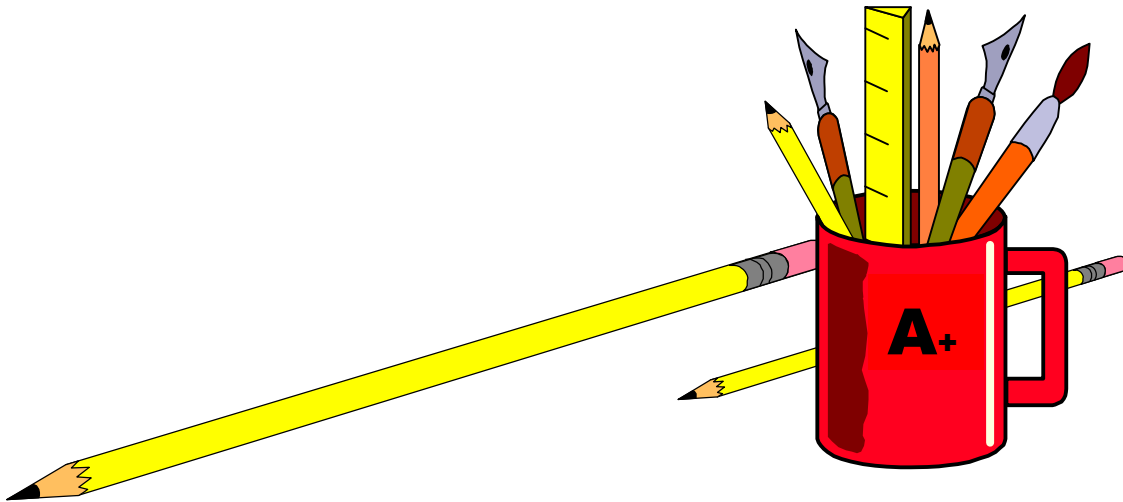


GEORGIA YOUTH TOBACCO SURVEY

Summary Report
1999



Acknowledgements

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Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey 1999 Summary Report Volume 1 No. 1

Introduction

Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of mortality in the United States (1). Tobacco consumption is responsible for more than 400,000 deaths each year, or one in every five deaths (2). In addition to this health burden, the national economic burden of tobacco use is more than \$50 billion in medical expenditures and another \$50 billion in indirect costs (3). The risk for a smoking-attributable disease increases the earlier in life smoking begins (4). Tobacco remains popular among adolescents and young adults, the life stage(s) at which nearly all smoking starts(5), despite a substantial reduction in smoking prevalence in the last 30 years.

The Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) is intended to enhance the capacity of organizations and community groups to design, implement, and evaluate tobacco use prevention and reduction programs. The GYTS includes: prevalence of cigarette, smokeless tobacco and cigar use; knowledge and attitudes; media and advertising; minors' access; school curriculum; environmental tobacco smoke (ETS); and cessation.

The Georgia Division of Public Health's Tobacco Use Prevention Program, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and various other states jointly developed the Youth Tobacco Survey instrument. Implementation of the 1999 Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey was a collaborative effort of the Georgia Division of Public Health, Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Division of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse, Regional Prevention Specialists, Georgia Public Health Districts, Georgia school districts, and volunteers from local community-based organizations. Public schools containing grades 6, 7, or 8 and grades 9-12 were included in the sampling frame. A multi-staged sample design was used to produce a representative sample of students in both the middle and high school categories.

The survey was administered from April-June 1999 to approximately 2,000 students attending middle and high schools throughout the state. Both middle and high school students completed the same 66-question survey instrument, which took one class period to complete (approximately 50 minutes). The response rates for public middle schools and students were **78%** and **85%**, respectively; response rates for public high schools and students were **48%** and **91%**, respectively; for an overall response rate of **66%** for middle schools and **44%** for high schools.

RESULTS

Among the middle school students, approximately 1,300 students completed usable survey instruments. The dominant life stage for this population was pre-adolescent or ≤ 13 years of age (**68%**) and the remaining **32%** were between the ages of 14-16. The proportions of males (**49%**) to females (**51%**) were relatively equivalent. The distribution of grades six, seven, and eight was approximately **30%**, **25%**, and **45%**, respectively. The ethnic/racial distribution among this group was white (**47%**), black (**39%**), and Hispanic (**6.0%**) (*figure 1*).

Among the high school student population, the frequency of the variables of age, gender, and race were distributed in a similar pattern. The results of the survey of high school students are not included in this report because the overall response rate of high school students (**44%**) is too low for statewide generalization. The low overall response rate for high school students stemmed from the low participation rate of high schools (**48%**). Participation by students in participating high schools was quite good (**91%**).

Definition of Terms

Lifetime cigarette smokers: Students who reported having ever smoked a cigarette(s), even one or two puffs.

Current cigarette, smokeless tobacco, and cigar user: Students who reported product use on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey.

Frequent cigarette, smokeless tobacco, and cigar user: Students who reported product use on twenty or more of the 30 days preceding the survey.

Daily cigarette, smokeless tobacco, and cigar user: Students who reported product use on one or more times each day of the 30 days preceding the survey.

Lifetime tobacco use: Students who reported ever having used cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or cigars.

Any current tobacco use: Students who reported having used any tobacco product on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey.

White: Those students who identified themselves as "White non-Hispanic"

Black: Those students who identified themselves as "African-American non-Hispanic"

Hispanic: Denotes persons of Hispanic ethnicity regardless of race.

Prevalence of Cigarette Smoking

In 1999, among middle school students, the prevalences of lifetime, current, and frequent cigarette use were **49%**, **14%**, and **4%**, respectively. The prevalence of lifetime smoking was **51%** among male students and **47%** among female students; and higher for students in grade eight (**59%**) than students in grade six (**36%**).

Students in grade seven reported a prevalence of **51%**. Among ethnic/racial groups, Hispanic students (**63%**) had a statistically higher prevalence of lifetime smoking compared to black students (**46%**). The prevalence for white students was **49%** (*figure 2*). The prevalence of current cigarette smoking was **14%** for males, females, and the overall population (*figure 3*). In the final category, **4%** of Georgia middle school students reported being frequent smokers. The prevalence for male students was **4%** and for females **3%**.

Prevalence of Smokeless Tobacco Use

Among Georgia middle school students, the overall prevalence of lifetime smokeless tobacco use was **12%**. The prevalence among males (**18%**) was higher than females (**6%**). The prevalences among students in grades six, seven, and eight were **9%**, **12%**, and **15%**, respectively. The reported prevalence among white students (**15%**) was statistically higher compared to black students (**6%**). Hispanic students reported a prevalence of **21%** (*figure 4*). The total current smokeless tobacco use prevalence was **4%** for middle school students, with males reporting a **7%** prevalence of current smokeless tobacco use and females reporting a prevalence of **2%**.

Prevalence of Cigar Smoking

The overall lifetime prevalence of cigar use was **30%**. The reported lifetime prevalence for male students (**38%**) was significantly higher than female students (**21%**). The prevalences among students in grade six, seven, and eight were **21%**, **30%**, and **39%** respectively. Students in grade eight were significantly more likely to have experimented with cigar use compared to students in grade six. Statistically, Hispanic students (**43%**) had a higher prevalence of lifetime cigar use compared to that of white students (**28%**). Black students reported a prevalence of **30%** (*figure 5*). The overall prevalence of current cigar smoking among Georgia middle school students was **8%**. The prevalence of current cigar smoking was lower among female students (**5%**), than male students (**11%**).

Prevalence of Any Tobacco Use

The overall lifetime prevalence of any tobacco use was **55%**. The reported lifetime prevalence by male students was **59%** and **50%** for female students. Students in grade six, seven, and eight reported prevalences of **43%**, **57%**, and **65%**, respectively. Students in grade eight were significantly more likely to have used tobacco compared to those in grade six. Hispanic middle school students reported a prevalence of **68%** for lifetime usage of tobacco and white students (**54%**) and black students (**53%**) reported similar prevalences (*figure 6*). The overall prevalence of current tobacco use among Georgia middle school students was **19%**. Male students reported a prevalence of **21%** and female students reported a prevalence of **16%**.

DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis offered by the pilot 1999 GYTS provides a baseline view of the tobacco consumption behavior among Georgia's middle school adolescents. The current smoking prevalence among Georgia eighth grade students (**21%**) is comparable to a recent national survey of the same grade (**17%**) (6). Given that three quarters of adult smokers became daily smokers before age 20 (7), the fact that one out of every five Georgia eighth grade students is already a current smoker suggests that Georgia will continue to suffer a high prevalence of cigarette smoking and its attendant health burdens. Additionally, the lifetime (**55%**) and current (**19%**) prevalences of tobacco use among middle school students have potential implications for the future overall rates of tobacco use among Georgia's young adult and adult populations. These data from the GYTS indicate that greater efforts are needed to prevent the onset of tobacco use by Georgia youth.

Figure 1
Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey 1999
Distribution of Participants by Sex, Age, Grade, and Race/Ethnicity

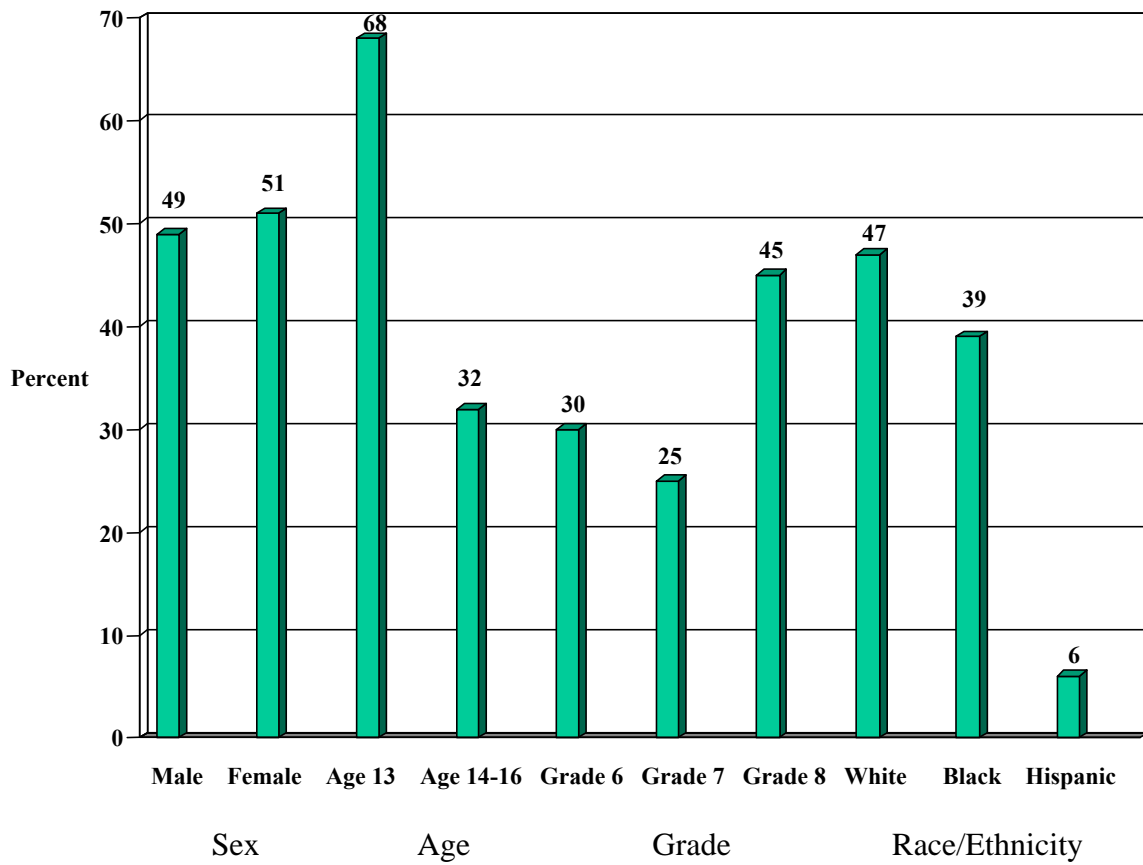


Figure 2
 Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey
 Prevalence of Lifetime* Cigarette Use Among Middle School Students
 *Lifetime Use: Students who reported having ever smoked a cigarette(s), even one or two puffs.

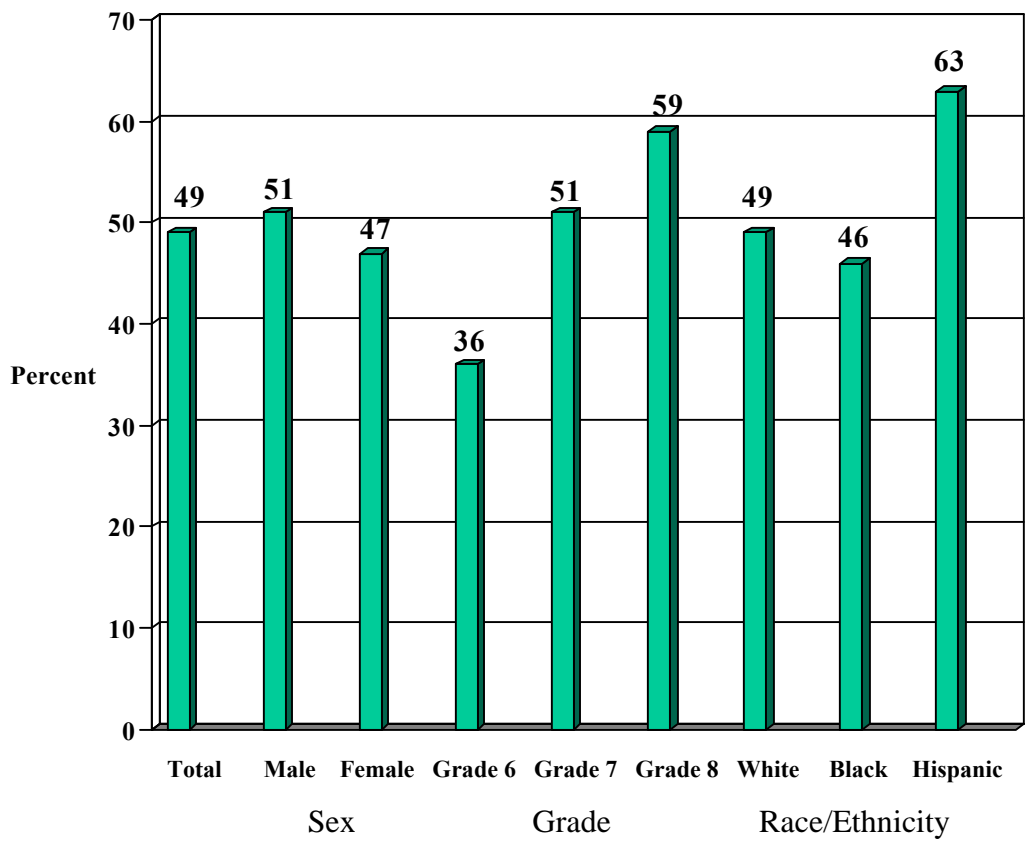


Figure 3
Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey 1999
Prevalence of Current* Cigarette Use Among Middle School Students
*Current Use: Students who reported product use on ≥ 1 of the 30 days preceding the survey.

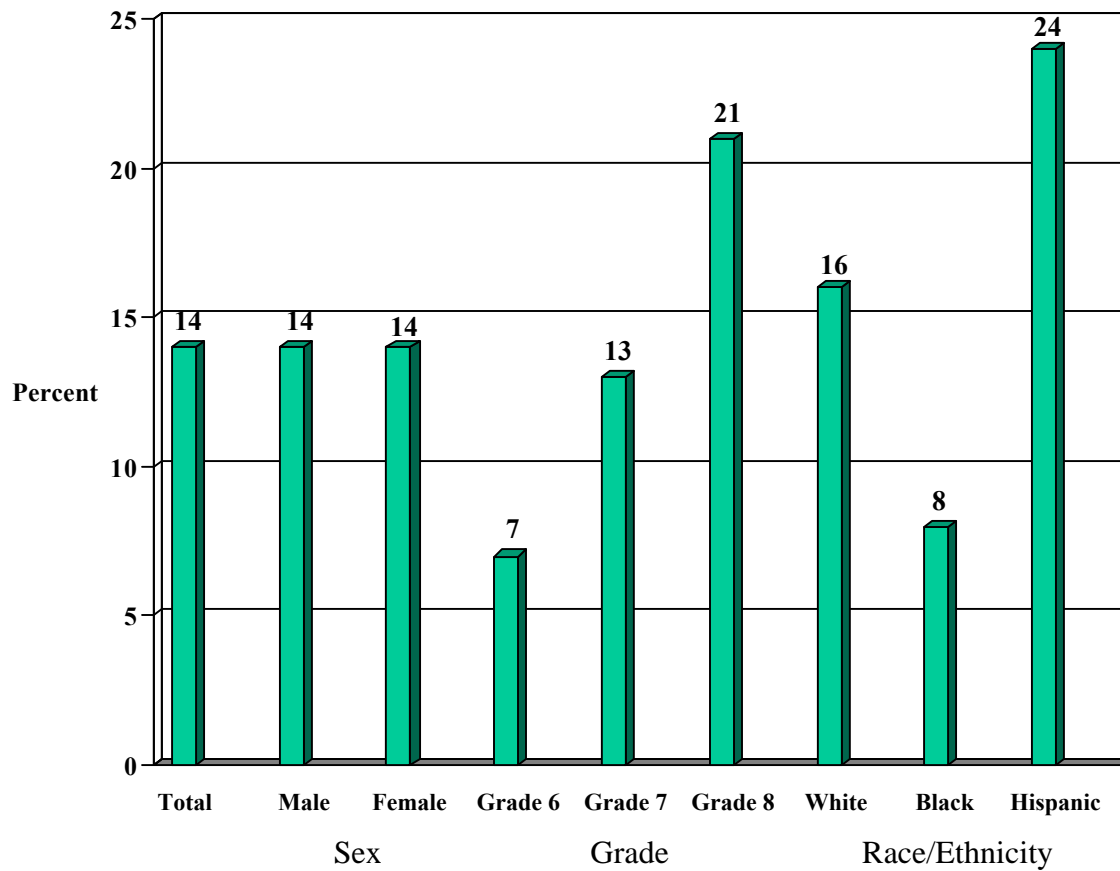


Figure 4
 Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey 1999
 Prevalence of Lifetime* Smokeless Tobacco Use Among Middle School Students
 *Lifetime Use: Students who reported having ever used a smokeless tobacco product.

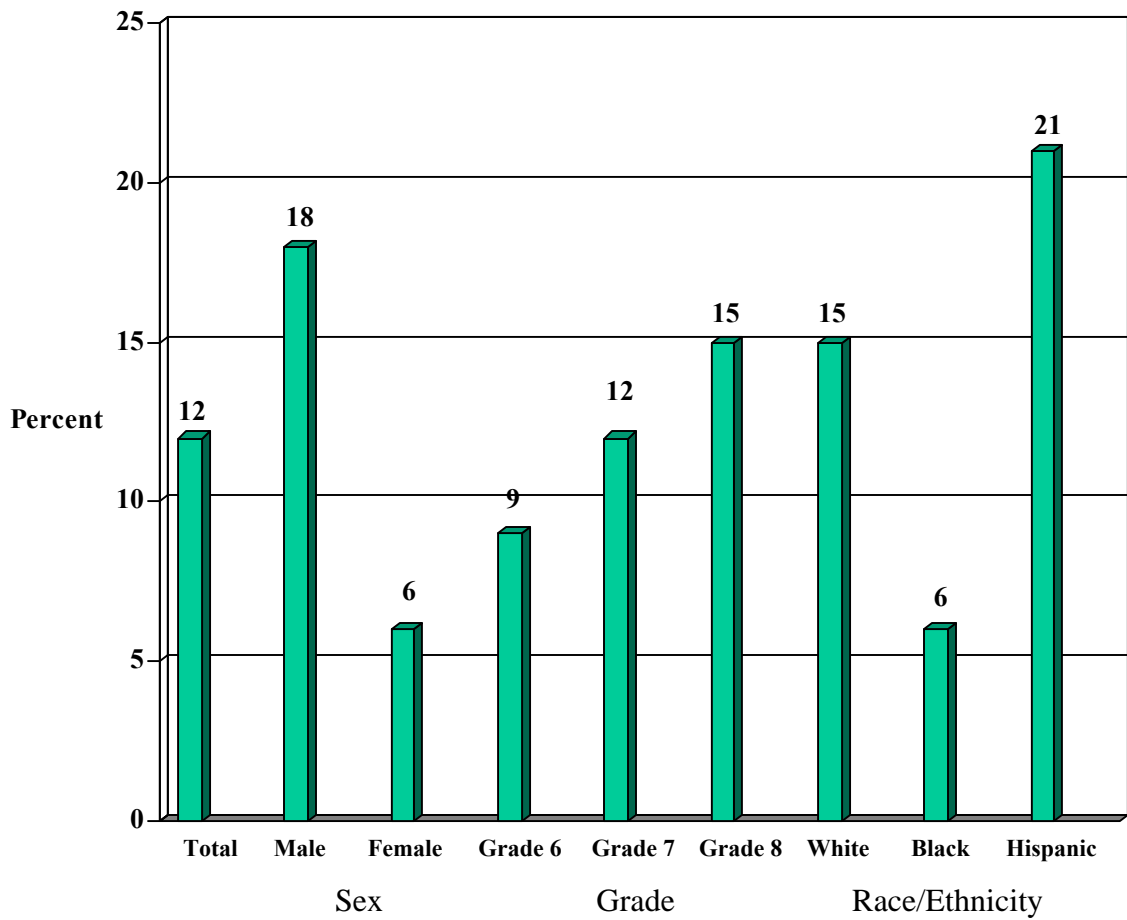


Figure 5
Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey 1999
Prevalence of Lifetime* Cigar Use Among Middle School Students
*Lifetime Use: Students who reported having ever smoked a cigar(s), even one or two puffs.

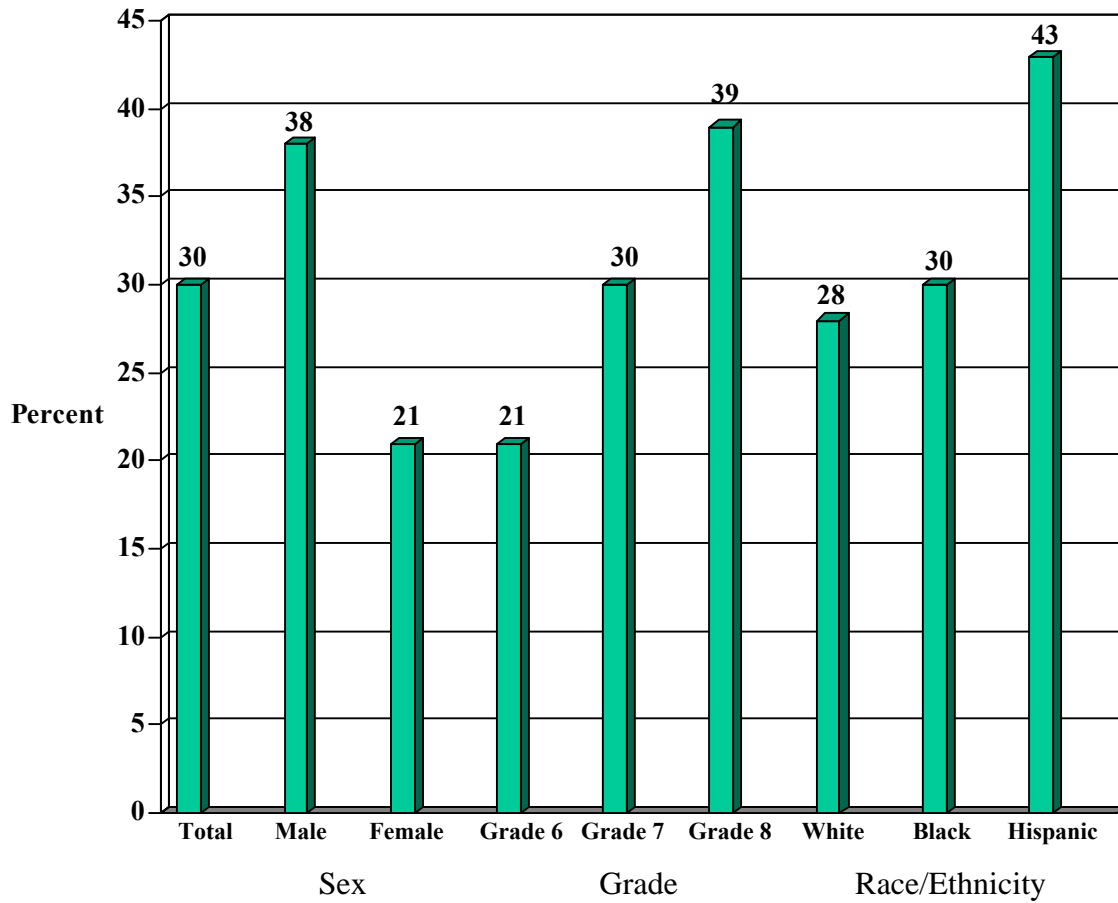
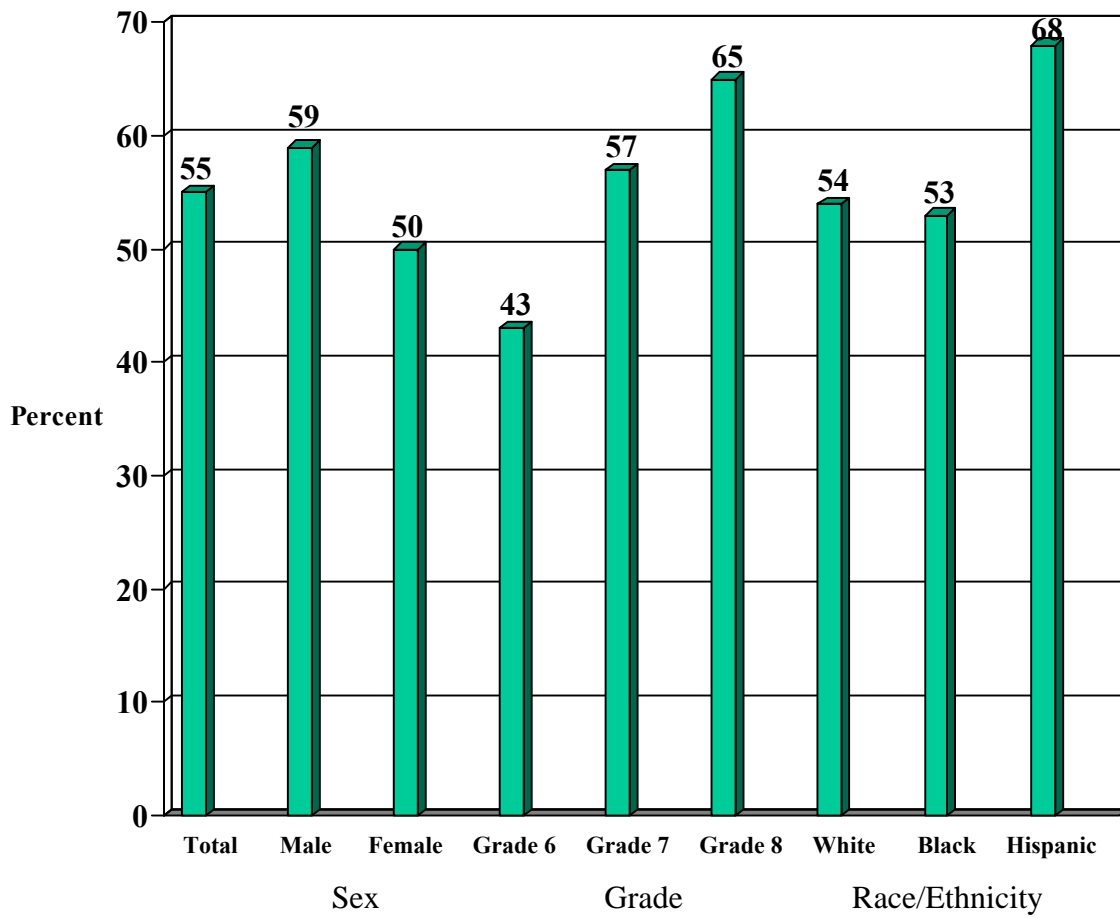


Figure 6
Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey 1999
Prevalence of Lifetime* Tobacco Use Among Middle School Students
*Lifetime Use: Students that reported having ever used cigarettes, cigars or smokeless tobacco.



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