



Physical Abuse During Pregnancy Among Women in Florida, 2000-2001

Physical abuse against women during pregnancy is a serious public health concern with implications for both the mother and infant. Adverse outcomes can include injury or death to the woman or to her baby.

According to Florida PRAMS 2000 and 2001 survey data, 4.9 percent of new mothers in Florida were physically abused during pregnancy. The prevalence of physical abuse during pregnancy among women in Florida was:

- Similar among all race/ethnicity groups. In particular, 4.7 percent among non-Hispanic White women, 5.9 percent among non-Hispanic Black women, and 4.8 percent among Hispanic women.
- The highest among women age 24 and younger. In particular, 8.3 percent among women age 19 and younger, 8.0 percent among women age 20 to 24, 2.6 percent among women age 25 to 34, and 4.1 percent among women age 35 and older.
- Higher both among women with less than a high school education (9.7 percent) and among women with a high school education (6.0 percent) than among those with more than a high school education (1.8 percent).
- The highest among women with household incomes of \$15,600 or less (8.9 percent); 3.9 percent among women with incomes between \$15,601 and \$39,600, and 1.8 percent among women with incomes of \$39,601 or more.
- Higher among Medicaid recipients (8.7 percent) than among non-Medicaid recipients (2.0 percent).
- Higher among women who were not married (9.1 percent) than among those who were married (2.4 percent).
- Higher among women with unintended pregnancies (6.9 percent) than among those with intended pregnancies (3.0 percent).
- Higher among women who were physically abused before pregnancy (54.1 percent) than among those who were not physically abused before pregnancy (1.4 percent).

Overall, during prenatal care visits, healthcare providers discussed physical abuse during pregnancy with less than half (40.9 percent) of women. Among women who were victims of physical abuse during pregnancy, less than half (47.2 percent) had a healthcare professional discuss physical abuse with them during a prenatal care visit.

This study shows that the highest prevalence of physical abuse during pregnancy occurs among women in Florida who are age 24 and younger, have lower levels of education or household income, are Medicaid recipients, are not married, have unintended pregnancies, and/or are physically abused before pregnancy. These findings may assist healthcare providers and program planners in Florida to provide effective information for the prevention and intervention of physical abuse during pregnancy.

The Florida Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a random survey of recent mothers of live-born infants. It is designed to monitor the physical, economic, and social health of Florida mothers and newborns. PRAMS data are "weighted" so that the resulting estimates can be generalized to the entire state population. PRAMS data from 2000 and 2001 were combined to increase sample size and precision of estimates for this study.

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