table 5-5). Surprisingly, parental violence again played more of a role

with student mental health than all other problems, including mental health (See Section 6).

Approximately a third of all students who had parents with violent behaviour problems felt depressed many times in the past month (31%), which 20% had harboured aggressive thoughts, thought about suicide, and 20% attempted suicide. These percentages were significantly high compared to the fact that only 18%, 9%, 22%, and 9% with each tendency respectively with no such parents reported the same. Each gender was seemingly affected.

5.5.2. Abuse by Family Members

About 36% of students were emotionally/ verbally abused; the majority, 65%, of this group was abused by an adult in the household. Over a third (37%) was abused by a sibling or other youth in the household (Table 5-1). The only gender or age distinction for those who were abused by household members was for female age only: a greater percentage of 13 to 15 year old females reported verbal abuse by an adult at home (79%) than 10 to 12 year olds (45%) and 16 to 19 year olds (70%).

As for the 22% of students physically abused, 71%, again the majority, were abused by an at-home adult, and 20%, by a sibling/or youth in the home (Table 5-1). There were no gender or age differences with home abuse.

Although most students (35%) did not tell anyone they were sexually abused, when they did, it was usually shared with their parent(s)/ guardian (32%) (Table 5-1). Of the 13% of students sexually abused, a quarter (25%) of them blamed an at-home adult and 17%, an at-home youth (Table 5-1). Of those abused, each gender and age group were equally likely to have been abused at home.

For females, abuse by an adult at home may have stemmed from problems that parents may have had due to drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and violence. For example, of emotionally abused females, those whose parents had problems due to alcohol (88%) and drug abuse (100%) appeared more likely to have been abused by an at-home adult than females whose parents had no alcohol (65%) or drug abuse (68%) problems. Further, of emotionally (82%) and sexually abused (33%) females, whose parents had violent behaviour problems, were abused by an adult at home compared to 65% and 14% with no such parents. (See Sections 6 and 7.)

As physical abuse was most likely to have taken place in the home, deviant violent behaviour, which was shown to be associated with physical abuse (See Section 7), may have been imprinted in the home.

5.5.3. Student Problems with Family

Only about 5% of students experienced family problems from their own drinking and drug use. There were neither age nor gender distinctions (Table 5-1).

More than (28%) of students had stolen from family members at least once within the past year. Males were more likely to have done this (32%) than females (24%) (Table 5-1). The findings showed that there was a significant chance that stealing from family members may have lead to shoplifting (moderate positive correlation of .42). It also appeared that male and female students who had drunk alcohol in the past year, and females only who were physically abused, were more inclined to have stolen from their parents/ family members (See Section 7).

Most (51%) of the students felt "very little" that they wanted to run away. Twenty-one percent (21%) felt "some" and 28% wanted "a lot" to run away from home. Females were more likely to have had these feelings "a lot" (33%) than males (22%). No age differences were found (Table 5-1). Feelings of wanting to run away increased for females if they were emotionally and/or physically abused by an adult in the household (See Section 6).

Seven percent (7%) of students had taken a step further and ran away from home within the past year, with neither gender nor age differences. The results had further shown that running away from home was especially correlated with burglary ($R=0.34$). Additionally, for both genders, running away from home increased if physical abuse had taken place, and for males only who had not abstained from alcohol (See Section 7).

5.5.4. Student Perception of Family Problems

Looking at students' perceptions of certain family problems, the biggest worry appeared to be parents leaving. Fifteen percent (15%) indicated worrying about parents leaving "sometimes" while 18% worried about this "a lot" (Table 5-1).

As for violence in the home, 14% worried about this "sometimes" and 11%, "a lot," for a total of 25%. Parents' drinking/drug use, the least concern of the family problems, garnered occasional concern from students, while 12% worried about this "a lot" (Table 5-1).

There were no gender distinctions for family concerns. For male age, however, worry over violence in the home decreased as age increased. Ten to twelve year-old males were around twice as likely to fear home violence (32%) than 16 to 19 year-olds (18%).

Section 5
(Tables and Charts)

TABLE 5-1

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF STUDENTS' HOME
LIFE AND FAMILY, BY AGE AND GENDER *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Student Home Life and Family	All Students	Males	Females	10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16-19 yrs
Number of Persons in House with Student						
1 to 3	25.4	27.4 *	23.6	24.0 *	26.1	25.7
4 to 6	52.1	49.5	54.3	52.8	53.0	49.5
7 to 9	16.6	16.4	16.8	16.1	15.9	18.5
10 or more	5.9	6.7	5.3	7.1	5.0	6.3
Number of Persons Who Shared Room With Student						
None	30.5	24.2	26.5	18.8	25.4	32.3
1 to 2	54.9	40.3	51.2	48.4	46.1	41.0
3 to 4	11.9	9.4	9.9	14.3	8.1	8.0
5 or more	2.8	26.1	12.3	18.5	20.5	18.7
Persons Living With Students						
Mother	89.0	87.9 *	90.0	91.9	89.6	84.5
Father	52.8	52.4 *	53.6	56.7 *	53.5	47.1
Grandparents	23.2	23.6 *	23.0	21.9 *	23.2	24.8
Other Adult Relatives	26.7	26.9 *	26.5	23.5 *	26.6	30.4
Other Adult Non-Relatives	10.5	10.1 *	11.0	10.0 *	11.7	9.0
Other Youth	81.2	79.4 *	82.8	83.3 *	81.1	78.9
Parental Structure in Home						
Mother and Father	49.9	49.5	50.6	54.8	50.6	42.3
Mother Only	38.8	38.4	38.8	36.8	38.9	41.8
Father Only	2.6	2.6	2.7	1.9	2.3	4.2
Not Living With Parents	8.7	9.5	7.9	6.5	8.2	11.7

TABLE 5-1. CONT'D

Student Home Life and Family	All Students	Males	Females	10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16-19 yrs
How Much Do You Feel... ?						
Mother cares about me "a lot"	85.8	86.8 x	84.7	89.5	85.8	81.2
Father cares about me "a lot"	70.1	70.8 x	69.5	78.3	69.6	61.0
Other family members care about me "a lot"	65.4	67.7 x	63.2	70.9 x	64.3	61.0
I can tell mom about my problems " a lot"	41.4	42.3 x	40.3	53.1	39.0	31.8
I can tell dad about my problems "a lot"	32.8	39.1	26.5	43.0	32.2	20.8
People in family understand me "a lot"	37.2	41.5	32.9	47.5	34.6	29.5
Family pays attention to me " a lot"	51.3	53.7 x	49.0	58.7	53.9	38.4
How Much Attention Do Your Parents Pay To Your Schoolwork?						
A Lot /Some	78.6	79.0 x	78.0	84.0	77.8	73.7
Not Very Much/ None at all	21.4	21.0	22.0	16.0	22.2	26.3
Parents Had Problems Due To..						
Drinking	17.0	16.0 x	18.1	14.1 x	17.6	19.5
Mental Health	7.1	7.1 x	7.0	7.4 x	7.0	6.9
Drug Abuse	5.1	5.7 x	4.6	2.7 x	6.6	5.5
Violent Behaviour	12.9	11.9 x	14.0	10.9 x	15.0	11.4
Emotionally /Verbally Abused (35.9% of students) By...						
Adult at home	65.1	58.6 x	69.5	46.9	70.3	66.7
Brother/ sister/ other youth at home	37.0	36.2 x	37.6	41.7 x	35.7	35.1
Physically Abused (22.2% of students) By...						
Adult at home	71.3	65.8 x	75.2	65.1 x	77.6	64.6

TABLE 5-1. CONT'D

Student Home Life and Family	All Students	Males	Females	10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16-19 yrs
Brother/ sister other youth at home	20.1	24.6 *	17.2	27.5 *	17.5	14.9
Sexually Abused (12.9% of students) By...						
Adult at home	24.8	35.0 *	21.3	27.8 *	31.9	15.2
Brother/ sister other youth at home	17.0	20.0 *	16.3	17.6 *	19.1	6.1
Told Parent / Guardian About Sexual Abuse	32.1	19.0 *	34.5	35.0 *	32.7	31.4
Had Family Problems From Own Drinking/ Drug Use	4.5	5.6 *	3.4	2.9 *	5.5	4.4
Stolen From Family Members During Past Year	28.2	32.4	23.7	27.1 *	31.3	23.2
Want " A Lot" To Run Away From Home	28.1	22.0	33.3	26.0 *	33.5	21.0
Ran Away From Home During Past Year	6.8	7.2 *	6.2	5.5 *	7.0	8.1
"I Worry About... "						
Parents leaving	33.2	30.7 *	35.6	36.8 *	32.3	29.4
Parents' drinking /drug use	21.8	19.6 *	23.8	22.9 *	23.3	16.9
Violence at home	25.3	23.4 *	27.1	28.2 *	25.1	22.5

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences between males and females and among the age groups existed with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

✕ Differences were not statistically significant.

TABLE 5-2

**PERCENTAGES (%) OF RESPONSES TO CERTAIN VARIABLES BY FAMILY SIZE
AND NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH WHOM STUDENTS SHARED ROOM *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Variables Associated with Family Size	Family Size (Number Other than Student)			
	1 to 3 Other Persons	4 to 6 Other Persons	7 to 9 Other Persons	10 or More Other Persons
Family pays attention to me "a lot"	57.6	49.2	56.3	35.6
Parents pay "not very much/ none at all" attention to schoolwork	16.2	19.2	28.1	31.4
<i>(Males only)</i> Think about hurting/ killing someone (aggressive thoughts)	61.0	70.7	61.1	35.7
<i>(Males only)</i> Worry about violence at home	14.4	24.0	32.8	32.1
Variables Associated with Number of Persons With Whom Student Shared Room	Number of Persons With Whom Student Shared Room			
	None	1 to 2 Persons	3 to 4 Persons	5 or more Persons
Hungry "a lot" because of no food in house	6.7	8.2	12.4	26.3
Worry about home violence	17.2	29.7	33.7	42.1
<i>(Males only)</i> Parents pay "not very much/ none at all" attention to schoolwork	15.6	17.6	31.9	38.5
<i>(Males only)</i> Worry about parents leaving	27.6	30.8	43.2	72.7

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 5-3

**PERCENTAGES (%) OF RESPONSES TO CERTAIN VARIABLES
BY PARENTAL STRUCTURE IN THE HOME, ALL BAHAMAS ***

Variables Associated With Parental Structure	Parental Structure	
	Lived With Mother	Did Not Live With Mother
Drank alcohol during past year	30.1	50.0
Parents pay "not very much/ none at all" attention to schoolwork	18.9	36.6
Carried weapon at times other than to school during past month	23.2	32.0
Have gang experience	11.5	25.0
<i>(Males Only)</i> Shoplifted during past year	37.4	52.9
<i>(Males Only)</i> Burglarized during past year	9.1	17.6
<i>(Males Only)</i> Carried weapon to school during past month	16.5	33.3
<i>(Males Only)</i> Engaged in sexual intercourse	52.3	78.4
<i>(Females Only)</i> Frequently felt depressed	21.7	37.0
<i>(Females Only)</i> Smoked weed during past year	3.7	10.9
Variables Associated With Parental Structure	Lived With Both Parents	Lived With Mother Only
Carried a weapon at times other than school during past month	18.6	28.6
Skipped school during past year	18.8	25.4
Felt "very little" that father cared about me	7.2	25.9
<i>(Females Only)</i> Been in a fight with weapons during past year	2.3	10.8
<i>(Females Only)</i> Shoplifted during past year	17.6	27.4
<i>(Females Only)</i> Stolen from family members during past year	19.4	28.1
<i>(Females Only)</i> Carried a weapon to school during past month	2.7	7.6
<i>(Females Only)</i> Parents pay "not very much/ none at all" attention to schoolwork	12.6	27.3
<i>(Females Only)</i> Frequently felt depressed during past month	16.6	26.9
<i>(Females Only)</i> Feel "very little" that I can tell dad about problems	41.5	61.2
<i>(Females Only)</i> Worry about parents leaving	29.1	41.6

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 5-4

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF CERTAIN DEVIANT ACTIVITIES¹
BY STUDENT PERCEPTION OF DEGREE OF FAMILY ATTENTION *
MALES ONLY, ALL BAHAMAS**

Variables (Males Only) Associated With Family Attention	Level of Family Attention		
	Little	Some	Much
Cheated on test	58.1	65.5	47.5
Committed vandalism	43.2	47.4	26.1
Been in a fight with weapons	25.3	25.2	15.4
Shoplifted	44.6	48.3	30.9
Stole from family members	35.5	43.1	27.1
Committed burglary	15.7	12.2	6.4
Carried weapon to school during past month	30.3	26.3	8.6
Carried weapon at times other than school during past month	44.0	47.0	26.0
Ever belonged to a gang	25.3	23.3	13.9
Drank alcohol	50.7	49.1	34.1

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF CERTAIN DEVIANT ACTIVITIES¹ BY PERCEPTION OF
HOW MUCH OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS CARED ABOUT STUDENT *
FEMALES ONLY, ALL BAHAMAS**

Variables (Females Only) Associated With Level of Family Care	Level of Family Care		
	Little	Some	Much
Skipped school	21.2	25.0	12.9
Been in a fight with weapons	3.9	11.3	4.3
Ran away from home	12.0	8.8	4.3
Carried a weapon at times other than school	17.3	19.8	8.0
Ever belonged to a gang	10.0	10.4	2.8
Carried weapon at times other than school during past month	44.0	47.0	26.0
Ever belonged to a gang	25.3	23.3	13.9
Drank alcohol	50.7	49.1	34.1

TABLE 5-4, CONT'D

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF CERTAIN DEVIANT ACTIVITIES¹
BY PERCEPTION OF DEGREE OF MOTHER'S CARE AND COMMUNICATION *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Variables Associated With Level of Communication With Mother/ Mother's Care	Level of Communication with Mother/ Mother's Care		
	Little	Some	Much
Skipped school	28.3	23.8	15.7
Cheated on test (Mother's care)	49.1	70.1	49.7
Cheated on test	59.9	54.7	41.9
Shoplifted	33.5	32.9	25.2
Carried a weapon at times other than school during past month (Mother's care)	23.3	41.2	22.1
Carried a weapon at times other than school during past month	25.5	29.2	17.0
Ever belonged to a gang (Mother's care)	22.4	13.4	11.7

¹ Event had taken place during the past year unless otherwise stated.

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 5-5

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF CERTAIN RESPONSES TO CERTAIN VARIABLES ¹
BY PROBLEMS OF PARENT(S) *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Variables Associated With Parents' Violence Problems	Parents Problems	
	Parents with Violence Problems	Parents with No Violence Problems
Committed vandalism	38.3	25.7
Ran away from home	18.4	5.1
Carried a weapon to school during the past month	23.1	10.8
Stolen from family members	40.2	25.8
Ever been hurt by a weapon	19.7	7.3
Ever belonged to a gang	24.1	11.6
Frequently felt depressed during past month	30.8	18.2
Ever experienced frequent aggressive thoughts	19.8	7.9
Ever have suicidal thoughts	51.3	22.4
Ever attempted suicide	28.2	9.3
Drank alcohol	40.7	30.7
<i>(Females only)</i> Skipped school	28.1	14.4
<i>(Females only)</i> Cheated on test	61.5	46.9
<i>(Females only)</i> Been in a fight with weapons	14.1	4.7
<i>(Females only)</i> Carried a weapon at times other than school during the past month	25.4	11.3
<i>(Females only)</i> Smoked cigarettes	12.5	2.6
<i>(Females only)</i> Shoplifted	36.5	21.4
<i>(Males only)</i> Committed burglary	20.4	9.3
<i>(Males only)</i> Smoked weed	20.8	9.6
<i>(Males only)</i> Taken cocaine	6.1	1.3
Variables Associated With Parents' Drinking Problems	Parents with Drinking Problems	Parents with No Drinking Problems
<i>(Males only)</i> Stole from family members	44.3	29.1
<i>(Males only)</i> Carried a weapon to school during the past month	29.2	17.2

TABLE 5-5 CONT'D

<i>(Males only)</i> Ever been injured by a weapon	23.9	12.7
<i>(Males only)</i> Drank alcohol	50.7	37.7
<i>(Males only)</i> Frequently felt depressed	23.6	15.1
<i>(Females only)</i> Ever have suicidal thoughts	46.4	27.8
<i>(Females only)</i> Ever attempted suicide	24.7	11.8
Variables Associated With Parents' Drug Use Problems	Parents with Drug Use Problems	Parents with No Drug Use Problems
Ever been hurt by a weapon	27.3	8.0
Drank alcohol	64.3	30.1
Smoked marijuana	24.4	7.1
<i>(Males only)</i> Committed burglary	24.0	9.7
<i>(Males only)</i> Ran away from home	28.0	6.3
<i>(Males only)</i> Carried a weapon to school during the past month	36.0	18.4
<i>(Males only)</i> Frequently felt depressed	38.5	15.1
<i>(Males only)</i> Ever have suicidal thoughts	38.5	18.8
<i>(Males only)</i> Ever attempted suicide	19.2	7.9
<i>(Females only)</i> Ever belonged to a gang	19.0	6.3
<i>(Females only)</i> Ever experienced frequent aggressive thoughts	23.8	5.3
Variables Associated With Parents' Mental Health Problems	Parents with Mental Health Problems	Parents with No Mental Health Problems
<i>(Females only)</i> Ever been injured by a weapon	12.9	3.3
<i>(Females only)</i> Ever belonged to a gang	16.1	6.5
<i>(Females only)</i> Smoked marijuana	25.8	3.4
<i>(Females only)</i> Frequently felt depressed	43.3	22.0
<i>(Females only)</i> Ever have suicidal thoughts	48.4	29.8

¹ Event had taken place during the past year unless otherwise stated.

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

Section 6

Mental Health

6. Mental Health

6.1. Worries and Concerns

"Passing my exams" appears to be the primary concern of Bahamian students, as the greatest proportion, 85%, responded that they worry about this issue ("Sometimes" and "A Lot" combined) (Table 6-1; Figure 6-1;). The second major concern, getting a job when older, received 70% of students' responses. "Violence in my community" is the third leading worry, garnering 63% of students' responses, followed by school violence (57%). As for the subject of drinking and drug use, the only major worry appeared to be "drinking and drug use in my neighbourhood", which garnered 44% of students' responses, making it the sixth leading concern. The other drug and alcohol concerns, mothers/father's drinking and drug use (22%), and own drinking and drug use (16%) were the least perceived problem of the students.

Significant gender differences existed for worry of being physically abused, being sexually abused, violence in the community, getting AIDS, facing prejudice, getting a job when older, and passing exams (Table 6-1). For all significant gender differences, females displayed more concern than males. The greatest contrast was fear of being sexually abused; females (30%) are twice as likely to worry about this than males (14%). Being physically abused also appears to arouse more apprehension for females (32%) than males (19%). As will be seen later on, these fears were well grounded because females were the more prone victims to all types of abuse. Naturally, students who were abused were the more likely to express concern over physical (both genders) and sexual abuse (females only). It was unexpected to recognize that own drinking and drug use and getting/ making someone pregnant were of equal concern to both genders.

Significant age differences were shown for males only with worry over sexual abuse, getting someone pregnant, getting AIDS, and violence at home (Figure 6-2). Not surprisingly, frequency of worry of getting someone pregnant (16 to 19 year olds were twice as likely to fear getting someone pregnant [58%] than 10 to 12 year olds [29%]) and getting AIDS (71% of 16 to 19 year olds, compared to 42% of 10 to 12 year olds) increased as age increased. The opposite is true for sexual abuse and violence in the home, as worry of these decreased as age increased. Ten to twelve year old males were around twice as likely to fear sexual abuse (22%) and home violence (32%) than 16 to 19 year olds (9% and 18% respectively).

Female concerns about getting a job and passing exams also increased as age increased, but the differences were not considerable.

6.2. Depression, Aggression and Suicidal Tendencies

6.2.1. General Personality

Most (76%) Bahamian students described themselves as "happy" when asked "In general, do you see yourself as a person who is mostly. . ." (Table 6-2). Nine percent (9%) saw themselves as "sad", 7%, "angry", and 8%, "irritable". A significant contrast was especially seen between males (7%) and females (11%) who saw themselves as "sad". This personality difference is further supported by gender distinctions in depressed feelings and suicidal tendencies as well. There were no significant age differences.

6.2.2. Feelings of Depression

Based on these findings, occasional feelings of depression is normal for young people; 42% indicated that they experienced these feelings within the past month "sometimes", with no difference between males and females (Table 6-2). One out of five students (20%), however, had these feelings "many times", comprised of 16% of males and 24% females. Of that one fifth, six out of ten were female (Figure 6-3).

Upon further inspection of these feelings by age (Table 6-2), the older age groups appeared slightly more susceptible to depressed feelings (22% each had them frequently) than 10 to 12 year olds (15%).

6.2.3. Aggressive Thoughts

When asked "Do you ever think about hurting or killing someone?", the majority (48%) of the students replied "Yes, sometimes" (Table 6-2). Ten percent (10%) had these thoughts "Almost always". Predictably, males were twice as liable to frequently have aggressive thoughts (13%) than females (6%).

For all students and both sexes, the higher the age group, the higher the frequency of having aggressive thoughts (Table 6-2). Sixteen to nineteen year old students were the most liable to have constant aggressive thoughts (13%) when compared to 10 to 12 year olds (5%).

6.2.4. Suicidal Thoughts

One out of five (19%) Bahamian students admitted to having suicidal thoughts "Sometimes", while 7% had these thoughts "Often" (Table 6-2). Again, females were more inclined ("Sometimes" and "Often" combined) to suffer (or report) these feelings than males (Table 6-2; Figure 6-4). One out five males (20%), as opposed to about one

out of three females (31%) have thought about killing themselves (Figure 6-4). Further, six out of ten students who had suicidal thoughts were female (Figure 6-3).

Significant age differences were found for females only with thoughts of suicide, where a corresponding increase for age and frequency of suicidal thoughts occurred (Figure 6-5). Two out of five (40%) 16 to 19 year olds and a third (34%) of 13 to 15 year olds have suicidal thoughts, making them roughly twice as liable to have suicidal thoughts than 10 to 12 year olds (21%).

6.2.5. Suicidal Attempts

A little less than one out of ten (8%) students have attempted suicide once, and 4% have tried more than once (Table 6-2). Again, a significant difference between males and females was evident. Females were twice as prone to attempted suicide (15%) than males (8%) ("Once" and "More than once" combined) (Table 6-2; Figure 6-4;). Additionally, female students represented more than six out of ten students who have attempted suicide (Figure 6-3), a ratio similar to that of constant feelings of depression and suicidal thoughts.

A similar female age pattern to suicidal thoughts is apparent with suicide attempts. An alarming one quarter (25%) of 16 to 19 year old females tried to kill themselves (compared to 11% of 16 to 19 year old males), making them almost twice as prone than 13 to 15 year olds (15%), and three times more likely than 10 to 12 year olds (8%) (Figure 6-5). No such distinction was found for males.

Of those who have attempted suicide, 18% of the attempts were serious enough to be treated by a doctor or nurse (Figure 6-6). There were no significant differences with treatment in terms of gender, age, and number of times students attempted suicide.

6.2.6. Suicidal Patterns

It is common sense that constant depressed thoughts may lead to suicidal ideas and ultimately attempted suicide, but to what extent does this occur for the Bahamian student? Looking first at the relationship between depression and suicidal thoughts, half (52%) of all students who had felt depressed many times had suicidal thoughts (Table 6-3). As to occasional feelings of depression, over a quarter (28%) of students in this group reported suicidal thoughts. The likelihood of having suicidal thoughts therefore increases two-fold with an increase in frequency of depressed feelings, a pattern that exists for both genders.

An association exists as well between depression and attempted suicide (Table 6-3). Thirty percent (30%) of students who were depressed many times within the past month attempted suicide, while 10% of those who were depressed sometimes attempted suicide. This makes the frequently depressed group three times as likely to try suicide

than those who were depressed sometimes. This association exists for both genders, with a greater contrast existing for females.

Over a third (38%) of students who thought of killing themselves had taken the next step to attempting suicide (Figure 6-7). This relationship was found for both genders.

6.2.7. Depressed Feelings, Suicidal Inclinations and Their Associations with Aggressive Thoughts

An increase in frequency of depressed feelings and suicidal inclinations is associated with a corresponding increase in frequency of feelings of hostility toward others. Fourteen percent (14%) of those who felt down many times for the past month, 11% who were depressed sometimes, and 6% who were never depressed felt like hurting or killing someone "almost always". Being depressed therefore doubles the chances of experiencing constant aggressive thoughts. The relationship is similar in strength for both genders.

A similar relationship which exists for both genders was revealed between suicidal thoughts and aggression. With differences clearer looking at students who never had aggressive thoughts, of those who never thought about killing themselves, 50% do not feel hostility toward others; only 22% of students who thought of suicide never felt like hurting or killing others.

Aggression is also associated with attempted suicide. Bahamian students who have tried to kill themselves were three times more inclined to have frequent aggressive thoughts (23%) than students who never attempted suicide (8%). Again, this relationship occurred for both males and females.

6.2.8. Suicide by Friends/ Relatives

One out of five (18%) Bahamian students have a friend or relative who had attempted/ committed suicide (5% died) (Table 6-2). A greater proportion of females than males reported knowing a friend/relative who either attempted (11% of males, 15% of females) or committed suicide (4% of males, 6% of females). There were no age distinctions.

A significant difference exists between knowing someone who attempted/ committed suicide or not and suicidal tendencies. While this association was significant for females only, near significance was revealed for males. All students will therefore be discussed.

Over a third (37%) of students with a friend or relative who had attempted/ committed suicide, compared to a quarter (24%) with no such experience thought about killing themselves (Figure 6-8). Similarly, one out of five (21%) who knows someone who attempted/ committed suicide, while 10% who reported otherwise had attempted suicide themselves (Figure 6-9).

6.2.9. Associations With Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

Currently, drug use, with the possible exception of alcohol, does not appear to be a major problem among the students surveyed. Most students have reported not engaging in alcohol, cigarette smoking, marijuana, or cocaine within the past year; one third (32%) have drunk alcohol (40% of males, 25% of females), and that is monthly or less to daily use combined; 7% have smoked cigarettes (9% of males, 4% of females); 8% have smoked marijuana (11% of males, 5% of females); 1% have admitted to taking cocaine (no significant gender distinctions). Despite the relatively small percentages, however, significant differences with regards to mental health were found between students who have abstained from these substances for the past year and those who have not (Table 6-4). There were little associations between cocaine and mental health.

Unexpectedly, there were mental health distinctions for both males and females between cigarette smokers and non-smokers. An increase in aggressive thoughts and suicidal disposition is observed among students who had smoked. One out of five (22%) students who had smoked both had frequent aggressive thoughts and attempted suicide, compared to 8% and 10% of students respectively who had not smoked. Almost half (48%) of students who had smoked, while a quarter (24%) who had abstained reported having suicidal thoughts. There was no relationship between tobacco and feeling depressed.

Mental health differences between alcohol abstainers and non-abstainers were more sweeping. Students (both males and females) who had drunk alcohol were more likely to have depressed feelings, aggressive thoughts, suicidal thoughts, and to have attempted suicide (the link could very well be vice versa, that is, for example, depressed students being more inclined to drink or take drugs). Two out of five (42%) of abstainers, much more than the 30% of non-abstainers were never depressed within the past month (there is not a substantial difference with regard to frequent depressed feelings). Adding to depressed emotions, students who had drunk alcohol were almost three times more likely to have frequent hostile thoughts (16%) than those who had not (6%).

Non-abstainers appeared more prone to suicidal bents than students who abstained from alcohol. A third of students (32%) who did not abstain from alcohol had suicidal thoughts, while 15% attempted suicide. This is distinct from the 22% and 9% of abstainers who thought and attempted suicide respectively.

Associations between marijuana and mental health were not as encompassing as alcohol and cigarettes, and only seem to affect a particular gender. Weed appears to have some influence on males with aggressive thoughts and attempted suicide. Over a third (36%) of male weed smokers, compared to only 10% of males who had not smoked reported constant thoughts of hurting or killing someone. Also, one out of five (19%) males who had smoked weed, while only 7% who had not, tried to kill themselves.

Females who had smoked weed were more prone to suicidal thoughts (52%) than those who abstained (30%). Feeling depressed and smoking marijuana were not found to be related.

Even though a very small proportion (2%) of the male population have taken cocaine, the seeming effect cocaine has on males when it comes to suicidal thought is enough to warrant significance. One out of five males (19%) who had not taken cocaine, compared to *three out of four (75%)* males who had, reported feelings of suicide.

6.2.10. Family Relationships and Student Mental Health

Parental residence in the home and family communication were tested with the aspects of mental health covered. For the most part, parental residence carried little connection to mental health. Further, the associations found were for females only. Firstly, a greater proportion of females whose mother or father did not reside with them reported depressed feelings. Aggressive thought is also more likely for females with no father in the home.

As for different measures of family communication, namely, telling mom and dad about problems and family attention, the majority of the relationships were strong enough to warrant reporting. Generally, the more students felt they could communicate with their parents, and the more attention they thought they received, the less the reporting of depressed feelings, hostile thoughts, and suicidal inclinations (Table 6-5). These relationships, unless otherwise stated, were significant for each gender.

Over a quarter (27%) of the students who felt "Very little" that they could talk to their mom about their problems reported frequent depressed feelings. This is two and a half times more likely than those who felt they could talk to their mom "A lot" (11%). Similarly, 22% of Bahamian students who felt "Very little" that they can tell their dad about their problems, while 14% of those who can tell their dad about their problems "A lot" were frequently depressed.

A third (32%) of the students who felt that their family paid very little attention to them reported feeling depressed many times during the past month, twice as prone than those who received much attention (14%). These three relationships were similar in strength.

Looking at aggressive thoughts, differences were clearer among those who never had these emotions. One out of three (34%) students with very little, compared to 52% with a lot of communication with mom never felt like hurting or killing someone. As for discourse with dad, an association of similar strength, 36% with little communication, while a substantial 53% of students who felt they can talk to their father a lot about their problems never had aggressive thoughts.

Students who indicated that they received a lot of family attention were the most likely to not harbour hostile thoughts (53%), compared to those who received very little (29%).

Suicidal tendencies also went hand in hand with level of communication. Over a third (36%) of the students with little communication with mom had suicidal thoughts, compared to 15% who reported good communication. Similarly, around a third (31%) of students with poor communication with their fathers, while 18% with good communication experienced suicidal thoughts. This relationship was not significant when examined for each gender, however. Open dialogue with fathers seemed to play no role with regards to suicide attempts.

Almost half (46%) of the students who reported receiving very little family attention, while 17% with a lot of attention had suicidal thoughts, about three times more susceptible.

Communication with mothers was associated with attempted suicide for females only. One out of every five females (23%) who felt they have virtually no communication with mom attempted suicide. This is three times more prone than those with a lot of communication (7%).

One out of five students (22%) with little family attention tried to kill themselves - about four times as probable than those with a lot of attention (6%).

6.2.11. Mental Health and Religion/ Spirituality

With the exception of having aggressive and suicidal thoughts, religion and spirituality played little roles in Bahamian students' mental health.

Generally for all students, the more students thought of themselves as religious or spiritual, the less they have aggressive thoughts. This association, however, was considerably stronger for females (there is no difference in level of religiosity between males and females). In brief, 8% of "Very religious" males harboured constant aggressive thoughts, twice less likely when compared to 15% and 16% of the "Somewhat" and "Not at all" religious respectively. Looking at females, 3% and 4% respectively of the "Very" and "Somewhat" religious had frequent aggressive thoughts, compared to 13% who were not at all religious. A non-religious female is therefore three to four times more likely than those who were somewhat and very religious to have frequent aggressive thoughts.

Females who perceived themselves as very religious were also less prone to suicidal thoughts. One out of every five very religious females (20%), while around two out of five (35% and 40%) of the somewhat and not at all religious have thought about killing themselves.

As for attendance of religious services, to a weak extent for males only, the more religious services attended, the less reporting of violent thoughts. Males who attended

religious services more than six times in the past three months (8%) stood out from those who attended less with regard to frequent aggressive thought (17% to 19%). As for females, the number of times they attended church had no connection to their having aggressive thoughts.

6.3. Abuse

6.3.1. Emotional/ Verbal Abuse

Thirty six percent (36%) of students, more than a third, have reported emotional/ verbal abuse (Table 6-2), the majority (65%) of which had been done by "An adult who lives with me" (Figure 6-11). Thirty seven percent (37%) reported emotional abuse from "A boyfriend, girlfriend, or other teenager who does not live with me", and twenty nine percent (29%) responded that emotional abuse was inflicted by "Another adult who does not live with me". About a quarter (26%) of the respondents blamed the abuse on "A teacher" and "A boyfriend, girlfriend, or other teenager who does not live with me" (24%).

There were significant differences between males and females with regard to emotional abuse (Table 6-2). About two out of five (43%) females, as opposed to 29% of males had been abused.

Significant age distinctions existed as well for both genders (Figure 6-10). Generally as age increased, especially from the youngest set of students to the older groups, proportionally more students reported verbal/emotional abuse. Eighteen percent (18%) of 10 to 12 year old males, 36% of 13 to 15 year olds, and 28% of 16 to 19 year olds have reported emotional/verbal abuse. As for females, 27% of 10 to 12 year olds, and approximately half of 13 to 15 (49%) and 16 to 19 year olds (54%) were abused.

Parental residence and number of persons living at home bore no relation to the incidence of emotional abuse by household members. Among females, their feelings of wanting to run away from home increased if they had been emotionally abused by an adult in their household.

6.3.2. Physical Abuse

Twenty two percent (22%) of Bahamian students have been physically abused. Among them, females (27%) were more likely to report physical abuse than males (18%) (Table 6-2).

Age differences in the student population existed for females only (Figure 6-12). Seventeen to twenty percent (17% to 20%) of males from 10 to 19 years responded that they were abused, making male students of any age equally probable to report physical abuse. For females, as age increased, primarily from 10 to 12 year olds to the older age

groups, so did the chances of physical abuse. A third of 13 to 15 and 16 to 19 year olds (32%, respectively) allegedly were physically abused, and were twice as probable than the youngest age group (16%).

Of those who were abused, the most frequent abuser was an adult who lived with the student; these individuals may have included parents. Seven of ten (71%) students indicated that they were abused by "an adult who lives with me" (Figure 6-13). The second most common perpetrators, reported by one out of five students, were "an adult who does not live with me but whom I know" (21%), followed by a "brother, sister or other teenager who lives with me" (20%). Eighteen percent (18%) reported abuse by a teacher, 13% an adult they did not know, and 12%, a "boyfriend, girlfriend or other teenager who does not live with me."

Almost one out of five (18%) students who were abused was treated by a doctor/ nurse because of the abuse (Figure 6-14). There were no differences with treatment in age nor gender.

Associations were found between physical abuse by a household member and parental residence in the home, but they were significant for one gender only. Of females reporting physical abuse, a greater percentage with a father who resided with them were abused by an at home adult (86%) than those whose father did not live with them (65%). Also, of males reporting abuse, 30% with an at-home mother was abused by a sibling or other household youth. There was no such report by males whose mothers resided away from home. Whether or not parents had problems with violent behaviour had no apparent bearing on physical abuse blamed on an at-home adult.

Feelings of wanting to run away increased for females students only who were physically abused by an adult who lived with them. The number of persons residing in the household had no relation to the incidence of physical abuse by household members.

6.3.3. Sexual Abuse

Thirteen percent (13%) of students were reportedly sexually abused (Table 6-2). The percentage of females (20.6%) who had been sexually abused was significantly greater than that of males (4.9%). Females were therefore almost four times as likely as males to have been abused.

For all students combined, the likelihood of having been sexually abused increased significantly with increasing age throughout the adolescent years. Whereas only 7.2% of males and females between the ages of 10-12 years reported being sexually abused, this increased to 13.8% among persons between 13-15 years and 17.6% among those 16 –19 years (Figure 6-15).

Upon further examination of the relationship between age, gender and sexual abuse, significant age differences existed for females only. From the youngest to the oldest age group, 3% to 7% of males reported sexual abuse. Sexual abuse appeared more likely to occur, however, for older females. Sixteen to nineteen year old females were three times more likely to report sexual abuse (32%) than 10 to 12 year olds (11%); 22% of 13 to 15 year old females were abused (Figure 6-15).

Most incidences of sexual abuse were committed by persons known to the victims. The three most common perpetrators identified by the students were adults known to the victims and who did not live in the household (42.5%), followed by a boyfriend, girlfriend or other teenager who did not live with the respondent (33.7%), and an adult living in the same house (24.8%). Other reported perpetrators were a sibling or other teenage living with the student (17%) and an adult unknown to them (11%) (Figure 6-16).

Sexual abuse blamed on an adult in the household is associated for all students (but not for each gender) with whether mothers resided in the same household as students. Of students reporting sexual abuse, 21% whose mother resided at home compared to 50% whose mother did not, had been abused by an adult who lived with the student.

Approximately two-thirds of abused adolescents told someone about their abuse, with almost equal proportions telling parents or guardians (32.1%) and friends (27.5%). Females were more likely to tell parents and males, a friend.

No relationships were found with regard to size of family and sexual abuse in the home. There was no significant difference in students wanting to run away from home with regards to being sexually abused by someone at home.

6.3.4. Association Between Types of Abuse

The results for all students and each gender had shown that when one form of abuse had occurred, it was usually accompanied by another form; moderate positive correlations, .34 to .47, existed among the three types of abuse. Four out of five students (79%) who had been physically abused reported verbal abuse as well (Figure 6-17). Similarly, if emotional abuse had occurred for students, they were six and a half times more likely to report physical abuse (47%) than those not emotionally abused (7%).

Along the same lines, four out of five (79%) students who reported sexual abuse had also been emotionally/verbally abused (Figure 6-18); verbally abused students were *seven* times more probable to report sexual abuse (28%) than those not verbally abused (4%).

Sexual and physical abuse also apparently go hand in hand. About two out of three (65%) students who reported sexual abuse were also physically abused (Figure 6-19). It

also appeared that physically abused children were six times more likely to have been also sexually abused (37%) than those not physically abused (6%).

Abuse by adults and whether it may have lead to abuse by youth in the home was not found in the results.

6.3.5. Association Between Abuse and Mental Health

Students who had been abused in any way showed much higher chances of having depressive thoughts, feeling hostile toward others, and exhibiting suicidal tendencies. It also appears that the mental repercussions from abuse is more substantial for females than males (Tables 6-6 to 6-8).

Students who were emotionally/ verbally abused were twice as likely to report frequent depressed feelings (29%), frequent aggressive thoughts (14%) and suicidal thoughts (42%). Emotionally abused students were also three and a half times more susceptible to attempted suicide (22%) (Table 6-6). Looking at students not abused, 14% reported frequent depression, 6%, frequent aggressive thoughts, 17% had suicidal thoughts, and 6% attempted suicide.

Thirty-six percent (36%) of students who were physically abused reported frequent depressed feelings, proportionally twice as many than those not abused (15%) (Table 6-7). Continuing, 15% of abused students reported frequent aggressive thoughts, half (50%) had suicidal thoughts, and a quarter (26%) attempted suicide. This is compared to 7% of students not abused who had frequent aggressive thoughts, 19% who thought of killing themselves, and 8% who tried suicide. The susceptibility to harbouring frequent aggressive feelings is therefore increased two-fold, suicidal thoughts, two and a half times, and suicide attempts, three times.

Around two out of five (38%) students who were sexually abused reported constantly feeling depressed, which is high considering that only 17% of students not abused reported the same (Table 6-8). Twelve percent (12%) of sexually abused students harboured frequent aggressive thoughts, compared to 9% of those not abused. Of abused students, half (51%) suffered suicidal thoughts and a third (33%) tried to kill themselves. This is compared to 22% of students not abused who tried to kill themselves, and 9% who attempted suicide.

6.4. Counselling for Emotional/ Mental Health Problems

The majority of the respondents, 85%, have either never been counselled or do not remember being counselled for emotional or mental health problems (Table 6-2). Five percent (5%) had counselling over two years ago, 4%, one to two years ago, and the remaining 6%, within the last year, for a total of 15%. There were no age nor gender differences.

Significant differences in mental health and abuse with regards to counselling were tested, with the hope of revealing the proportion of students with problems who have had counselling. It was generally found that a greater percentage of students with mental health and abuse concerns (males only experiencing constant aggressive emotions and females only showing suicidal tendencies) were counselled (but not necessarily for these specific problems).

Twenty two percent (22%) of students (not significant for each gender) who suffered frequent depressive thoughts, 28% of males harbouring constant hostile feelings, 21% of females with suicidal thoughts, and 27% of females who attempted suicide have been counselled.

As for abuse cases, 19% of females emotionally abused, 23% of students physically abused (significant for females, near significance for males), and 22% of students sexually abused (not significant for each gender) were counselled for emotional/ mental health problems.

6.5. Mental Health Problems of Parents

Seven percent (7%) of students reported that their parent(s) had mental health problems. There were no gender or age distinctions (Table 6-2).

Parents' mental health as it relates to that of the students' was tested. The only significant relationships were discovered for females only with regards to feeling down and suicidal thoughts.

Forty three percent (43%) of females whose parents had problems due to mental health frequently felt depressed; half (48%) reported suicidal thoughts. Only 22% and 30% respectively of females with no such parents reported likewise.

Parents' mental health problems were not associated with any form of abuse by an adult at home.

6.6. Other Parental Problems and Mental Health

With regards to mental health, there were significant differences between students with parents who had problems from drinking, drug abuse, and violent behaviour and those with parents who had no such problems. It appears that parent(s) with violence behaviour problems has more of an effect on student mental health than the other problems of parents, including mental health.

As for abuse, not many associations between parents problems and abuse by an adult at home were found. The associations found existed for females only.

6.6.1. Parents' Violent Behaviour

Thirteen percent (13%) of students indicated having parents with problems stemming from violent behaviour. With this in mind, for all students and each gender, feeling depressed, hostile emotions, and suicidal intentions were all associated with parental violent behaviour (Table 6-9).

Around a third (31%) of all students who had parents with violent behaviour problems felt depressed many times in the past month, while 18% of students with no such parents reported likewise.

As for aggressive thoughts, one out of five (20%) students of the group with parents who had violent behaviour problems harboured frequent violent thoughts toward others. This is a significant contrast to the 9% of students whose parents had no violent problems (See also Section 7).

Half (51%) of all students with parents who had violent behaviour problems, a contrast to 22% reporting otherwise, thought about killing themselves. Similarly, 28% with violent-problem parents, while 9% with no such parents had attempted suicide.

Looking at abuse, of emotionally abused females, four out of five (82%) whose parents had violent behaviour problems, compared to 65% with no such parents, were abused by an adult at home.

Similarly, a greater proportion of sexually abused females reporting parents with violence concerns were abused by an adult at home (33%) than students with no such parents (14%).

6.6.2. Parents with Drinking Problems

Though 17% of the students reported having parents with problems due to drinking, this problem did not carry the all-encompassing associations with mental health as parents with violence problems. When it came to feeling depressed, males only were seemingly affected. A quarter (24%) of males reporting parents with alcohol concerns, while 15% indicating otherwise frequently felt depressed.

Suicidal inclinations on the other hand carried significant associations for females only. Of the parents with drinking concerns group, almost half, (46%), and a quarter (25%) of females reported suicidal thoughts and attempts respectively. This is substantial when compared to females with no such parents; 28% of this group thought about suicide, and 12% tried to kill themselves.

Of emotionally abused females, those whose parents had problems due to alcohol appeared more likely to have been abused by an at-home adult (88%) than females whose parents had no alcohol problems (65%).

6.6.3. Parents with Drug Abuse Problems

Except for aggressive thoughts, there were significant mental health differences for males only whose parents had drug abuse problems (5% of students reported parents with drug abuse problems). Two out of five (39%) males with parents who had drug abuse problems, while 15% indicating otherwise felt depressed many times.

Conversely from parents with drinking problems, suicidal tendencies in males only are seemingly exacerbated if their parents had drug abuse problems. Two out of five (39%) males in this group thought about killing themselves, and one out of five (19%) attempted suicide, twice as likely (19% and 8% respectively) than males with parents with no drug abuse concerns.

An increase in aggressive thought was found for females only if their parents had problems due to drug abuse. A substantial quarter (24%) of females with such parents frequently thought about hurting or killing someone, compared to 5% with no such parents.

Of verbally abused females, all (100%) with parents tackling drug abuse issues were abused by an at-home adult, compared to 68% of females with no such parents.

6.7. Mental Health, Abuse and Their Associations with Physical Health and Body Perception

6.7.1. Mental Health

State of general health, physical disabilities/ chronic illness and body perception were all related to some extent with both mental health and abuse (not shown). It was found that as general health decreased (from "Excellent" to "Poor"), feelings of depression and aggression increased. Also, students reporting poorer health appeared more prone to suicidal thoughts and for females, suicide attempts.

While physical disabilities or having a chronic illness for the most part was not associated with mental health, proportionally more females with a physical handicap/ illness tried to kill themselves (27% versus 13% with no handicap).

Weight perception and some aspects of mental health were connected. For example, females who felt that they needed to lose weight were the least likely to have aggressive thoughts, especially frequent ones. For both males and females, those reporting suicidal thoughts had more perceived weight problems (needed to gain or lose). Also, overweight and underweight males appeared more prone to attempted suicide (14% and 9% respectively) than males who thought they were of normal weight (5%).

Similar patterns arose for both genders with regard to body satisfaction. To a small extent, as frequency of depressed and aggressive thoughts increased, as well for students with suicidal tendencies, level of body contentment decreased (from "Happy" to "Okay" to "Not happy" with body).

6.7.2. Abuse

For both males and females, it seems that emotional abuse was more likely to occur for students indicating having "Poor" or "Fair" health; three out of five students (59% and 63%) with fair and poor health respectively were emotionally abused, compared to 38% and 30% respectively of students with "Good" and "Excellent" health. This pattern occurred also for students who are handicapped in some way. Half (50%) of these students reported emotional abuse, compared to a third (35%) with no disability.

Physical abuse also appeared more likely to happen to females only as their general health decreased, as well as for females with disabilities. A greater proportion of females with relatively poorer general health had also been sexually abused (70%, or seven of the ten females with poor health reported sexual abuse). With regard to physical disabilities and sexual abuse, it was found on the other hand that males only who have a physical disability/ chronic illness were more prone to sexual abuse (11%) than males with no disability (4%).

Females only who were emotionally and/or physically abused were more likely to report that their weight was not normal. Also, emotionally abused females seemed more susceptible to be unhappy with their bodies than those not abused. Sexual abuse looks to have no effect on body perceptions.

Section 6
(Tables and Charts)

TABLE 6-1

**PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENT WORRIES AND CONCERNS⁺
BY GENDER, ALL BAHAMAS**

I Worry About . . .	Total Students	Males	Females
My own drinking and drug use	15.7	16.6	14.8
My mother's or father's drinking or drug use	21.8	19.6	23.8
Being physically abused *	25.9	19.2	32.4
Being sexually abused *	22	13.6	30.2
All the fighting and violence I see in my home	25.3	23.4	27.1
All the fighting and violence I see in my school	56.8	54.0	59.7
The violence in my community *	63	59.2	66.7
The drinking and drug use in my neighbourhood	43.7	45.7	41.5
Getting or making someone pregnant	42.6	41.8	43.4
Getting AIDS *	56.1	52.7	59.5
Being treated unfairly because of my race, nationality or religion *	34.3	30.4	38.1
My parents leaving me	33.2	30.7	35.6
Getting a job when I'm older *	69.8	66.8	72.8
Passing my exams *	85.4	81.0	89.7

⁺ The responses "sometimes" and "a lot" have been combined for ease of presentation.

* Significant gender differences are evident for these variables with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 6-2

**PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS REPORTING VARIOUS MENTAL HEALTH
AND ABUSE ASPECTS BY GENDER AND AGE *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various Measures of Mental Health/ Abuse	All Students	Males	Females	10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16-19 yrs
General Personality						
Happy	75.6	77.4	73.7	76.6 ✕	76.8	71.2
Sad	9.2	7.1	11.4	9.9	8.6	10.4
Angry	7.2	8.4	6	6.9	6.4	8.6
Irritable	8.0	7.1	8.9	6.6	8.2	9.9
Depressed Feelings During Past Month						
Many Times	19.9	16.3	23.7	14.9	21.9	21.9
Sometimes	42.0	41.0	42.9	36.4	45.0	42.5
Never	38.0	42.7	33.4	48.7	33.1	35.5
Feelings of Hurting or Killing Someone (Aggressive Thoughts)						
Many Times	9.5	12.7	6.0	4.7	10.4	13.2
Sometimes	48.0	50.8	45.3	36.6	51.5	54.6
Never	42.5	36.5	48.8	58.7	38.1	32.2
Suicidal Thoughts						
Often	6.6	5.0	8.0	4.7 ✕	6.2	9.7
Sometimes	18.9	14.8	23.1	15.7	19.8	20.8
Never	74.5	80.2	68.9	79.6	74.0	69.5
Suicide Attempt(s)						
More than Once	3.6	2.5	4.5	3.9	3.4	3.3
Once	8.0	5.9	10.1	3.5	7.9	13.7
Never	88.5	91.7	85.4	92.5	88.7	82.9

TABLE 6-2 CONT'D

Various Measures of Mental Health/ Abuse	All Students	Males	Females	10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	16-19 yrs
Attempted Suicide of Friend or Relative						
Attempted Suicide (They Lived)	13.5	11.4	15.2	10.4 ×	14.1	14.7
Committed Suicide	4.9	3.6	6.3	5.2	4.1	6.0
No	81.6	85.0	78.5	84.4	81.8	79.4
Parents with Problems due to Mental Health	7.1	7.1 ×	7.0	7.4 ×	7.0	6.9
Counseling for Mental Health/ Emotional Problem (s)	15.5	15.6 ×	15.3	12.3 ×	16.3	17.8
Verbally/ Emotionally Abused	35.9	28.9	42.9	22.6	42.6	38.8
Physically Abused	22.2	17.8	26.6	16.3	24.5	25.0
Sexually Abused	12.9	4.9	20.6	7.2	13.8	17.6

* Except where mentioned, significant gender and age differences are evident for these variables with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

× These associations are not significant.

TABLE 6-3

**PROPORTION (%) OF FREQUENCY OF DEPRESSED FEELINGS FOR PAST MONTH,
BY SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND ATTEMPTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Suicidal Inclinations	No Depressed Feelings			Occasional Depressed Feelings			Frequent Depressed Feelings		
	All Students	Males	Females	All Students	Males	Females	All Students	Males	Females
Suicidal Thoughts	9.3	7.2	11.9	27.5	23.6	30.9	52.1	41.0	59.6
Suicide Attempt(s)	4.2	5.5	2.7	9.7	7.8	11.1	30.3	18.3	38.5

* All associations (using chi-square) are significant with $p \leq 0.05$.

TABLE 6-4

**PROPORTIONAL (%) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENTS WHO HAVE
AND HAVE NOT ABSTAINED FROM TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, AND MARIJUANA
BY VARIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS
ALL BAHAMAS ***

Mental Health Aspects		Cigarettes		Alcohol		Marijuana	
		Abstained	Did not Abstain	Abstained	Did not Abstain	Abstained	Did not Abstain
Frequent Depressed Feelings	All Students	19.0 ×	25.9	18.2	20.6	19.1 ×	22.5
	Males	14.4 ×	28.2	14.5	16.1	15.1 ×	20.0
	Females	23.3 ×	21.1	21.1	27.6	22.9 ×	28.6
Frequent Aggressive Thoughts	All Students	8.4	22.0	5.8	16.3	7.6	28.2
	Males	12.1	22.5	9.3	17.9	10.0	36.0
	Females	5.1	21.1	3.1	13.8	5.4 ×	9.5
Suicidal Thoughts	All Students	24.1	47.5	22.3	31.8	24.8	35.2
	Males	17.5	42.5	14.6	27.3	18.8 ×	28.0
	Females	30.0	57.9	27.9	38.8	30.1	52.4
Suicide Attempt(s)	All Students	10.3	22.4	9.1	15.4	10.6 ×	17.4
	Males	7.1	18.4	5.8	11.3	7.0	18.8
	Females	13.2	30.0	11.6	22.0	13.9 ×	14.3

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

× Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 6-5

**PROPORTION (%) OF LEVEL OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION
BY VARIOUS ASPECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Mental Health Aspects		Family Communication								
		I can tell mom about my problems			I can tell dad about my problems			My family pays attention to me		
		Very Little	Some	A Lot	Very Little	Some	A Lot	Very Little	Some	A Lot
Frequent Depressed Feelings	All Students	27.4	17.5	11.4	22.0	15.4	13.8	31.5	17.6	14.3
	Males	21.4	14.4	10.2	16.5	14.4	11.3	20.0	12.9	14.0
	Females	32.1	21	12.8	25.6	16.5	17.7	41.4	21.4	14.7
No Aggressive Thoughts	All Students	33.6	43.4	52.0	35.9	43.8	52.9	29.1	33.2	52.8
	Males	29.4	33.8	47.2	28.2	34.3	49.3	23.1	25.6	46.9
	Females	37.1	54.4	57.6	41.1	55.4	58.8	34.5	39.7	59.4
Suicidal Thoughts	All Students	35.7	26.8	15.3	30.5	24.5	17.8	45.5	26.6	17.4
	Males	25.5	24.8	11.2	22.9 x	23.4	13.9	33.3	17.1	17.2
	Females	43.2	29.0	19.8	35.2 x	26.1	23.7	56.3	34.8	17.4
Suicide Attempt(s)	All Students	16.4	9.8	6.3	13.3 x	6.6	11.2	21.7	11.8	6.2
	Males	8.2 x	9.4	6.0	7.5 x	5.1	8.2	16.4	7.0	5.9
	Females	22.7	10.3	6.7	17.1 x	8.4	15.7	26.2	16.0	6.6

* All associations except where mentioned are significant with $p \leq 0.05$.

x These associations are not significant.

TABLE 6-6

**PROPORTION (%) REPORTING EMOTIONAL/VERBAL ABUSE
BY VARIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS ²
ALL BAHAMAS ***

Various Mental Health Aspects	Verbally Abused			Not Verbally Abused		
	All Students	Males	Females	All Students	Males	Females
Frequent Depressed Feelings	29.4	20.3	35.5	14.0	13.2	15.2
Frequent Aggressive Thoughts	14.1	21.0	9.1	6.4	9.5	2.5
Suicidal Thoughts	41.8	31.7	48.7	16.6	15.5	18.1
Suicide Attempts	21.5	15.3	25.3	6.1	6.1	6.1

² Percentage of students who answered "Yes, many times" for depressed feelings within past month, "Yes, almost always" for aggressive thoughts, "Yes, often" and "Yes, sometimes" combined for suicidal thought, and "Yes, once" and "Yes, more than once" combined for suicide attempts were taken into account.

* All associations (using chi-square) are significant with $p \leq 0.05$.

TABLE 6-7

**PROPORTION (%) REPORTING PHYSICAL ABUSE
BY VARIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS³
ALL BAHAMAS ***

Various Mental Health Aspects	Physically Abused			Not Physically Abused		
	All Students	Males	Females	All Students	Males	Females
Frequent Depressed Feelings	35.5	26.7	41.8	15.1	12.6	18.1
Frequent Aggressive Thoughts	15.1	18.7	11.8	7.2	10.6	3.3
Suicidal Thoughts	50.0	38.7	58.2	19.4	16.1	23.3
Suicide Attempts	26.3	18.9	30.8	7.7	6.0	9.8

³ Percentage of students who answered "Yes, many times" for depressed feelings, "Yes, almost always" for aggressive thoughts, "Yes, often" and "Yes, sometimes" combined for suicidal thought, and "Yes, once" and "Yes, more than once" combined for suicidal attempts were taken into account.

* All associations (using chi-square) are significant with $p \leq 0.05$.

TABLE 6-8

**PROPORTION (%) REPORTING SEXUAL ABUSE
BY VARIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS⁴
ALL BAHAMAS ***

Various Mental Health Aspects	Sexually Abused			Not Sexually Abused		
	All Students	Males	Females	All Students	Males	Females
Frequent Depressed Feelings	37.8	33.3 ×	39.1	16.7	14.0	19.8
Frequent Aggressive Thoughts	11.6	9.5 ×	11.1	9.0	12.8	4.5
Suicidal Thoughts	50.9	38.1	54.4	22.0	19.1	25.4
Suicide Attempts	33.3	26.3	34.1	9.0	7.6	10.6

⁴ Percentage of students who answered "Yes, many times" for depressed feelings, "Yes, almost always" for aggressive thoughts, "Yes, often" and "Yes, sometimes" combined for suicidal thought, and "Yes, once" and "Yes, more than once" combined for suicidal attempts were taken into account.

* All associations except where mentioned (using chi-square) are significant with $p \leq 0.05$.

× These associations are not significant.

TABLE 6-9

**PROPORTIONAL (%) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENTS REPORTING PARENTS
WITH/WITHOUT PROBLEMS DUE TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR
BY VARIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Various Mental Health Aspects	Parent(s) with Violence Problems			Parents with no Violence Problems		
	All Students	Males	Females	All Students	Males	Females
Frequent Depressed Feelings	30.8	26.9	33.8	18.2	14.9	21.5
Frequent Aggressive Thoughts	19.8	21.6	18.5	7.9	11.9	4.1
Suicidal Thoughts	51.3	40.4	60.0	22.4	17.0	27.5
Suicide Attempt(s)	28.2	25.0	30.6	9.3	6.2	12.3

* All associations were significant with $p \leq 0.05$.

FIGURE 6-1

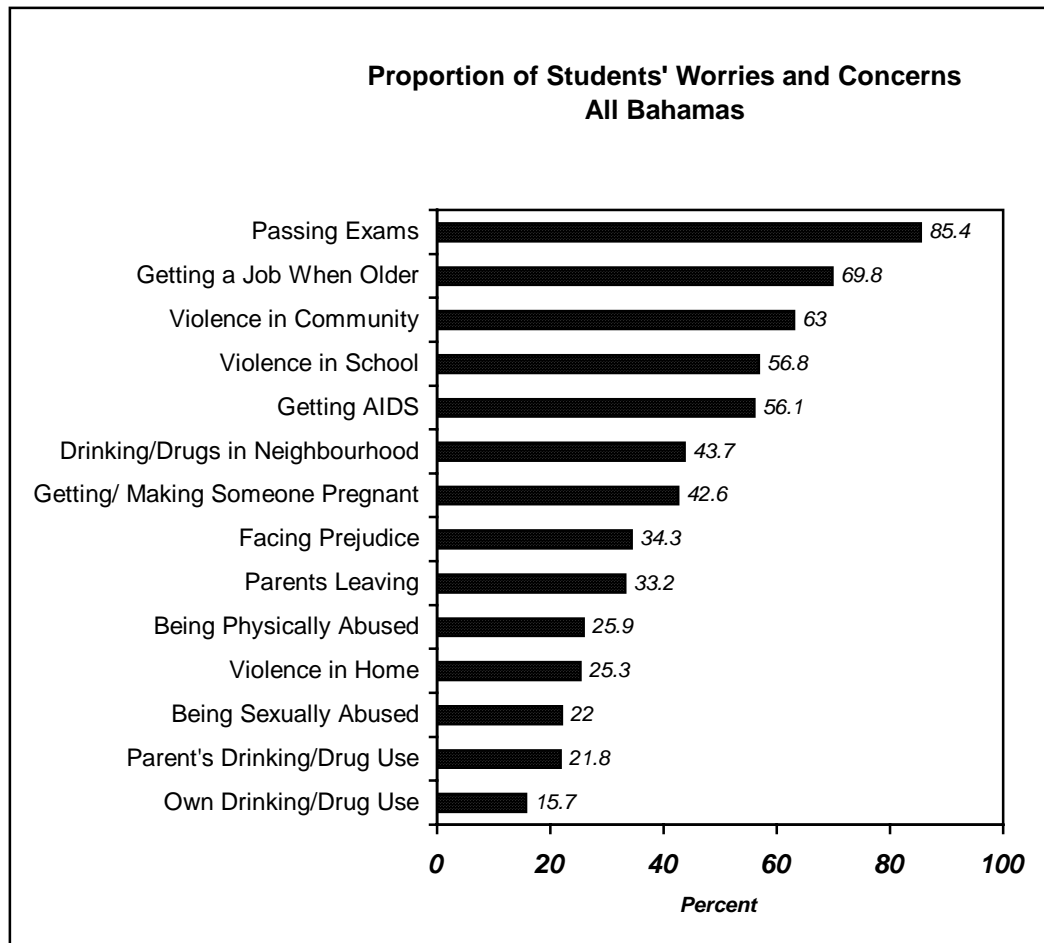


FIGURE 6-2

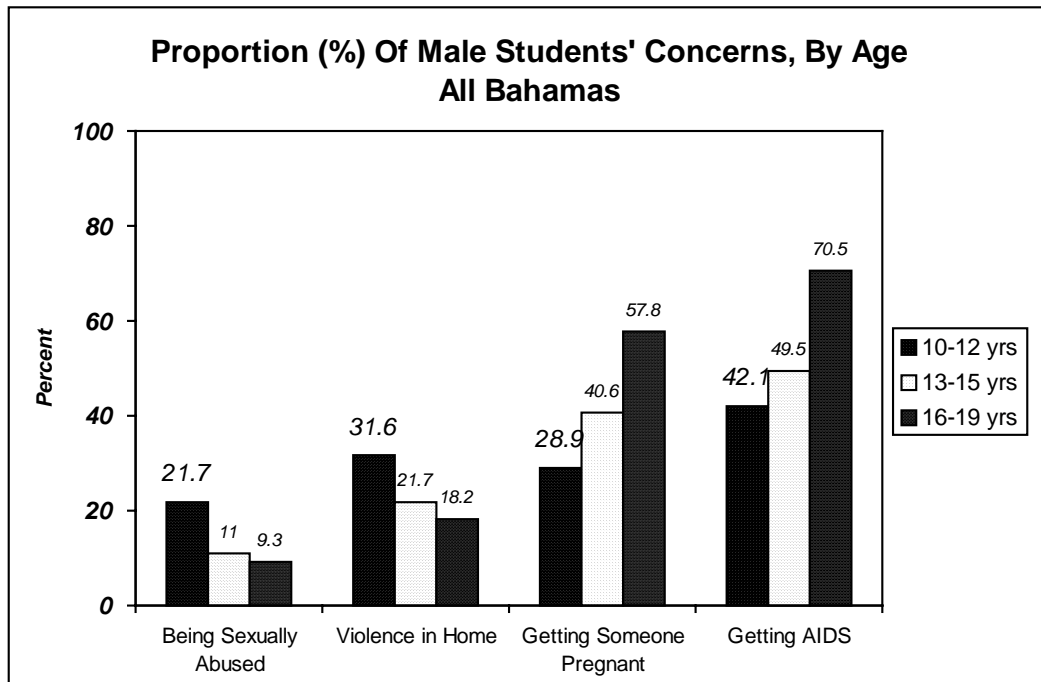
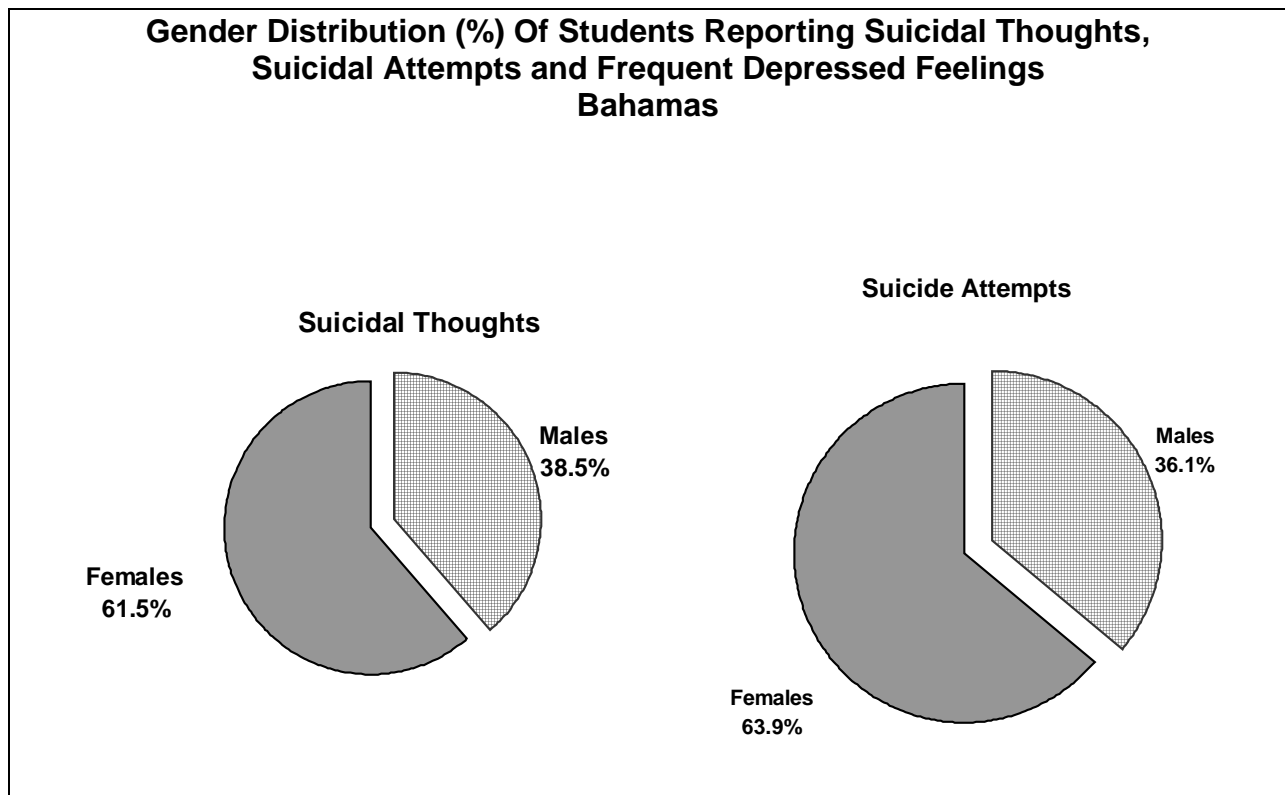


FIGURE 6-3



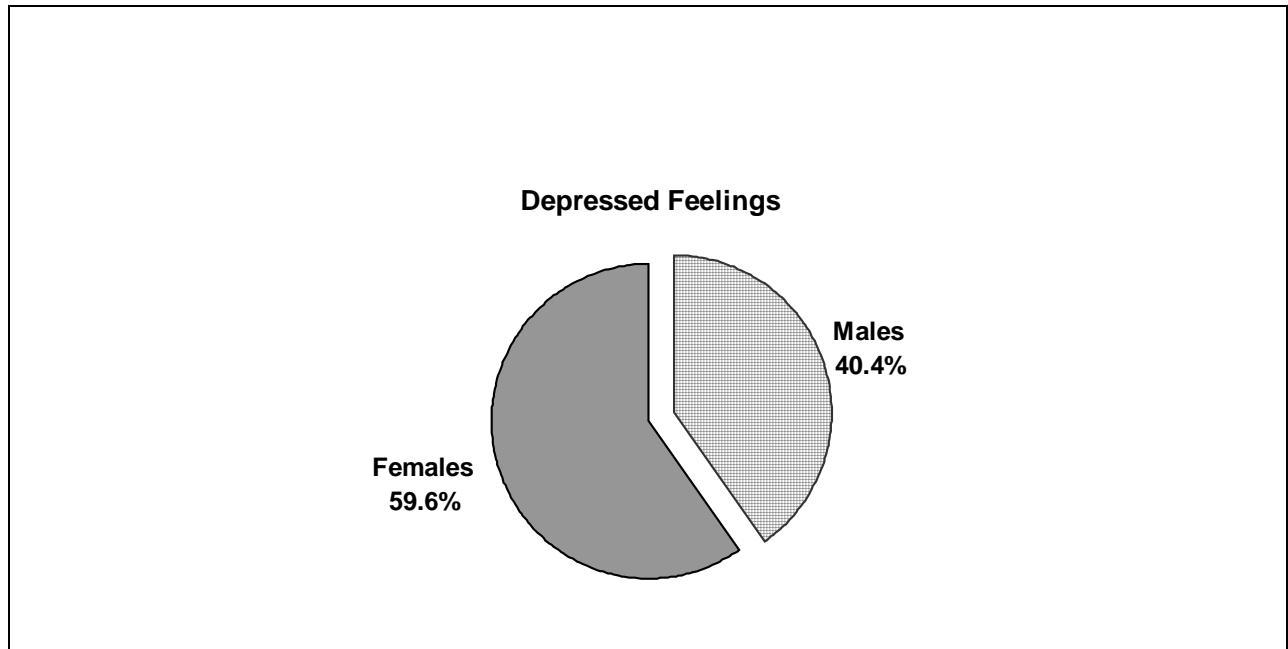


FIGURE 6-4

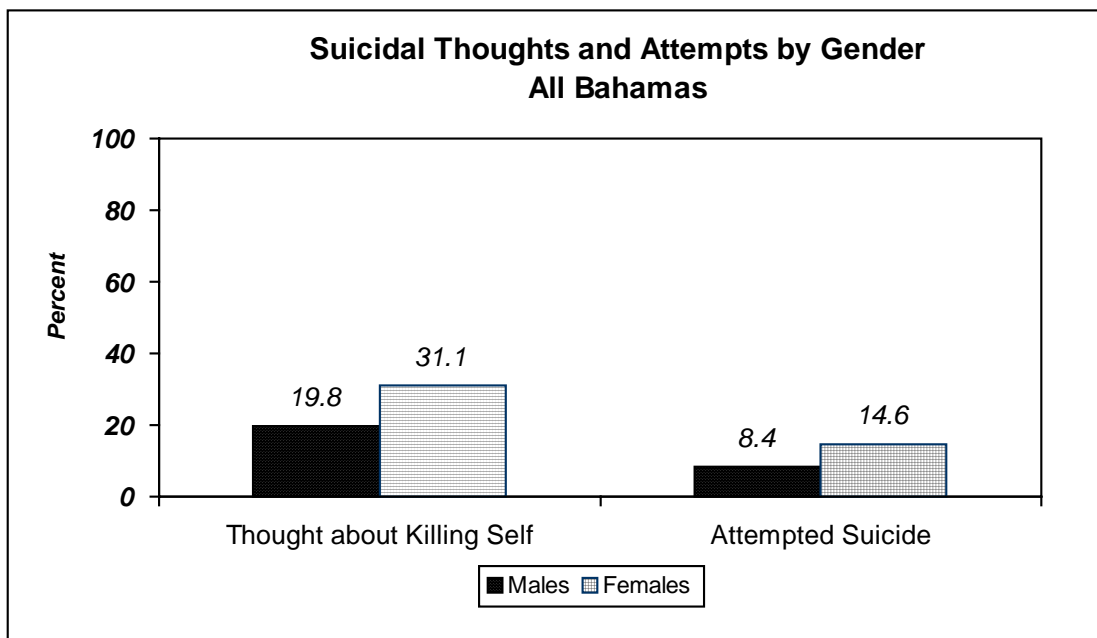


FIGURE 6-5

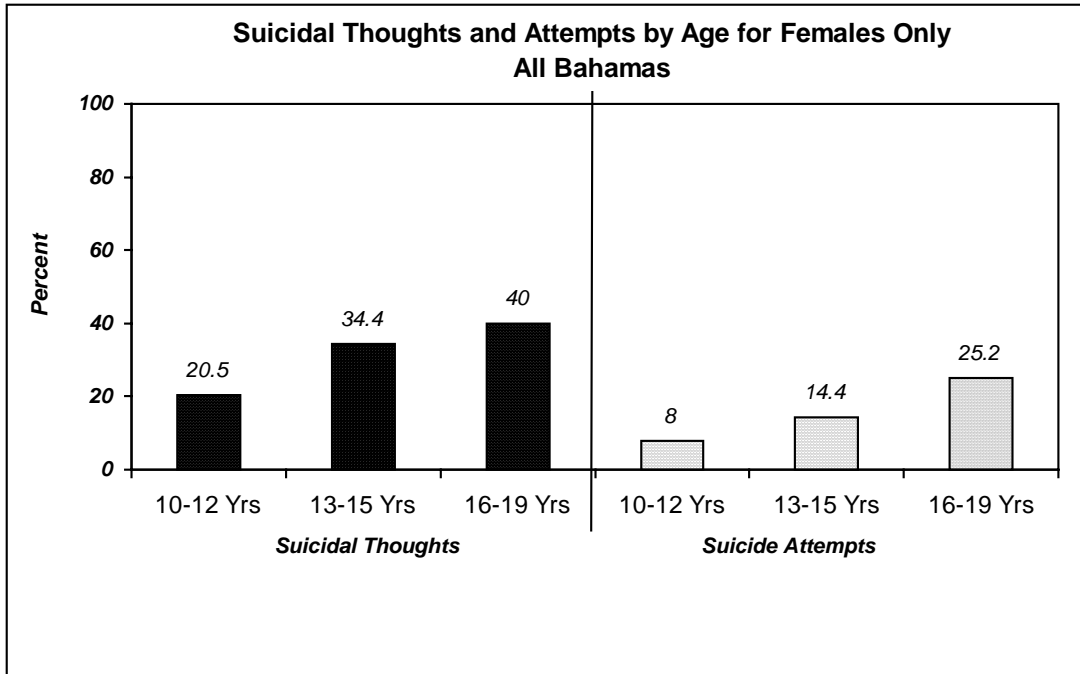


FIGURE 6-6

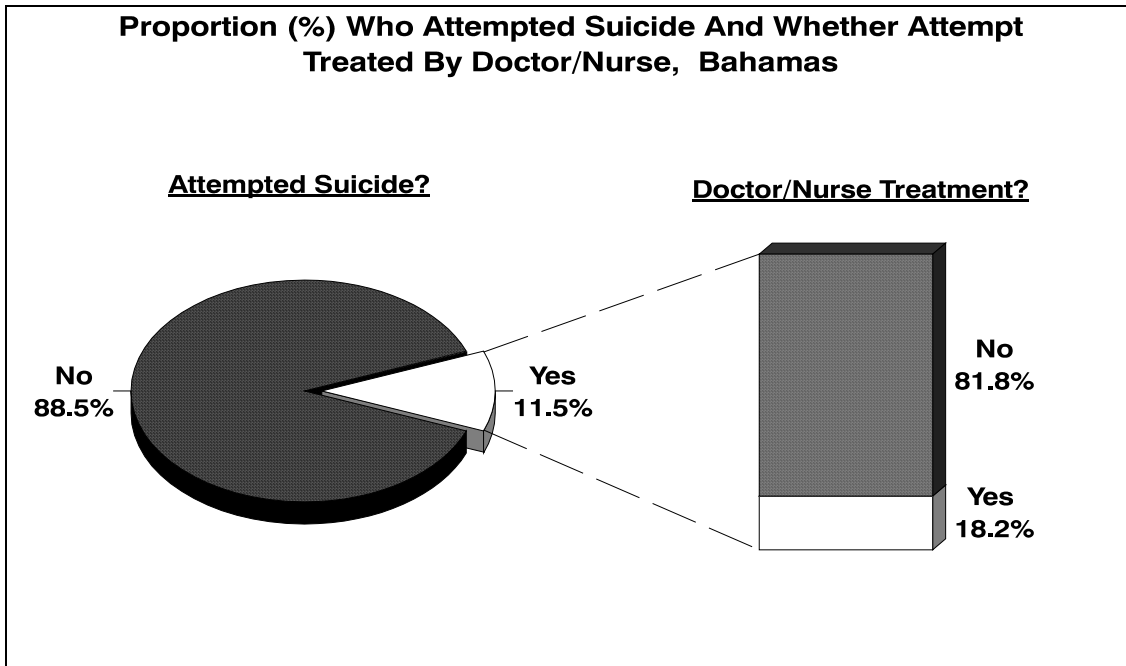


FIGURE 6-7

By Student Suicidal Attempt, Bahamas

Has Relative/Friend Ever Tried To Kill Him/Herself?

No

Yes

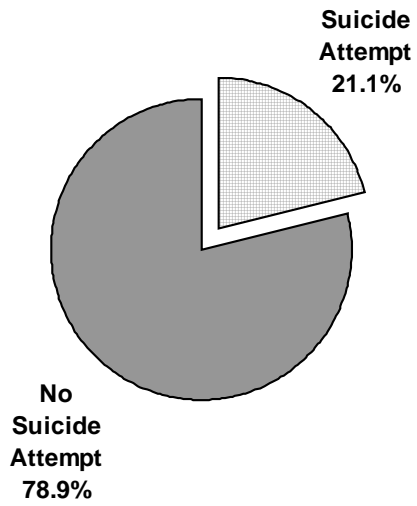
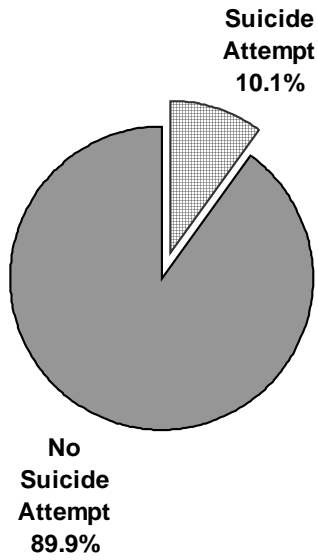


FIGURE 6-10

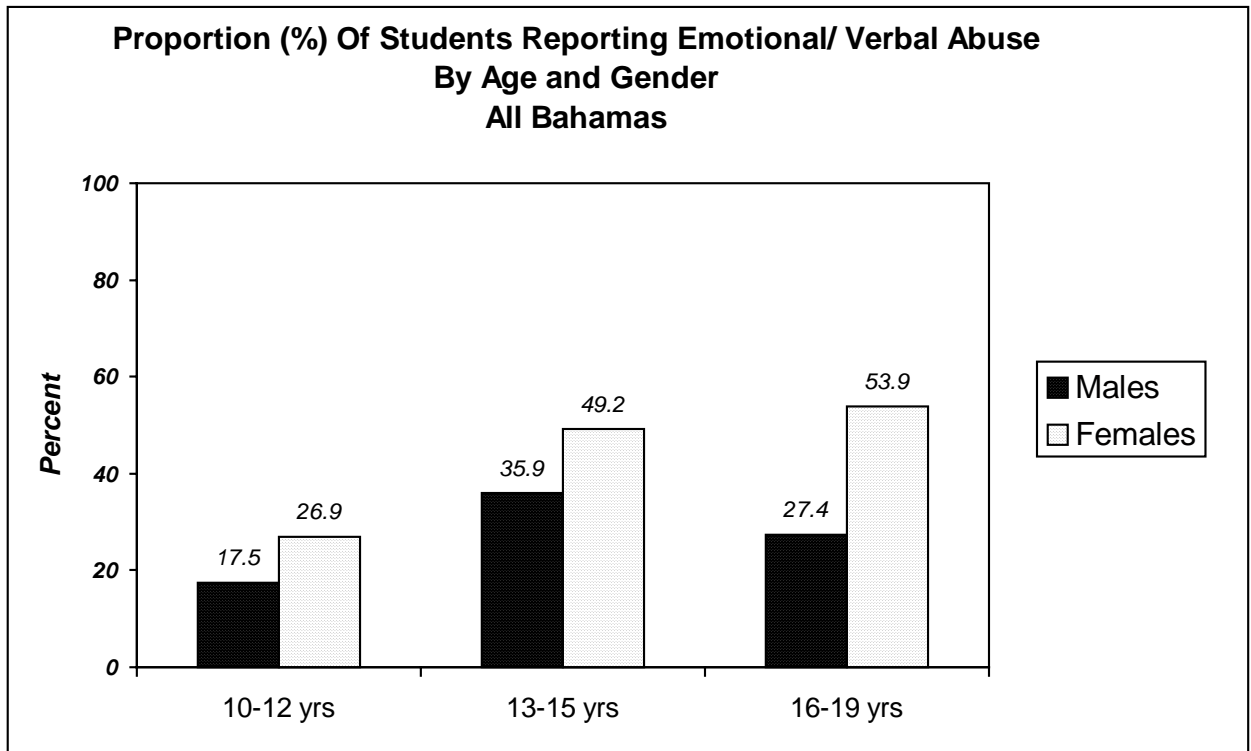


FIGURE 6-11

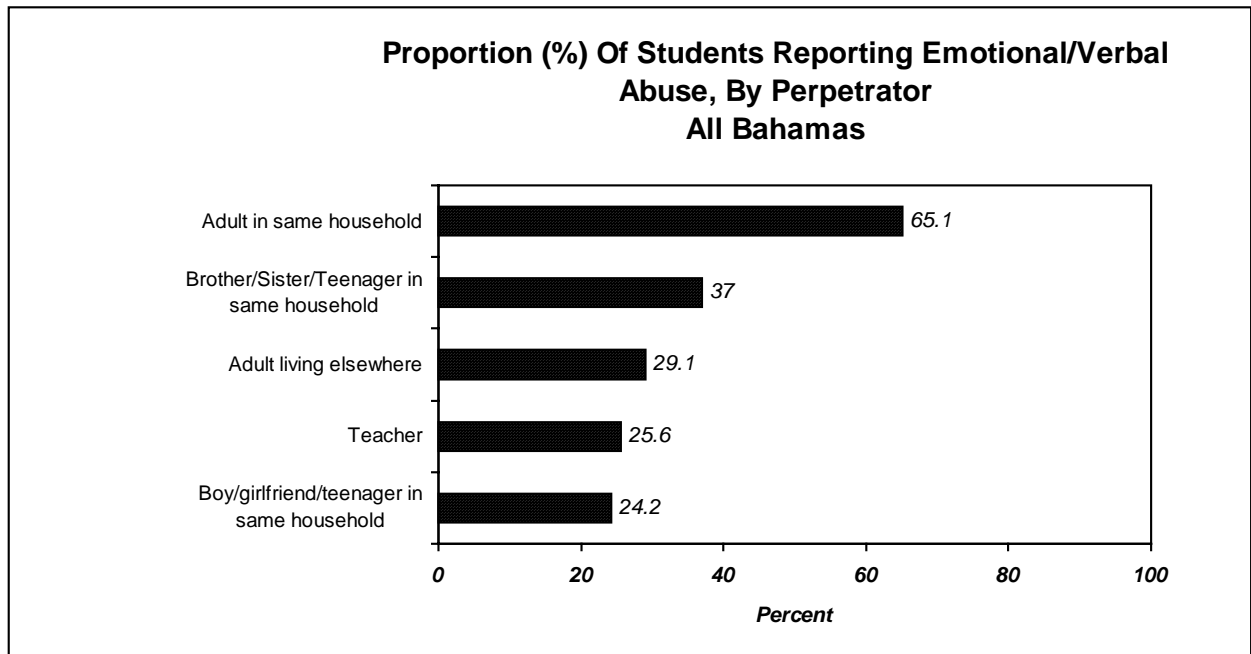


FIGURE 6-12

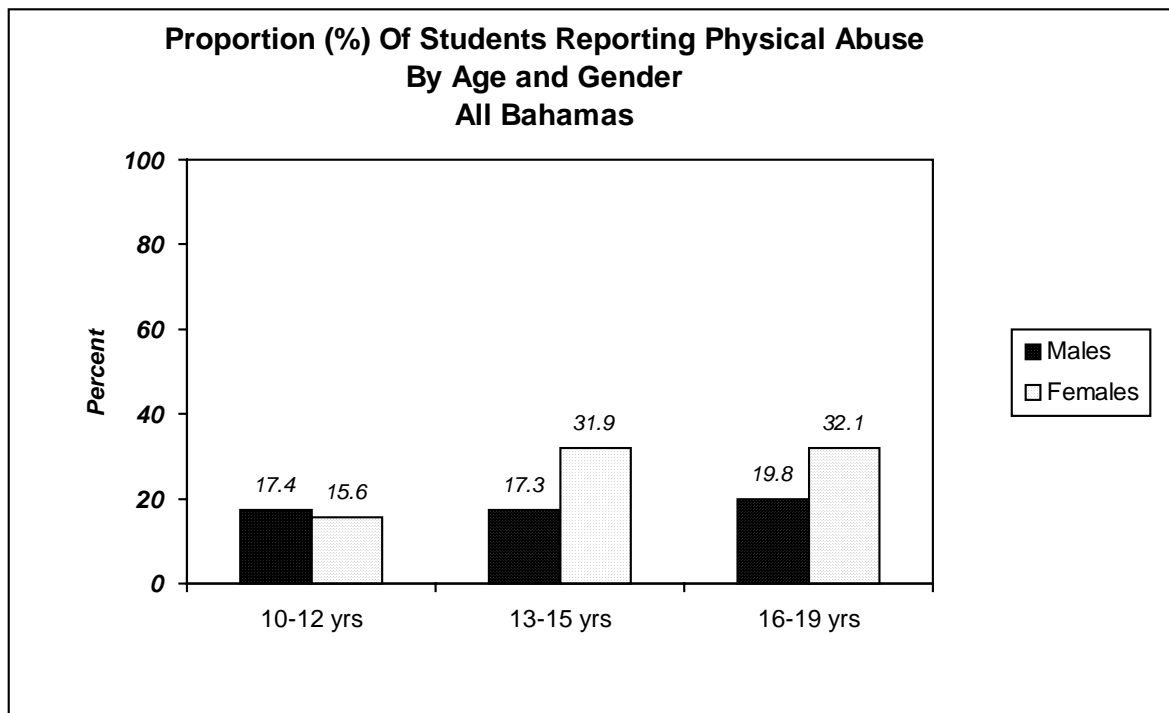


FIGURE 6-13

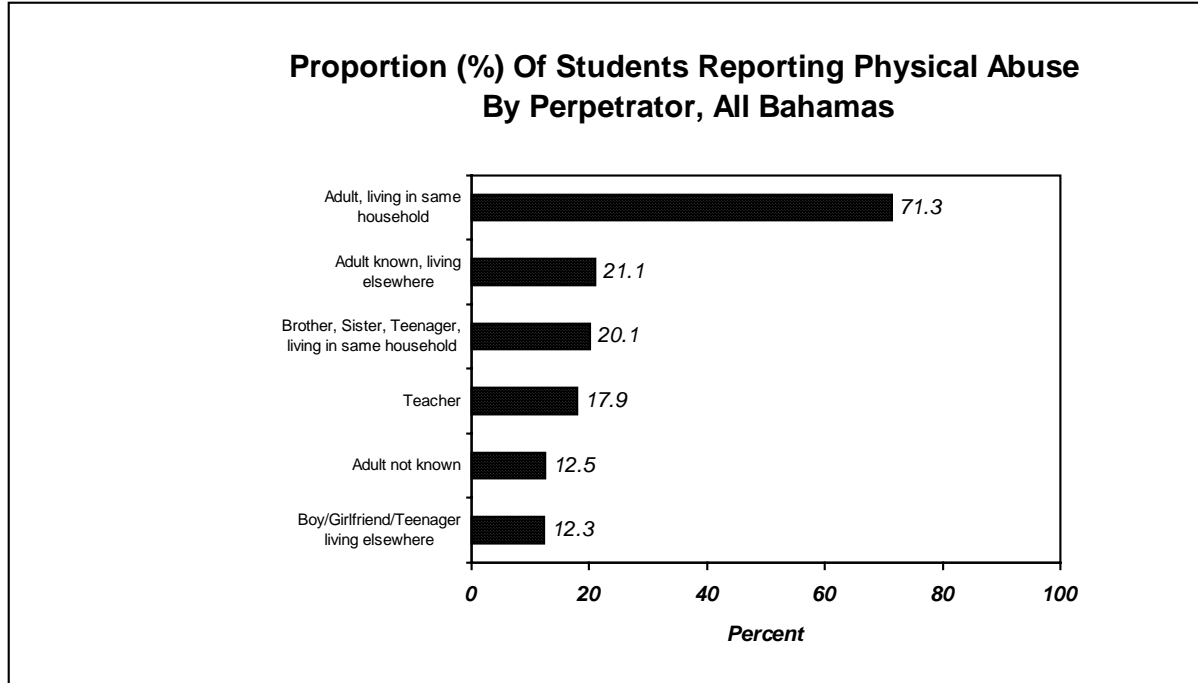


FIGURE 6-14

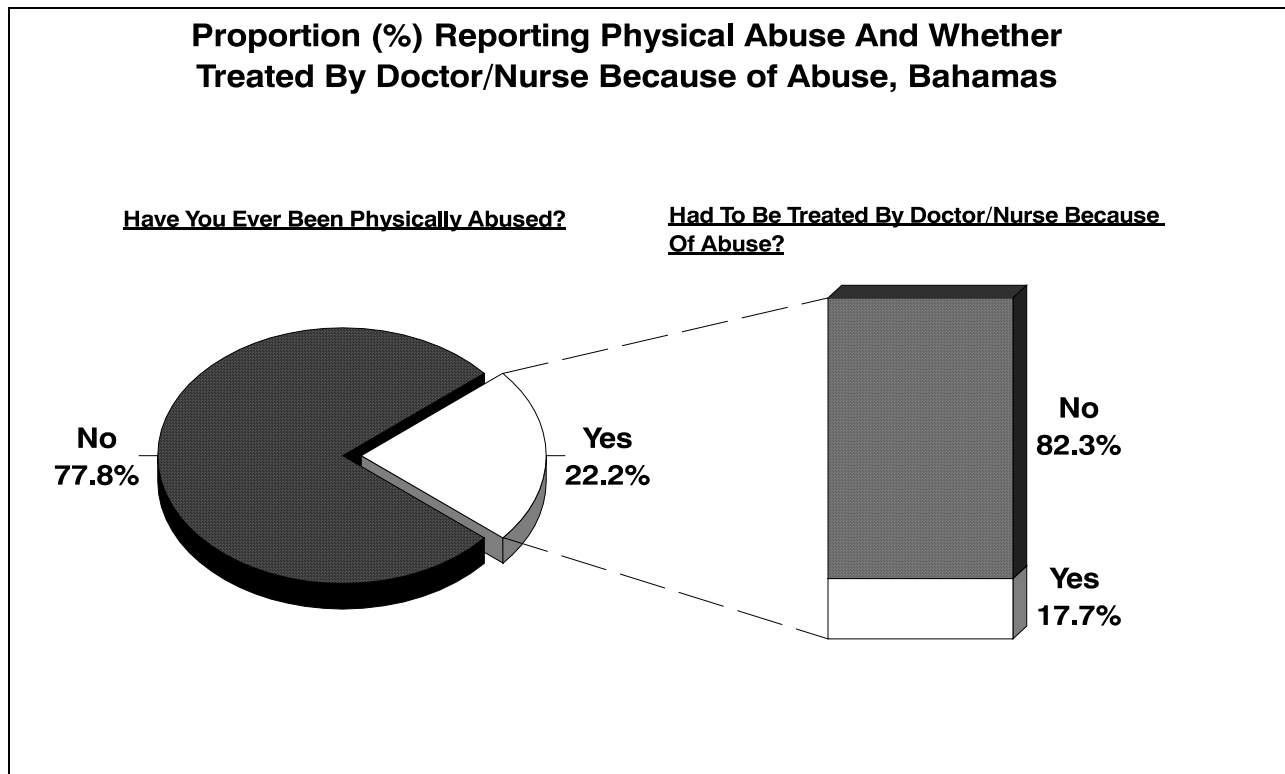


FIGURE 6-15

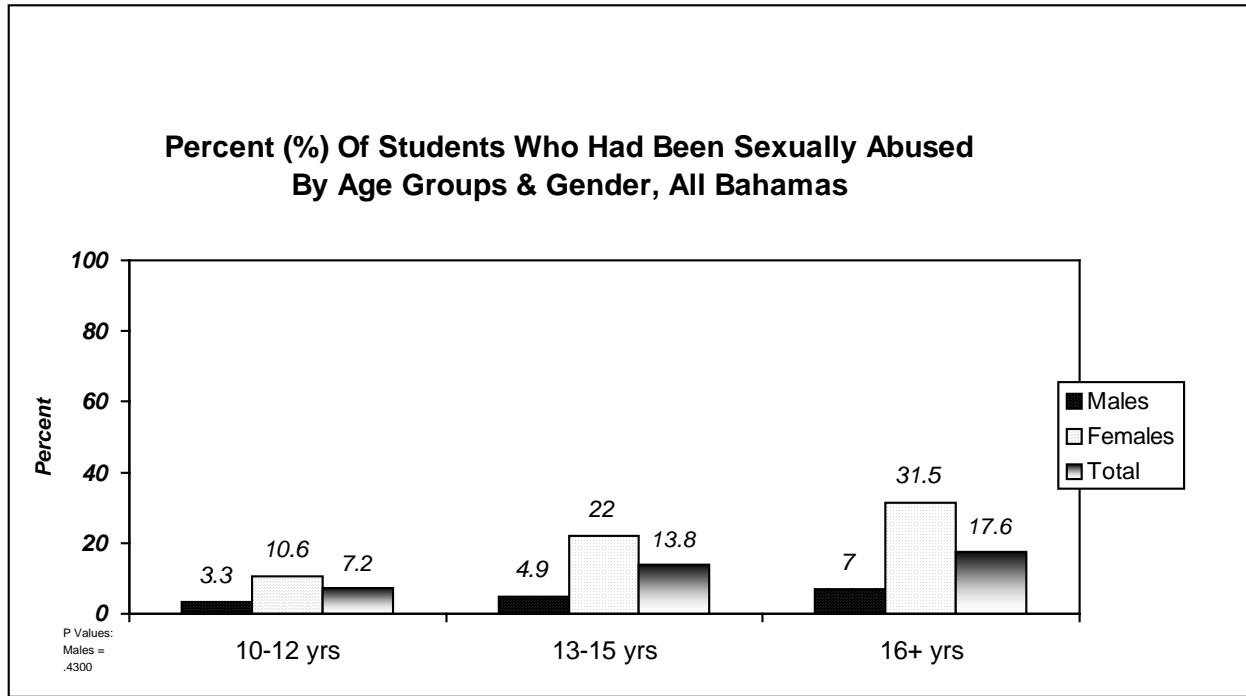


FIGURE 6-16

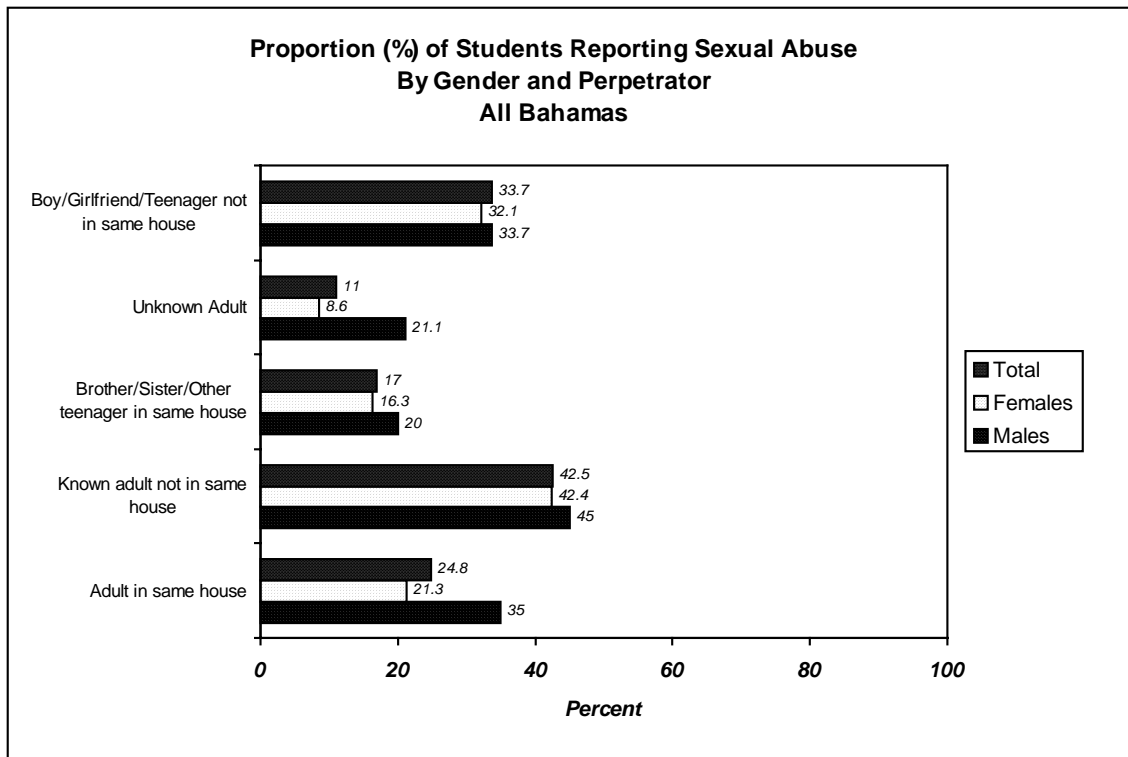


FIGURE 6-17

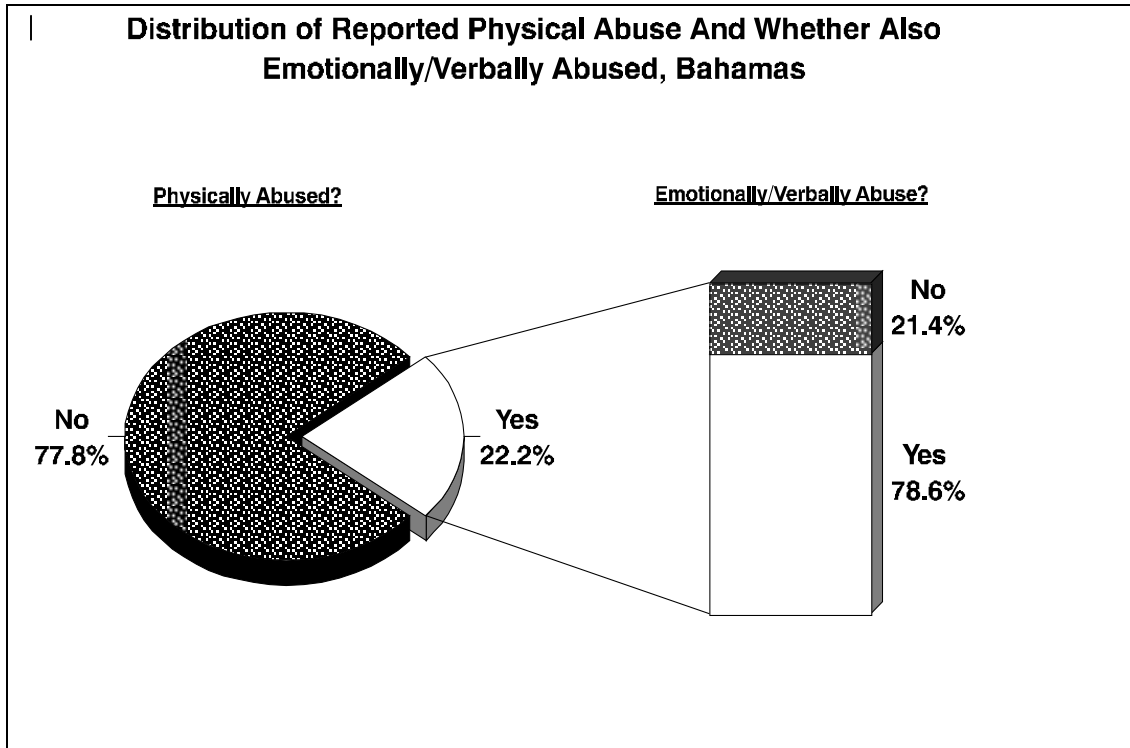


FIGURE 6-18

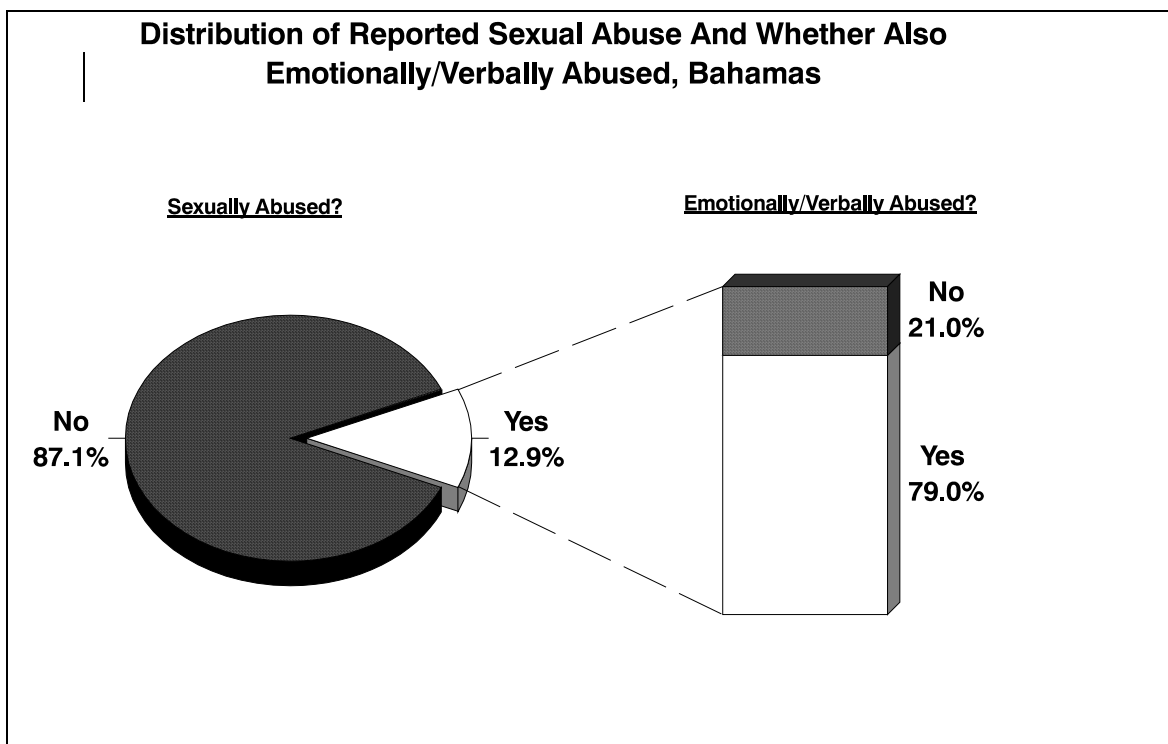
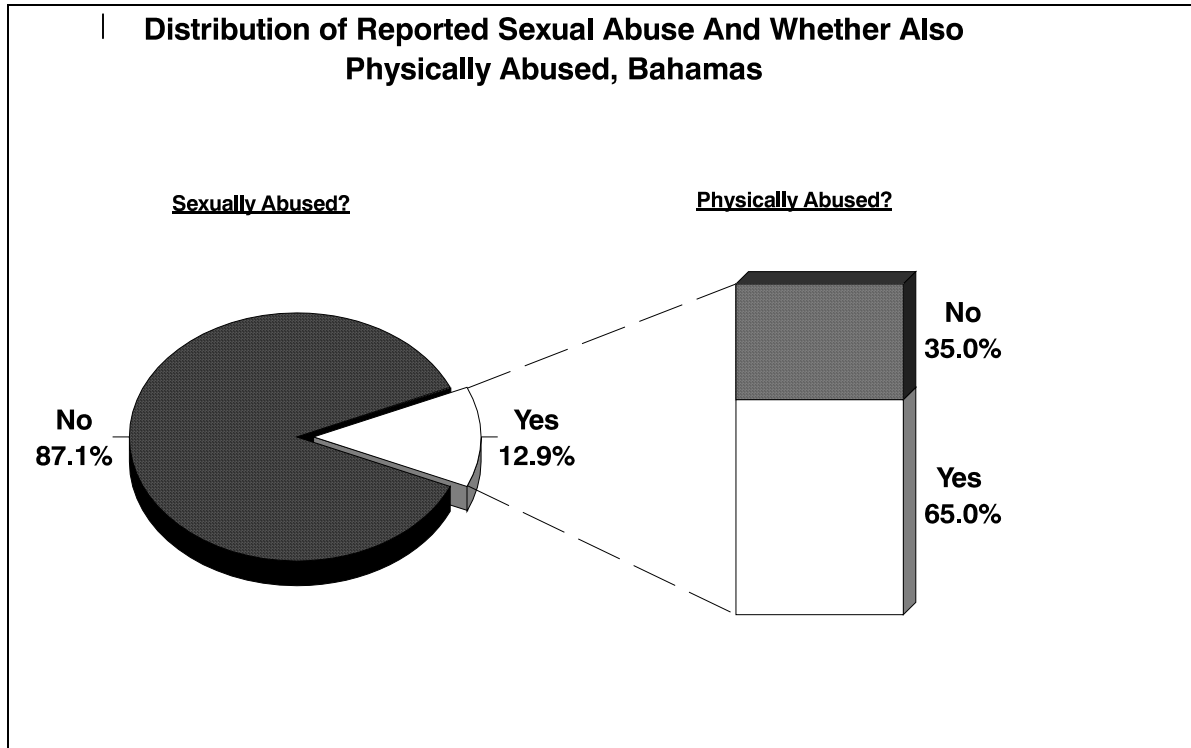


FIGURE 6-19



Section 7

Violence and Illegal Activities

7. Violence and Illegal Activities

7.1. Immoral and Illegal Activities

With the exception of having cheated on a test, the majority of Bahamian students had not committed such unethical acts as skipping school, vandalism, shoplifting, stealing from parents, or burglary. Nonetheless, the proportion who have admitted to these acts are high enough to warrant some concern and action, particularly since some of the acts are unlawful and a possible precursor to more serious offences. Half of all respondents have admitted to cheating on a test within the past year (51%), about a third had shoplifted (31%), one-quarter had vandalized or deliberately damaged property that didn't belong to them (27%) and stole something from their parents or other family members (28%). Additionally, approximately one out of five (22%) had skipped school without an excuse and 14% had been in a fight where weapons were used (Table 7-1).

Statistically significant differences between males and females exist for most of the activities, with the larger contrasts noted for fighting with weapons, vandalism and shoplifting. Males (22%) were three and one-half times more likely than females (6%) to have engaged in a fight where weapons were used, and for vandalism and shoplifting, 34% and 39% of males respectively, compared to 19% and 23% of females, participated in these activities (Table 7-1).

Cheating on tests (53% of males, 49% of females) and running away from home (7% of males, 6% of females) were equally likely to have been committed by male and female students.

Regarding the association between these illegal and/or immoral acts and age, the data indicates that as age increases, so does the likelihood of the students engaging in truancy, cheating on tests, vandalism, fighting with weapons, and stealing from family members (Figure 7-1). Students 16 to 19 years old (36%) were about twice as likely than those 13 to 15 years old (21%) and almost three times as likely as those 10 to 12 years old (13%) to skip school. As for cheating on tests, 7 out of 10 or 68% of those 16 to 19 years old, one of two (55%) of those 13 to 15 years old and approximately one of three (30%) of the 10-12 years old group had cheated on tests within the last year.

For fights with weapons, those 16-19 years old (23%) were almost twice as likely to fight as those 13-15 years old (14%) and three times as likely as those 10-12 years old (7%). Students thirteen to fifteen years old stole from their families more than any of the other age groups.

No association was observed between age and the number of times students committed shoplifting, burglary, or ran away from home. Obviously, students engage in illegal activities such as those above from a young age and continue this behaviour throughout their teens. Such actions at a young age that go unpenalized may contribute to increasing the level of illicit activity in later years.

As an indicator of the impact of family relationships, parental residence in the home was examined in relation to the committing of immoral and/or illegal acts. Results revealed that generally, whether or not a parent lived with the student had little bearing on the committing of most of the activities. The exception was a mother's presence in the home and its influence on males with regards to shoplifting and the overall association with burglary. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of all males with a mother residing in the same household as compared to 53% with no mother in the home had shoplifted. Similarly, but on a lesser scale, 6% of the students who resided with their mother have admitted to burglary as compared to 13% in the group with no mother at home.

A father's presence in the home, however, appears to have more of an influence on females with regards to engaging in certain activities. Three percent (3%) of females with a father at home have admitted to fighting with weapons, whereas 9% of females with no father had done the same. Also, 19% of females with fathers had stolen from their family members, and 27% of those with no father did likewise. Females not living with their father are twice as inclined to run away from home (9%) than those with their father (4%). The possible influence of older boyfriends along with troubled relationships within the home may all contribute to this attempt to distance themselves from the perceived problem.

Thirty percent (30%) of all students with a father at home had shoplifted, while 43% with no father had stolen from a store.

The extent to which mom and dad cares about the students and level of perceived family attention bore, for the most part, no statistically significant relationship with the frequency of practice by students of morally questionable and illegal activities.

Family attention, was observed to have a significant relationship with two activities, namely cheating on tests and damaging property (vandalism). The more students thought their family paid attention to them, the lower the frequency of cheating and vandalizing. While more than half of those students whose families paid "little" attention to them (56%) and those whose families paid "some" attention (58%) had cheated on a test, only 45% of the students whose families paid "a lot" of attention had done the same. Similarly, while 32% and 35% of students with "little" and "some" family attention, respectively, had damaged property, only 21% of those with "a lot" of attention also committed vandalism.

7.2. Weapon Carrying and Injury from Weapons

7.2.1. Weapon Carrying

Most Bahamian students did not carry weapons to school during the month prior to the survey (87.4%) nor at other times (76%) (Table 7-2). Thirteen percent (13%) had carried a weapon to school and almost one-quarter (24%) had carried a weapon at times other than school ("sometimes" and "almost all the time" combined).

When weapons were carried, the most popular overall (11%) and for both males (15%) and females (7%) was the knife or razor. Secondary to this, about 4% had carried the more lethal and illegal handgun and another 4% a stick, bat, club or pipe. In looking at the gender differences, males were almost three times as likely as females to carry weapons both in school (19% versus 6%) and outside the school compound or at other times (35% versus 13%).

It is critical to note that of weapon carriers, both at school and at other times, almost 30% are female. Adding to that, a third of the persons who were injured by weapons (stabbed, chopped or shot) are female. This is not too surprising since the legal authorities have noted over the last few years that females contribute to gang violence in many instances by serving as the vehicle for carrying weapons.

For both weapon carrying at school and at other times, significant age differences exist with the likelihood of weapon carrying increasing with increasing age. For weapon carrying in school, 7% of those aged 10 to 12 years, 13% of those 13 to 15 years old and 20% (one out of five) of the 16 to 19 years old group had carried. (Table 7-2). Outside of school, students aged 13-15 years (26%) were twice as likely to have carried than those 10 to 12 years old (12%) and those 16 to 19 years (35%) three times as likely than the youngest age set.

Generally, the evidence for an association between parents resident in homes and weapon carrying was not overwhelming, although adolescents who lived with their mother and/or father were less likely to carry. The most pronounced association was observed for males who did not live with their mothers. This group was twice as likely to carry weapons to school (33%) as those who did reside in the same household as their mothers (17%).

Likewise, the extent to which mom or dad cared and level of family attention had little or no bearing on the frequency of weapon carrying. A weak inverse relationship exists, one defined by no observable differences in weapon carrying for those whose family cares "very little" or "some," but with a substantial decrease when it is felt that their families' care about them "a lot." Seventeen percent (17%) and 30% who receive very little attention; 15% and 29% who receive some attention; 7% and 18% who get a lot of attention from their family had carried weapons to school and at other times respectively.

7.2.2. Injury from Weapons

In total, only about 10% of the students had ever been either stabbed, chopped or shot. Males were more likely to have been injured than females (Table 7-2), and the percentage of previously injured students in the age groups 13-15 and 16-19 years were only slightly more than the percentage in students aged 10-12 years.

Not surprisingly, injury from weapons was positively associated with the frequency of weapon carrying. Results revealed that whereas only 6% of those who had never carried a weapon to school in the past month were injured themselves, 29% of students who had carried a weapon to school "sometimes," and 65% of students who had "usually" carried a weapon to school were injured. As for weapon carrying at times other than at school, students who had carried weapons "sometimes" (23%) and "almost always" (44%) were five times and ten times, respectively, more prone to injury from weapons than those who did not carry a weapon at all (4%).

7.3. Gangs and Violence

As a result of the general perception by society that a large proportion of youth violence is due to gang involvement, a more in-depth look was afforded to gang membership and its relation to violence and other aspects of a student's life.

Most Bahamian students do not now or have ever belonged to gangs. Overall, only 13% have any gang experience, one out of five males (20%) and just 7% of the females (Table 7-3). Of the 13%, 5% admitted that they were current members while 8% said that they were former gang members. It is important to note, however, that gang membership in the student population is not limited to males as a full 25% of former and present gang members, were female.

There were no significant differences between the age groups regarding the percentage of students who were either past or present gang members. The range was about 4 percentage points from the youngest to the oldest age group for past gang involvement, and 3 percentage points for present gang membership. This may suggest either an early attraction to or recruitment by the gangs.

Gang membership is associated with some aspects of family relationships, namely having one or both parents in the home and the amount of attention paid to them by the family. Gang involvement (past and present) is twice as likely to occur in students from homes where the mother is absent (25%) than those from homes with the mothers present (12%). This difference was not as obvious for the presence of fathers in the homes.

Regarding family attention, 16% of those who feel that their family pays "very little" attention to them have had gang experience, as compared to 15% of the group that feels that they get "some attention," and 9% in the group where family attention is not lacking. (Figure 7-2).

Weapons were more likely to have been taken to schools by students who were or still are involved with gangs. Those students who are still in gangs were about ten times more likely to carry a weapon to school than those with no gang experience (6%) Table 7-4).

As a result of the small numbers of students in gangs, however, interventions to reduce weapon carrying should not only target gang members as those presently in gangs represents only a third of all weapon carriers.

As for weapon carrying at times other than school, a significant association was again evident. Three out of five (60%) who have been in gangs in the past and four out of five (82%) who are still in gangs had carried a weapon at times other than school (Table 7-4). For those who have never been in gangs, less than one out five (17%) carry weapons at times other than school.

Figure 7-3 indicates that there was a clear preference for certain types of weapons based on gang involvement. The majority (66.7%) of those who carried the most lethal weapons, i.e., the handgun, were either current or former gang members. Contrastingly, most (68.1%) of those who have never been in a gang carried mostly weapons such as knives and razors or clubs, sticks, bats or pipes.

Among the immoral and illegal activities previously discussed, a significant association exists between the frequency of committing these activities and the level of gang involvement. (Figure 7-4). In descending order of strength, gang involvement influenced the number of times students fought with weapons, shoplifted, skipped school, damaged property, cheated on tests, ran away from home, burglarised, and stole from their families.

The frequency of being in a fight involving weapons increased as the level of gang membership rose. Whereas just one of ten (9%) of those who have never been in gang had been in a fight with weapons, this increased to two out of five (39%) for those with past gang membership, and to just over one-half (55%) for those who are presently in a gang (Figure 7-4). Not surprisingly then, 30% of those who were in a gang and 43% who were currently in a gang had been injured by a weapon, as compared to just 6% of those who have never been in a gang (Table 7-4).

There is also an association in males between engaging in extra-curricular activities and gang membership (Table 7-4). Of those males who had never been in a gang, one-half (49%) were involved in organized activities after school. Of the current gang members, only one-third (32%) were involved in extracurricular activities. What was interesting though, was that almost 60% of past gang members were involved in extra-curricular endeavours. This suggests that these type of activities do provide more positive options that can attract the male interest if given a chance and that former gang members recognize this fact even more. A significant relationship for females was not apparent.

7.4. Aggressive Thoughts

When asked "Do you ever think about hurting or killing someone," 48% of Bahamian students said "Yes, sometimes." Another 10% had these thoughts "Almost always." Predictably, males (13%) were twice as likely to have had these thoughts "almost

always" than females (6%) (Figure 7-5). For both sexes, as age increased so did the frequency of having aggressive thoughts (Figure 7-6).

Weapon carrying both at school and at other times, as well as injury due to weapons, were associated with thoughts of aggression. As the frequency of thinking about "hurting or killing someone" increased, there was a corresponding increase in weapon carrying and frequency of personal injury. Two out of five students (40%) who "almost always" felt like hurting or killing someone, 17% who had these thoughts "sometimes," and 2% of the students who never had these thoughts, had carried a weapon to school (Table 7-5). While these associations were found for both genders, they were much more obvious for males.

Over one-half (53%) of the students who harboured frequent aggressive thoughts, a third (34%) who had these thoughts "sometimes," and 7% who never had these thoughts had carried weapons at times other than school. In the event that methods to detect individuals who harbour these thoughts can be identified, interventions to avoid committing further immoral or illegal acts may be possible (Table 7-5).

As for having been hurt before by a weapon, 28% of those with frequent aggressive thoughts, 13% with occasional thoughts, and 2% of those who never have these thoughts had been hurt (Table 7-5). Obviously, harbouring such thoughts led to actions that placed these students in a position where they would get hurt.

Gang membership was also observed to be associated with harbouring aggressive feelings. Students previously involved with gangs and those presently in a gang were four (24%) and six (33%) times more likely to have constant aggressive thoughts than students who had no history of gang involvement (6%) (Table 7-4).

Additionally, emotional abuse was evidently connected to having aggressive thoughts as one out of five (21%) males who were emotionally abused had constant aggressive thoughts as compared to one out of ten (10%) of those not abused. No association between sexual abuse and aggression for males was found, although the number of sexually abused males was small.

Nine percent (9%) of female students who have been verbally or emotionally abused have frequent aggressive thoughts, while only 3% of females not abused reported likewise. Having been emotionally abused therefore triples the chances of frequent aggressive thoughts in females.

7.5. Violence Due to Alcohol and/or Drugs

Seven percent (7%) of all students reported becoming violent from drinking and/or drug use. This was twice as likely to have occurred for males (10%) than for females (4%), and older students were more likely to report such behaviour. Three percent (3%) of those 10 to 12 years old, 8% of the 13 to 15 years old group, and 11% of the 16 to 19

years old students have reported becoming violent from alcohol and/or drugs (Table 7-6).

The frequency of alcohol consumption in the past year was also looked at in relation to the commitment of immoral, illegal and violent activities. For the most part, it was found that an increase in alcohol consumption brings about an increase in the frequency of committing both violent and immoral activities. These associations were especially evident for male students.

Generally, students who drank alcohol in the past year, when compared to those who did not, were three times more likely to have been involved in a fight using weapons, almost 4 times more likely to have carried a weapon to school, and twice as likely to have carried weapons at other times and of having been injured from a weapon.

As for females, those who drank were five times more likely to have been in a fight with weapons, seven times more likely to report having carried a weapon to school, and three times more likely to have carried a weapon at times other than to school (Table 7-7).

Alcohol is also associated with having aggressive thoughts. Results showed that males who had drunk alcohol in the past year are twice as likely to feel like hurting or killing someone "almost always" (18%) than males who had abstained (9%). Female non-abstainers are four times more liable to report having frequent aggressive thoughts (14%) than abstainers (3%) (Table 7-7).

Three out of five students (60%) replied that they never drink "beer, wine, or hard liquor" at one time. Twenty eight percent (28%) drink one "glass, can or drink"; 6%, 2 or 3 drinks; 3%, 4 or 5; 2% drink six or more glasses. Results show that the more students drink at one time, the more frequently they practice certain adverse activities. While these associations are evident for both genders, the strength of most is more considerable for males.

The differences observed between abstainers and non-abstainers with respect to immoral and illegal acts are further supported by the bivariate results for the amount of drinks at one time and these acts. The likelihood of cheating on tests, carrying weapons at times other than at school, and shoplifting increased almost consistently the more students drink at one time. This steady increase drops off only after 4 or 5 drinks per occasion. When compared to non-drinkers, students who usually had four or five drinks at one time were about five times more likely to carry weapons at times other than at school; twice as likely to cheat on tests; and three times more likely to shoplift (Figure 7-7).

7.6. Parents with Violent Problems

Thirteen percent (13%) of all students have reported that their parent(s) had problems because of violent behaviour.

Generally, a greater proportion of the students whose parents did have some problems due to violent behaviour were involved with weapons and also had frequent aggressive thoughts more often than those whose parents did not have violent problems (Table 7-8). Interestingly, differences were found to be more substantial for females who showed significant differences with all the violent aspects tested. Whereas 14% of all females whose parents had problems with violence had been in a fight with weapons, only 5% who reported no parental violence did the same. Additionally, one quarter of the females (25%) reporting parents with violent problems as compared to 11% of females reporting no parental violence had carried weapons at times other than school.

For males, whether parents had violent problems or not had no significant bearing on whether they fought with weapons or carried weapons at times other than school. However, males reporting parents with violent problems are roughly twice as likely to have carried a weapon to school (32%), to have experienced frequent aggressive thoughts (22%), as well as to have been injured from a weapon (29%) than males reporting parents with no violent problems (18%, 12%, and 12% respectively).

Females reporting parents with problems due to violence are four times as likely to have carried a weapon to school (16%), to have frequent aggressive thoughts (19%), and to have been hurt by a weapon (12%) than those with no "violent" parents (4%, 4%, and 3% respectively) (Table 7-8).

7.7. Physical Abuse

On comparing students who have been physically abused or not with regards to committing illegal or immoral activities, a positive association was observed for females only. If this abuse was meant to serve as a deterrent to these activities, then the desired result was not achieved. It is possible, however, that the abuse may have occurred as a result of the behaviour of the students. A greater proportion of females who have been physically abused have admitted to activities such as skipping school, cheating on tests, fighting with weapons, shoplifting and vandalism. Very obvious was the difference in the two female groups with regards to fighting with weapons. Whereas only 3% of females not abused were in a fight with weapons during the past year, 16% of the physically abused females did the same; five times more likely (Table 7-9).

Additionally, the physically abused students were three times more likely to run away from home than those who were not abused as 14% of this group ran away from home at least once in the past year as compared to 5% of the non-abused group.

A significant difference also exists between those who have been physically abused and those who have not when it comes to weapon carrying and suffering injury due to weapons (Figure 7-8). Those who have been physically abused were twice as likely to have carried a weapon to school (21%) than those who were not physically abused (10%). As for weapon carrying at other times, 35% of those who were physically abused, while 22% of students who were not abused bore weapons. Further, those who have been physically abused are three times as likely (20%) to have been injured from a weapon than those who were not (7%).

Results also revealed an association between physical abuse and having aggressive thoughts. One out of five males (19%) who have suffered abuse have frequent aggressive thoughts, compared to 11% of those not abused (Table 7-9). Twelve percent (12%) of physically abused females have frequent aggressive thoughts, a rate four times that of females not physically abused (3%).

7.8. Students' Perception of Violence

A quarter (25%) of the students responded that they worry about violence in the home ("sometimes" and "a lot" combined). Over half (57%) worry about violence in school, and three out of five (63%) worry about violence in the community (Table 7-6). A significant difference between males and females was not apparent when it came to concern over violence in the home and school. Females tend to worry a little more than males about violence in the community, but this difference was very small.

Significant age differences were apparent for males only with respect to worries over school violence (Figure 7-9). The proportion who worried increased from about one-half (48%) of the 10 to 12 years old males to a little over one-half (54%) of those 13 to 15 years old and peaking at 61%, three out of five, of the 16 to 19 years old group.

A quarter (26%) of the students also worry about being physically abused. Females worry about this more than males. A third (32%) of the females, compared to one out of five (19%) males expressed concern over this type of abuse. There were no age distinctions (Table 7-6). Not surprisingly, those who worried about physical were also concerned about violence in the home.

(Tables and Charts)

Violence and Illegal Activities

TABLE 7-1

**PROPORTION (%) ADMITTING TO IMMORAL
AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE LAST YEAR⁵
BY GENDER* AND ALL BAHAMAS**

Activities	Percentage (%)		
	All Students	Males	Females
Skipped school without an excuse	22.4	27.7	17.1
Cheated on a test ✕	51.1	53.2	48.9
Deliberately damaged property that didn't belong to you	27	34.4	19.4
Been in a fight where weapons were used	13.9	21.7	6.2
Took something from a store, shop or supermarket without paying for it	31.2	38.9	23.4
Stole something from your parents or other family members	28.2	32.4	23.7
Gone into a house or building to steal something	6.4	10.2	2.8
Ran away from home ✕	6.8	7.2	6.2

⁵ The responses "Once or twice" and "Three or more times" have been combined for ease of presentation.

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant gender differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

✕ Gender differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 7-2

PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS REPORTING WEAPON CARRYING AND INJURY FROM WEAPONS, BY GENDER AND AGE * ALL BAHAMAS

Activities	Student Characteristics					
	All Students	Males	Females	Age (Years)		
				10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	15-19 yrs
During the Past Month (30 Days), did you carry a weapon such as a gun, cutlass, knife, stick or bat to school?						
Never	87.4	80.8	94.3	93.3	87.4	79.9
Sometimes	10.4	16.3	4.1	5.6	10.6	15.6
Almost all the Time	2.3	2.9	1.6	1.1	2.0	4.5
Did you carry a weapon at times other than school?						
Never	75.8	64.9	86.9	87.7	74.1	65.2
Sometimes	20.7	30.0	11.3	10.9	22.9	28.1
Almost all the Time	3.5	5.1	1.8	1.4	3.1	6.7
How Many Times Have You Been Stabbed, Chopped, or Shot?						
Never	90.2	85.5	95.1	94.3 ×	88.7	88.6
Once	6.7	10.4	2.9	3.9	7.7	8.3
Twice	2.0	3.1	.8	1.1	2.0	2.6
Three or More Times	1.1	1.0	1.2	.7	1.5	.4

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences between males and females and among the age groups exist with p value set at <= 0.05.

× Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 7-3

**PROPORTION (%) OF GANG INVOLVEMENT BY GENDER * AND AGE x
ALL BAHAMAS**

GANG INVOLVEMENT	Student Characteristics					
	All Students	Males	Females	Age x		
				10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	15-19 yrs
Have you ever belonged to a gang?						
No	86.4	80.0	92.9	91.4	85.0	83.5
Yes, but not anymore	8.2	12.1	4.4	5.8	8.6	10.4
Yes, I still do	5.4	8.0	2.7	2.9	6.4	6.1

TABLE 7-4

**PROPORTION (%) OF GANG INVOLVEMENT BY VARIOUS
VIOLENCE ASPECTS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

ACTIVITY	Gang Involvement		
	Never in Gang	Past Gang Involvement	Present Gang Involvement
Weapon carrying to school	6.6	43.1	62.7
Weapon carrying at times other than school	17.3	59.5	82.4
Injury from weapon	5.7	29.5	43.4
Participate in after-school activities (males only) ⁶	48.7	58.9	32.4
Ever have frequent aggressive thoughts	6.4	23.7	33.3

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist between males and females, among the age groups and the different levels of gang involvement with p value set at <=0.05.

x Differences are not statistically significant.

⁶ Significant differences were found for males only with regard to extra-curricular activities.

TABLE 7-5

**PROPORTION (%) OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF AGGRESSION
BY WEAPON CARRYING AND INJURY FROM A WEAPON
ALL BAHAMAS ***

Activities	All Students		
	Think about Hurting or Killing Someone		
	Never	Sometimes	Almost Always
Carried a weapon to school during past month	2.0	17.1	40.0
Carried a weapon at times other than at school during past month	6.6	34.4	53.4
Ever been stabbed, chopped or shot	2.2	13.1	27.9

* Statistically significant differences exist among the different levels of aggression with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 7-6

**PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS REPORTING VARIOUS VIOLENT ASPECTS
BY GENDER AND AGE *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Student Characteristics	All Students	Males	Females	Age		
				10-12 yrs	13-15 yrs	15-19 yrs
Became violent from drinking/drug use	7.1	9.9	4.4	3.3	8.0	10.6
Parents with problems due to violence	12.9	11.9 ×	14.0	10.9 ×	15.0	11.4
Have been physically abused	22.2	17.8	26.6	16.3	24.5	25.0
Worry about violence in home	25.3	23.3 ×	27.1	28.1 ×	25	22.5
Worry about violence in school	56.8	53.9 ×	59.7	53.8	56.7	60.7
Worry about violence in community	63	59.3	66.6	56.9 ×	65.9	64.4
Worry about physical abuse	25.9	19.1	32.4	26.2 ×	26	24.5

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist between males and females and among the age groups with p value set at <=0.05.

× Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 7-7

**PROPORTIONAL (%) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ALCOHOL ABSTAINERS AND
NON-ABSTAINERS * FOR THE PAST YEAR, BY THE COMMITTING OF
IMMORAL, ILLEGAL AND VIOLENT ACTIVITIES DURING THE PAST YEAR⁷
ALL BAHAMAS**

Activities	Males		Females	
	Abstainers	Non-Abstainers	Abstainers	Non-Abstainers
Skipped school without an excuse	20.1	39.7	13.7	24.8
Cheated on a test	44.0	68.7	40.6	73.0
Deliberately damaged property that didn't belong to you	25.8	46.6	15.7	31.6
Been in a fight where weapons were used	11.2	36.7	3.2	15.8
Took something from a store, shop or supermarket without paying for it	30.0	52.8	17.8	39.8
Stole something from your parents or other family members	26.5	41.9	20.0	34.5
Gone into a house or building to steal something	6.3	16.3	2.3 x	4.5
Ran away from home	3.6	13.0	6.2 x	7.3
Carried a weapon to school during past month	9.7	33.3	2.3	16.7
Carried a weapon at times other than at school during past month	23.2	55.2	8.7	27.8
Ever been stabbed, chopped or shot	9.1	21.7	1.7	13.7
Ever have frequent aggressive thoughts	9.3	17.9	3.1	13.8

⁷ Event have taken place during the past year unless otherwise stated.

x Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist between abstainers and non-abstainers with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

*Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 7-8

**PROPORTIONAL (%) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENTS REPORTING
PARENT(S) WITH AND WITHOUT PROBLEMS DUE TO VIOLENCE
BY THE COMMITTING OF CERTAIN VIOLENT ACTIVITIES *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Activities	Males		Females	
	Parents With Violence Problems	Parents With No Violence Problems	Parents With Violence Problems	Parents With No Violence Problems
Been in a fight where weapons were used during past year	28.6 ×	19.3	14.1	4.7
Carried a weapon to school during past month	31.5	17.7	15.9	3.8
Carried a weapon at times other than at school during past month	39.6 ×	34.0	25.4	11.3
Ever have frequent aggressive thoughts	21.6	11.9	18.5	4.1
Ever been stabbed, chopped or shot	28.8	11.7	12.3	3.0

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist between students with the two groups of parents with p-value set at ≤ 0.05 .

× Differences are not statistically significant.

TABLE 7-9

**PROPORTIONAL (%) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENTS ABUSED/NOT
ABUSED, BY CERTAIN IMMORAL, ILLEGAL AND VIOLENT ACTIVITIES *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Activities	Males		Females	
	Physically Abused	Not Physically Abused	Physically Abused	Not Physically Abused
Skipped school without an excuse	33.3 ×	26.9	23.3	14.5
Cheated on a test	60.0 ×	51.1	60.4	44.1
Deliberately damaged property that didn't belong to you	42.5 ×	33.1	26.5	16.7
Been in a fight where weapons were used	27.0 ×	21.3	15.7	3.4
Took something from a store, shop or supermarket without paying for it	44.6 ×	36.3	32.7	17.8
Stole something from your parents or other family members	41.3 ×	30.5	37.5	17.8
Gone into a house or building to steal something	11.1 ×	9.0	5.1 ×	2.3
Ran away from home	13.5	5.5	14.1	4.4
Carried a weapon to school during past month	28.0	16.9	15.0	3.0
Carried a weapon at times other than at school during past month	51.9	31.4	23.1	10.5
Ever have frequent aggressive thoughts	18.7	10.6	11.8	3.3
Ever been stabbed, chopped or shot	29.3	11.6	13.6	2.0

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences exist between physically abused and not physically abused students with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

× Differences are not statistically significant.

FIGURE 7-1

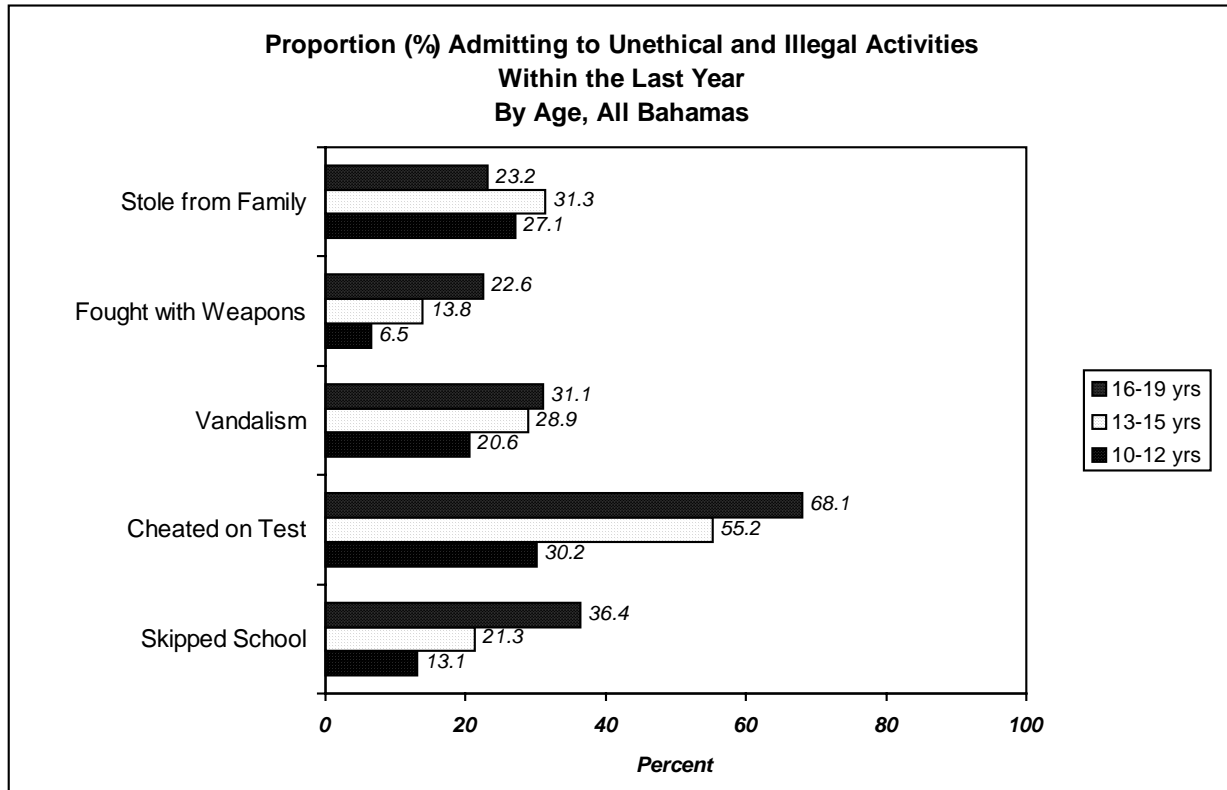


FIGURE 7-2

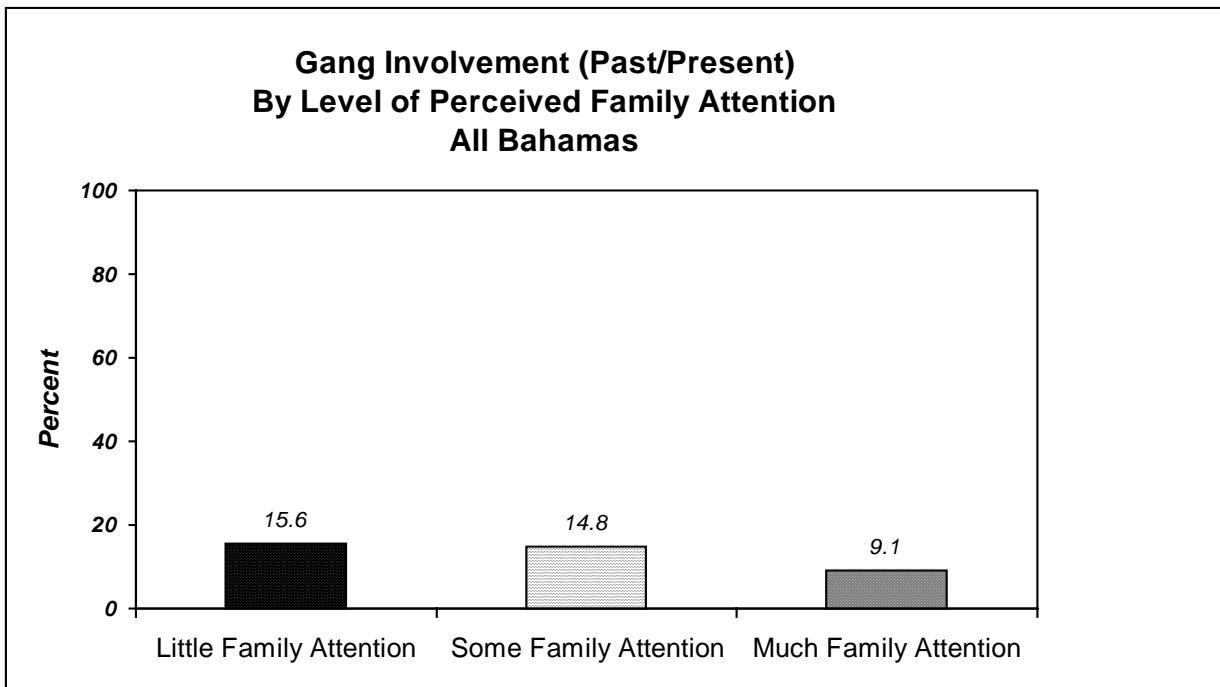


FIGURE 7-3

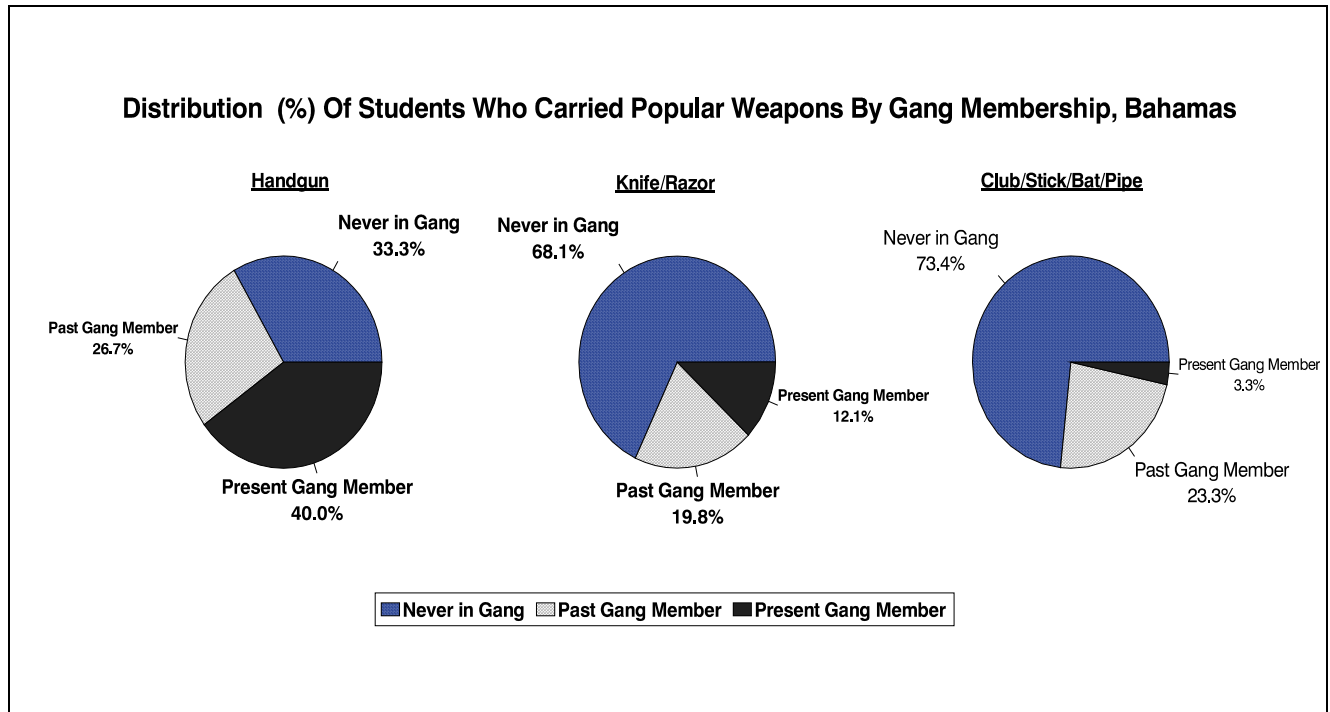


FIGURE 7-4

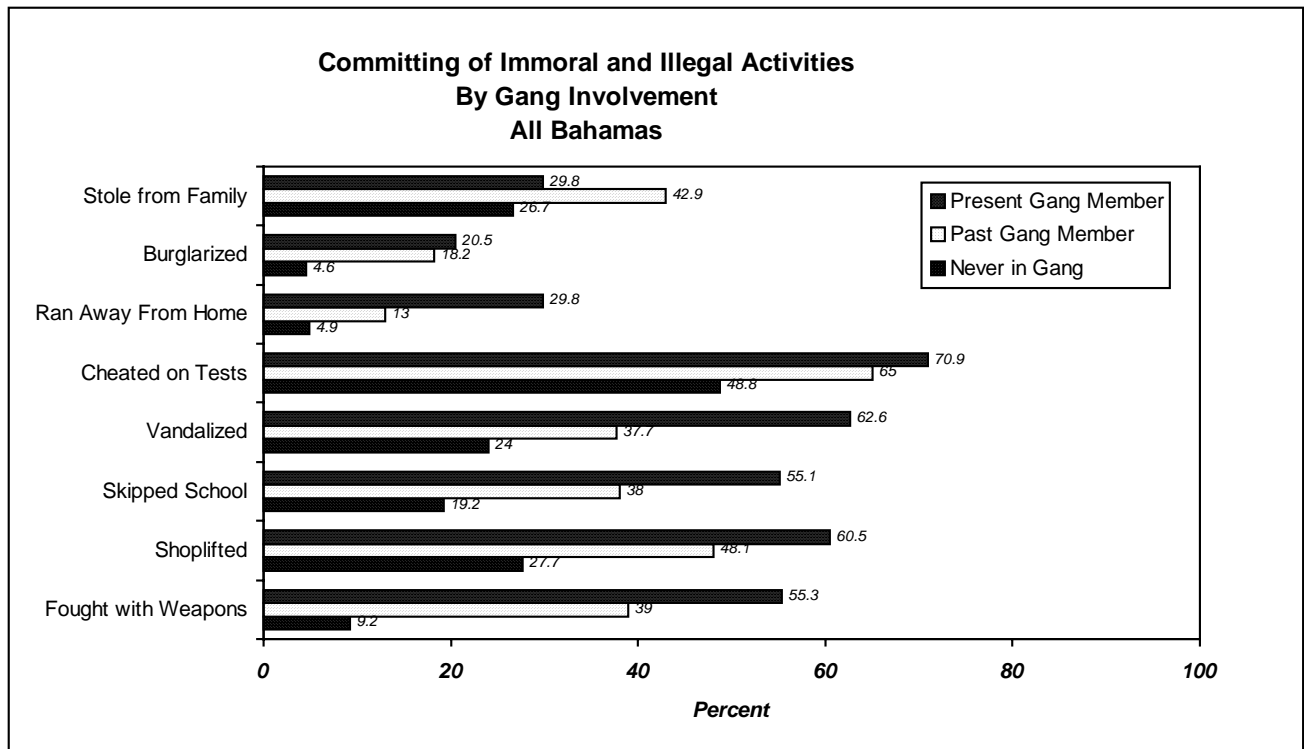


FIGURE 7-5

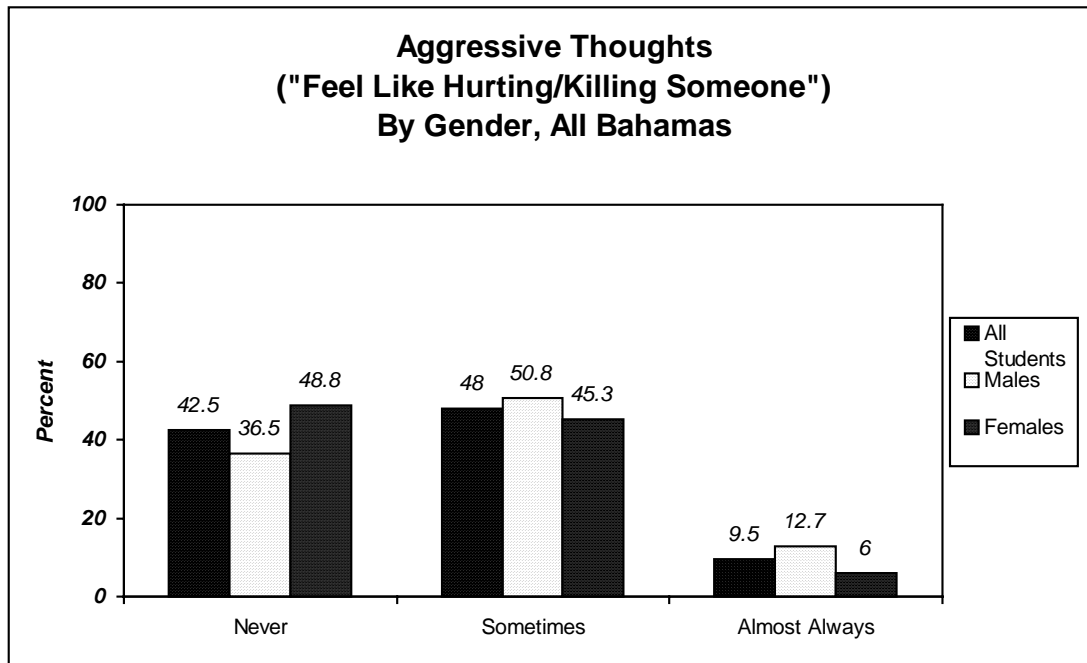


FIGURE 7-6

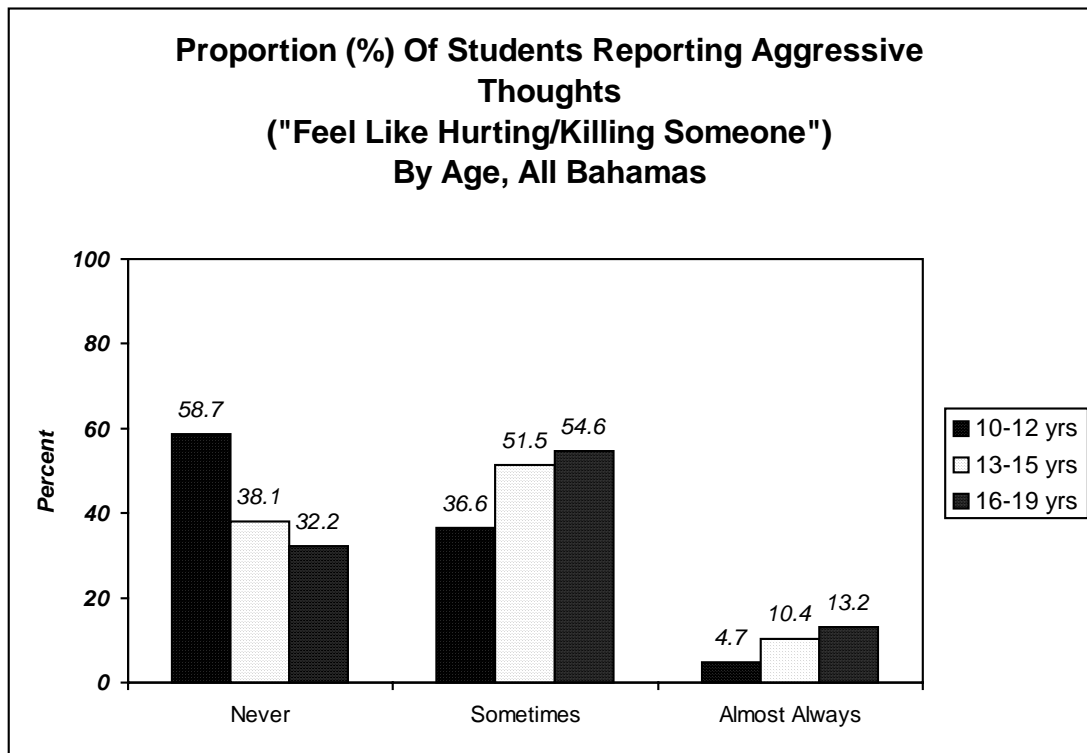


FIGURE 7-7

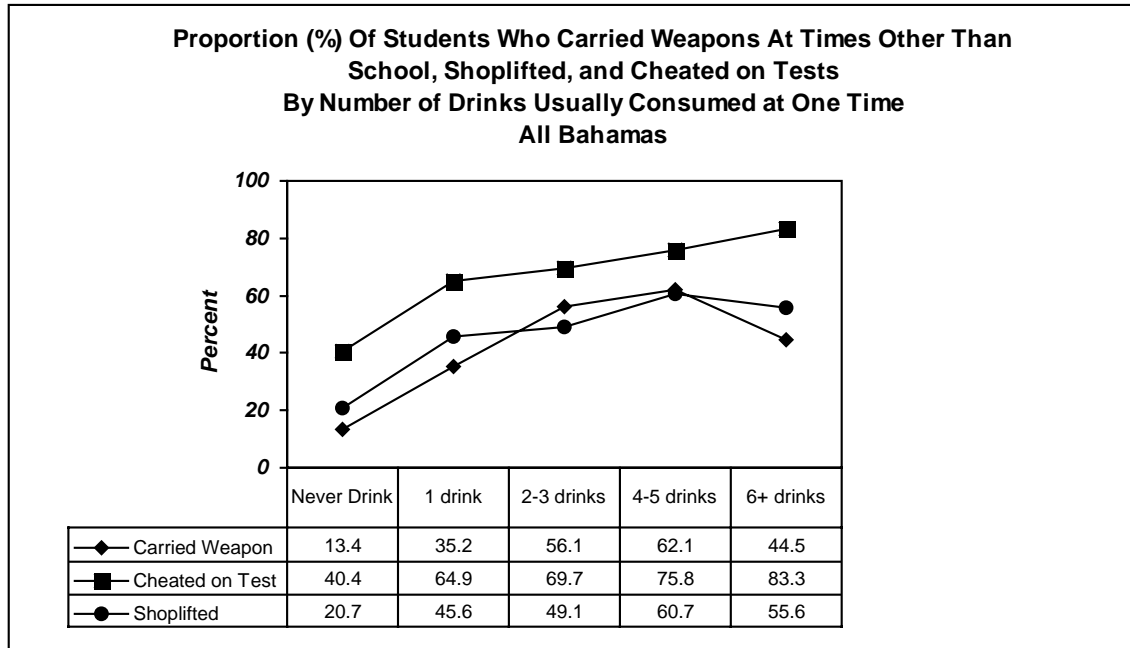


FIGURE 7-8

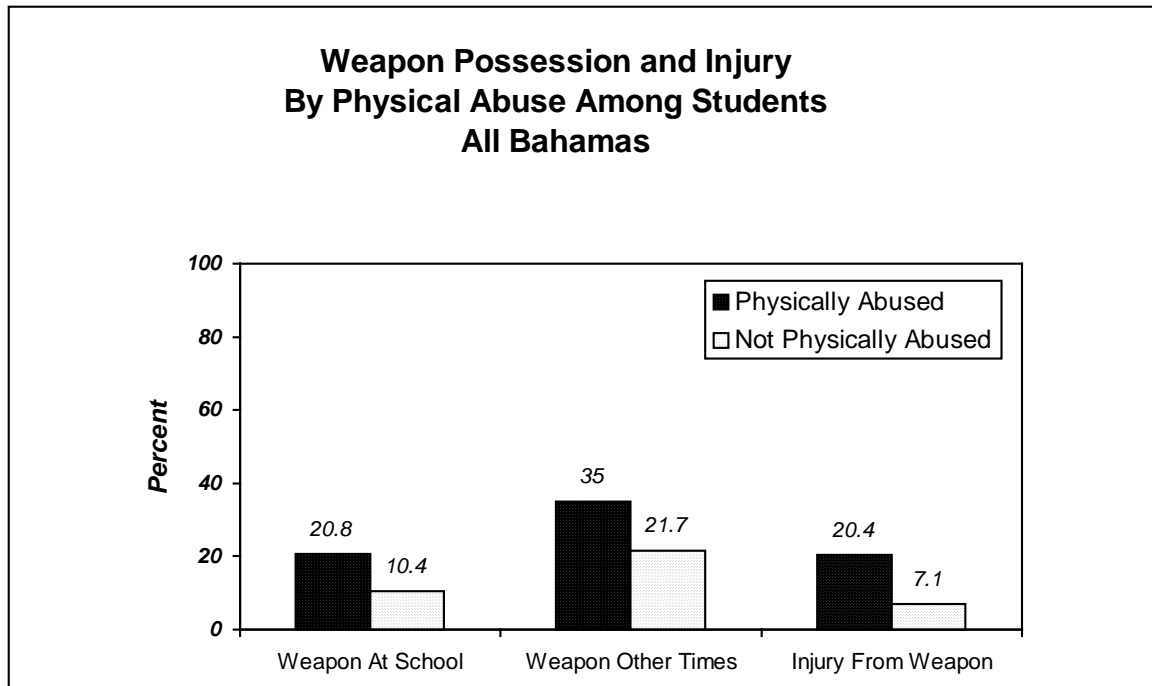
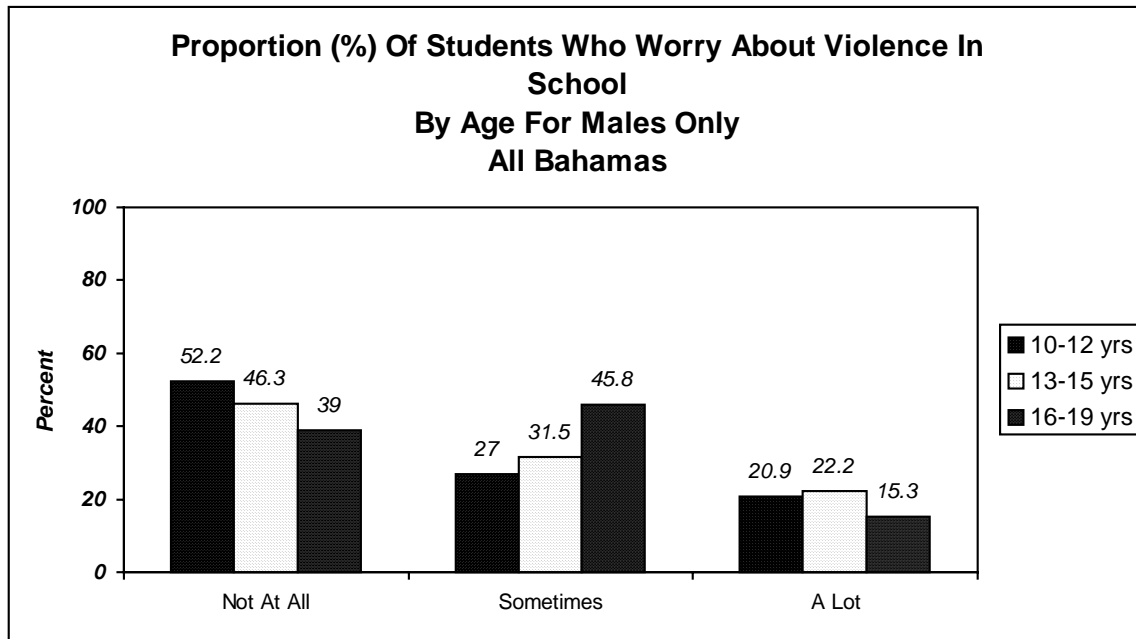


FIGURE 7-9



Section 8

Physical Health, Health Care Services and Nutrition

8. PHYSICAL HEALTH, HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND NUTRITION

8.1. General Health

The majority of the students surveyed thought of themselves as having "excellent" (48%) or "good" general health (41%) (Table 8-1; Figure 8-1). Only 9% had "fair" health, and 2% reported "poor" health. There were no gender or age differences.

Although overall student health was satisfactory, there were one in ten (11%) who indicated having a disability, handicap or chronic illness that limits them from activities similar to their peers'. There were no significant age/ gender differences. Despite having a handicap or disability, however, 40% of this group still considered themselves as being in "good" health, and 36%, "excellent" health. Nineteen percent (19%) thought they were in "fair" health, while only 5% had "poor" health.

As discussed in Section 6, results revealed strong links between state of general health and aspects of mental health such as feeling depressed, aggressive thoughts, and suicidal leanings. Generally, students with good or excellent health were less likely to have reported feeling depressed, aggressive or suicidal thoughts.

8.2. Common Health Concerns

The most pressing health concern for Bahamian students, taking into consideration that which "often caused a problem," seemed to be "not getting enough sleep" (17%) (Table 8-2; Figure 8-2) shows health ailments "often" and "sometimes" combined). Headaches and acne were the second most common health issues (15% "often" got these), followed by "body developing much faster than friends' " (12%). In descending order, the other concerns were, "body developing not as fast as friends' " and stomach aches (both 10%), toothaches, trouble seeing, trouble breathing, heart problems, (all 6%), difficulty using hands/arms/legs (5%), and trouble hearing (4%).

Gender differences were discovered for many of the health issues, and for virtually all (with the exception of body developing faster than friends'), females appeared to have suffered these ailments more than males (Table 8-2). Nineteen percent (19%), 17%, 14%, and 8% of females responded that they "often" got headaches, acne, stomach aches, and had trouble seeing respectively, compared to only 11%, 13%, 6%, and 5% respectively of males. Twelve percent (12%) of males, on the other hand, felt that their bodies were developing too fast, while 10% of females indicated likewise.

Many age distinctions were found in this area as well, with the emergence of two main patterns upon closer inspection: firstly, practically all differences existed for one gender only. Secondly, the oldest age group (16 to 19 years), regardless of gender, was the least likely to report having health concerns (Table 8-2). The only age differences that existed for both genders was for acne: 14% of *all* students 10 to 12 years old, 17% of 13 to 15, and 13% of those aged 16 to 19 years claimed that they "often" suffered from acne. Differences

in male age were found for having headaches (11% of those aged 10 to 12, 14% of 13 to 15, and 5% of the 16 to 19 year group), toothaches (10% of those aged 10 to 12, 5% of 13 to 15, 3% of the 16 to 19 year group), stomach aches (6% of 10 to 12 year group, 7% of those aged 13 to 15, and 3% of the 16 to 19 year set), and difficulty using limbs (7% of those aged 10 to 12 and 13 to 15, 0% of students in the eldest age set) (Table 8-3).

As for females, age differences were found for having heart problems, 10% of those 10 to 12, 4% of those 13 to 15, and 5% of the 16 to 19 year olds, not getting enough sleep (17% of those aged 10 to 12, 26% of 13 to 15, and 14% of those aged 16 to 19), and worry over their bodies not developing as fast as their friends' (15% of those aged 10 to 12, 10% of 13 to 15, and 3% of students in the 16 to 19 group) (Table 8-3).

The above ailments were examined in relation to the students' state of general health in order to determine possible reasons why some students' considered their health as less than good. Associations were found for only three of these health concerns, namely headaches, stomach-aches and not getting enough sleep. (Table 8-4).

Two out of five (40%) students who thought their health was poor reported that they "often" had problems due to headaches, which is substantially high when compared to students with fair health (24%), good health (16%), and excellent health (12%). Similarly, students with "poor" and especially "fair" health also experienced more stomach-aches (14% and 25% respectively). Only 10% and 6% respectively of students with good and excellent health responded likewise. Continuing, students with fair health were the most likely to not get enough sleep (30%). One out of five students with poor (20%) and good (19%) health, while only 14% of students with excellent health reported not getting enough sleep.

On a similar note, students reporting a handicap or chronic illness were more likely to report having various ailments in addition to difficulty involving stomach aches (16.3%), breathing difficulties (16.9%), and difficulty using a limb(s) (11.5%) than those without disability/handicap or chronic illness (Figure 8-3).

8.3. Nutrition and Eating Patterns

8.3.1 Nutrition

With the exception of beverages, the most consumed type of food of Bahamian students, measured by what was eaten at least once the day before, was starches, or "breads, rice, pasta, cereals, porridge," reported by 73% of students (Table 8-5; Figure 8-4) shows breakdown by frequency). Second was white meat, "fish, conch, chicken, turkey," eaten by 70% of students, and the third most eaten food was sweets and pastries (67%). It was pleasant to discover that three out of five (57%) students had eaten fresh fruits, and that only 38% had fast food, one of the least eaten types of food. On the other hand, only half (51%) had their vegetables, and 41% had eaten legumes ("peas, beans, peanuts") also among the less popular foods. The results had also shown a suspected trend that

Bahamians, judging from the eating habits of their youth, may be eating less red meat (53% of students) and more white meat, a healthier alternative.

It was later found that when it came to certain foods, namely eggs, beef and other red meat, potatoes, starches, Caribbean foods, and especially milk and legumes, males had eaten more of these than females. Females on the other hand had drunk more soft drinks. There were no age distinctions.

When comparing general health and nutrition, not many relationships were discovered. Associations which were found included the findings that students in good to excellent general health had consumed more milk (41% to 46%), breads and other starches (72% to 77%) and 100% fruit juice (54% to 61%) than those in poor to fair health (27% to 33%, 57% to 63%, and 46% to 47% respectively).

Some distinctions in nutrition relating to common health ailments were found: students whose bodies were developing too fast ("sometimes" and "often" combined) proportionally consumed more milk (49%), 100% juice (63%) and Caribbean foods (60%) than normally developing students (40%, 52% and 49% respectively). Also, students who complained of acne ate much more sweets/ pastries (75%) than students with no acne (59%). Continuing, those not getting their sleep had less potatoes (35%) than students reporting otherwise (44%). Students who complained of headaches and stomach aches consumed more sweets (71%, 70% respectively) and sodas (both 76%) than students without these health issues (sweets - 60%, 61%; sodas - 66%, 68% respectively).

In addition, students who had trouble breathing and difficulty using their limbs ate more fast food (47% and 52% respectively) than students without these afflictions (each 36%). Finally, students who felt their bodies were developing too slow consumed more vegetables (57%) and drank less soda (66%) than students without this complaint (47%, 75% respectively) (Table not shown).

8.3.2 Meal Patterns

Most students ate three meals (38%) or more (27%) daily (Table 8 -1). A quarter (25%) ate two meals, while 10% usually had one. Males and females had similar eating patterns, but as age increased, the number of meals eaten per day decreased. For example, 72% of students aged 10 to 12 years, 66% of those 13 to 15 years, and only 55% of the eldest age set ate three or more meals a day.

The results that only 56% of students never went hungry because there was not enough food in the house was unexpected (Table 8-1). Over a third (35%) "sometimes" went hungry, and 9% were hungry "a lot" because of household food shortage. Females were twice as likely to have indicated being hungry "a lot" (12%), than males (6%). No age differences were found.

The data had suggested that not eating at an optimum level, be it whether by eating less than three meals a day, or being hungry "a lot" because of little food in the house, may be linked to less than good general health, as well as certain ailments. Firstly, looking at general health, as this perceived level worsened, the more likely less than three meals a day were eaten. More than half (50% to 56%) of the students in "fair" to "poor" health ate less than three meals a day, much more than about a third (30% to 37%) of those in "excellent" to "good" health. Similarly, students especially in "poor" health (26%) were distinct from those in better health (7% to 10%) regarding going hungry "a lot" because of little food in the house (Table 8-4).

Continuing, students who ate less than three meals a day had more trouble seeing, hearing, and difficulty using their limbs, compared to students eating at least three meals a day (not shown). Also, students who were hungry "a lot" because of little household food appeared more prone to toothaches, trouble seeing, heart problems, insufficient sleep, and difficulty using their limbs (Figure 8-5). In these instances, especially the latter case, these two associations may be due to socioeconomic level, as opposed to a direct link.

Along similar lines, associations between going hungry because of household food shortage and some aspects of mental health were discovered. Students stating that they felt hungry "a lot" were proportionally more likely to have described themselves as "sad" or "angry," to indicate having depressed feelings, and to have suicidal thoughts.

As for the most important meal of the day, the majority (34%) of the students ate breakfast only once to twice a week. Twenty-three percent (23%) did so everyday, 18% never ate breakfast, 16%, three to four times a week, and 10%, five to six times a week (Table 8-1). Some students apparently did not eat breakfast as they ought to because they "don't have time for breakfast" (46%) (Table 8-1). Fifteen percent (15%) "can't eat that early in the morning," 2% cited lack of food in the house for breakfast, and 10% had other reasons. Twenty-seven percent (27%) "don't skip breakfast" (Table 8-1; Figure 8-6).

Males and females as well as the different age groups exhibited different breakfast-eating habits. Females ate breakfast less frequently (21% never ate breakfast, while only 28% did so five or more times a week) than males (14% never ate breakfast, 38% ate five or more times). As for reasons for skipping breakfast, the most disparate reason was being unable to eat that early (males, 11%, females, 18%) (Table 8-1).

As students got older, they ate breakfast less frequently. A third (32%) of the 10 to 12 year age group, 23% of 13 to 15 year olds, and only 11% of students aged 16 to 19 years ate breakfast everyday. As it turned out, as age increased, a greater percentage of students reported not having enough time to eat breakfast. Most 16 to 19 year olds cited this reason for skipping breakfast (54%) while 48% of 13 to 15 year olds and 36% of 10 to 12 year olds reported likewise (Table 8-1).

Expectedly, the less meals eaten in a day, the more likely students were to skip breakfast, or vice versa. Approximately half (48% to 53%) of the students who ate breakfast five or more times a week ate three meals a day, while only a quarter (25%) who never ate

breakfast, 31% who had breakfast once to twice a week, and 42% who had breakfast three to four times a week usually ate three meals a day. From another point of view, only between 10% to 12% of students who usually ate one to two meals a day, while 27% to 31% of those who ate three or more meals a day, ate breakfast everyday. Males and females exhibited this eating pattern.

Along these lines, it seemed that students not eating at the desired level may have missed out on vital food groups. For example, the less meals/ breakfast students ate for the day/ week, the less the consumption of foods such as dairy products, eggs, starches (foods eaten more in the morning), and vegetables. In addition to these foods, students who had less than three meals a day also ate less of legumes and drank less water; and students who never or rarely ate breakfast had also eaten less fruits, milk, and 100% juice (foods also usually eaten in the morning), and potatoes. Similar relationships were not found for going hungry because of not enough food in the home.

8.4. Exercise

Getting enough exercise did not seem to be a problem for Bahamian youth. When asked about the number of days students had "worked, played, or exercised hard enough to make you sweat and breathe heavily," during the past week, 36% of students responded they did this on at least five days during the past week while 14% did not exert themselves at all. (Table 8-1). The remaining students exercised one to two days (24%) or three to four days (25.6%) during the past week.

Significant gender differences were found: it appeared that males exercised for more days than females - 42% of males, while only 30% of females, exercised five or more days. However, there were no age distinctions.

When asked on the amount of time usually spent on playing sports or exercising during an average physical education (P.E.) class, the majority (59%) responded "more than 30 minutes" (Table 8-1; Figure 8-7). Five percent (5%) did not take P.E., 7% spent less than ten minutes, 16%, ten to twenty minutes, and 12% spent twenty-one to thirty minutes exercising during P.E. Similar responses were found for each gender and age group.

There was a positive relationship between general health and frequency of weekly exercise. Generally, the healthier students saw themselves, the more likely they were to have done some form of exercise on at least five days during the past week (Table 8-4). It should be noted, however, that students in poor health and those in excellent health were equally likely to exercise five or more days (both 41%), which was significantly more than those with self-reported fair (28%) or good (31%) health.

Although popular literature stresses the importance of exercise not only for physical, but for mental health as well, no such associations were found in this survey.

8.5. Menstruation

Four out of five (79%) of the females surveyed had seen their periods (Figure 8-8). The mean (average) age for the first period was 11.9 years (12 years was the median and mode as well). The youngest age of first period was 9 years (3.4% of the females), while the oldest was 16 years (one female).

Looking at how menstruating females handle possible pain while seeing their periods, the two most common ways were to take medicine, (61%), and going through emotional changes ("I become moody, anxious cranky"), experienced by 59% of the females. Thirty-seven percent (37%) stayed home from school a day or more, 32% went to the school/work sick room or nurse, and 14% usually saw a doctor (Figure 8-9).

The survey has suggested that older females may either suffer from increased instances of pain from their periods, or were more aware of methods to deal with period pain (Figure 8-9). When comparing females aged 13 to 15 years old, and those 16 to 19, the eldest age set were much more liable to utilize all methods of dealing with menstrual pain (except going to the doctor).

8.6. Use of Health Care Services

When it came to health care, the most common examination the students received was the general check-up (Table 8-6; Figure 8-10). About 30% had used this service over one year ago, and 30%, within the last twelve months. This was closely followed by eye exams (35%, over a year ago, 25%, within the last year), and dental visits (32% over a year ago, 27% within the last year). Twenty-eight percent (28%) of students had a hearing test over a year ago and 17%, within the last year. At the bottom end were vaginal exams (12% of females over a year ago, 8% within last year), mental health counselling (9% over a year ago, 6% within past year), and seeing a bush doctor/ obeah man (6% over a year ago, 3% within the past year). No gender nor age differences were found.

It was also found that when it came to general check-ups, eye exams and dental visits, students in poor health especially appeared the least likely to utilize these services. Over half (53%) of these, compared to those in fair (35%), good (44%) or excellent (38%) health had never or did not remember their last regular check-up. Almost four out of five students (78%) never had /did not remember their last eye exam, substantially high when considering those in fair (39%), good (44%), or excellent health (36%). Finally, most students in poor health (71%) never had/ did not remember their last dental visit, again alarming when only 35% to 47% of students with better health responded likewise (Table 8-4).

Most students were inclined to utilize government services for most of their medical care, be it the government hospital (PMH or the Rand) (31%), or government clinics (23%) (Figure 8-11). Sixteen percent (16%) did not usually go to any health care facility, 9%

mainly attended a private hospital, 20%, a private doctor/clinic, and 1% saw a bush doctor/obeah man.

When students were asked where they would most like to get contraception from if needed, the overwhelming majority, 47%, preferred a doctor's office (Figure 8-12). Seventeen percent (17%) chose the drug store/ pharmacy, 12%, a government clinic, 9%, a family planning clinic, 8%, a youth clinic, 5%, supermarket/grocery store, 2% would not mind getting them at school, and 1% favoured machines in a public bathroom.

As for student perceptions regarding doctor/ nurse and patient confidentiality, almost half (47%) thought that if they told their doctor something personal, their parents would find out. Males were more trusting (43%) than females (50%). There were no age differences.

Students were much less distrustful of nurses however - only 29% of students felt that nurses would "talk" personal issues. Again, females were less trusting (32%) than males (25%) and there were no significant age differences (Table 8-1).

8.7. Body Image and Weight Perceptions

The majority (52%) of students thought their weight was "about right" (Table 8-7). One out of five (20%) thought they needed to gain weight, while 28% thought they needed to lose. There were gender differences. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of males, compared to 47% of females thought their weight was okay. Twenty-two percent (22%) of males, while 17% of all females thought they needed to gain weight; 20% of males, a significant, but not surprising contrast to 36% of females, thought they needed to lose weight. No age distinctions existed.

Similar results emerged when students were asked how they felt about themselves when looking in the mirror (Table 8-1). Most (54%) felt happy with the way their bodies looked while a third (32%) thought their bodies were "okay," and 14% were "not happy". Among males, 89% were happy or felt "okay" about the way their bodies looked while 11% were not happy. Among females the percentages were 83% and 17%, respectively.

Positive body image appeared to decrease with age (Table 8-1). Sixty-two percent (62%) of the 10 to 12 year group, while only 52% of 13 to 15 year olds, and 50% of those aged 16 and older, felt happy about their bodies.

Only among students who felt they were overweight were there clear distinctions in negative body image and this was equally true for both males and females (Table 8-7). A substantial 70% of students not happy with their bodies felt they needed to lose weight, a significant contrast to 13% who felt their weight was okay, and 17% who thought they needed to gain weight.

Besides diet and exercise, students had tried drastic methods to lose or maintain weight. However, such measures were not common. Only 9% had taken laxatives, 8% had tried to

force themselves to vomit, 5% had taken diuretics, and 7% had taken diet pills. There were no significant gender or age differences (Figure 8-13).

Negative Body image appeared to have more of an influence on unhealthy methods of losing weight than negative weight perceptions (Table 8-7). Students who were not happy with the way their body looked were substantially more susceptible to extreme weight loss methods. One out of five (18%) students not happy with their bodies, compared to only 8% okay, and 7% happy with their bodies, had taken laxatives.

Among females, 13% of those who were just okay or unhappy (14%) had tried to induce vomiting, as compared to 7% who were happy with their body. Diet pills (17.6%) were also another method used to lose or maintain weight among the girls. With the exception of forcing oneself to vomit, these results were significant for both genders, but were much more pronounced for females.

How students felt about their weight and body may have also affected the number of meals they ate a day. Basically all weight groups of students ate mainly three meals a day, but students who needed to lose weight appeared more likely (46%) to eat less than three meals a day than students who needed to gain or lose (both 31%). Along these lines, students not happy (44%) or just felt okay about their bodies (43%) were also more inclined to eat less than three meals a day, as compared to others happy with their bodies (28%). These results were significant for each gender, but again were more notable for females (Table 8-7).

Weight perception may have also played a part in what students ate. Generally, the overall trend showed that for a number of foods, namely milk, dairy products, eggs, starch (breads, etc.), legumes, fruits, 100% fruit juice and fast food, students who felt that they needed to gain weight ate slightly less, while students who needed to lose weight ate significantly less of these foods "yesterday" than students who felt their weight was okay. A similar pattern was found for students' body image. Students who were okay with their bodies ate moderately less, while students who were unhappy with their bodies ate significantly less of foods such as milk, 100% fruit juice, and fast food than students who were happy with their bodies.

Weight perception bore no relations to exercise, be it during P.E. class or otherwise. As elaborated in Section 6, feeling depressed and having suicidal inclinations may have made students more predisposed to having negative body images.

(Tables and Charts)

Physical Health, Health Care Services and Nutrition

TABLE 8-1

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO CERTAIN
HEALTH AND NUTRITION ISSUES
BY AGE AND GENDER *, ALL BAHAMAS**

Health and Nutrition	All Students	Males	Females	10-12 years	13-15 years	16-19 years
General Health						
Excellent	47.8	46.8 x	49.0	55.3 x	44.2	47.2
Good	41.0	43.6	38.1	36.7	43.5	40.6
Fair	9.1	7.6	10.7	6.2	10.0	10.9
Poor	2.1	1.9	2.3	1.8	2.2	1.3
Days during past week work/ played/ exercised hard enough to sweat or breathe heavily						
0 days	14.1	12.5	15.5	14.2 x	12.8	16.9
1 day	13.6	11.2	15.8	13.0	15.6	9.8
2 days	10.9	10.1	11.8	7.7	11.4	13.8
3 days	15.5	13.4	17.2	16.9	14.2	16.0
4 days	10.1	11.0	9.5	9.6	8.9	13.3
5 or more days	35.8	41.9	30.3	38.7	37.1	30.2
My weight is...						
About right	52.4	57.9	46.9	53.9 x	53.2	49.1
Need to gain weight	19.5	21.9	17.2	18.7	19.1	22.1
Need to lose weight	28.1	20.2	36.0	27.3	27.7	28.8
When looking in mirror, I feel..						
Happy with body	54.1	58.1	50.4	62.4	51.6	49.5
Okay with body	31.9	31.3	32.5	24.3	32.9	38.2
Not happy with body	14.0	10.6	17.1	13.3	15.5	12.3
Number of meals eaten per day						
One	10.4	8.5 x	11.9	9.0	9.7	13.0
Two	24.7	23.8	25.5	18.8	24.4	32.4

Health and Nutrition	All Students	Males	Females	10-12 years	13-15 years	16-19 years
Three	38.4	38.1	38.7	38.0	42.7	30.6
More than Three	26.5	29.6	23.8	34.2	23.2	24.1
How often go hungry because of not enough food in house?						
Never/ Hardly ever	56.3	56.0	56.5	55.3 ×	55.6	58.6
Sometimes	34.6	37.9	31.5	32.6	36.0	34.0
A Lot	9.1	6.1	12.0	12.1	8.4	7.4
How often do you eat breakfast?						
Never	17.5	14.4	20.5	12.5	15.5	27.6
1-2 times a week	34.0	30.6	37.3	26.6	36.1	37.8
3-4 times a week	15.6	16.6	14.3	14.4	16.9	14.7
5-6 times a week	10.3	13.9	6.7	14.1	8.3	9.2
Everyday	22.7	24.5	21.2	32.3	23.1	10.6
Why do you skip breakfast?						
Do not skip breakfast	27.3	30.3	24.4	39.8	23.9	17.9
Not enough time for breakfast	45.7	46.4	44.9	35.6	47.8	54.2
Cannot eat that early in the morning	14.7	11.0	18.2	13.0	15.1	16.0
Not enough food in house for breakfast	2.4	2.5	2.3	1.9	2.6	2.8
Other reason	9.9	9.7	10.2	9.6	10.6	9.0

* Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences between males and females and among the age groups existed with p value set at <= 0.05.

× Differences were not statistically significant.

TABLE 8-2

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF HEALTH AILMENTS AMONG STUDENTS
BY AGE AND GENDER*, ALL BAHAMAS**

Health Ailments That "Often" Occurred	All Students	Gender		Age (Years)		
		Males	Females	10-12 Yrs	13-15 Yrs	16-19 Yrs
Headaches	14.9	10.7	18.9	13.6	17.9	9.7
Toothaches	6.1	5.4 x	6.8	8.4 x	6.0	3.8
Acne	15.0	12.7	17.4	14.1	16.8	13.4
Trouble seeing	6.4	4.9	8.0	8.6 x	5.5	5.9
Trouble hearing	4.0	2.8 x	5.3	5.4 x	4.3	2.0
Stomach aches	9.5	5.6	13.5	9.2 x	10.3	8.8
Trouble breathing (wheezing, allergies, asthma)	5.9	4.4 x	7.4	6.2 x	5.2	6.1
A heart problem	6.0	5.7 x	6.1	10.0	4.6	3.5
Not enough sleep	17.4	14.8 x	20.1	14.2	19.9	16.6
Body's not developing as fast as my friends'	10.1	10.1 x	9.9	13.1	11.3	4.0
Body's developing much faster than my friends'	11.5	12.3	10.4	12.2 x	12.5	8.6
Difficulty using hands, arms, legs or feet	4.6	5.0 x	4.3	6.7	4.6	2.6

*Except where mentioned, statistically significant differences between males and females and among the age groups existed with p value set at <= 0.05.

x Differences were not statistically significant.

TABLE 8-3

**PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCED SPECIFIC
HEALTH AILMENTS, BY GENDER AND AGE *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Males	Age (Years)		
	10-12 Yrs	13-15 Yrs	16-19 Yrs
Headaches	10.9	13.7	4.9
Toothaches	9.6	4.8	2.6
Acne	13.2	14.5	9.5
Stomach aches	6.4	6.9	2.7
Difficulty using limbs	7.3	6.6	0
Females	Age (Years)		
	10-12 Yrs	13-15 Yrs	16-19 Yrs
Acne	15.0	19.0	18.3
Not enough sleep	16.8	25.5	14.3
Body not developing as fast as my friends'	15.0	9.8	3.4
A heart problem	10.0	4.0	5.0

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 8-4

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF SELECTED HEALTH ISSUES
BY PERCEIVED GENERAL HEALTH STATUS *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Nutrition and Health Issues	Self-reported State of General Health			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Ailments That "Often" Caused Problems				
Headaches	40.0	24.4	15.6	11.6
Stomach Aches	14.3	25.0	9.9	6.3
Not Enough Sleep	20.0	29.6	18.7	13.8
Ate Less Than Three Meals a Day	55.6	50.0	37.0	29.5
Hungry "A Lot" Because of No Food in the House	26.3	9.9	9.8	7.3
Ate Breakfast Five or More Times a Week	10.5	20.7	29.5	38.6
Spent Five or More Days During Past Week on Some Exercise	41.2	28.2	31.2	41.0
Percent Who "Never/ Did Not Remember" Their Last ...				
Regular Check-Up	52.9	34.6	43.8	37.9
Eye Exam	77.8	39.2	44.0	36.4
Dental Visit	71.4	35.4	46.9	37.1

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

TABLE 8-5

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF STUDENTS WHO HAD EATEN
CERTAIN FOODS "YESTERDAY"
ALL BAHAMAS**

Foods	Frequency of Eating Certain Foods Yesterday		
	No Time	Once	Twice or More
Cheese, yogurt, ice cream	57.5	26.8	15.7
Milk	57.5	23.8	18.8
Eggs	64.0	22.8	13.2
Beans, peas, peanuts	58.6	26.1	15.3
Beef, pork, goat, lamb	46.9	32.5	20.5
Fish, conch, chicken, turkey	29.6	43.8	26.6
Breads, rice, pasta, cereals, porridge	26.9	47.0	26.0
Fresh fruits, berries	43.0	32.5	24.4
100% fruit juice	43.6	31.4	24.9
Vegetables (fresh, canned, frozen)	49.5	30.4	20.1
Candy, cakes, pies, sweet rolls, etc.	32.8	37.6	29.6
Sodas, juice cocktails, bag/boxed drinks, other soft drinks (not diet)	28.1	39.4	32.5
Potato chips, cheese doodles, pretzels, nachos, corn chips	43.6	31.9	24.6
Potatoes, breadfruits, cassava, yams etc.	59.5	22.5	18.0
Water	23.4	28.9	47.7
Caribbean foods (macaroni & cheese, peas and rice, potato salad, etc.)	46.9	32.1	21.0
Fast foods (Wendy's, McDonald's, Kentucky, Bamboo Shack, Dirty's etc.)	61.9	20.6	17.5

TABLE 8-6

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF STUDENTS UTILIZING
SELECTED HEALTH CARE SERVICES
ALL BAHAMAS**

When Did You Last...?	All Students
Have a Regular Checkup	
Never/ Do Not Remember	40.2
Over 2 Years Ago	13.0
1-2 Years Ago	17.3
Within Last 12 Months	29.5
Have your Hearing Checked	
Never/ Do Not Remember	55.1
Over 2 Years Ago	14.3
1-2 Years Ago	14.0
Within Last 12 Months	16.7
Have your Eyes Checked	
Never/ Do Not Remember	40.5
Over 2 Years Ago	15.3
1-2 Years Ago	19.7
Within Last 12 Months	24.5
See a Dentist for your Teeth	
Never/ Do Not Remember	41.4
Over 2 Years Ago	16.7
1-2 Years Ago	15.2
Within Last 12 Months	26.8

Get Counselling for Mental Health/ Emotional Problem	
Never/ Do Not Remember	84.5
Over 2 Years Ago	4.9
1-2 Years Ago	4.3
Within Last 12 Months	6.2
See a Bush Doctor or Healer	
Never/ Do Not Remember	91.0
Over 2 Years Ago	3.0
1-2 Years Ago	2.9
Within Last 12 Months	3.2
(Girls only) Have a Vaginal (Pelvic) Exam	
Never/ Do Not Remember	79.9
Over 2 Years Ago	6.1
1-2 Years Ago	6.3
Within Last 12 Months	7.7

TABLE 8-7

**PERCENTAGE (%) OF SELECTED HEALTH AND NUTRITION ISSUES
BY STUDENTS' WEIGHT PERCEPTION AND BODY IMAGE *
ALL BAHAMAS**

Health Issues	Feelings about Body When "Looking in Mirror"		
	Happy with Body	Okay With Body	Not Happy With Body
Weight Perception			
About Right	68.4	42.2	12.5
Underweight	18.3	22.3	17.2
Overweight	13.3	35.5	70.3
Taken Following To Lose/ Maintain Weight ...			
Laxatives	7.0	7.9	17.9
(Females Only) Forced Self to Vomit	6.6	13.1	14.3
Diuretics	3.7	3.6	12.1
Diet Pills	4.1	6.5	17.6
Ate Less Than Three Meals a Day	27.6	43.7	43.0

* Statistically significant differences exist with p value set at ≤ 0.05 .

FIGURE 8-1

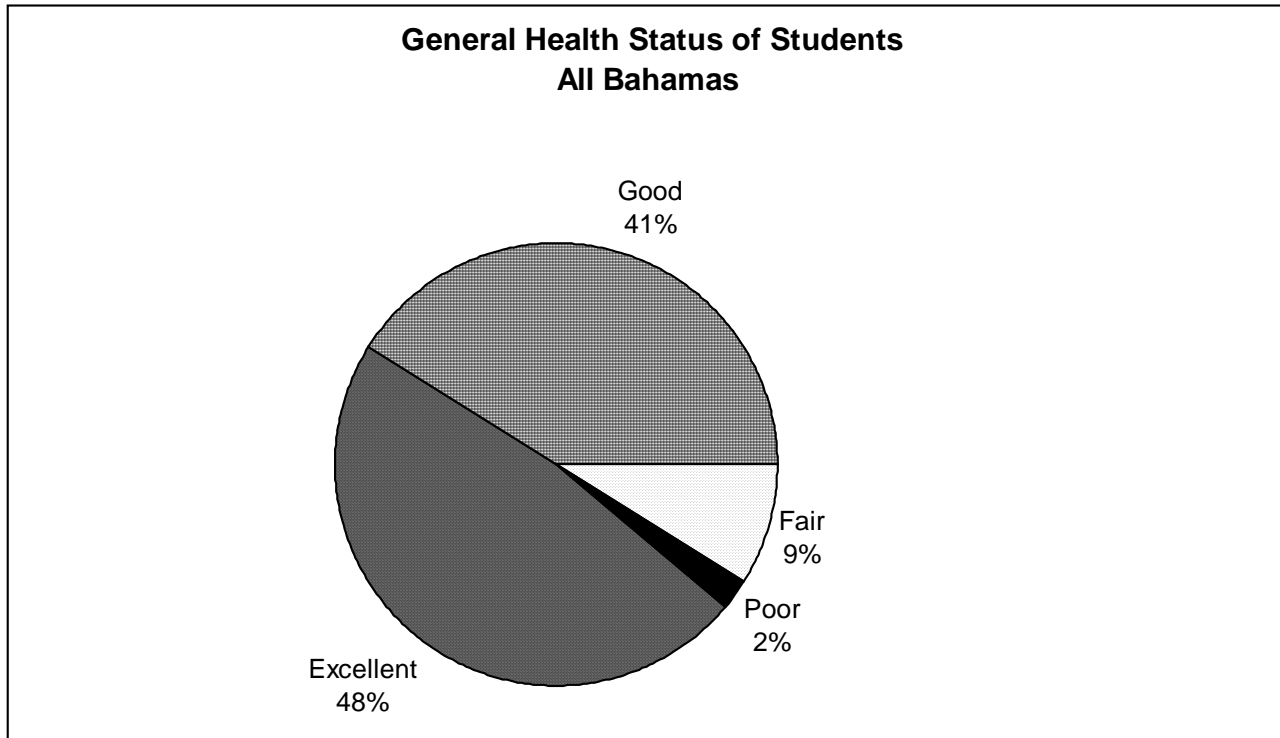


FIGURE 8-2

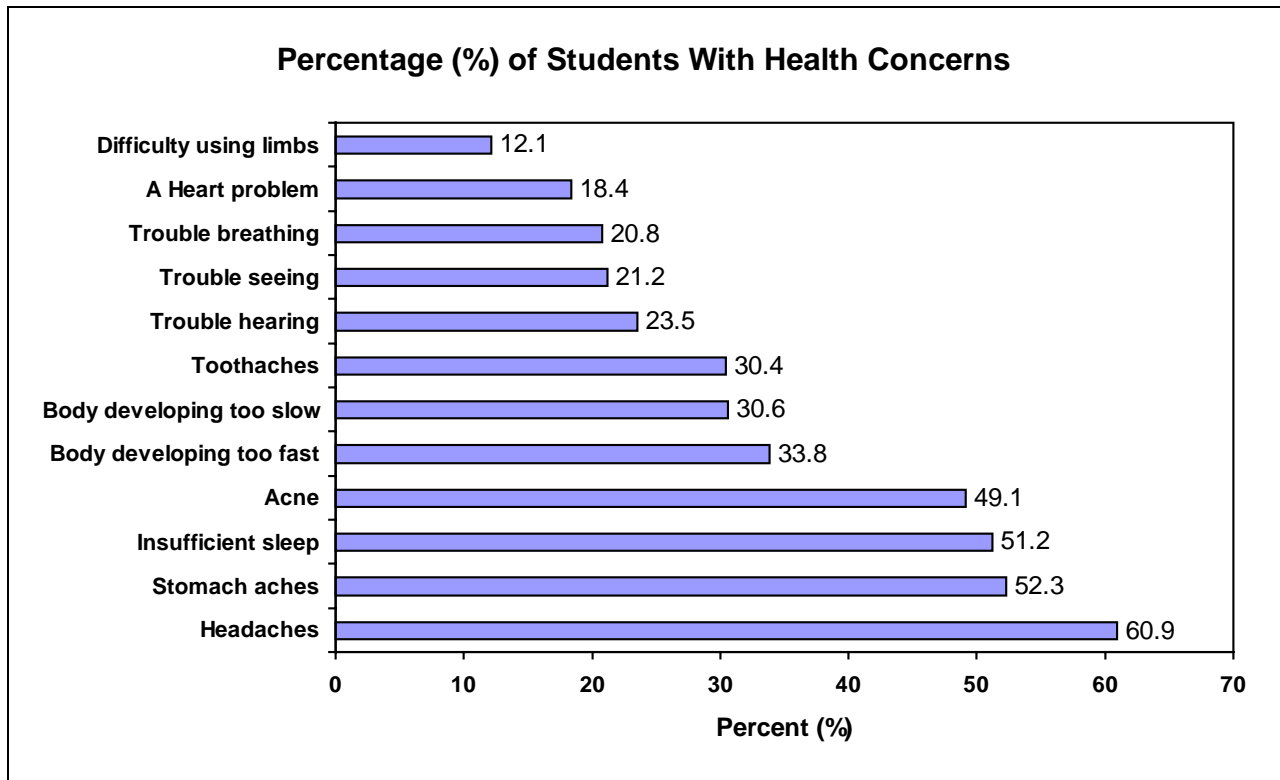


FIGURE 8-3

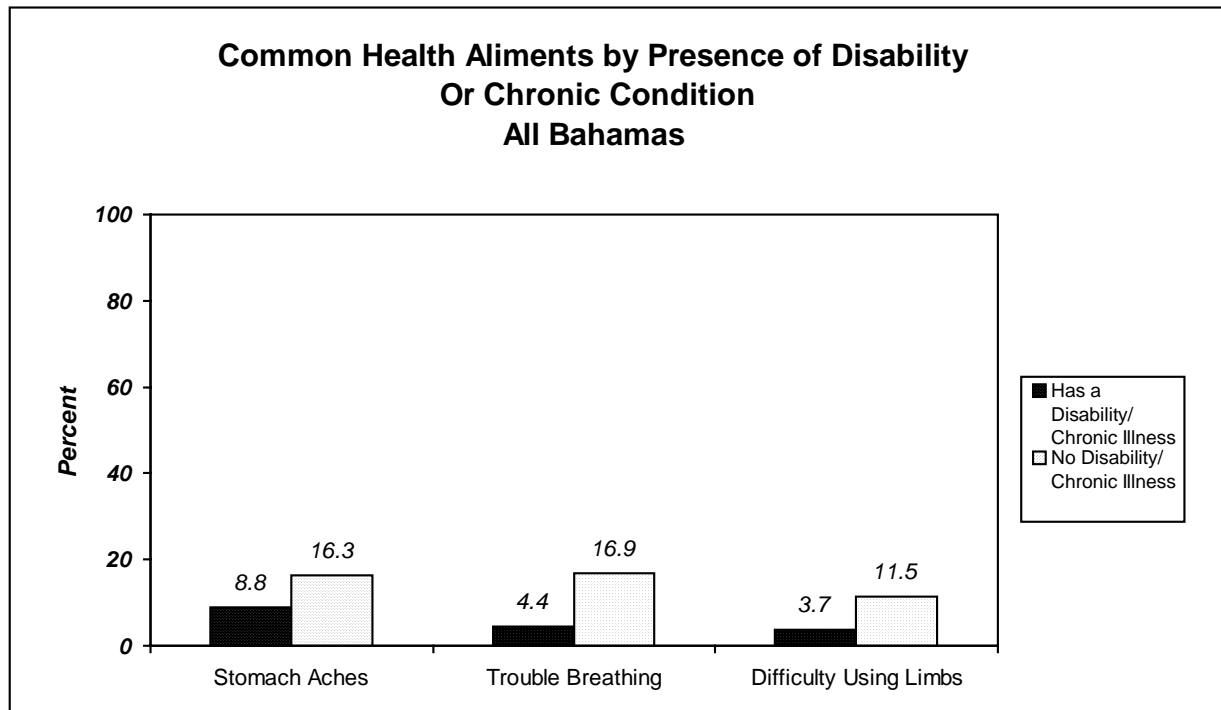


FIGURE 8-4

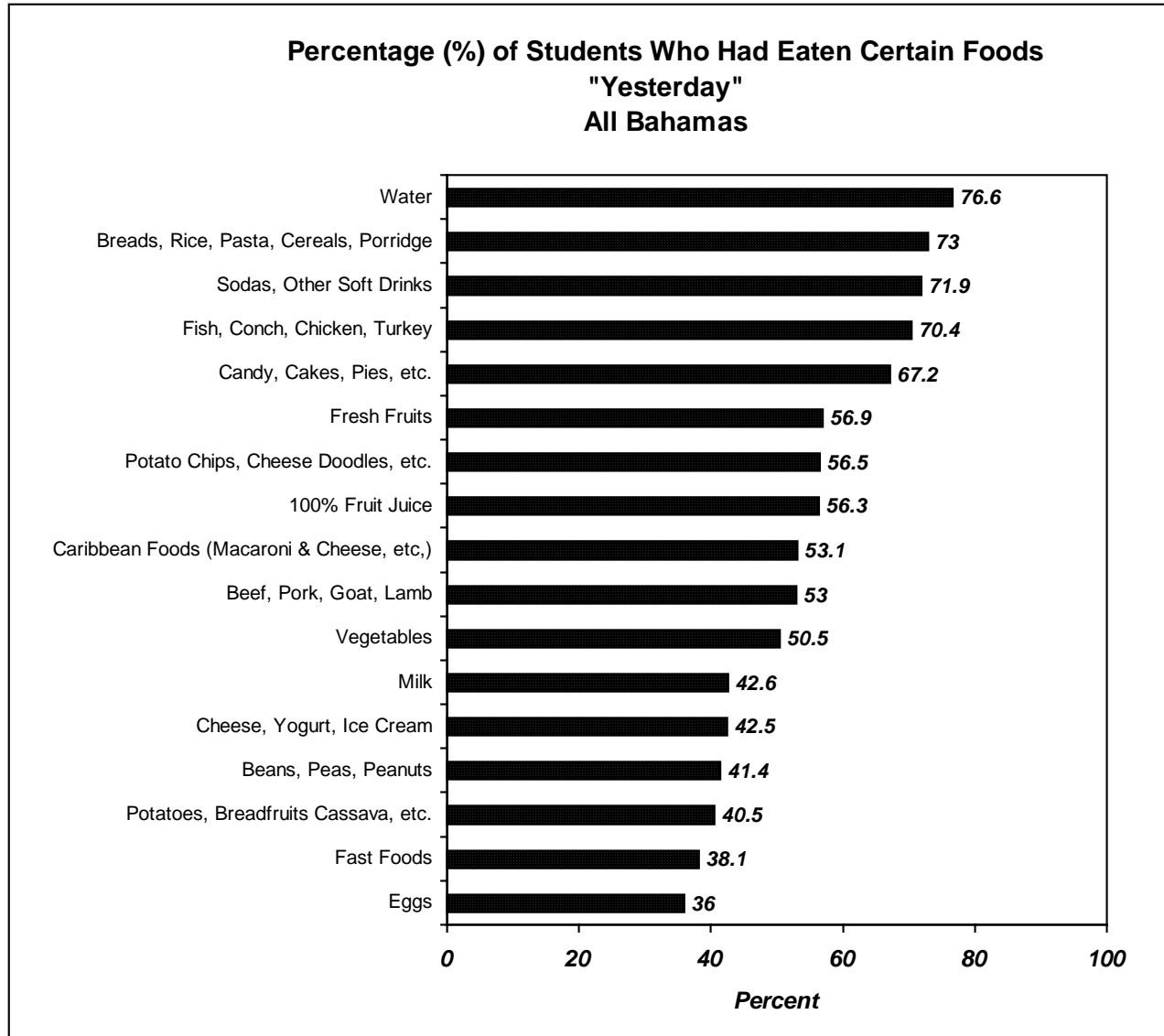


FIGURE 8-5

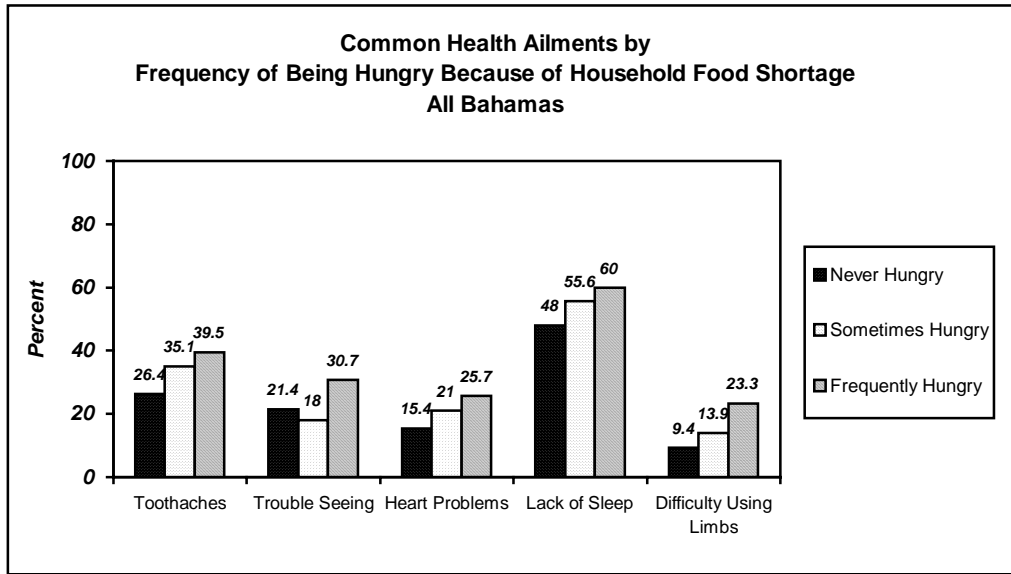


FIGURE 8-6

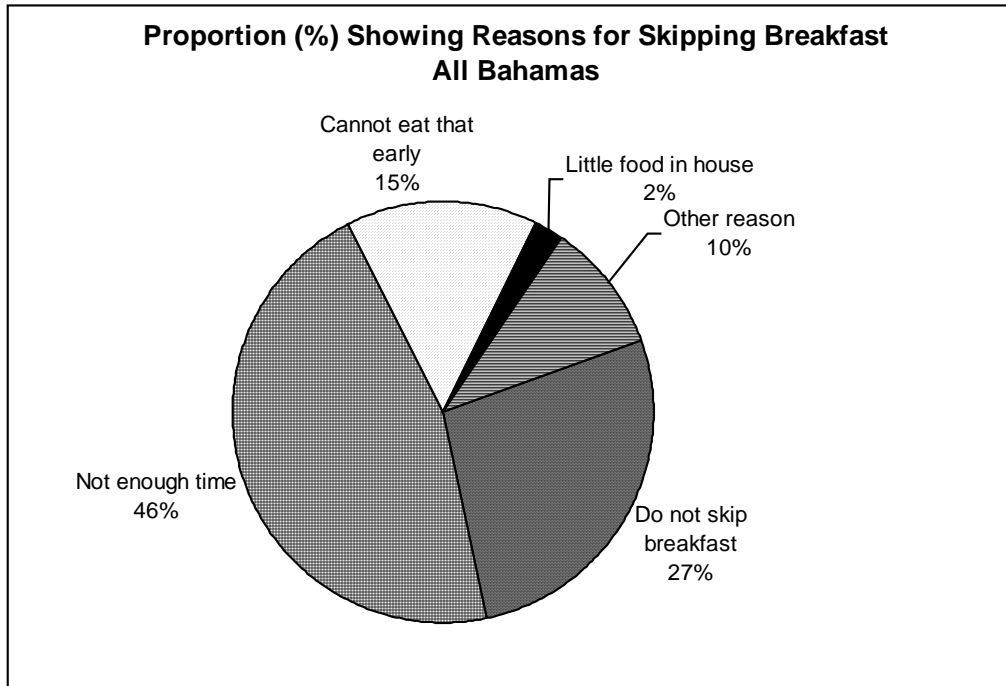


FIGURE 8-7

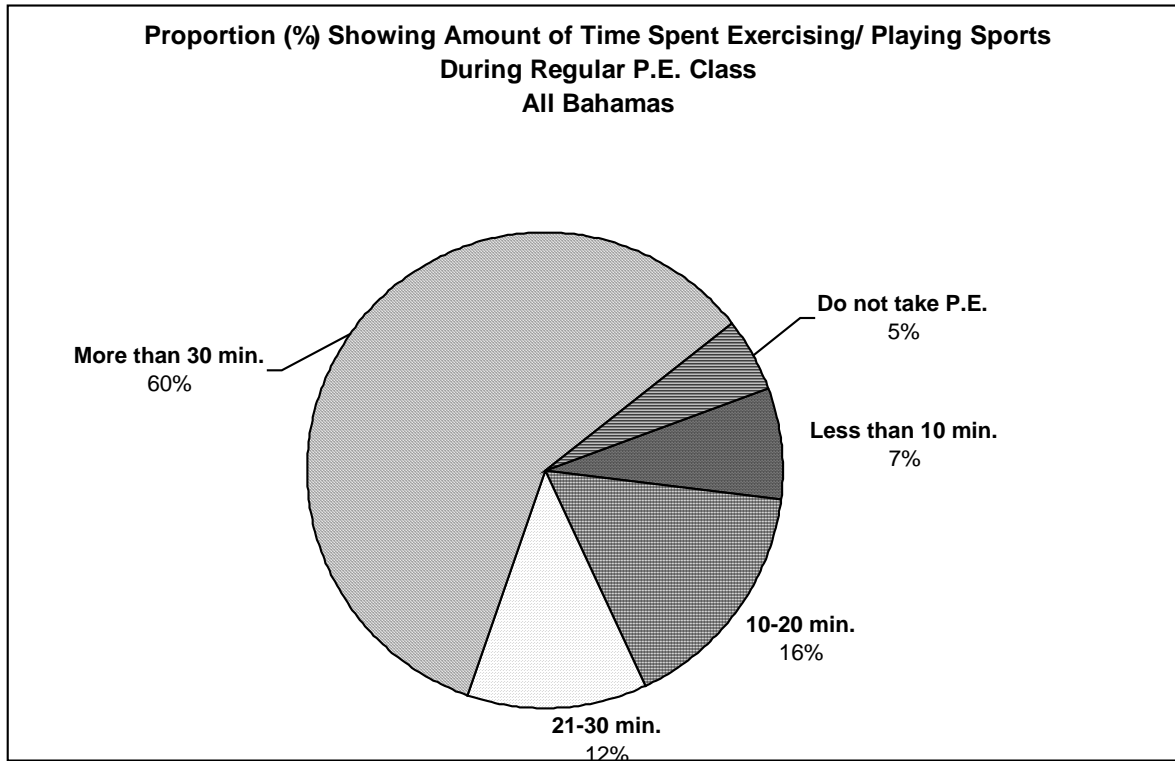


FIGURE 8-8

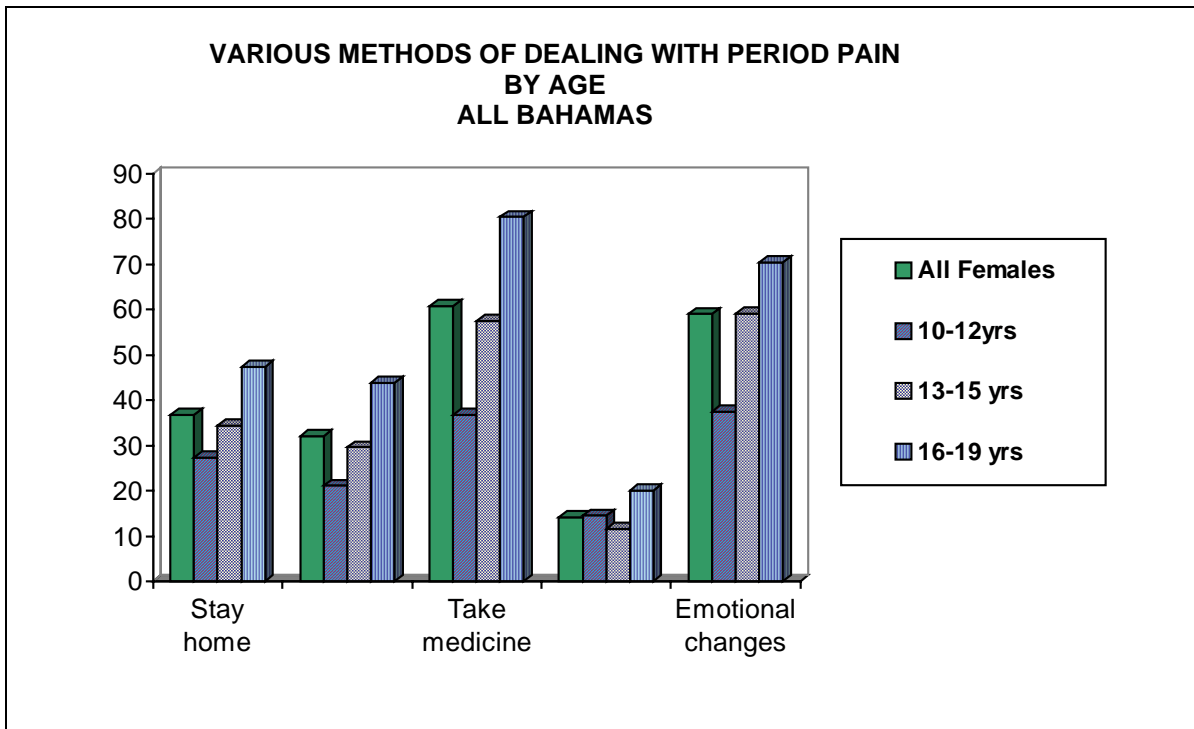


FIGURE 8-9

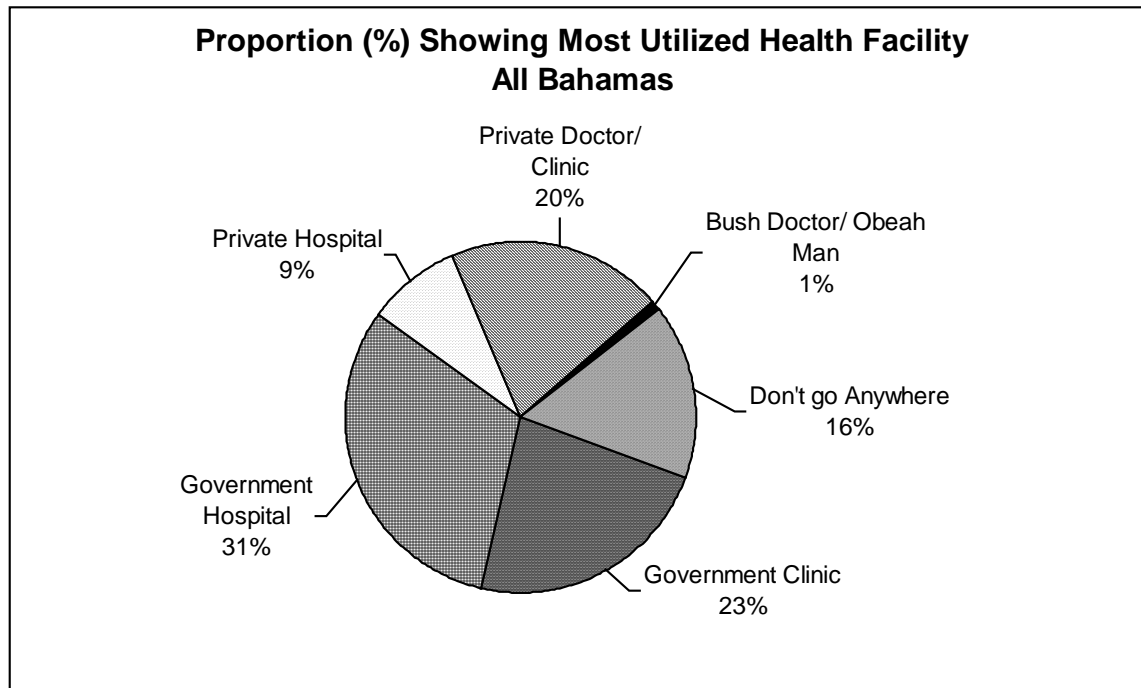


FIGURE 8-10

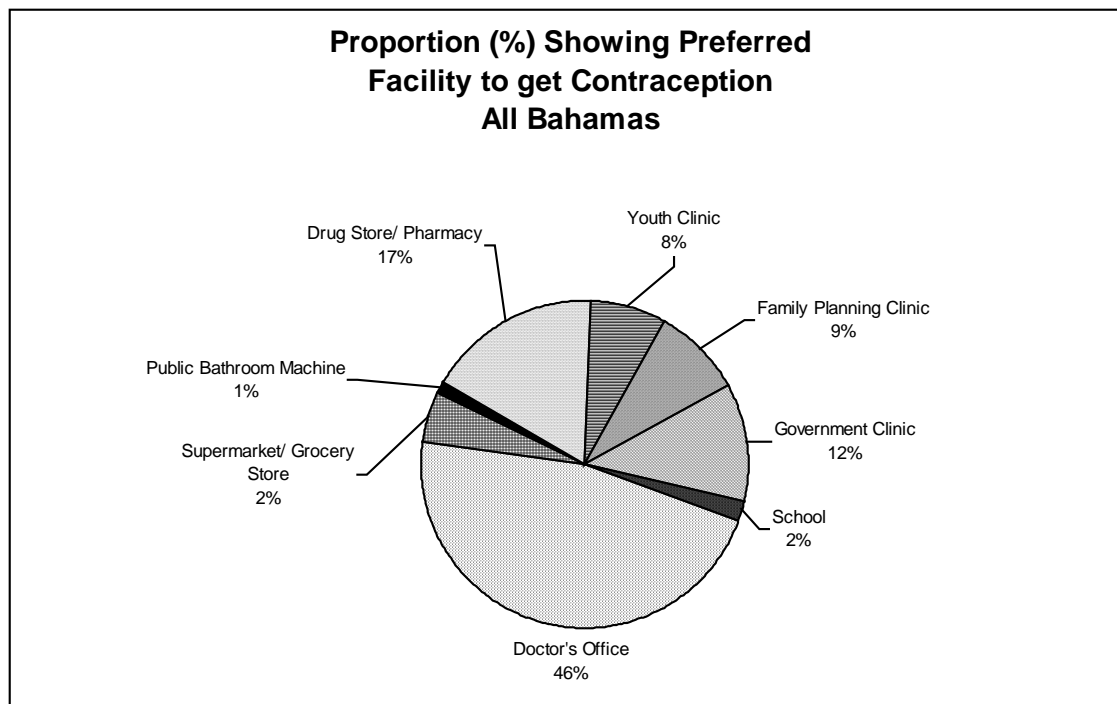
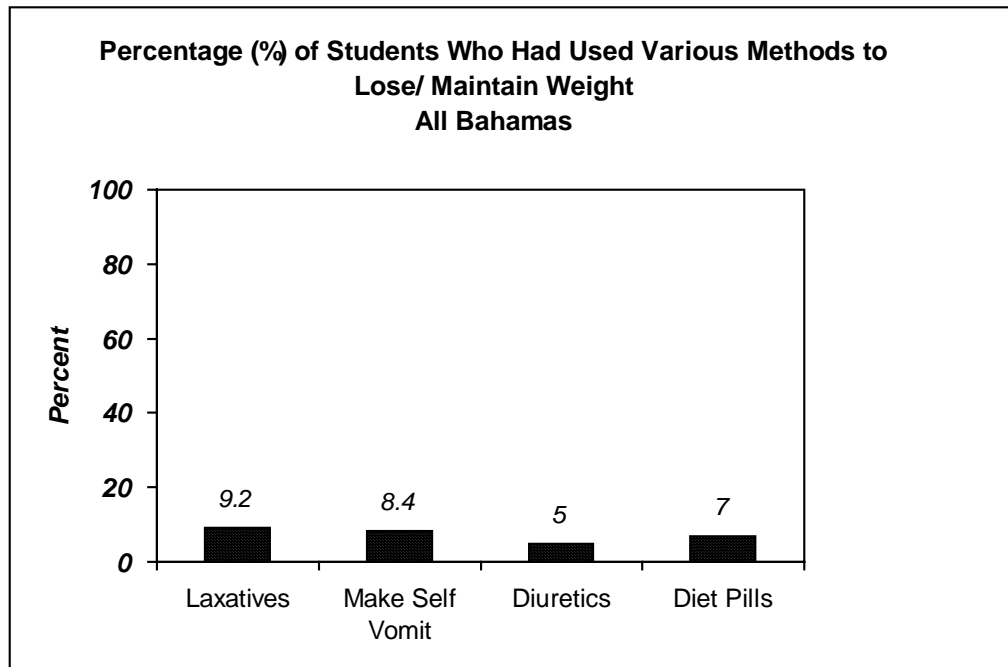


FIGURE 8-11



Section 9

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

9. Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

Respondents were asked about the frequency of the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances during the past twelve months. Cigarettes and alcohol are recognized as gateway drugs in that the use of these substances serve as an indicator of future use of other illicit substances.

9.1. Cigarettes

In total, 93.2% of the 952 respondents were abstainers or did not smoke any cigarettes during the past year. A significant gender specific difference was observed with 95.8% of the females having abstained as compared to 90.6% of the males. Although the percentage of smokers did increase with increasing age overall and for both genders, this increase was not significant.

An interesting observation was the association between cigarette smoking and gang relations. For those students who reportedly were never involved with gangs, only 5.1% were smokers, this compared to 11.0% and 19.6% in the group of students who were former and current members of a gang, respectively (Figure 9-1).

9.2. Alcohol

9.2.1. Frequency of Consumption

With respect to the consumption of alcohol, the overall abstinence rate was 67.8%. Again, females abstained at a significantly greater rate than their male counterparts. While 75.1% of all female students did not drink any alcohol in the year prior to the survey, only 60.4% of the males fell in this category (Table 9-1).

Among drinkers, there was a strong consistent association observed with age. As age increased, the percentage of male and female drinkers increased significantly. For males, the rate increased from 24.6% in the 10-12 years old group to 57% in those 16-19 years. Similarly, while only 9.2% of the 10-12 years old females drank, 42% of those over 16 years did so. Some religions did have a larger percentage of drinkers than others but it was unknown whether this was due to differences in doctrines or other factors.

In terms of parental influence, the presence of fathers appeared to be a protective factor for alcohol consumption as the percentage of females who abstained was much greater when the fathers were in the same household as compared to those whose fathers were not residing in the same household. Unfortunately, the opposite effect was observed when the students were involved with gangs. Whereas only 27.6% of the students who were never involved with gangs drank, this increased to 61% for those who used to be in gangs and 64% for those students currently affiliated with a gang (Figure 9-1).

The survey also attempted to assess the mental health of the students by asking how often they felt down or discouraged and this factor was also looked at in relation to the frequency of alcohol consumption. The findings clearly showed that as the frequency of feeling down or discouraged increased, the percentage of students who drank increased significantly (Table 9-2). How much of this association is due to some predisposition of persons who are depressed or feeling down to drink more often or whether the drinking led to such feelings is unknown. Unfortunately, no temporal associations can be studied in cross-sectional surveys.

Strong associations were also observed between the frequency of alcohol consumption and several factors indicative of feelings of violence. These included thinking about hurting or killing someone and hurting or killing themselves (Table 9-2). With respect to violent thoughts directed towards others, in the group who felt like hurting or killing someone "almost all of the time", 57.6% of the students drank. Conversely, in the group who admitted feeling this way either "sometimes" or "never", the percentage of drinkers decreased to 42.8% and 15.3%, respectively. Regarding self-directed thoughts of hurting or killing, a similar association was observed. For students who thought "often" of hurting or killing themselves, the percentage who did drink in the past twelve months was 46.7%, decreasing to 38.7% for those with such thoughts "sometimes" and even further to 29.7% in the group who never had such thoughts.

This association was also observed between the non-consumption of alcohol and actual attempts at suicide. Of those who reportedly attempted suicide more than once, only 48.1% did not drink in the last year. Among those who tried suicide once, 55.9% abstained, as compared to 67.9% of those who had never made such attempts.

9.2.2. Amount of Alcohol

In addition to the frequency of drinking, students were also asked about the amount of alcohol that they would normally consume at any one time. For all students combined, the percentage who said that they never drank (60.2%) was only slightly less than those who did not drink in the past year. This non-drinking category contained the majority of students in all gender and age groups with the exception of males 16 years and over. For the drinkers, most students reportedly limited themselves to one drink. Males, however, drank significantly more per occasion than females, with 7% consuming four or more drinks as compared to 3.1% of the females. The usual number of drinks per occasion also increased with increasing age. While only 2.2% of the students 10-12 years old drank four or more drinks per occasion, this increased steadily to 4.2% for the 13-15 years old group and 10.6% for those 16 years and older. This association was evident for both males and females.

9.2.3. Drinking and Driving

Risk taking behaviours by teens contribute in large measure to the major causes of morbidity and mortality among this group. One such risk is riding with someone under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Overall, almost one in five students (18.3%) had ridden with the driver of either a car, boat or jet ski while the driver was high on alcohol or drugs, with a larger percentage of males (22.9%) having done so than females (13.4%). The likelihood of having taken this risk increased steadily with increasing age from the 10-12 years age group in males and after the age of 16 in females. These numbers are also reflected in the gender differential observed for deaths and hospital admissions due to these types of accidents.

Regarding the number of drinks that would make it unsafe to drive, 48.5% of the males and 59.1% of the females indicated that they considered any amount of drinking would make driving unsafe. Whether these differences in stated opinions led to the observed gender differences in these risk-taking behaviours or was simply a justification of behaviour is unknown. For males, as age increased, the percentage who said all drinking was unsafe decreased drastically.

9.3. Marijuana

Reported marijuana use by the students revealed an overall abstinence rate of 92%. A total of 88% of the males had abstained as compared to 95.1% of the females (Table 9-1). Among smokers, however, there were significant differences between the genders, with males having been twice as likely as females to have smoked in the past year.

The percentage of marijuana smokers increased significantly with increasing age, from 2.5% in the 10-12 years old group to 8.2% in the group of students 13-15 years and peaking at 15.1% in the 16-19 years old group. This increase was more dramatic in males although the difference in females was also significant.

No association was observed between marijuana smoking and the frequency of feeling down or discouraged but similar to what was observed for cigarette smoking and the frequency of alcohol consumption, an association was observed with gang involvement (Figure 9-1).

Of those students never involved with gangs, the smokers accounted for only 5.5%. For those who used to be in a gang and currently in a gang, the percentage of students who smoked marijuana in the past year increased to 16.2% and 32.7%, respectively (Figure 9-1).

9.4. Cocaine

The prevalence of cocaine use based on this survey is not a major problem in the school population at this time. This was no surprise as the age of first use for cocaine, based on the National Adult Drug Use Survey 1991, was primarily in the late teens and

early twenties. In total, 98.8% of Bahamian students did not use cocaine in the past year. These results did not differ by age groupings or gender (Table 9-1).

9.5. Bindro

As a test of the validity of these results, students were also asked about the use of a fictitious substance called Bindro. While 98.9% indicated that they did not use Bindro, 10 (1.1%) students reported that they had in fact used it in the past year. A further look at these students revealed much higher usage rates when compared to the total student population for all of the common drugs. Of the 10, 44.4% had reportedly smoked cigarettes, 70% had drunk alcohol, 60% smoked marijuana and 87.5% taken cocaine. Six of the ten students were male. Whether these students were telling the truth about the use of other substances is unknown.

9.6. Problems and Concerns Related to Alcohol and Drugs

Results to the question of problems faced by the teens due to drinking alcohol or drug use are shown in Figure 9-2. The problems experienced most often included "Breaking up with boyfriend/girlfriend" (12.1%), "Loss of Friends" (10.1%), "School Problems" (8.2%), "Accidents or Injuries" (7.3%), and "Becoming Violent" (7.1%). Significant gender differences were observed for all of these except for the "Loss of Friends", while an overall positive association was observed between age and "Becoming Violent".

With respect to parent behaviour, 17% of the students reported one or both parents as having had problems because of their drinking while 12.9% had parents who experienced problems due to some type of violent behaviour. Five percent (5.1%) of the students had parents who had problems resulting from drug abuse.

Given the above, students were not so concerned about their own drinking and drug use as they were about that of their parents and the level of use in the community. While 15.6% of the students worried about their own use, 21.8% indicated a similar thing when asked about their parents' usage. The question on the community revealed that 43.6% of the teens worry about the level of drinking and drug use in their neighbourhoods.

Section 9
(Table & Charts)

TABLE 9-1

**PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS WHO ABSTAINED FROM
DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE IN THE PAST YEAR
BY GENDER AND AGE GROUP**

SUBSTANCE	GENDER		AGE GROUP (Years)			TOTAL
	Male	Female	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 -19	
Cigarettes	90.6	95.8	96.0	93.0	90.0	93.2
Alcohol	60.4	75.1	84.0	67.0	49.8	67.8
Marijuana	88.8	95.1	97.5	91.8	84.9	92.0
Cocaine	98.3	99.4	98.6	99.1	98.6	98.8

TABLE 9-2

**FREQUENCY OF NEGATIVE FEELINGS AND SUICIDE ATTEMPTS
AMONG CURRENT DRINKERS**

Negative Feelings and Suicide Attempts	% of Current Drinkers		
	Frequency of Feelings and Actions		
	Many Times	Sometimes	Never
Felt so down or discouraged in the past month that wondered if anything was worthwhile	35.1	37.0	25.6
Ever felt like hurting or killing someone	Never	Sometimes	Almost Always
	15.3	42.8	57.6
Ever felt like hurting or killing self	Never	Sometimes	Often
	29.7	38.7	46.7
Ever tried to kill self	Never	Once	More than Once
	32.1	44.1	51.9

FIGURE 9-1

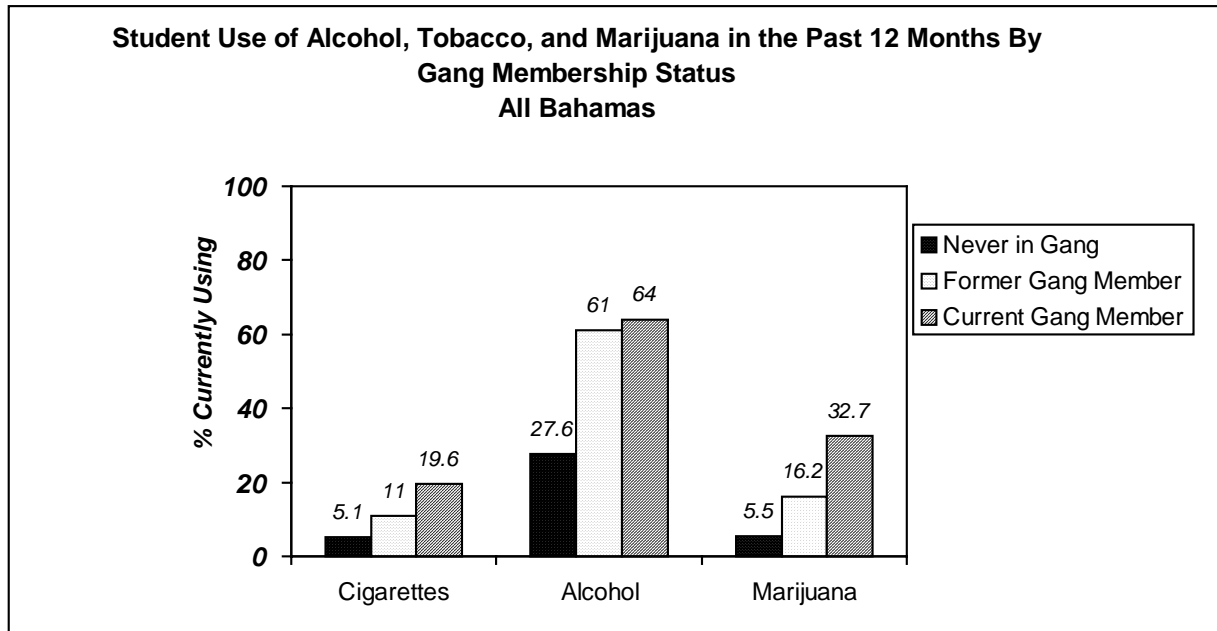
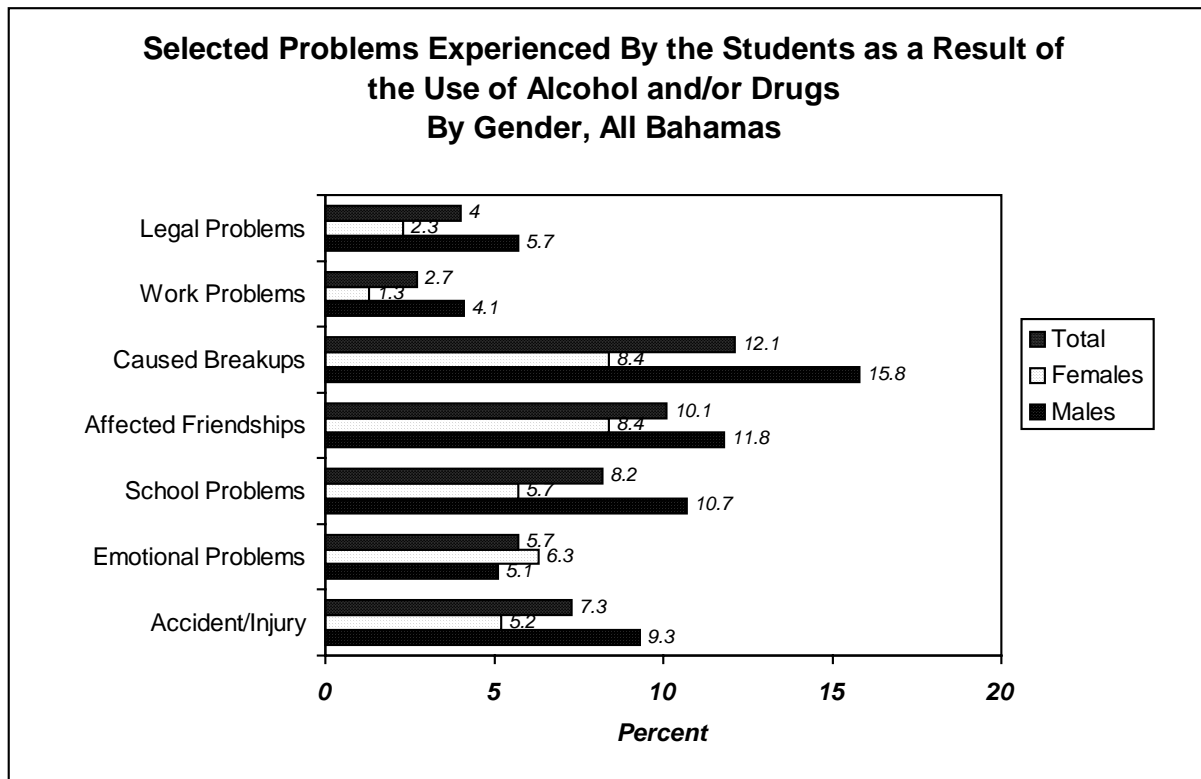


FIGURE 9-2



Section 10

Sexuality and Sexual History

10. Sexuality and Sexual History

10.1. Personal Feelings and Attractions

Students were asked to describe their personal feelings and attractions towards members of the same as well as opposite sex. Results revealed that a total of 540 (87.2%) of the adolescents in the 9th and 11th grades were only attracted to persons of the opposite sex. Thirteen (2.1%) respondents were only attracted to persons of the same sex and an additional 11 (1.8%) were reportedly equally attracted to both sexes.

Regarding the sexual experiences of the students, 6.8% of the males reported having had a sexual encounter with another male while 7.5% of the females had experienced a same sex sexual encounter. On the other hand, while 70.5% of the females had a sexual experience with members of the opposite sex, 90% of the males indicated that they had some sexual experience with females.

10.2. Sexual Activity

10.2.1. Sexual Intercourse

Overall, 41.2% of the adolescents reported that they had engaged in sexual intercourse or had "gone all the way." There was a significant gender difference with approximately 6 of 10 males (55.7%) as compared to 1 of 4 females (26.9%) who had experienced intercourse. A significant positive association was also observed with age. Whereas 32.5% of those aged 13-15 years had engaged in sexual intercourse, 57.4% of those 16 years and over were sexually active (Table 10-1).

The likelihood of adolescents having had intercourse was not associated with their involvement in organized school extracurricular activities, neither with whether or not fathers resided in the same household. Additionally, for males, no association was observed between engaging in sexual intercourse and the amount of attention paid to the students by their families. However, for females there was a tendency towards a statistical association with those who felt that their "family paid very little attention to them" being more vulnerable to sexual advances than those who felt that their family paid "a lot of attention." The "very little attention" group was approximately one and one-half times more likely to engage in sexual intercourse than the "a lot of attention" group.

A highly significant dose response was also observed between sexual intercourse and the amount of beer, wine or hard liquor normally consumed at any one time. As the number of drinks normally consumed at one time increased, so did the percentage of respondents who had engaged in sexual intercourse. For males, this consistent dose response was evident across all drinking categories while for females, it was observed after consumption of 2 to three drinks (Figure 10-1). The fact that this phenomenon was observed in both males and females leads more to the conclusion that differences in personality traits and risk-taking behaviours rather than vulnerability due to alcohol

consumption accounts for the differences in sexual activity between the heavy and light drinkers.

For those persons who were not sexually active, the more common reasons as to their having abstained are presented in Figure 10-2. "Fear of disease" was the reason mentioned most often (75.6%), followed by "a desire to wait until marriage" (72.3%), "not wanting to get pregnant" (68.7%), that it was "against parental values" (67.8%) and that they would "feel guilty" (60.9%).

That only one-third of the students reasoned that they simply "haven't met anyone they wish to have sex with" or that they "had no opportunity to have sex with someone they like" and even less having indicated that "they wish to but no one has asked" demonstrates that the decision to delay sexual intercourse is, in most cases, a very deliberate one.

10.2.2. Initial Sexual Experience

In order to determine the role of peer pressure on the decision to have sex, the respondents were asked if, at the time they first engaged in sexual intercourse, they were pressured or forced into it against their will. One-third (31.1%) of the respondents felt that they were; 7.5% "definitely" and 23.7% "sort of." When those who responded either "definitely" or "sort of" were combined, females (45.5%) were almost twice as likely as males (24%) to have felt that they were pressured or forced; a difference that was highly significant. However, for those who felt that they were definitely forced or pressured, there was no difference between the genders (Figure 10-3).

Males reportedly engaged in sexual intercourse at a significantly younger age than females, with the average age of first sexual intercourse approximated at 12 years for males and 14 years for females. Of concern was that 20.1% of all sexually active adolescents had their sexual debut at or before the age of 10 years. This was primarily due to the influence of males (27.7%) rather than females (5%). (Figure 10-4).

Regarding the relative age of the respondents' very first sexual partner, females, as compared to males, were significantly more likely to have had initial partners who were older. A total of 14.8% of the sexually active females indicated that their partners were "a lot older" and 69.1% "not much older." For males, 50.3% reported that their first partner was "about my age" and another 28.7% "not much older." (Figure 10-5). There was a significant association, for both males and females, between the age of first partner and whether or not the respondents were forced or pressured into having sex. For those individuals who were definitely forced or pressured into having sex, the percentage of partners who were "a lot older" was much greater than the percentage in those who were not forced or were "sort of" forced or pressured. These results clearly reveal that individuals who are much older are not interested in these adolescents for purely platonic reasons.

10.2.3. Number of Partners

There was a strong gender difference in the number of lifetime sex partners. Approximately one-fourth of all male (23.1%), as compared to two-thirds (66.7%) of all female adolescents, who were sexually active, reportedly had only one partner since beginning sexual intercourse. On the high end of sexual partners, the reverse was observed. While 37.5% of the males reported 5 or more lifetime partners, only 7.4% of the sexually active females admitted to sleeping with this amount. (Figure 10-6). There was no association between the number of partners and the age of students or whether or not the fathers of the respondents lived in the same household.

An interesting association was observed between involvement in school sponsored organized activities after school and the number of partners. For persons not participating in organized activities, the number of sex partners was significantly greater than that of persons who were involved. This association was not observed with the decision to begin sexual activity, which suggests that although sexual experimentation and peer pressure may increase the likelihood of sexual debut, continuous involvement with a change in partners is somehow associated with opportunity and availability.

A total of 21.2% of the sexually active respondents indicated that they had slept over with a sexual partner, with more males (24.8%) having done so than females (13.8%). When compared to adolescents who lived with either one (21.8%) or both parents (20.7%), a larger percentage of the adolescents who lived with neither mother nor father had slept over (32.1%), although this difference was not significant.

10.3. Birth Control

Just over one-half of the adolescents (54%) that were engaged in sexual activity reported that neither they nor their partner ever used a birth control method. (Figure 10-7). One-third (33.2%) indicated that some type of birth control method was always used. The most common methods used, based on a cross-sectional picture obtained from the most recent time the adolescents engaged in sexual intercourse, were condoms (73.4%), withdrawal (38.2%), and the rhythm method (22.9%). (Figure 10-8). Of interest was the fact that in spite of almost one-half the respondents having indicated that they never use any method, the percentage that reported not using anything during the last time was only 38.4%. In fact, 18.3% of those who indicated that they always used some method did not use anything the last time and 52.6% of those who reportedly never used anything used some type of birth control method the last time. These results may reflect differences in the ability to accurately recall one recent episode versus a complete history.

As to the reasons why adolescents don't use any birth control, the top three reasons for males were: (i) that there was no time to prepare; (ii) that they didn't think of it; and (iii) their partner did not wish to use any. For females, these included: (i) that they didn't think of it; (ii) no time to prepare; and (iii) they were concerned about the side effects.

(Figure 10-2). Those reasons that showed significant differences between the genders or that approached significance, with males consistently responding in the affirmative at a greater rate than females, were "no time to prepare," "no risk of STDs or pregnancy" and "partner does not wish to use any." The percentage of respondents who indicated that they always use birth control (22.8%) in this question was less than the percentage responding to the direct question of how often was birth control used (33%). This may reflect an inability to understand the questionnaire and to follow instructions or that the respondents simply were not consistent in telling the truth.

In spite of the efforts of the Non-government Bahamas Planned Parenthood and the government's Reproductive Health and Family Planning Program to make contraceptives available either free of charge or at a minimal cost, 18% of the sexually active adolescents reported that "they didn't know how to get protection or were too embarrassed" and another 18% reported that "they could not afford to buy protection." Whether the adopted policies of requiring parental consent for persons under 16 years are excluding these institutions as an option for the teens must be explored particularly since a large percentage of sexually active students are under the age of 16 years.

In terms of where adolescents would most like to get contraceptives from in the event they were needed, the most popular place was the doctor's office (46.7%), followed by the drug store or pharmacy (17%) and the government clinics (11.7%).

10.4. Pregnancy History

Regarding teen pregnancy, 9 (6.3%) of the sexually active males and 7 (10.5%) of the sexually active females reported becoming pregnant or having caused a pregnancy at least once. Of these, one male and one female student reported multiple pregnancies. There was no association between this question and the age of respondents.

When the number of pregnancies was looked at in relation to the frequency of contraceptive use for the entire sample, there was no association observed. However, when this association was looked at within the two gender categories, a significant adverse association was observed for males. Those males who reported using contraception "always," had a greater risk of getting someone pregnant than those who never used contraception. This interesting observation may reflect false reporting by these respondents, a subsequent change in practice since the pregnancy was in the past and the question on birth control use reflected current behaviour, or improper use of the contraceptive method employed.

Additionally, when the various contraceptive methods used during the last sexual encounter, which may be more indicative of the norm, is looked at in relation to pregnancy risk, significant or near significant associations were observed for both condom use and withdrawals. Those adolescents or their partners who used these methods were less likely to have been pregnant or to have caused a pregnancy than those who did not.

An attempt was also made to observe the decisions that Bahamian youths make when faced with adversities such as unplanned pregnancies. This information could be used to estimate the number of abortions as well as the number of teen pregnancies. Of the 16 teens who reportedly had been pregnant or had gotten someone pregnant, 2 did not reply to the question on results of the last pregnancy, 2 others did not know what eventually happened, and one of the 16 was currently pregnant and undecided about their choice. Of the remaining 11 teens, 5 (45.5%) made the decision to carry the baby to term while the final 6 (54.5%) had opted for abortions. Of those 5 teens who had decided to have their babies, 3 of them kept their babies while the other two were being raised by either the maternal or paternal grandparents. This clearly shows that for school aged children, abortion remains the most popular choice in the event of a pregnancy; this, in spite of the fact that abortions in the Bahamas are illegal except for therapeutic reasons.

While these teen parents are in school, the majority of the children are looked after by family members or left in Day Care Centres. Most of the respondents see and are able to spend time with their child once a week or more often and the type of support given most often is money.

10.5. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse and its possible influence with student sexuality was tested. With regards to whether sexual intercourse has taken place, a relatively substantial relationship was found for females only. A greater proportion of female students who were sexually abused have engaged in sexual intercourse (41%) than females not abused (19%). Among students who are sexually active, however, whether they were pressured or forced into their first sexual encounter did not appear to be connected with whether they were sexually abused. Also, the average age of first sexual intercourse for both genders of those sexually abused was around the same as students who were not abused. Sexual orientation was not associated with sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse was associated with the relative age of first sexual partner. A greater percentage of partners was categorized as "older" among the abused respondents. There was no evidence of abused persons acting out or reacting to their abuse in a sexual way. In most instances, there was no difference in those abused and not abused by either the likelihood of their having had intercourse or in the number of sexual partners for those who were having sex. The exception to this was for those abused female adolescents who were significantly more likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse than those not abused, a finding that could also have resulted from the abuse actually culminating in intercourse.

10.6. Sexual Worries and Concerns

Both the possibility of getting AIDS and becoming or making someone pregnant was a real concern for the students. Overall, 24.7% worried "a lot" about getting pregnant which was significantly associated with having sexual intercourse. For those adolescents who were sexually active, the percentage who worried both "sometimes" and "a lot" about getting pregnant were greater than those for the corresponding groups in the non sexually active adolescents. No association was observed between age and worrying about getting pregnant nor was it associated with any personal history of getting someone pregnant or being pregnant.

For the 38% of the students who were worried "a lot" about getting AIDS, a significant positive association was observed for both age and having sexual intercourse. As age increased, so did the percentage of teens who worried both "sometimes" and "a lot" about getting AIDS. Similarly, while 49.3% of those who were sexually active worried about getting AIDS, only 38.6% of those who were not active were worried.

In an attempt to determine whether discussing sexual opinions with their teachers was a real option for the students, teens were asked if they thought that others in the school would find out if they did hold such discussions. Approximately one in three said that undoubtedly others would find out while another 23.4% said that they were not sure. These results did not differ by gender but those persons in the age group 10-12 years was significantly more trusting of the teachers confidentiality than those in the older age groups.

Section 10
(Tables and Charts)

TABLE 10-1

**PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE HAD
SEXUAL INTERCOURSE
BY AGE GROUP AND GENDER**

Age Groups	Gender		Total
	Males	Females	
10 - 12	0	0	0
13 - 15	46.7	19.8	32.5
16+	70.2	41.4	57.4
Total	55.7	26.9	41.4

TABLE 10-2

**REASONS FOR NOT USING BIRTH CONTROL AMONG
SEXUALLY ACTIVE STUDENTS**

Reasons For Not Using	Percentage		Total
	Males	Females	
Don't think about it	40.5	38.3	39.9
Wish to have a baby	10.4	5.2	8.9
Not at risk for STD or Pregnancy	27.1	14.3	23.5
Unexpected, no time to prepare	45.5	28.6	40.8
Partner don't wish to use any	28.3	14.5	24.4
Wrong to use birth control	13.9	7.1	11.9
Embarrassed or don't how to get	16.3	23.3	18.4
Can't afford to buy any	20.1	14.0	18.4
Concerned about side effects	22.1	25.4	23.1
Partner's problem, not mine	12.5	5.3	10.4
Got drunk or high at the time	9.9	5.2	7.8
Always use birth Control	22.2	24.1	22.8

FIGURE 10-1

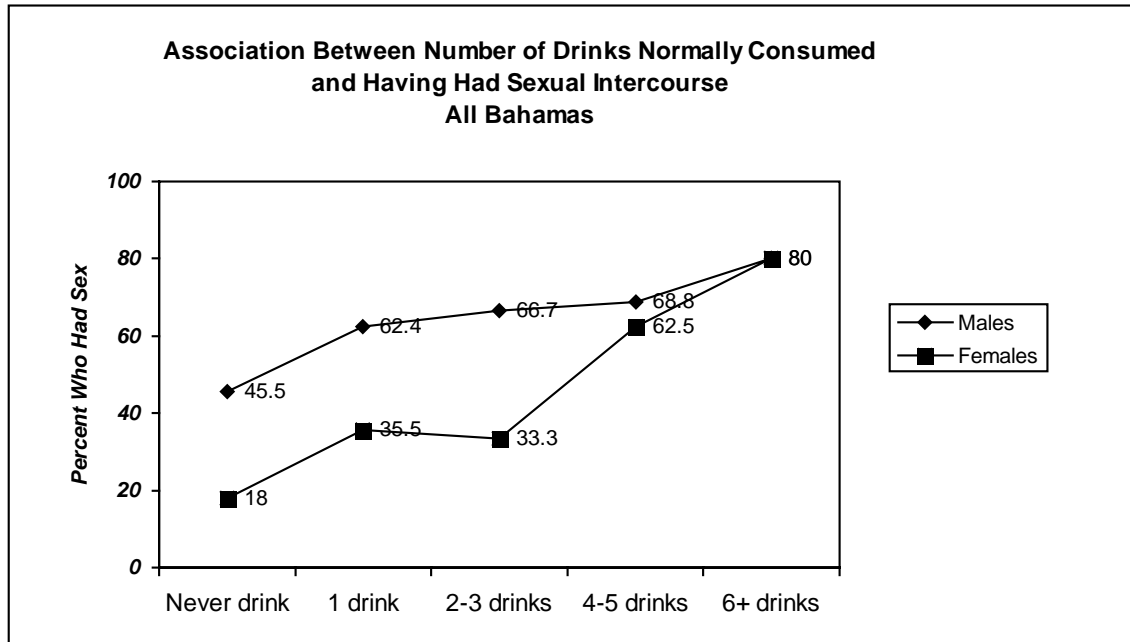


FIGURE 10-2

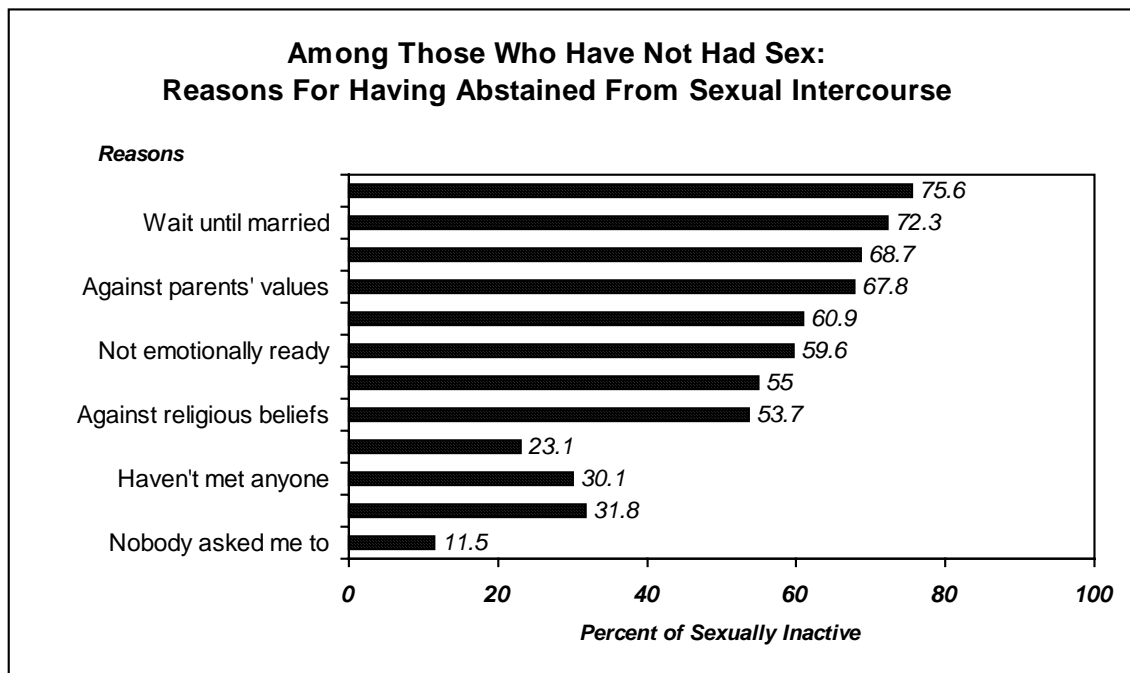


FIGURE 10-3

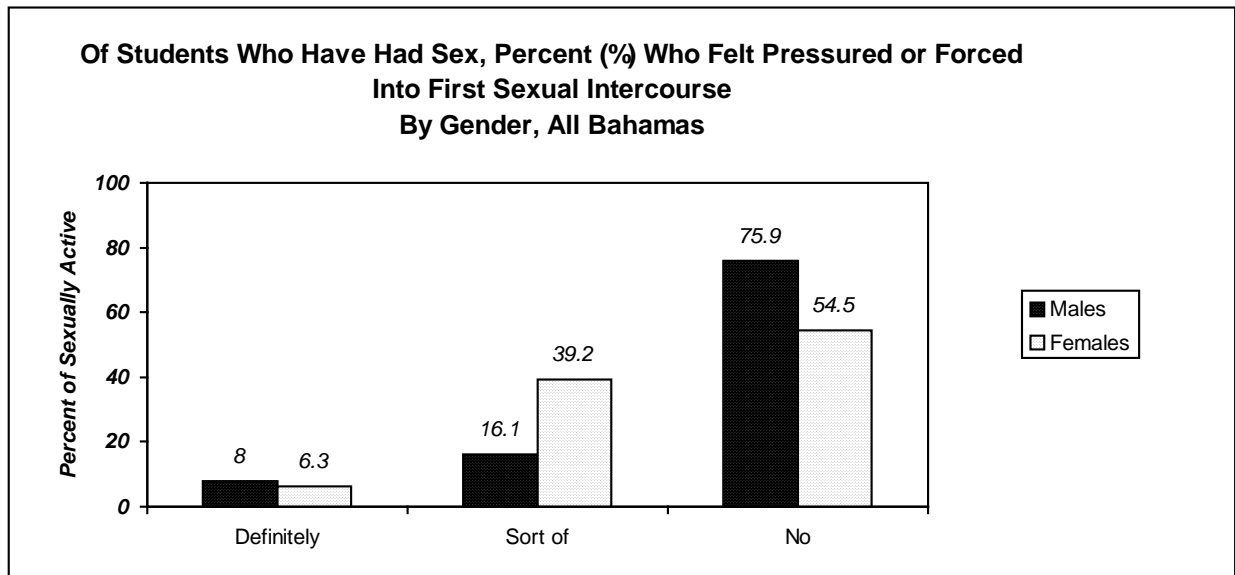


FIGURE 10-4

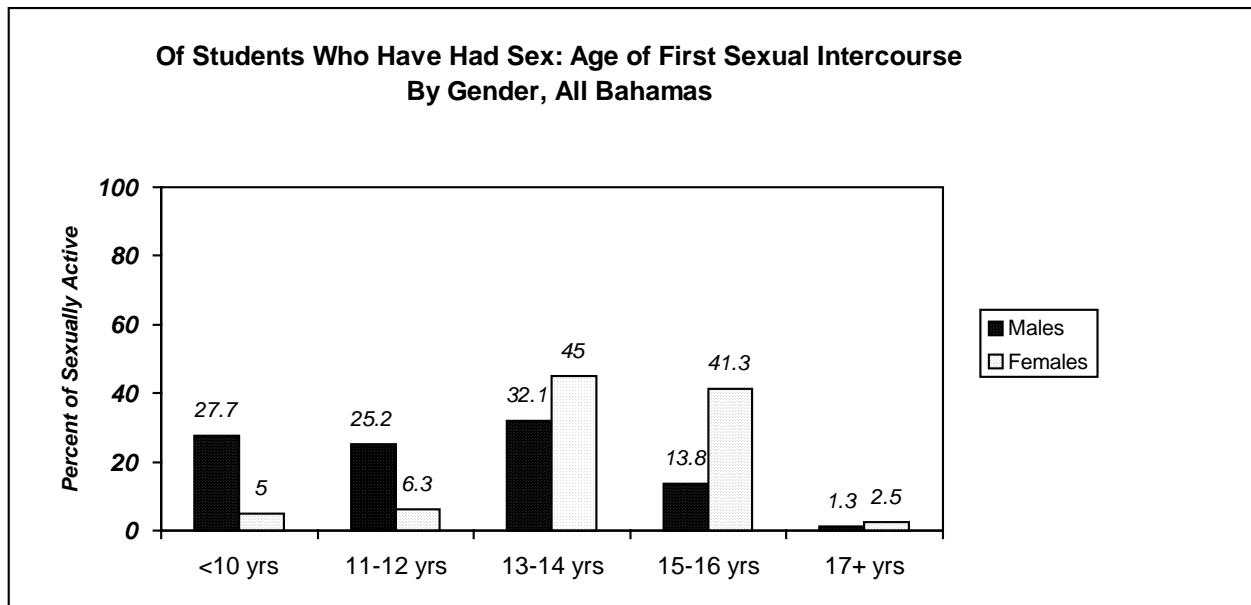


FIGURE 10-5

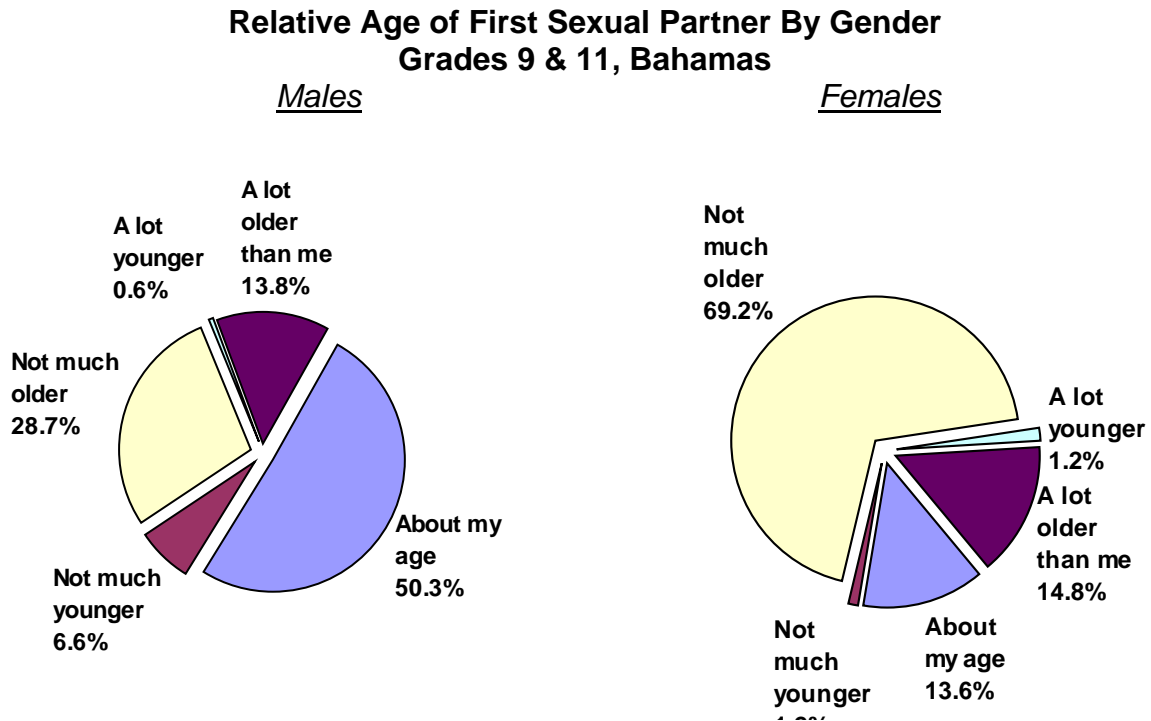


FIGURE 10-6

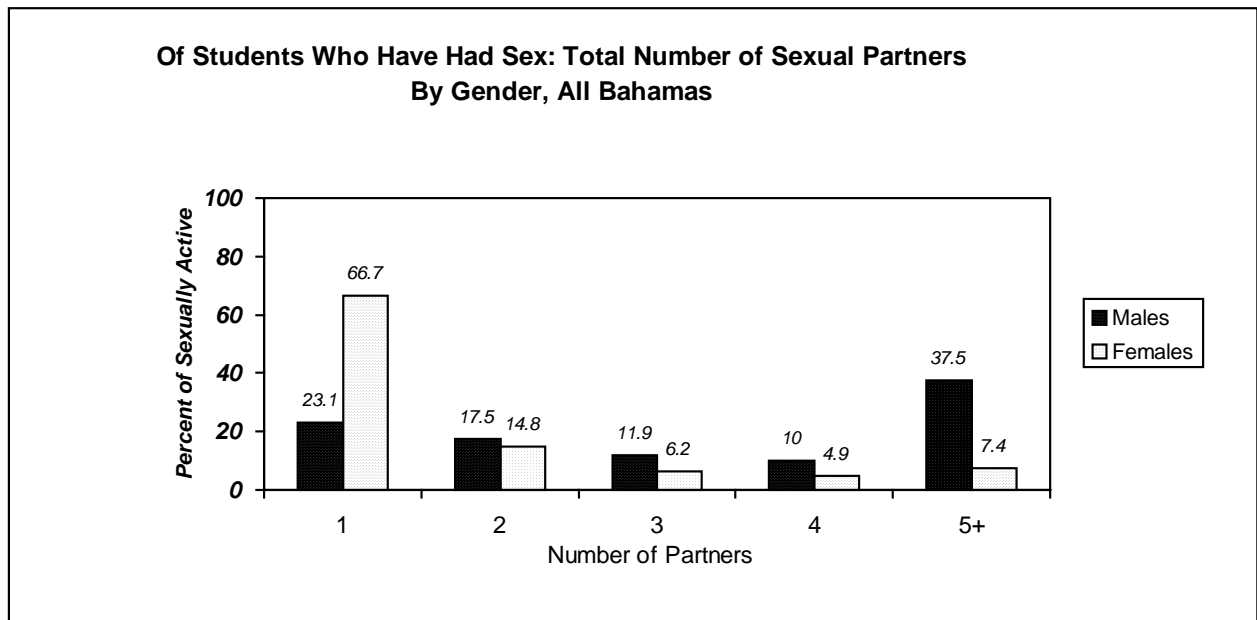


FIGURE 10-7

**Frequency of Birth Control Use By Respondents
And/Or Partner(s) Engaged In Sexual Intercourse
Grades 9 & 11, Bahamas**

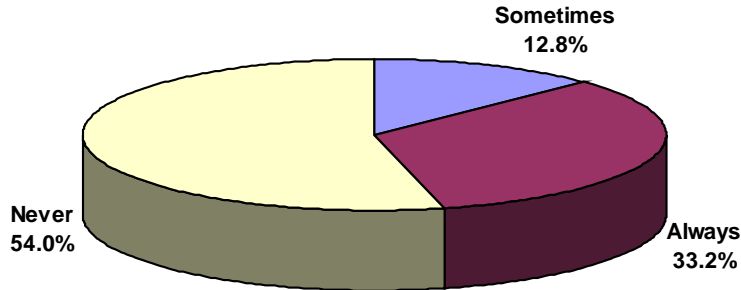
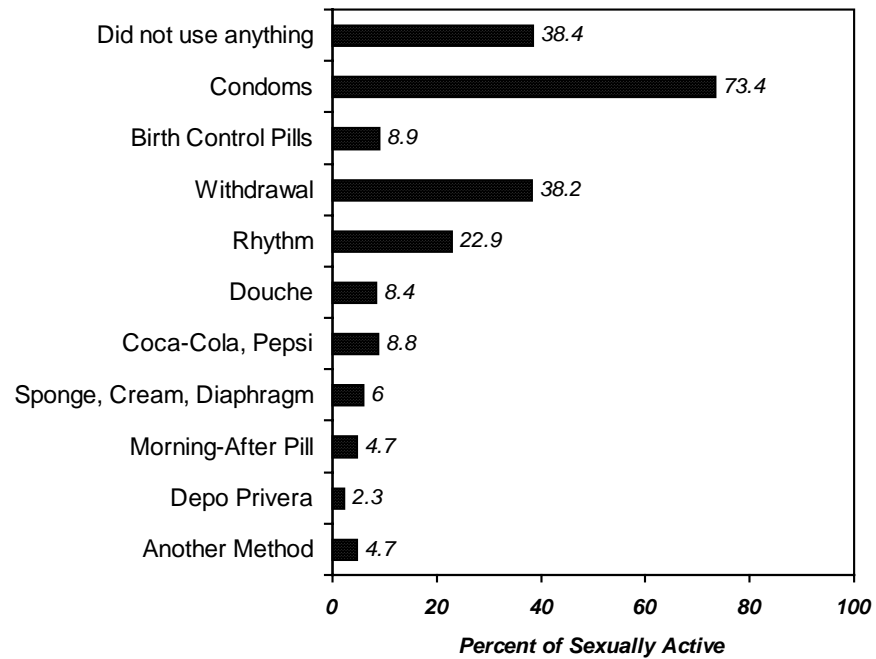


FIGURE 10-8

**Percent (%) Students Using Various Methods of Contraception
During Most Recent Sexual Encounter
All Bahamas**



11. Recommendations

11.1 Family

- Educational programs be designed to target the general population on the recognized benefits of proper family planning, showing that you care, on the need for the home environment to be free of stress, abuse, and causes of worry for the teens, and on the establishment of the kind of relationships whereby these adolescents can trust family members enough to discuss their problems;
- Stakeholders at the national and community levels, including adolescent groups, be identified and utilized in both the identification of root causes and possible solutions for problems.

11.2 Mental and Emotional Concerns

- A system is established that will facilitate the recognition of troubled kids, such as those with problems at home, in school, those showing signs of abuse, etc.;
- Appropriate treatment for such kids be made available, either within the school system or in other institutions that will not stigmatise the teens;

11.3 Community Concerns

- Policies and laws that will halt illegal activities be strengthened and enforced;
- A community policing programme, if not in existence within local communities, be established as a vehicle to strengthen the bonds between the police and the community, and to empower the community, etc.;
- Schools consider implementing programs that will result in the students learning skills that would make them more employable or that would allow them to earn a living. These can be offered as extracurricular activities.

11.4 Schools

- Continuing workshops be held for those working in the school system that will keep them abreast of those risk factors that may be related to performance, referral mechanisms that will allow for appropriate resolutions of problems, and for counsellors, to instil in them the need for complete confidentiality;
- Special education classes are made available for those with reading and other learning disabilities, either within the school or at a central referral centre;

- Sessions be held for parents, either in the schools or at their homes, which could serve to teach them how to be of more assistance to their children.

11.5 Health

- If not yet established, a school health program should be introduced that focuses on expanding the school screening programme. This will allow for cross-sectional health assessments of the school-aged population and for impact evaluations of school-based health programs;
- Additionally, a comprehensive adolescent health program should be considered that specifically addresses the health needs of this group;
- School-based Health and Family Life programs must provide nutrition education, stressing or continuing to emphasize the importance of exercise, getting sufficient rest, and a healthy diet, whereby the students can avoid the need for diet drugs etc. To accomplish this, however, parents will also have to be involved;
- Students should also be encouraged to drink more fresh milk, eat more vegetables, and consume fewer sweets.

11.6 Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs

- Existing laws regarding the sale of alcohol to minors be enforced;
- Parents are educated about access to alcohol within the homes, excess drinking within the house and its impact on teens; the gateway phenomenon, etc.
- Anti-drug education must begin in the primary schools, with reinforcements continuing throughout the students' careers, and should also utilize the media to target the wider communities about the threat and the dangers to society;
- Sessions should incorporate, along with others, messages on the dangers of binge drinking, particularly alcohol poisoning, the link between health, behavioural and other problems and drug or alcohol use, and strengthen the students' decision-making skills.

11.7 Sexual Behaviour

- Sex education, if not available in the school system where young persons are already a captive audience, then it should be implemented. If it already is, then these programs should be monitored, evaluated and strengthened, if warranted.

- Students should be targeted from the primary level, with effective messages appropriate for their age level.
- For those who have abstained, messages should concentrate on methods of resisting and decision-making to avoid succumbing to pressure and being placed in positions where they can be forced.
- For those who are active, messages should concentrate on how to avoid pregnancy and acquiring sexually transmitted diseases by reducing the risks through the use of birth control, limiting the number of partners, etc. Additionally, girls must take responsibility for their own protection, and boys must learn how to accept “no”.
- Birth control must be accessible and should not be restricted to the point where the teens will prefer to do without rather than having to face the possibility of justifying their choices.
- If not available, a programme for pregnant girls should be established that would allow them to continue schooling during pregnancy in a comfortable environment.

11.8 Violence

- A qualitative survey be conducted to determine the reasons for weapon carrying both in and out of school;
- Programs be established for parents that stress the need for and appropriate methods of discipline, positive and negative reinforcement; etc.;
- Programs be established for teens that address decision making, the fact that actions have consequences, goal setting, conflict resolution, etc.;
- These lessons be strengthened with the establishment or further addition of organizations for teens that cater to their expressed desires or needs, and that will keep them involved;
- To instill in the teens that there are consequences, the establishment or enforcement of sanctions for acts of violence or other immoral or illegal acts.