



## Physical Abuse During Pregnancy in Florida, 2000

December 5, 2002

PRAMS Report # 12

### Findings at a Glance

- In 2000, 4.9% of mothers surveyed in Florida reported being physically abused during pregnancy; 4.3% reported being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy.
- Characteristics of mothers more likely to report being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy include:
  - ⇒ 24 years of age and younger
  - ⇒ 12 years or less of education
  - ⇒ Not married
  - ⇒ Unintended pregnancy
  - ⇒ History of previous delivery
  - ⇒ Receipt of Medicaid benefits
  - ⇒ Physically abused before pregnancy
- Overall, 41.2% of mothers reported that their health care providers discussed physical abuse with them during prenatal visits. Among mothers who had been physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy, 37% reported a health care worker discussed physical abuse with them during prenatal visits.
- The overall prevalence of being physically abused during pregnancy in Florida was lower in 2000 than in any previous year since 1996. However, the prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy in Florida has not changed significantly since 1996.

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### **Additional Information**

For more information about Maternal and Child Health, please contact your local County Health Department, Healthy Start Coalition, or call The Maternal and Child Health Unit at the Florida Department of Health, (850) 245-4465, or write to us at Maternal and Child Health Unit, Florida Department of Health, 4025 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-13, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1723.

For more information about the report, *Physical Abuse During Pregnancy in Florida, 2000*, call the Bureau of Epidemiology at the Florida Department of Health, (850) 245-4401; or write to us at Bureau of Epidemiology, Florida Department of Health, 4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-12, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1720; or contact us via the internet at the following website: [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease\\_ctrl/epi/topics/contact\\_epi.htm](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/topics/contact_epi.htm).

For more information about the Florida PRAMS project, please contact Helen Marshall, Florida PRAMS Coordinator, by telephone at 850-245-2415, or by email at [helen\\_marshall@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:helen_marshall@doh.state.fl.us).

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## Introduction

Physical abuse against women during pregnancy is a serious public health concern with implications for both the mother and infant. Adverse outcomes associated with maternal physical abuse include fetal loss, early onset of labor, and delivery of preterm, low-birth-weight infants.<sup>1</sup> Fetal injury, rupture of the mother's uterus, and antenatal hemorrhage also may result following physical violence.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this report is to describe: a) the prevalence of physical abuse experienced during pregnancy among women in Florida during 2000; and b) the trend in domestic physical abuse over the five-year period from 1996 through 2000.

Analysis for this report is based on data from the 2000 Florida Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS). PRAMS is a joint surveillance project between the Florida Department of Health and the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, designed to monitor the physical, economic, and social health of mothers and newborns in Florida. PRAMS is designed as a mail survey with telephone follow-up of a random sample of recent mothers of live-born infants in Florida during 2000, completed when the infant is approximately three to six months old. In 2000, 2,065 surveys were completed, with a response rate of 75.7%. The demographic distribution of survey respondents is given in Table 1. The results presented are weighted to reflect the total population of recent mothers and their infants born in Florida during 2000. SAS-callable SUDAAN was used to analyze the data. Due to the small numbers of mothers who reported being physically abused in 2000, this report includes many pertinent statistics regardless of whether the results are statistically significantly different. This enables identification of certain maternal demographics among women who are at risk for physical abuse during pregnancy.

**Table 1: Number of survey respondents by demographic, Florida PRAMS 2000**

<b>Maternal Demographic</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>non-Hispanic White</b>	<b>non-Hispanic Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Overall</b>	2065	844	803	368	50
<b>Age Distribution</b>					
19 Years and Under	660	246	286	119	9
20 to 24 Years	440	152	208	78	2
25 to 34 Years	734	325	235	141	33
35 Years and Over	231	121	74	30	6
<b>Education</b>					
Less Than 12 Years	596	198	260	134	4
12 Years	727	280	315	121	11
13 Years or More	733	364	221	113	35
<b>Annual Household Income</b>					
\$15,600 and Under	809	239	399	159	12
\$15,601 to \$39,600	622	292	200	110	20
\$39,601 and Over	391	239	83	54	15
<b>Marital Status</b>					
Married	966	509	226	196	35
Not Married	1099	335	577	172	15

In 1996, a question focusing specifically on physical abuse during pregnancy was added to the Florida PRAMS questionnaire. From 1996 through 1999, the following question addressed physical abuse during pregnancy:

- During your most recent pregnancy, did any of these people physically abuse you?**
- My husband or partner**
- A family or household member other than my husband or partner**
- A friend**
- Someone else**

In 2000, the following modifications first appeared in the Florida PRAMS survey questionnaire:

**During your most recent pregnancy, did your husband or partner push, hit, slap, kick, choke, or physically hurt you in any other way?**

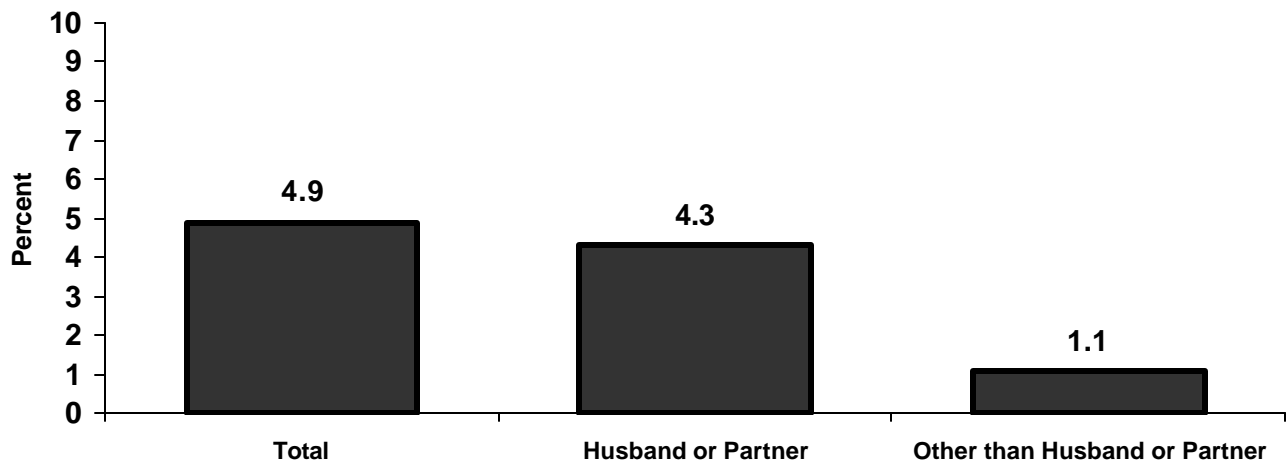
**During your most recent pregnancy, did anyone else physically hurt you in any way?**

Surveillance of physical abuse experienced during pregnancy is a key component to Florida's work toward achieving the Healthy People 2010 objective to reduce the rate of physical assault by current or former intimate partners to 3.3 per 1000 persons ages 12 years and over<sup>2</sup>.

This report focuses on being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy during 2000. Data analysis from 1996 through 2000 is also included for the purpose of addressing trends.

The lowest overall prevalence of being physically abused during pregnancy in Florida during the five-year period from 1996 through 2000 was 4.9%, in 2000; the highest prevalence of being physically abused during pregnancy was 9.4%, in 1997. The prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy was significantly higher than the prevalence of being physically abused during pregnancy by someone other than a husband or partner (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Prevalence of being physically abused during pregnancy by source of abuse, Florida PRAMS 2000**



## Physical Abuse by a Husband or Partner During Pregnancy, 2000

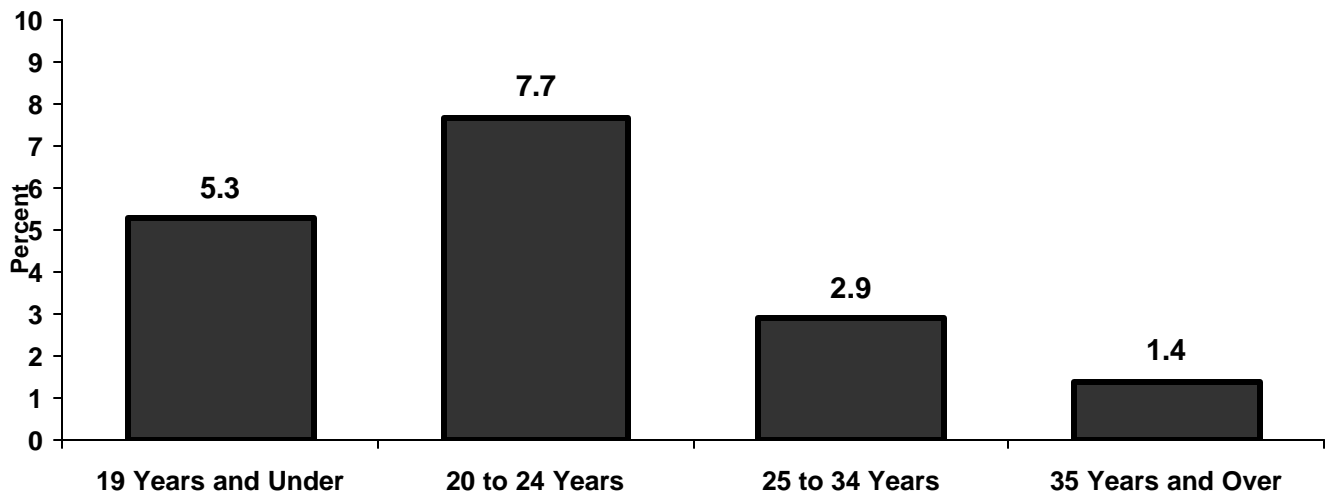
### Maternal Race/Ethnicity

During 2000, the prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy was 3.7% among non-Hispanic White pregnant women, 5.3% among non-Hispanic Black pregnant women, and 4.8% among Hispanic pregnant women. However, these differences were not found to be statistically significant (see Table 2).

### Maternal Age

The prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy varied among maternal age groups. Mothers under the age of 25 years reported being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy more often than those 25 years of age and older. The prevalence of being physically abused by their husbands or partners was the highest among pregnant women between 20 years and 24 years of age, and was the lowest among pregnant women 35 years of age and older (see Figure 2 and Table 2).

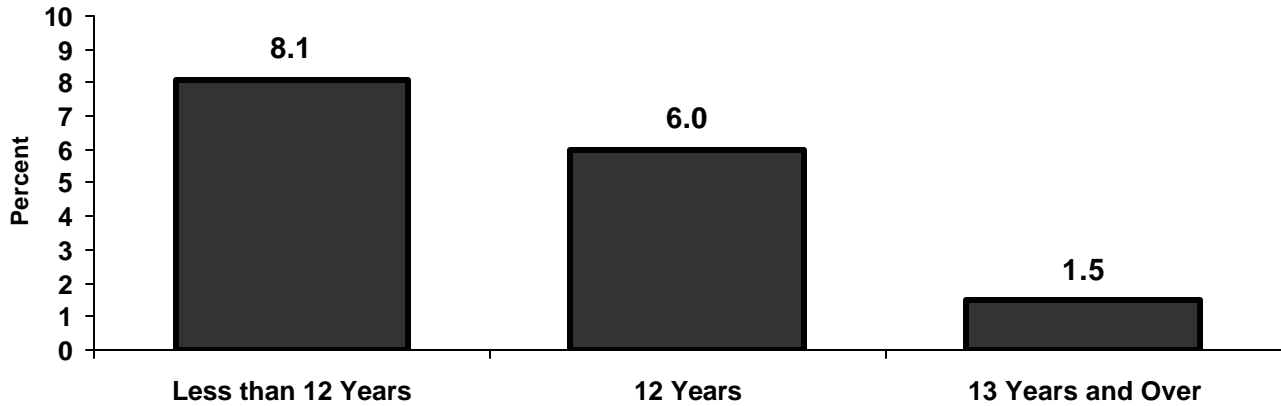
**Figure 2: Prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy by maternal age, Florida PRAMS 2000**



### Education

The prevalence of being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy among mothers in Florida varied among levels of maternal education. The prevalence was higher among pregnant women with less education. In particular, the prevalence of being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy among pregnant women with less than 12 years of education was over 5 times the prevalence among those with at least 13 years of education (see Figure 3 and Table 2).

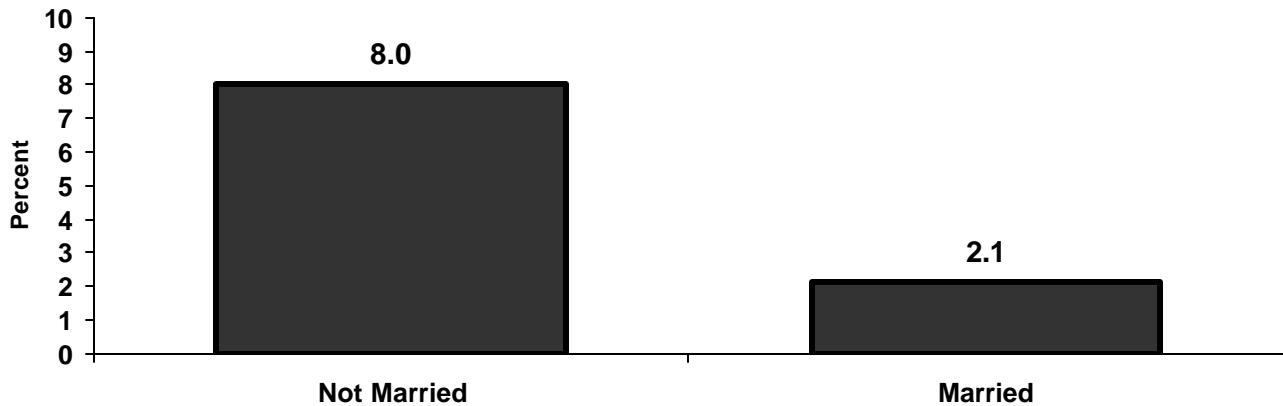
**Figure 3: Prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy by maternal education, Florida PRAMS 2000**



### **Marital Status**

The prevalence of being physically abused by husbands or partners during pregnancy varied according to marital status. The prevalence of being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy among pregnant women who were not married was nearly 4 times the prevalence among pregnant women who were married (see Figure 4 and Table 2).

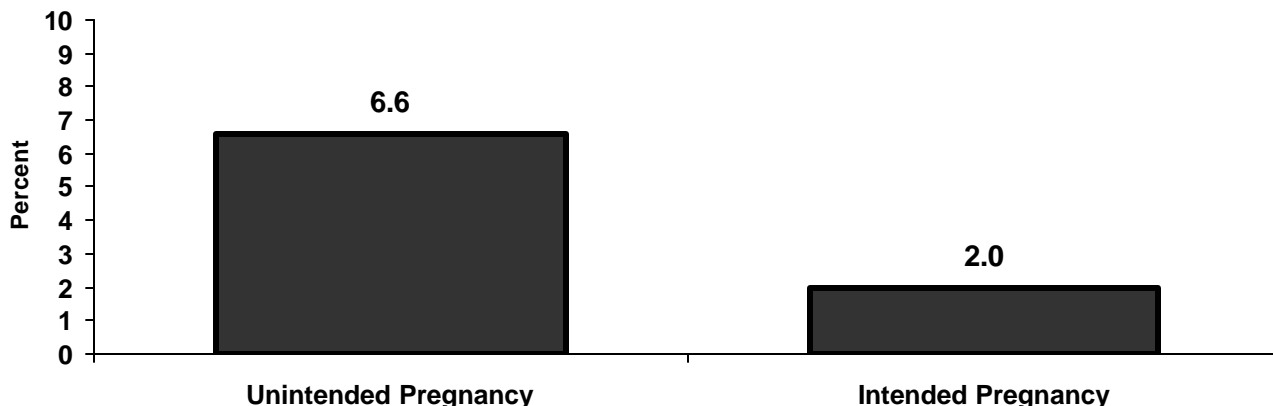
**Figure 4: Prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy by marital status, Florida PRAMS 2000**



### **Intendedness**

The prevalence of being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy also varied according to whether a pregnancy was intended. The prevalence of physical abuse by their husbands or partners among pregnant women whose pregnancies were unintended was more than 3 times that among those whose pregnancies were intended (see Figure 5 and Table 2).

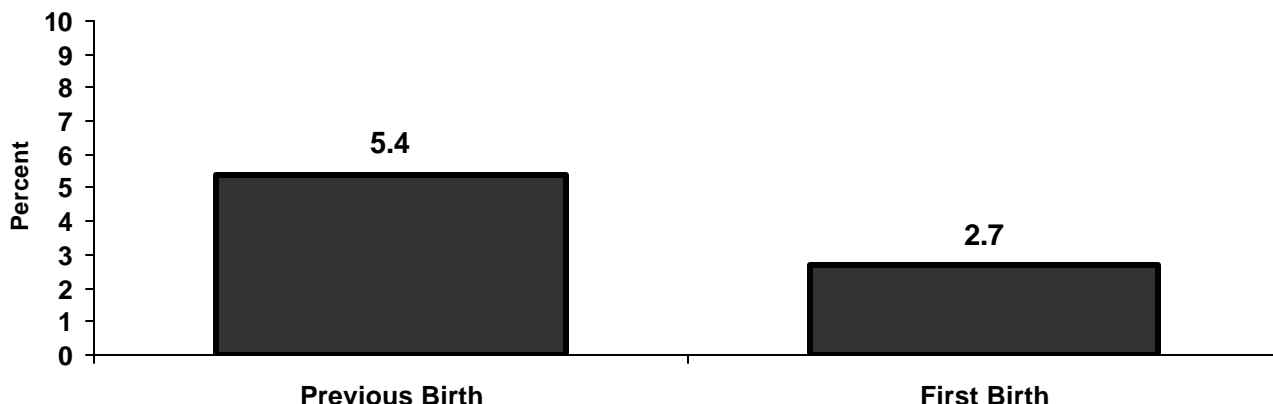
**Figure 5: Prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy by intendedness, Florida PRAMS 2000**



### **Birth History**

Mothers who had previously given birth reported being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy 2 times more often than first-time mothers (see Figure 6 and Table 2).

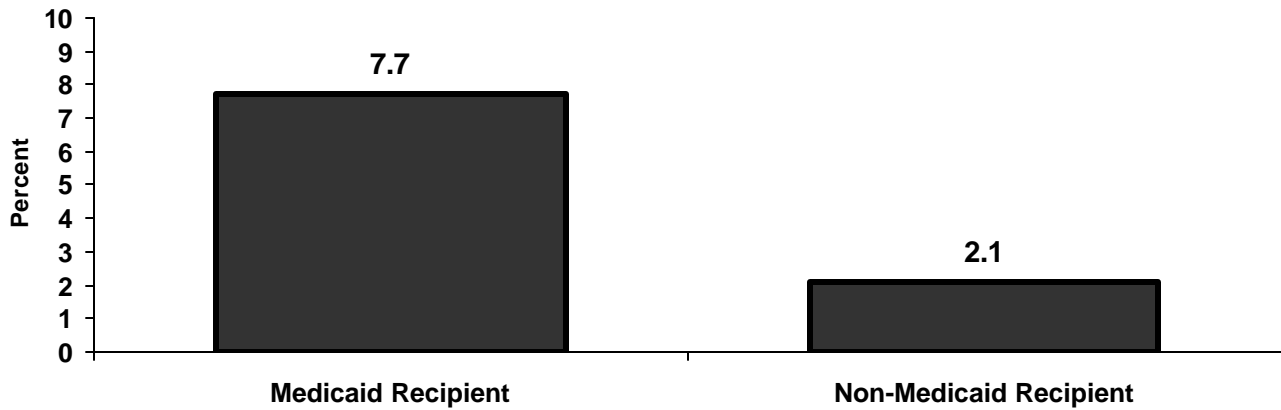
**Figure 6: Prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy by birth history, Florida PRAMS 2000**



### **Medicaid Recipients**

Mothers who had either their prenatal care or their deliveries paid for by Medicaid, or were on Medicaid just before they became pregnant, reported being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy more often than those who were not on Medicaid during those periods. In 2000, mothers who were Medicaid recipients reported being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy over 3.5 times more than those who were not recipients of Medicaid benefits (see Figure 7 and Table 2).

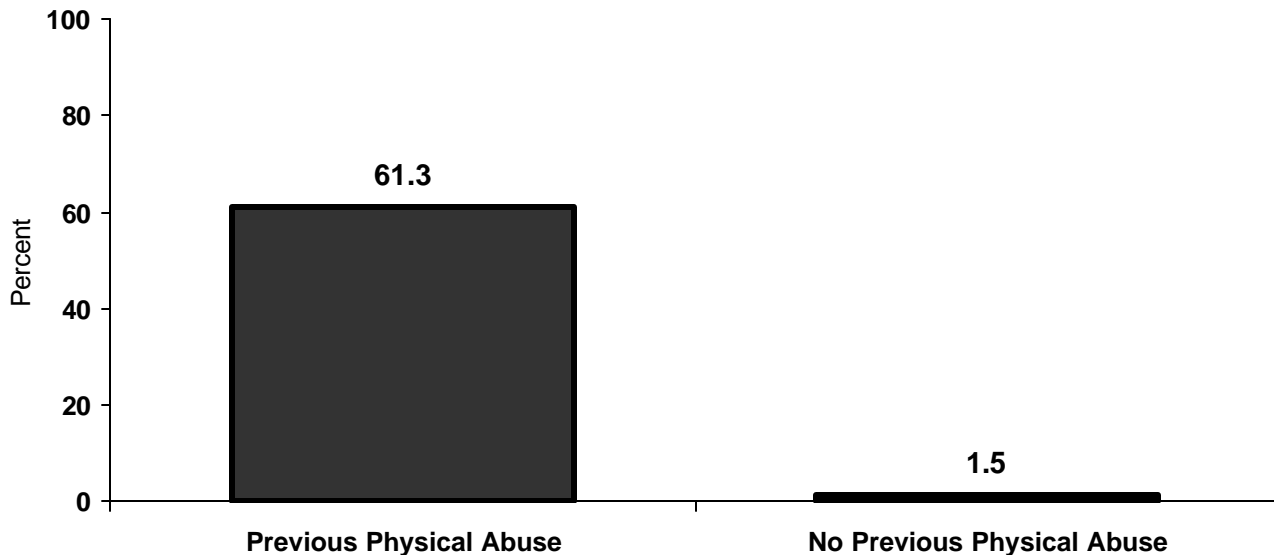
**Figure 7: Prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy by Medicaid recipient status, Florida PRAMS 2000**



**Being Physically Abused Before Pregnancy**

Over half the mothers who reported being physically abused by their husbands or partners during the 12 months before their pregnancies also reported being physically abused by their husbands or partners during their pregnancies. The prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy among pregnant women who were abused before pregnancy was more than 40 times the prevalence among pregnant women who reported not being physically abused by their husbands or partners before pregnancy (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy by history of being physically abused before pregnancy, Florida PRAMS 2000**



**Table 2: Prevalence of being physically abused during pregnancy among maternal social demographics by source of abuse, Florida PRAMS 2000**

Maternal Demographic	Overall		By Husband or Partner		By Other than Husband or Partner	
	Percent	95% Confidence Interval	Percent	95% Confidence Interval	Percent	95% Confidence Interval
<b>Overall</b>	4.9	(3.5, 6.3)	4.3	(3.0, 5.6)	1.1	(0.5, 1.6)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
non-Hispanic White	4.3	(2.2, 6.3)	3.7	(1.8, 5.7)	0.5	(-0.1, 1.1)
non-Hispanic Black	6.7	(4.4, 9.1)	5.3	(3.1, 7.5)	2.3	(1.0, 3.6)
Hispanic	5.0	(1.8, 8.2)	4.8	(1.6, 8.0)	1.1	(-0.4, 2.6)
<b>Age Distribution</b>						
19 Years and Under	7.8	(5.1, 10.5)	5.3	(3.1, 7.5)	3.1	(1.4, 4.9)
20 to 24 Years	8.1	(4.3, 11.8)	7.7	(4.0, 11.4)	0.6	(-0.1, 1.3)
25 to 34 Years	3.1	(1.4, 4.8)	2.9	(1.2, 4.6)	0.8	(0.0, 1.5)
35 and Over	2.5	(-0.4, 5.4)	1.4	(-0.6, 3.5)	1.1	(-1.0, 3.1)
<b>Education</b>						
Less than 12 Years	9.9	(5.6, 14.1)	8.1	(4.0, 12.3)	2.8	(0.8, 4.9)
12 Years	6.8	(4.0, 9.7)	6.0	(3.3, 8.7)	1.2	(0.2, 2.3)
More than 12 Years	1.5	(0.4, 2.6)	1.5	(0.4, 2.6)	0.2	(-0.1, 0.5)
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married	2.3	(1.0, 3.6)	2.1	(0.8, 3.3)	0.3	(-0.2, 0.8)
Not Married	9.3	(6.4, 12.3)	8.0	(5.1, 10.9)	2.3	(1.1, 3.6)
<b>Intendedness of Pregnancy</b>						
Intended	2.4	(1.1, 3.6)	2.0	(0.9, 3.2)	0.5	(0.1, 0.8)
Not Intended	7.6	(5.1, 10.2)	6.6	(4.1, 9.0)	1.8	(0.6, 3.0)
<b>Birth History</b>						
Previous Birth	6.2	(4.1, 8.4)	5.4	(3.4, 7.5)	1.5	(0.6, 2.4)
First Birth	3.1	(1.6, 4.6)	2.7	(1.2, 4.2)	0.5	(0.1, 0.8)
<b>Medicaid Recipient</b>						
Recipient	8.9	(6.1, 11.7)	7.7	(5.0, 10.4)	2.2	(0.9, 3.6)
non-Recipient	2.3	(1.0, 3.6)	2.1	(0.8, 3.3)	0.3	(0.1, 0.6)

### **Discussion of Physical Abuse with a Health Care Provider**

Overall, less than half (41.2%) the mothers in Florida reported that their health care providers talked with them about physical abuse during a prenatal visit in 2000. Among mothers who had been physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy, 37% reported a health care worker discussed physical abuse with them during a prenatal visit.

## Alcohol Use and Physical Abuse

Over 95% of mothers in Florida reported that they did not drink alcohol during the last three months of their pregnancies, 3.4% reported drinking less than one drink per week during the last three months of their pregnancies, and 1.3% reported drinking more than one drink per week during the last three months of their pregnancies. Only 0.2% of mothers in Florida reported drinking 5 drinks or more in one sitting during the last three months of their pregnancies (see Table 3).

The prevalence of being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy was 50% higher among women who drank any alcohol during the last 3 months of pregnancy than women who did not drink any alcohol during the last 3 months of pregnancy. Although it appeared that women who drank either during the three months before pregnancy, or during pregnancy, had higher prevalence of being physically abused, no statistical significance was detected (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Prevalence of maternal alcohol consumption before and during pregnancy and being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy, Florida PRAMS 2000**

Characteristic	Maternal Alcohol Consumption		Physical Abuse During Pregnancy by Husband or Partner by Alcohol Consumption <sup>†</sup>	
	Percent	95% Confidence Interval	Abuse During Pregnancy by Husband or	95% Confidence Interval
<b>Average alcoholic drinks per week during the 3 months before pregnancy</b>				
None	61.0	(57.7, 64.2)	4.3	(2.6, 6.0)
Less than 1	24.5	(21.5, 27.4)	3.6	(1.0, 6.2)
1 or more	14.6	(12.1, 17.0)	5.5	(1.5, 9.5)
<b>Average alcohol drinks per week during the last 3 months of pregnancy</b>				
None	95.3	(93.8, 96.8)	4.2	(2.8, 5.6)
1 or more	4.7	(3.2, 6.2)	6.3	(-0.2, 12.8)
<b>Number of times 5 or more drinks were consumed in one sitting during the 3 months before pregnancy</b>				
None	89.4	(87.3, 91.5)	3.6	(2.2, 4.9)
1 time	3.9	(2.5, 5.2)	3.0	(-0.4, 6.5)
2 times	2.9	(1.8, 4.1)	11.0 §	(-2.6, 24.6)
3 or more times	3.8	(2.4, 5.2)	14.6 §	(1.2, 28)
<b>Number of times 5 or more drinks were consumed in one sitting during the last 3 months of pregnancy</b>				
None	99.8	(99.7, 99.9)	4.2	(2.9, 5.6)
1 or more times	0.2	(0.1, 0.3)	‡	—

† Differences in each category under this column are not statistically significant.

§ Fewer than 60 respondents, may not be reliable.

‡ Fewer than 30 respondents, not reported.

## Five-Year Trend in Physical Abuse by a Husband or Partner During Pregnancy

During the period from 1996 through 2000, the prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy ranged from 3.9%, in 1999, to 4.3%, in 2000. However, no statistically significant trend was detected over the five-year period (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy, Florida PRAMS 1996-2000.**

	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Percent	CI*	Percent	CI*	Percent	CI*	Percent	CI*	Percent	CI*
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	4.0	(2.8, 5.1)	4.1	(2.9, 5.2)	4.0	(2.8, 5.2)	3.9	(2.6, 5.2)	4.3	(3.0, 5.6)

\* 95% confidence intervals

### Summary

Characteristics of mothers in Florida who reported higher rates of being physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy in 2000 include:

- ⇒ 24 years of age and younger
- ⇒ 12 years or less of education
- ⇒ Not married
- ⇒ Unintended pregnancy
- ⇒ History of previous delivery
- ⇒ Receipt of Medicaid benefits
- ⇒ Physically abused before pregnancy

Health care providers discussed physical abuse with less than half of pregnant women in Florida during prenatal visits in 2000. Among mothers who had been physically abused by their husbands or partners during pregnancy, 37% reported a health care worker discussed physical abuse with them during a prenatal visit. The prevalence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy did not change significantly during the five-year period from 1996 through 2000.

The findings presented in this report are self-reported by the PRAMS survey respondents. As such, these findings represent the reported incidence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy among mothers in Florida during 2000. We do not have data to indicate whether the self-reported incidence of being physically abused by a husband or partner during pregnancy was underreported or over-reported.

These findings present opportunities to target services and programs in areas where significant progress can be made to decrease the prevalence of physical abuse among women during pregnancy.

### **References:**

<sup>1</sup> Lipscomb LE, Johnson CH, Morrow B, Colley Gilbert B, Ahluwalia IB, Beck LF, et. al. PRAS 1998 Surveillance Report. Atlanta: Division of Reproductive Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy people 2010 (Conference edition, in two volumes). Washington, DC: January 2000.

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