

A Look at Latinos

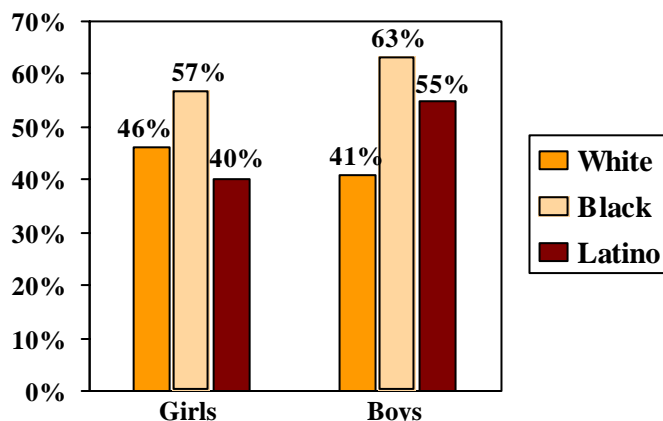


Latino Teen Sexual Behavior and Contraceptive Use

Over the past decade, teens in the United States have significantly changed their sexual behavior and patterns of contraceptive use. The proportion of sexually experienced teens has decreased dramatically, particularly among teen boys.¹ More teens also report that they are using contraception when they have sex.² However, since the teen pregnancy rate among Latinas is not decreasing as quickly as the overall national rate—more than half of all Latina girls experience a pregnancy before they turn 20—it is important to explore the sexual behavior and contraceptive use patterns of Latinos.³

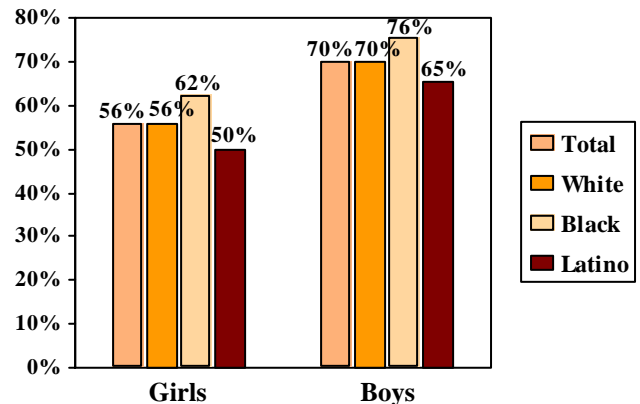
- Latina teen girls are less likely than non-Latina girls to have ever had sex, while Latino boys are more likely than non-Latino white boys and less likely than non-Latino black boys to have ever had sex (see Figure 1).⁴
- Between 1995 and 2002, the proportion of Latino teen boys who were sexually active decreased from 61% to 55% and the proportion of Latina teens who were sexually experienced decreased from 56% to 40%.⁵
- More than one-third of Latina teens report that their first sexual partner was four or more years older compared to about one-fifth of non-Latina white and non-Latina black teen girls.⁶
- Latino teens, both boys and girls, are less likely to use contraception at first sex compared to their non-Latino peers.⁷

Figure 1: Sexually Experienced Teens (Aged 15-19), by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 2002



Source: National Survey of Family Growth; Flanigan, C. et. al. See #4.

Figure 2: Condom Use at Last Sex Among High School Students (Aged 15-17), by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 2005



Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey; See #8.

- Among sexually active high school students, Latino teens are less likely than their counterparts to have used a condom the last time they had sex (see Figure 2).⁹
- Latina high school students are also less likely to report having used birth control pills the last time they had sex (9%) compared to their peers (27% of white teen girls and 11% of black teen girls).¹⁰

Like their non-Latino peers, a large proportion of Latino teens have had sex. However, Latino teens—both boys and girls—are less likely than their peers to report using contraception which puts them at increased risk of getting pregnant or causing a pregnancy. By better understanding the differences in sexual behavior and contraceptive use patterns between Latino teens and other teens in the United States, we can create more effective strategies to address this challenge.

SOURCES

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