

# **Lexington High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey**

## **2007 Results**

# Background on Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey

- Department of Education administers the Youth Risk Survey in selected high schools every other year.
- Lexington has worked with researchers from Northeastern University to conduct an analysis of YRBS since 1995.
- Survey focuses on the major risk behaviors that threaten the health and safety of young people
  - tobacco use,
  - alcohol and other drug use,
  - sexual behavior that might lead to unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease,
  - dietary behavior and physical activity, and
  - behaviors associated with intentional and unintentional injury.
- Survey is anonymous

# **Demographics of 2007 YRBS (N=1,533)**

**Grade:** 25% in 9th, 26% in 10th, 25% in 11th,  
and 24% in 12th

**Gender:** 47% male, 52% female; 1% transgender

**Ethnicity:** 70% White, 4% Black, 3%  
Hispanic/Latino, 19% Asian, 4% Other

**Residence:** 95% live in Lexington, 2.8% live in  
Boston

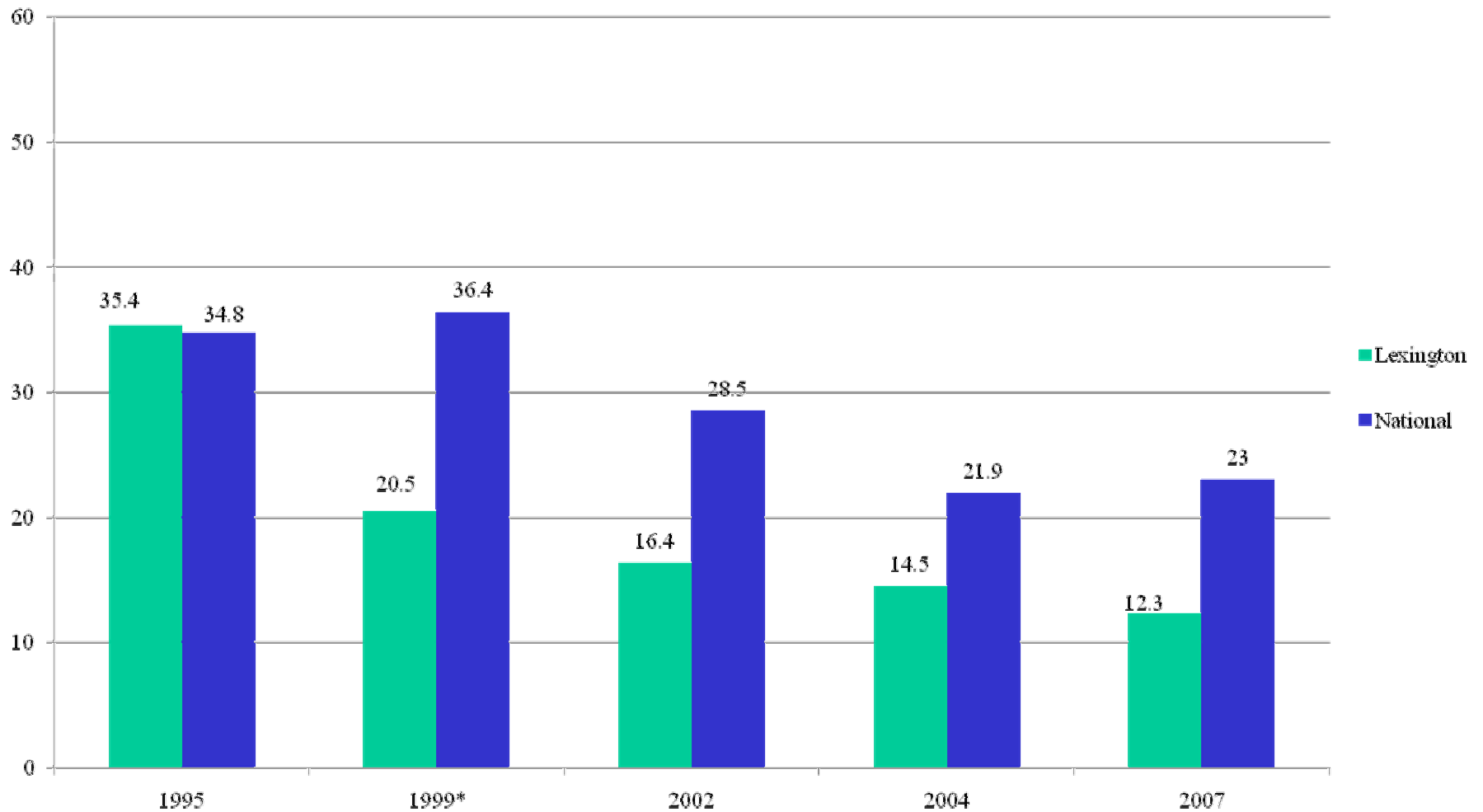
# Patterns of Student Cigarette Use

- In 2007, 12.3% of all students report smoking cigarette in past 30 days
  - *Lower than the 21% state average or 35.8% national average*
- Active smokers: 3.1% males and 1.9% females reported smoking 20-30 days during the past month
- Males start smoking earlier than females (4.4% males vs. 1.9% females started smoking before age 13)

# Cigarette Smoking Trends Over Time

## Lexington and National

*(smoked in last 30 days)*



# Patterns of Marijuana Use

- 20% reported using marijuana in the past 30 days.
  - *Lower than the 26% state average*
  - Males are more likely to smoke marijuana than females (24.6% and 15% respectively – *gender gap widening*)
  - Almost twice as many students used marijuana over the past 30 days as smoked cigarettes
- Marijuana use has gone down over the past ten years (33% in 1995 only 20% in 2007)
  - Closer to national average

# Marijuana Use Over Time

## Lexington and National

*(smoked in last 30 days)*



# Patters of Other Drug Use

- In 2007 3.6% reported using cocaine, 4% used speed in the their lifetime.
- Serious drug use has gone down over time
  - In 1995 20.6% used any (LSD, ecstasy, heroin, cocaine etc.) at least once compared to only 14% in 2007.
  - In 1995, 14.3% reported they had sniffed glue/aerosol in their life compared to only 8% in 2007.
- In 2007 6.4% reported using OTCs to get high and 7.4% used Rx to get high in their lifetime.



# Patterns of Student Drinking

- In 2007, 43% of students reported having at least one drink in the past 30 days
  - Down from 48.5% in 2004
  - Now under the 47.8% state average, *right at the 43% national average*
- Gender differences in drinking remain
  - 46.4% of males have had one drink in past 30 days
  - 38.2% of females have had one drink in past 30 days
- 25% of students reported binge drinking (more than 5 drinks in a row) in the past 30 days
  - Lower than 26.5% statewide average, down from 27% in 2004

# Student Drinking Over Time

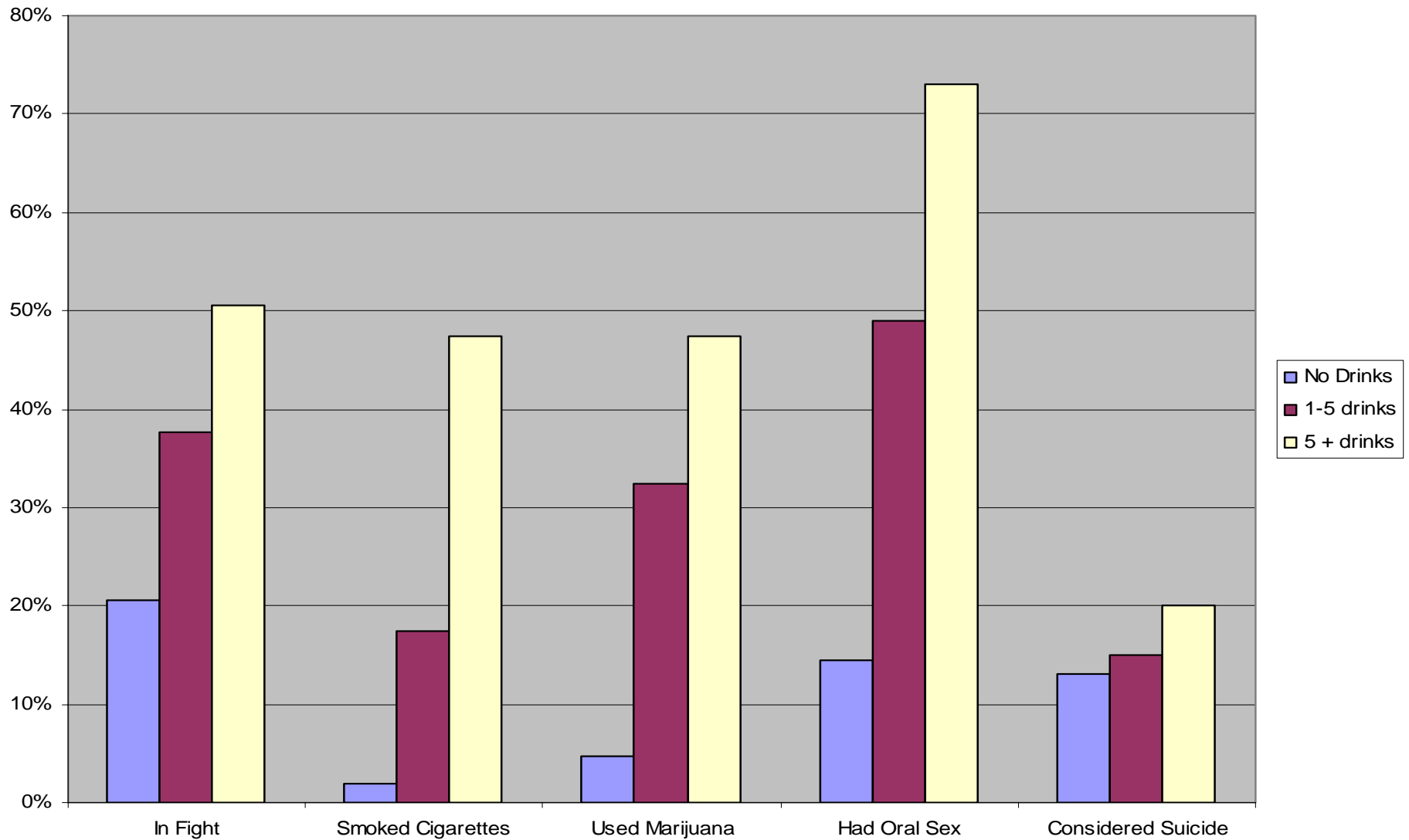
## Lexington and National

*(drank in last 30 days)*



Students who have more than 1  
drink in the last 30 days are more  
likely to engage in other risky  
behavior

# Drinking and Risky Behavior



# Sexual Activity

- 21% of students report having sexual intercourse
  - 7% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 14% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 27% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 34% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders
- Trends of students having sexual intercourse declined slightly since 1995.
  - Much lower than 45% statewide average
- Proportion of sexually active student who report using a condom if sexually active has increased from 66% to 73% since 1995.

# Sexual Activity – Oral Sex

- 32% of students report having oral sex
  - 14% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 25% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 30% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 46% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders
- National poll of 13-16 year olds (2004) found 13% reported having oral sex
- Of those who have had oral sex, 20% report having more than 4 partners (*down from 27 in 2004*)
- Strong relationship between alcohol use and oral sex:
  - 14% of students who report **no** alcohol in last 30 days have had oral sex
  - Of students who report drinking on 1-5 days 49% had oral sex
  - Of students who drank more than 5 days in last 30 days 73% had oral sex

# Stress

- **Students continue to feel a great deal of stress associated with academics**
  - 96% of students report classes cause some stress
    - 12% report classes cause “extreme stress”
    - 39% report classes cause “a lot of stress”
  - 89% report their stress has increased since starting high school
  - 78% report the atmosphere in Lexington High School encourages academic competition (agree and strongly agree)
  - 76% report the atmosphere in the town of Lexington encourages academic competition (agree and strongly agree)
  - 64% feel they are in academic competition with their friends (up from 60% in 2004)

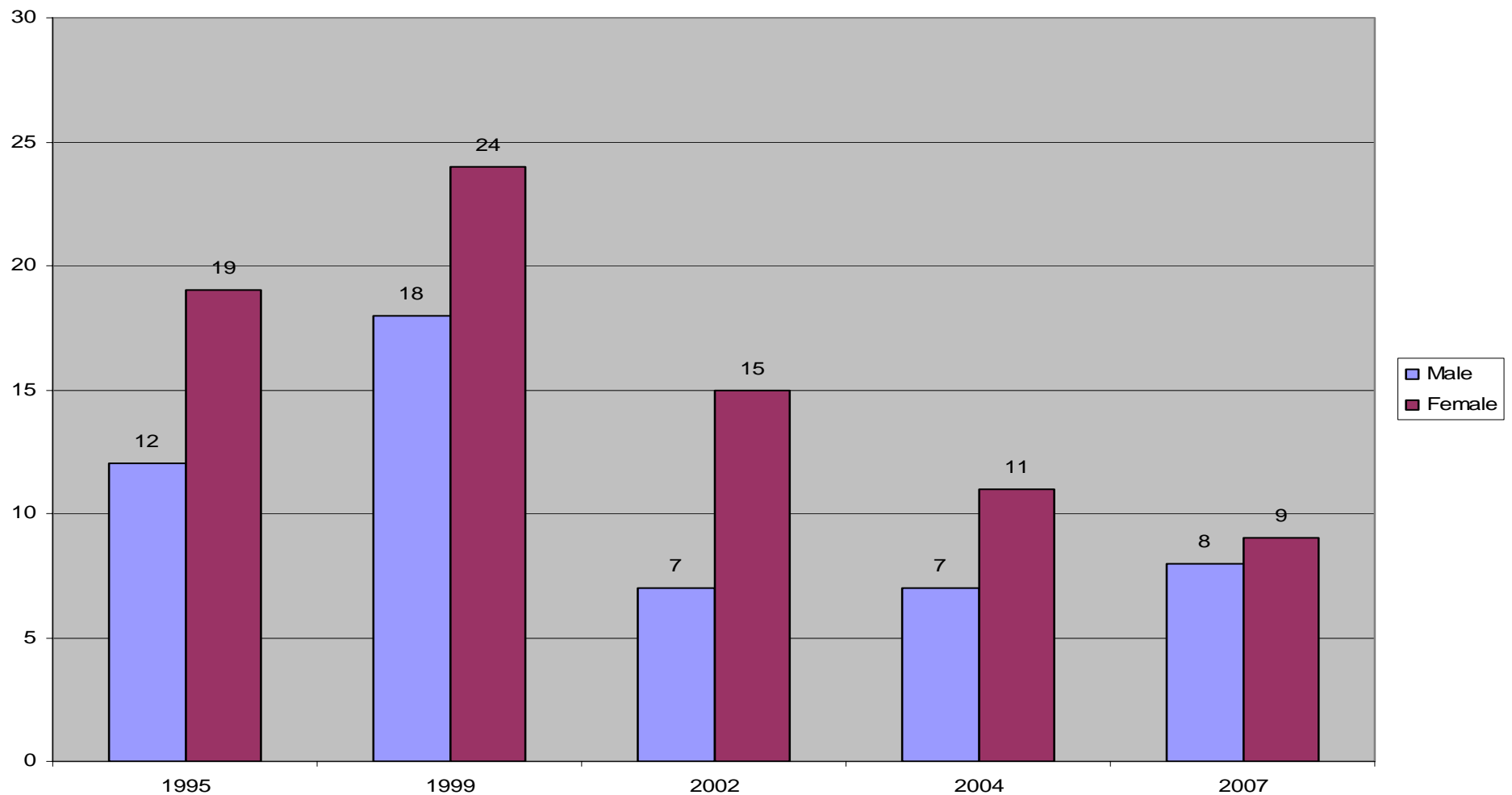
# Stress, Continued

- Academic stress highly correlated with other problems and risky behavior
  - 38% of extremely stressed kids report considering suicide
  - Extremely stressed students much more likely to engage in self-injury and more likely to be in risky sexual activity
- Gender impact of academic stress
  - Doing poorly on a test bothers young women more than young men (“bothered a lot” 46% women, 34% men)



# Progress Made to Reduce Suicide

**Made a Plan to Commit Suicide in Last Year**



# Conclusions

- Much progress over 10 years in area of suicide reduction, cigarette smoking and drug use
- Student drinking has been more resistant to change
  - Students who drink are much more likely to report engaging in other risky behaviors
- Stress continues to be a problem for students of LHS
  - Stress of LHS may contribute to risky behavior.
  - This atmosphere makes health programming particularly important

# Conclusions, continued

- Programs to reduce stress may be having an impact
  - Those who “strongly agree” that the atmosphere at LHS encourages competition decreased from 48% in 2002 to 35% in 2007
  - Students report dealing with stress by listening to music (29.8%) and exercising (25.2%)
- Health education can have a positive impact on student decision making
  - Students report they receive the most accurate information about sex from:
    - Health teachers (60%)
    - Parents (10%)
  - Parents and friends still most important in decisions about sex and other risky behavior
    - 84.5% depend on their family and friends to support them if they have problems