

Vermont Adult Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

Data Brief

Mental health status and its impact on other aspects of health and behavior are of ongoing concern. To help assess this, the Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) has included a question on poor mental health days in all but one year since 2000. Specifically, respondents are asked to state the number of poor mental health days they've had in the last month.

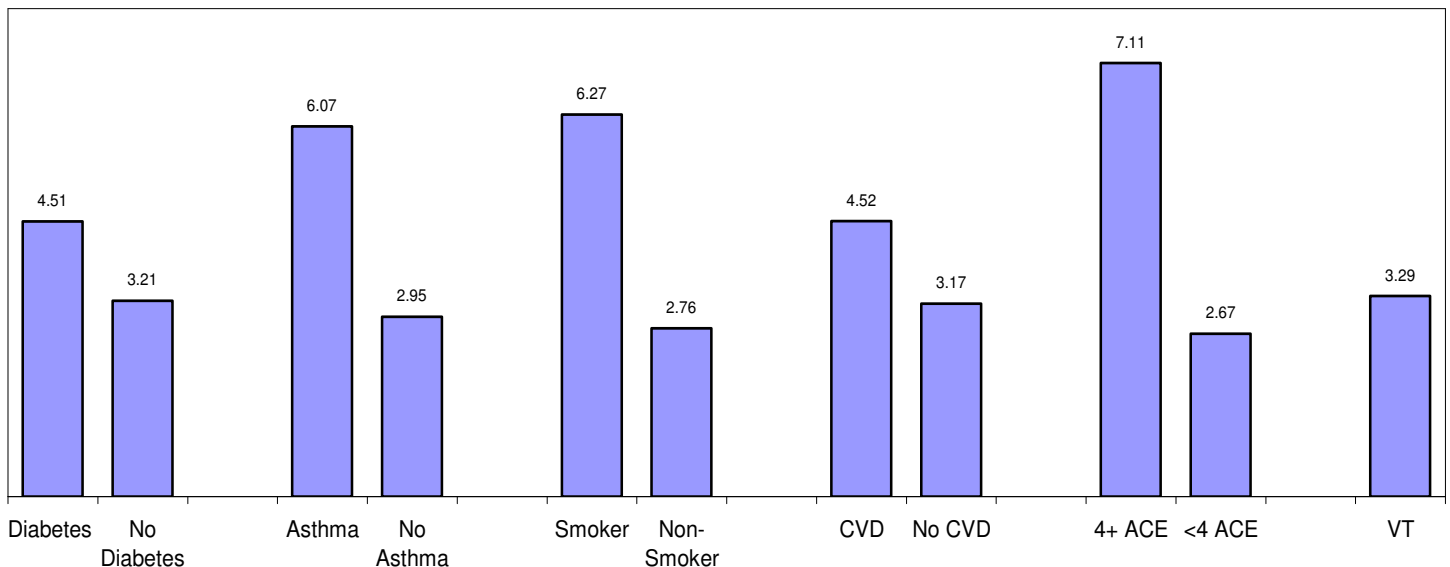
In 2010, on average, Vermont adults reported 3.3 days of poor mental health in the last month. Thirty-six percent experienced at least one day of poor mental health, while nine percent had poor mental health on at least half of the days in the last month. Less than five percent (4%) reported poor mental health every day of the last month. These are statistically unchanged as compared to data from both 2009 (3.4, 36%, 9%, & 4%) and 2000 (2.9, 34%, & 8%, 3%).

Average Days of Poor Mental Health by Co-morbidities and Risk Behaviors

The table below looks at the average number of poor mental health days in the last month, by various chronic conditions and risk behaviors. Only those with a statistically significant difference between those with and without the chronic condition/risk behavior are shown. Vermont adults with diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular disease, four or more adverse childhood experiences, and current smokers all had significantly more poor mental health days in the last month, as compared to their counterparts without the chronic condition or risk behavior. (See Figure 1.)

Other chronic conditions and behaviors analyzed that did not show statistically significant differences in the occurrence of poor mental health days were: cancer prevalence, drinking and driving, binge drinking, and recent marijuana use.

**Figure 1: Average Number of Poor Mental Health Days by Chronic Conditions & Risk Behaviors
2010 BRFSS**



Adults Experiencing Poor Mental Health in the Past Month

The occurrence of poor mental health days varies by age, gender, education level, and income level. On average, women report significantly more days of poor mental health as compared with men (4.0 vs. 2.5 days).

Older adults report significantly fewer days of poor mental health than younger adults. Those 65 and older had poor mental health on significantly fewer days than those in all other age groups. Adults 55-64 reported fewer poor mental health days compared to those 25-44 (3.0 vs. 4.3 days).

Reported days of poor mental health are fewer among those with higher education levels and annual household income levels. Adults with a college degree or higher had significantly fewer poor mental health days than those with less education. Those with some college education also had statistically significantly fewer poor mental health days compared to those with a less than high school education. All differences by annual household income level were statistically significant. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Poor Mental Health in Last Month, By Demographics	
Sex	Ave. # Days of Poor Mental Health
Male	2.5
Female	4.0
Age	
18-24	3.7
25-34	4.3
35-44	4.0
45-54	3.5
55-64	3.0
65+	1.8
Education	
Less than High School	5.7
High School	3.9
Some College	3.6
College or Higher	2.3
Income (Annual, Household)	
<\$25,000	8.5
\$25,000-<\$50,000	4.5
\$50,000->\$75,000	2.8
\$75,000+	1.9

For more information on the BRFSS or to suggest ideas for future BRFSS Data Briefs, contact Jessie Brosseau, M.P.H. (802-863-7663; Jessie.Brosseau@state.vt.us).