

TITLE: Sexual Health Behaviors among High School Students with Disabilities

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: No

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Sexual health program developers; researchers

ABSTRACT: Context: Youth with disabilities have reported substantial unmet needs for sexual health information. However, little is known about current sexual health behaviors among adolescents with disabilities.

Aim: To describe sexual behaviors of Oregon youth with disabilities.

Approach: We analyzed cross-sectional data from the 2017 Oregon Healthy Teens (OHT) survey. OHT is an anonymous and voluntary survey conducted with 8th and 11th graders statewide to monitor the health and well-being of adolescents. The survey for 11th graders included six disability questions. We conducted survey-weighted cross-tabulations and regression analyses comparing sexual activity, number of sexual partners, alcohol use during sexual encounters, and condom use among 11th graders with and without disabilities.

Conclusions: Our findings revealed multiple sexual health risks among youth with disabilities. Compared to 11th graders without disabilities, a higher proportion of 11th graders with disabilities had had intercourse (47.9% vs. 37.8%, $p < .0001$). Youth with disabilities had significantly greater odds of having had 3 or more partners (OR=1.41, 95% CI=1.26-1.59), using alcohol the last time they had intercourse (OR=1.41, 95% CI=1.17-1.71), and engaging in condomless intercourse (OR=1.44, 95% CI=1.20-1.73).

Implications: Our findings highlight the importance of sexual health education for youth with disabilities, including an emphasis on safer sex behaviors.

OBJECTIVE(S): Describe differences between youth with and without disabilities in sexual activity and risky sexual behaviors

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