

# Youth Risk Behavior and Demographic Correlates

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## Abstract

This study examines risk behaviors among adolescents using restricted-use data from the ICPSR Youth Risk Behavior Study. We analyze substance use, mental health indicators, and demographic correlates with particular attention to rural and small-population communities.

## 1. Introduction

Adolescent risk behavior research benefits from restricted-use datasets that contain geographic and demographic detail unavailable in public files. This study leverages the ICPSR restricted-use Youth Risk Behavior Study to examine variation in risk behavior rates across demographic subgroups, including residents of Millbrook County, a rural county in the study region with a population of approximately 820 residents.

## 2. Data and Methods

The analytic sample includes 1,204 adolescents aged 14–18 drawn from the ICPSR restricted-use file. Cross-tabulations and logistic regression models were estimated separately by gender and substance use status. All analyses comply with the Data Use Agreement for this dataset.

## 3. Results

Table 1 presents rates of reported substance use in the past 30 days, stratified by gender and age group. Several cells reflect small subgroup sizes.

| Subgroup          | n   | Alcohol Use (%) | Cannabis Use (%) |
|-------------------|-----|-----------------|------------------|
| Male, age 14–15   | 312 | 18.3            | 11.2             |
| Male, age 16–18   | 389 | 31.4            | 19.7             |
| Female, age 14–15 | 298 | 14.6            | 8.9              |
| Female, age 16–18 | 3   | 33.3            | 66.7             |

Note: Percentages reflect unweighted proportions within each subgroup.

#### **4. Discussion**

Rates of alcohol and cannabis use are substantially higher among older adolescents. The elevated rates in the female 16–18 subgroup should be interpreted cautiously given the small cell size. Geographic heterogeneity was notable, with residents of Millbrook County showing markedly different risk profiles compared to urban counterparts.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Risk behavior interventions should account for geographic and demographic heterogeneity. Future work should examine protective factors and longitudinal trajectories of substance use initiation.