

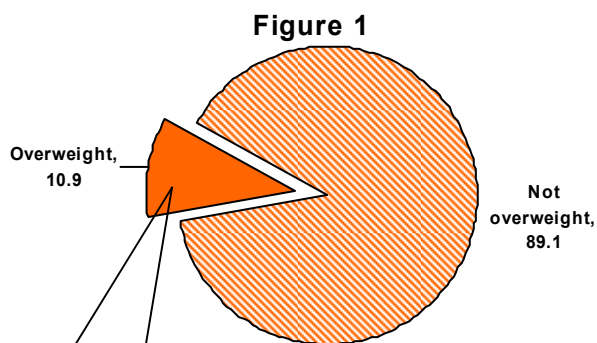
Unawareness of Being Overweight and Intention to Control Weight Among Florida Public High School Youth

Introduction: The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a self-administered, confidential, school-based survey of Florida public high school students in every odd-numbered year. Data from the 2005 YRBS were used in this report to estimate the prevalence of the unawareness of being overweight, and to monitor the behaviors taken or not taken to control body weight among students who were unaware of being physically overweight. The information presented here can be used by those running overweight/obesity prevention programs to better identify students who are unaware of being overweight as an important target group for interventions.

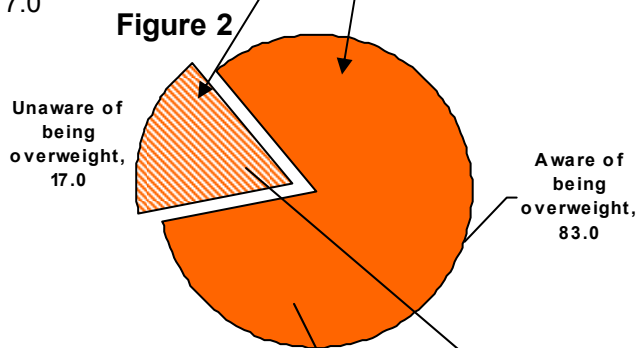
Definition: 1) **Physically overweight** is defined as a body mass index (BMI) is greater than or equal to the 95th percentile in weight distribution among a reference population of students having the same age and gender; 2) Survey respondents who are physically overweight are defined as **aware of being overweight** when they answer “slightly overweight” or “very overweight” to the question “How do you describe your weight?”; 3) **Sufficient moderate physical activity** is defined as engaging in activities that do not make one sweat or breathe hard for at least 30 minutes a day on five or more of the past seven days; 4) **Sufficient vigorous physical activity** is defined as engaging in activities that make one sweat or breathe hard for at least 20 minutes a day on three or more of the past seven days.

Results:

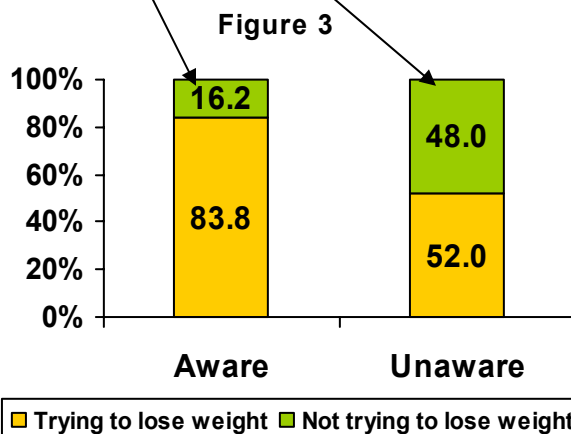
1. According to the 2005 Florida YRBS, 10.9 percent of Florida public high school students were physically overweight based on their BMI (Figure 1).



2. Among students who were physically overweight, the majority (83.0 percent) were aware of being overweight. The remaining 17.0 percent were unaware of being overweight (Figure 2).



3. Among students who were aware of being physically overweight, the majority of them (83.8 percent) were trying to lose weight. This prevalence was significantly higher than the prevalence among students who were unaware of being physically overweight. Only half of the students who were unaware of being overweight were trying to lose weight (52.0 percent). (Figure 3).



4. In both groups (aware and unaware of being overweight) students reported taking actions to lose weight. Compared to students who were aware of being overweight (60.9 percent), students who were unaware of being overweight (39.2 percent) had a significantly lower prevalence of eating less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat to lose weight. There were no significant differences between the two groups in taking other actions to lose weight (Figure 4).

Figure 4

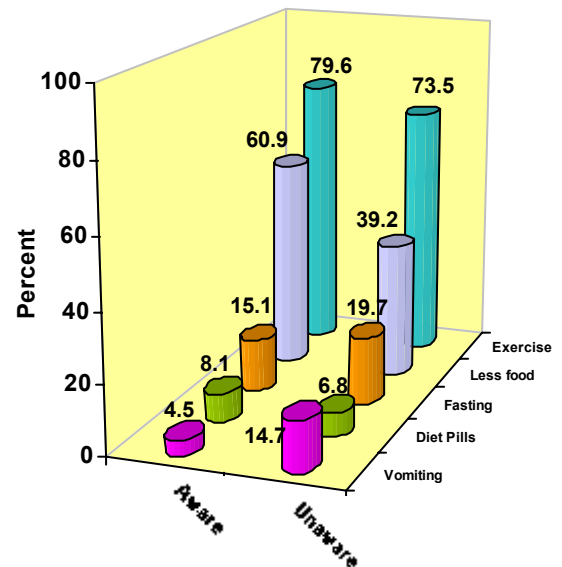
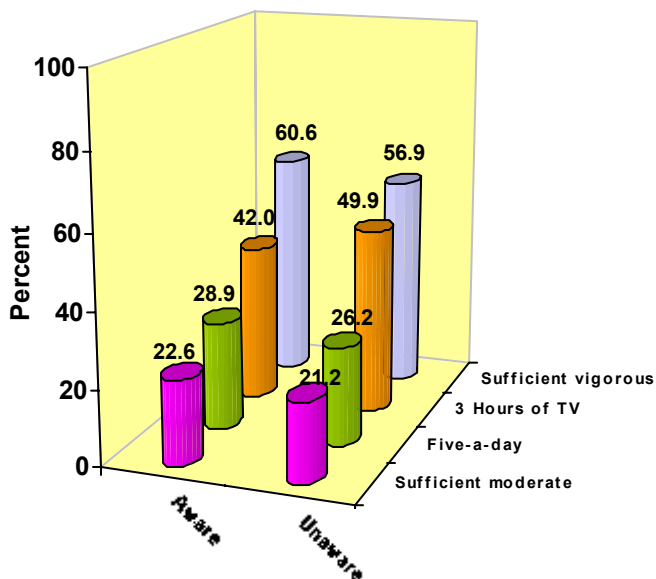


Figure 5



5. Among students who were unaware of being overweight:
- One-fifth (21.2 percent) participated in sufficient moderate physical activities.
 - More than on-half (56.9 percent) participated in sufficient vigorous physical activities.
 - One-quarter (26.2 percent) ate five servings of fruits and vegetables a day in the past seven days.
 - Half (49.9 percent) watched TV for three or more hours on an average school day.

There were no significant differences in each of the above actions between students who were overweight, but unaware of it, and students who were overweight and were aware of themselves being overweight (Figure 5).

Conclusion:

1. Among students who were physically overweight, nearly one-fifth (17.0 percent) were unaware that they were overweight.
2. Students who were physically overweight, but unaware that they were overweight, were less likely to be trying to lose weight than students who were physically overweight and who were aware of being overweight.
3. Students who were physically overweight and unaware of it were less likely to lose weight by eating less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat, but equally likely to take other means to lose weight when compared to students who were overweight and aware of being overweight.
4. Students who were overweight and unaware that they were overweight did not differ from students who were overweight and aware of being overweight in participating in moderate or vigorous physical activities, eating five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, or watching TV three or more hours a day.

For more information about the YRBS, please contact: Ms. Jamie Weitz, M.S., Florida Youth Survey Coordinator, at (850) 245-4444, extension 2424, or by e-mail at Jamie_Weitz@doh.state.fl.us or Mr. Zhaohui Fan, M.P.H., Epidemiologist, at extension 2418, or by e-mail at Zhaohui_Fan@doh.state.fl.us. Also, visit our web site at: www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/Chronic_Disease/YRBS/Intro.htm. For additional YRBS data, try the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's web site at: www.cdc.gov/yrebs.