

national, state and local samples of youth. The YRBSS monitors six categories of behaviors: (1) behaviors that contribute to unintentional and intentional injuries; (2) tobacco use; (3) alcohol and other drug use; (4) sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and STDs, including HIV infection; (5) dietary behaviors; and (6) physical activity. Questions about HIV address exposure to HIV education and sexual activity including age at onset, number of partners, condom use, preceding alcohol use, contraceptive use, and pregnancy.

Youth risk behavior surveys are conducted in alternate years by the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) as part of a cooperative agreement with CDC. Adaptations to state and local needs are encouraged, as well as modifications for specific population samples (e.g., college students). The YRBSS can provide information from representative samples of students of both sexes, different racial/ethnic groups, in public and private schools in urban, suburban, and rural areas, as well as in-school and out-of-school youth. The primary importance of the YRBSS is its use for needs assessment and targeted prevention programming and evaluation.

Some limitations of the YRBSS are lack of uniformity in sampling methods; use of non-standardized core questions and administrative procedures over time and across states which do not take indigenous variations into account; inability to extract specific regional or county-level information from statewide data except for a few separately funded states; and limited space for HIV questions. For instance, specific risk factors, such as men having sex with men and anal intercourse, are not presently addressed in the survey. Another limitation is that these data are more likely to capture information on youth in school, while out-of-school youth may have higher levels of HIV risk behavior. While the YRBSS has recently attempted to include household surveys of 12 to 21 year-olds outside school, neither absentees nor school leavers are adequately represented in the sample.

#### **4.3.2.2. YRBSS Findings--Tennessee High School Survey (1995) and National High School Survey (1993)**

This section of the report summarizes the results from the YRBSS High School Surveys conducted nationally in 1993 and in Tennessee in 1995. The 1993 national school-based survey employed a three-stage cluster sample design to produce a nationally representative sample of students in grades 9-12. The school response rate was 78%, and the student response rate was 90%, for an overall response rate of 70%. The national data presented were weighted to adjust for nonresponse and for the oversampling of black and Hispanic students. The 1995 Tennessee school-based survey employed a two-stage cluster sample design to produce representative samples of students in grades 9-12. The school response rate was 56%, and the student response rate was 83%, for an overall response rate of 46%. Because of the low overall response rate the data could not be weighted. The unweighted data presented here