

Introduction

This chapter examines how lifestyle choices and situations affect the health of individuals. Among the topics covered are physical activity, smoking, diet and related health problems, communicable diseases, and environmental conditions. Data are presented from the household needs assessment survey conducted by California State University, San Bernardino, as well as data from several other sources.

Household Needs Assessment Survey Results

Sexually Transmitted Infections

- When asked if they thought teens received enough education about STDs, HIV and pregnancy, 40.7% of respondents indicated that teens did not receive enough education.
- 26% of the survey respondents indicated that prostitution is a problem. The survey regions where prostitution was a greater concern was the central San Bernardino County survey area where 32.6% of the residents voiced concern and the Eastern Los Angeles County/West San Bernardino County survey region. Less than 10% of respondents in the East Valley and Morongo Basin survey regions indicated that prostitution was a major problem.
- Analysis of racial and ethnic groups reveal Hispanics (37.1%) and Asians (50%) as the most likely groups to consider prostitution a major problem.

Substance Abuse

- 19.1% of survey respondents indicated that someone in their family has a drug or alcohol abuse problem. This number was fairly consistent across all survey study regions.
- Among racial and ethnic groups, Blacks reported the highest rate of having family member with substance abuse problems (32.3%) followed distantly by Whites (18.3%) and Hispanics (17.2%). None of the Asian respondents indicated having family members with substance abuse problems.
- Substance abuse was fairly consistent across all income ranges.
- Smoking continues to be a central issue in family health. 30.5% of respondents indicated that a family member smokes too much. Responses ranged from 27.6% agreement in the east end of Los Angeles County/west end of San Bernardino County survey region to over 44.6% in the Morongo Basin survey region.

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- Among racial and ethnic groups, Asians most often indicated that someone in their family had a serious smoking problem (40%), followed by Blacks (39.7%), Whites (34.4%), and Hispanics (23.1%).
- Smoking problems were very consistent across income categories.

Food and Nutrition

- One of the basic survival needs for the family is food provision. In the telephone survey, respondents were asked if their family has enough food to eat every day. 4.4% of the survey respondents indicated that their family did not get enough food to eat every day.
- 8% of the respondents in the Central San Bernardino survey region and 6.2% of the respondents in the Morongo Basin region, 5.2% in the High Desert region, 3.4% in the East Valley, and 2.8% in the Eastern Los Angeles/West San Bernardino County region indicated that their family did not get enough food to eat.
- The racial and ethnic group with the highest percentage of families not getting enough food to eat was Blacks (9.3%), followed by Hispanics (6.8%), and Whites (2.5%). No Asian respondents indicated that their family did not get enough to eat.
- Survey respondents were also asked if their children received healthy meals and snacks at home. Only 1.9% of respondents indicated that their children did not.

Indicators

Food and Nutrition

- A major risk factor in the development of heart disease and several other chronic conditions is the type of diet consumed by the individual.
- According to the CHIS, 53.3% of San Bernardino county residents and 49.6% of Los Angeles County residents stated that they eat less than five servings of fruit or vegetables daily (CHIS, 2002).
- During 2002-2003, 50.8% of children in San Bernardino County Schools received free and reduced price meals. Of the Los Angeles County school districts in the study area only Pomona had an above average rate (63.9%) of students who received free or reduced meals. The California statewide average for students receiving free and reduced meals is 48.7%.
- Obesity is the second leading preventable cause of chronic disease and premature death in the United States. It can shorten a woman's life by seven years and a man's life by six years.

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- Obesity is a chronic disease that encompasses genetic, cultural, social, metabolic, physical, behavioral, and psychological aspects of the individual and the family. (NANA, 2003).
- Over 36.3% of adults in San Bernardino County are considered overweight and another 23.4% are considered obese with a Body Mass Index of 30.0 or higher. In Los Angeles County 36.1% are overweight and 19.4% are obese (CHIS, 2002).
- The California Food Policy Advocates 2002 “Profile of Poverty, Hunger & Food Assistance” indicates that 13.7% of children in San Bernardino County are obese, which is just above the California statewide figure of 13.4%. (California Food Policy Advocates, 2002) Furthermore, 33% of San Bernardino County public school fifth, seventh, and ninth graders did not meet the “Health Fitness Zone” requirements for the body composition (percent fat and body mass index) component of the California Physical Fitness test. (DataQuest, 2003)
- Teenage and young adult autopsy studies revealed that one in ten had advanced fibrous plaque in their arteries and nearly every subject had fatty streaks in their arteries (PDAY, 1993).
- In the United States, obesity rates among adults increased by 75% between 1991 and 2001. Obesity rates for children and teens have doubled in the past 20 years. California ranks 30th with adult obesity topping 17.9%.
- One of the complications of obesity is diabetes. Rates for Type 2 diabetes (which is due to obesity and poor nutrition) have increased over 60% in the past decade (NANA, 2003).
- According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, only 12% of Americans eat a healthy diet that meets the minimum requirements of daily federal regulations (Bowman, 1998).

Physical Activity

- Regular physical activity is a preventive measure for the onset of chronic diseases and debilitating conditions.
- Regular activity not only helps to prevent obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and colon cancer, it also adds three years to the life span of a 40 year old adult (NANA, 2003).
- Physical activity levels are a risk factor in the development of many of the chronic diseases affecting residents in the Inland Empire. San Bernardino County residents were asked to rate their activity level in the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS). Almost 28% stated that they do no vigorous or moderate activity at all. (CHIS, 2002)
- The sedentary lifestyle is more than likely instilled at a young age in the Inland Empire. According to the California Department of Education only 22.3% of San Bernardino County’s fifth graders passed the state mandated physical fitness tests. By seventh grade the passing rate decreased to 21.3% and by ninth grade,

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only 19.1% of the high school students passed the physical fitness test (CDE, 2003).

Smoking

- Cigarette smoking has been identified as the most important source of preventable morbidity and premature mortality worldwide. Smoking is responsible for approximately one in five deaths in the United States. (American Lung Association (ALA, 2003).
- In the United States over 6.4 million children will shorten their life expectancy from smoking-related disease, if current smoking trends continue unabated (ALA, 2003).
- Nationally, annual health care costs related to smoking total over \$150 billion dollars. Annual advertising costs to promote and market cigarettes have averaged \$8.2 billion dollars over the past three years (ALA, 2003).
- San Bernardino County has the highest rate of coronary heart disease of all 58 California Counties. Furthermore, heart disease is the number one cause of death in San Bernardino County. In a recent survey, 23.3% of the County's residents stated that they had been diagnosed with high blood pressure and 7.1% had been diagnosed with heart disease. Over 32.8% of those diagnoses with either condition were also found to have high serum cholesterol levels (CHIS, 2002).
- According to a recent study, children experiencing higher dental cavities have been linked to second hand smoke and cotinine, which is a by-product of nicotine (JAMA, 2003).
- Between 1995 and 1999, smoking was a major factor in 124,813 deaths from lung cancer, 81,976 deaths from coronary heart disease, and 64,735 deaths from chronic airway obstruction. "Adult deaths in California were 262 persons for every 100,000 people in the state. Heavy smoking is more prevalent among men, Whites, non-Hispanics, those with less than or equal to 12 years of education, and among people 45-64 years of age." Current California cigarette smoking prevalence for adults is 17.2%, 21.6% for teens in grades 9-12, and 6.7% for children in grades 6-8. In 2001, 17.5% of teens aged 15-19 smoked while pregnant. "Of all races, Native American women have the highest rate of smoking during pregnancy (19.9%)" (ALA, 2003).
- According to the CHIS at least 225,000 San Bernardino residents are current smokers and 32% (72,000) smoke at least 20 or more cigarettes per day (CHIS, 2002).
- According to the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) 54.5% of the San Bernardino County respondents and 56.0% of Los Angeles County respondents had at least one drink of an alcoholic beverage within one month of the survey.

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- 31.% of adults in San Bernardino County and 25.7% of adults in Los Angeles County drank at least five drinks at a time sometime during the prior month (CHIS, 2002).
- In addition, 17.2% of San Bernardino County's teenagers and 18.1% of Los Angeles County's teenagers acknowledge that they have ridden in a car with a driver who has had alcohol (CHIS, 2002).

Environmental Conditions

- The 2002 American Lung Association's State of the Air reports that San Bernardino County has the worst air quality in the nation.
- According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Toxics Release Inventory database, manufacturing plants released 1.9 million pounds of toxic chemicals in the environment in San Bernardino County in 2000. Over 1.3 million pounds of these toxic chemicals were released into the air.
- In 2001, San Bernardino County was designated a non-attainment area for ozone, based on ambient air quality standards. (Alexis et al, 2002)
- Western San Bernardino County also has non-attainment status for ozone, based on federal one-hour and eight-hour air quality standards in 2001. (Alexis et al, 2002)
- San Bernardino County was classified as a non-attainment area by both state and federal standards, based on particulate matter concentrations in 2001. (Alexis et al, 2002)
- San Bernardino County exceeded both state and federal standards for carbon monoxide emissions in 2001. (Alexis et al, 2002)

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- The incidence and rate of AIDS cases declined annually from 1995-1999. The rate of AIDS cases in San Bernardino County is below both the state and national average. (SB County, 2000)
- Current state and county prevention and education programs have helped to decrease the number of reportable cases of several diseases in the past three years. Hepatitis A cases have decreased by 73%, Hepatitis C by 33%, Campylobacteriosis by 22%, Giardiasis by 48%, Salmonellosis by 16%, Non-Gonococcal Urethritis by 39%, Pelvic Inflammatory Disease by 78%, Syphilis by 16%, and Tuberculosis by 39% (S.B. County, HSS, 2001).
- Communicable diseases on the rise include AIDS by 85%, Chlamydia by 16%, Gonorrhea by 29%, Viral Meningitis by 56%, Pertussis by 74%, Coccidioidomycosis by 32%, and Malaria by 58% (S.B. County, HSS, 2001).
- Since 1995 the San Bernardino County rates of early, primary and secondary syphilis have been on the decline, and are below the national and state averages. (SB County, 2000)

Conclusions

- Over half of San Bernardino County adults have an unhealthy weight or a higher than recommended body mass index.
- Type II diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and colon cancer are among the ramifications of obesity.
- Three of four 5th graders failed the physical fitness test, which increased to four of five by 9th grade.
- Many deaths in San Bernardino County, including those resulting from Type II diabetes, coronary heart disease and lung disease, are preventable.
- As a consequence of the poor air quality of San Bernardino County, asthma, especially in children, is on the rise.
- After several years of decreasing rates, STDs and HIV are now increasing.
- Although survey respondents report that their children have enough healthy food at home, about one fifth of San Bernardino County youth live in poverty and over half receive free or reduced meals at school.

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