

2007 Fact Sheet on

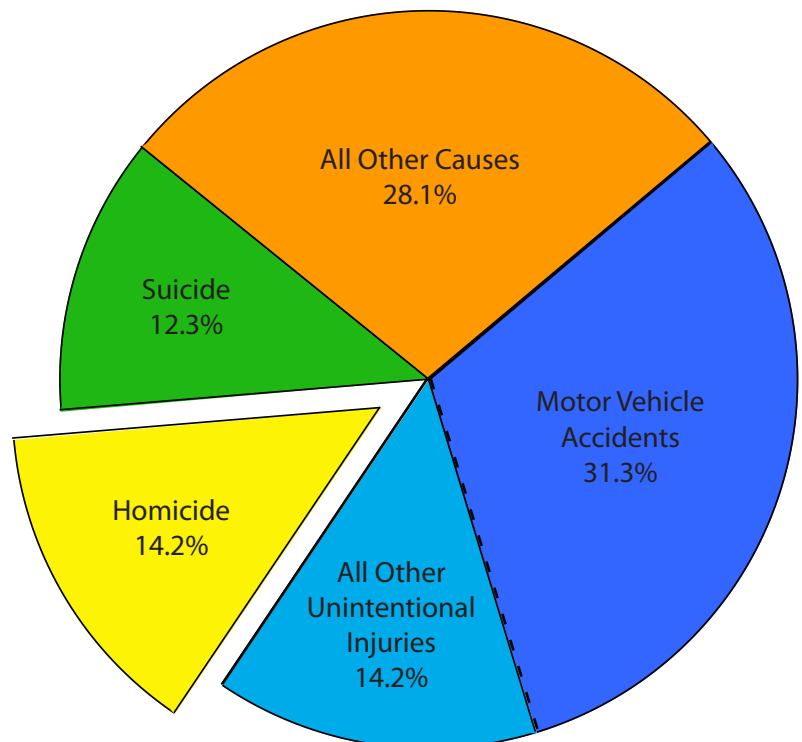
# Violence: Adolescents & Young Adults

**Highlights:**

- ▶ Homicide is the second leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults.
- ▶ Male adolescents and young adults have higher homicide rates than females.
- ▶ Homicide is the leading cause of death for adolescent and young adult Black males.
- ▶ The homicide rates for adolescent and young adult males have fallen sharply in the past decade.
- ▶ Male adolescents engage in violent behavior more than their female peers.

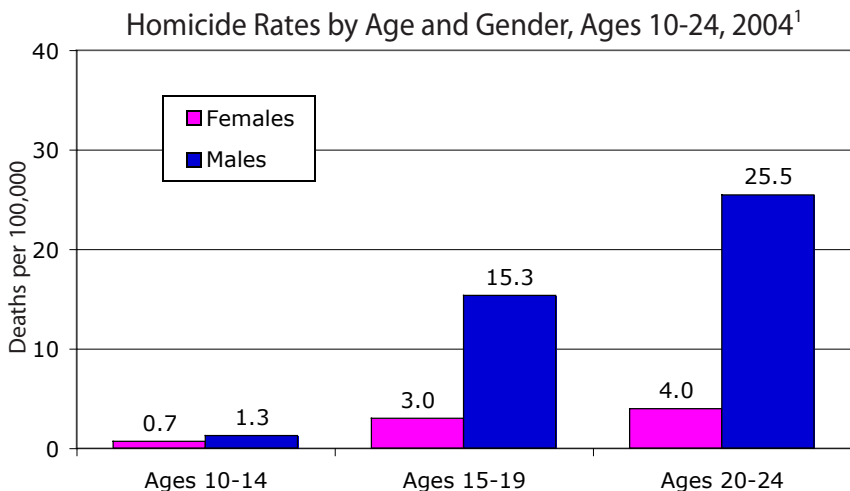
- ▶ **Homicide is the second leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults.**

Leading Causes of Death, Ages 10-24, 2004<sup>1</sup>



In 2004, 5,292 adolescents and young adults ages 10-24 were victims of homicide, resulting in a homicide rate of 8.4 per 100,000. Homicide accounted for 14.2% of all deaths for adolescents and young adults, making it the second leading cause of death for this age group after motor vehicle accidents.<sup>1</sup>

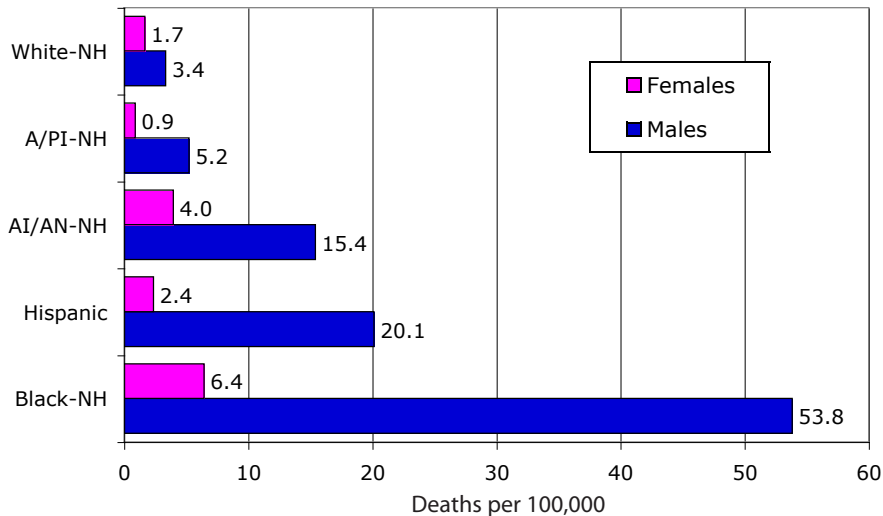
► **Male adolescents and young adults have higher homicide rates than females.**



Young males have a higher homicide mortality rate than females. The gender gap increases with age: for early adolescents ages 10-14, males are 1.9 times more likely to die from homicide than same-age females; this difference jumps to 6.4 for young adults ages 20-24. This is a long-standing trend: from 1981 to 2004, 82% of all homicide victims aged 10 to 24 were male. Homicide rates peak in young adulthood and then decrease throughout the lifespan.<sup>1</sup>

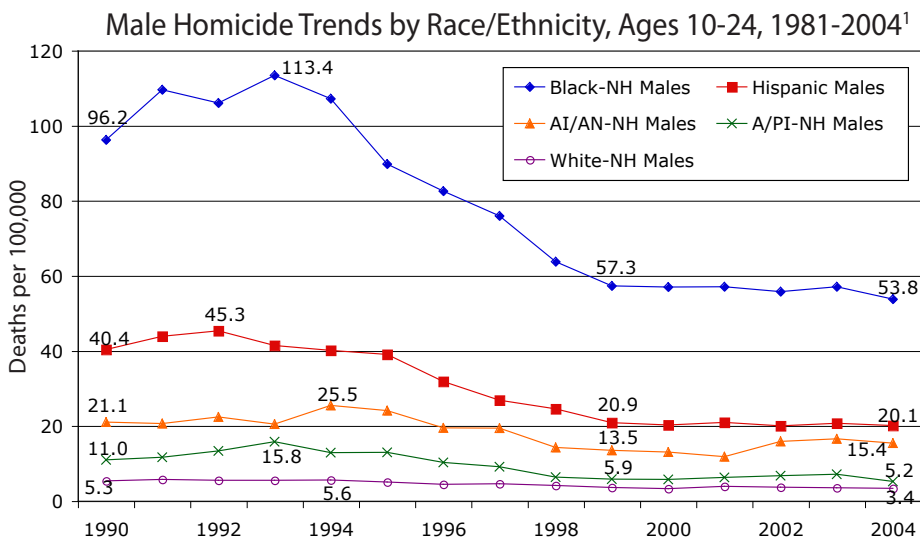
► **Homicide is the leading cause of death for adolescent and young adult Black males.**

Homicide Rates by Race/Ethnicity\* and Gender, Ages 10-24, 2004<sup>1</sup>



Among adolescents and young adults ages 10-24, Black, non Hispanic males are the most likely to die from homicide. Homicide accounts for 44.5% of all deaths among Black-NH\* males. In 2004, the homicide rate for Black-NH males was 2.7 to 15.8 times that of same-age males in other racial/ethnic groups. Among females, White-NHs and Asian/Pacific Islander-NHs are least likely to die from homicide.<sup>1</sup>

► **The homicide rates for adolescent and young adult males have fallen sharply in the past decade.**



By 1999, homicide rates for adolescent and young adult males ages 10-24 significantly decreased from peak levels in the early 1990s. The decline in homicide has been greatest for Black-NH and Hispanic males, with 1999 rates half that of the 1993 rates. Since 1999, male homicide rates have remained relatively stable. Rates for all same-age females have decreased overall during the same period.<sup>1</sup>

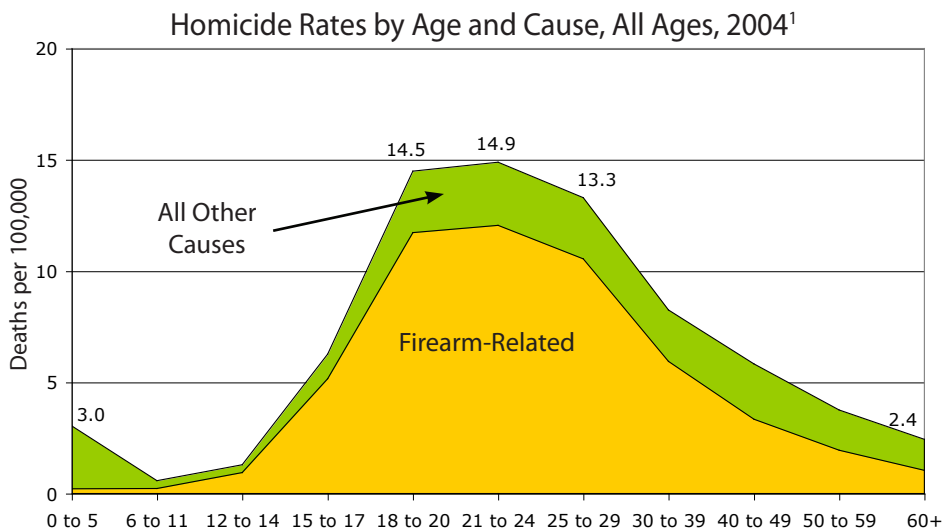
\*These abbreviations apply to all figures and text throughout the fact sheet:

NH(s)=non Hispanic(s)

AI/AN=American Indian/Alaskan Native

A/PI=Asian/Pacific Islander

► **Firearm use accounts for the majority of homicides among young people.**

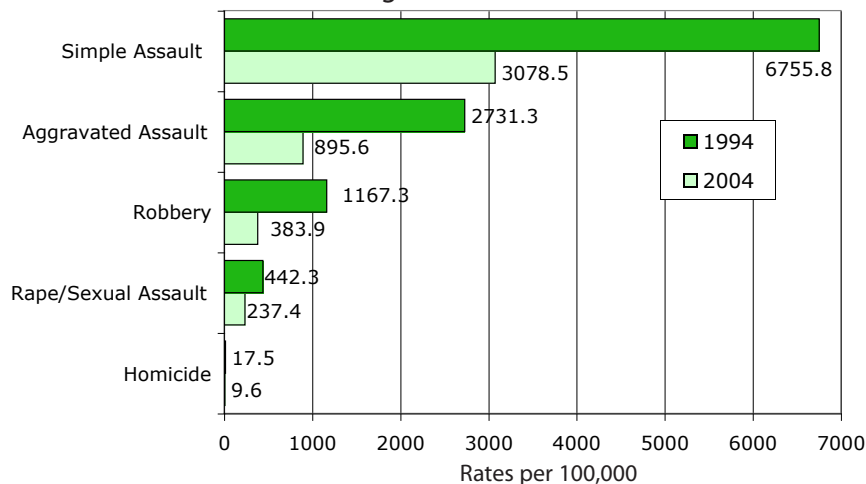


Most homicide mortality among adolescents and young adults are caused by firearms. Other causes of homicide include cutting/piercing, suffocation, and fires/burning. The rate of firearm-related homicide peaks in young adulthood (ages 18-24) and decreases significantly throughout the life-span. This is a longstanding trend: firearm-related homicides have been highest among young adults since 1981.<sup>1</sup>

► **Non-fatal violent crimes have decreased markedly in the past decade.**

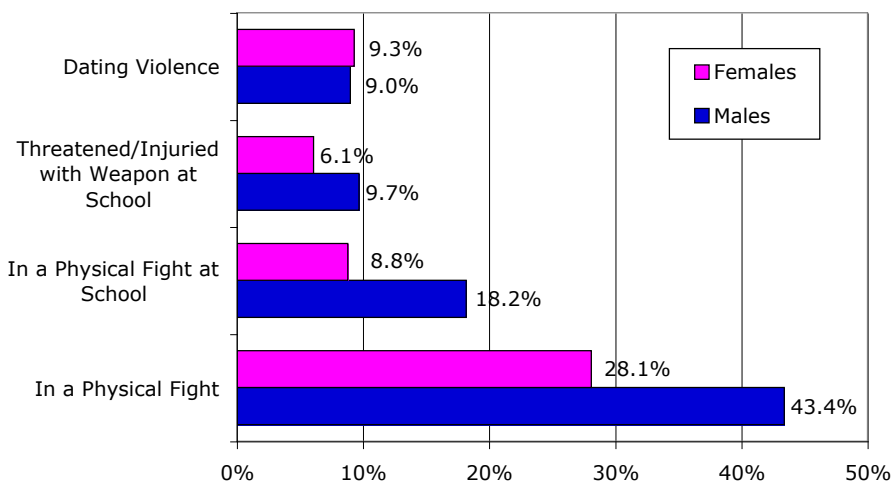
Violent crime<sup>+</sup> rates decreased by more than one half between 1994 and 2004 for ages 12-24. Non-fatal violent crimes are much more common than homicide: in 2004, young people were victims of simple assault 321 times more than homicide.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Violent crimes are largely an issue of youth: victimization rates peak at ages 12-24 and offenders in this age group are most likely to target other young people.<sup>2</sup>

Violent Crime Victimization Rates by Type, Ages 12-24, 1994 & 2004<sup>1,2,3</sup>



► **Male adolescents engage in violent behavior more than their female peers.**

Violence-Related Behaviors by Gender, High School Students, Past Year, 2005<sup>4</sup>



Violent behavior is experienced more by male adolescents than their female peers. Males are much more likely to have been in a physical fight and be threatened/injured with a weapon. In addition, adolescent males are also more likely to carry a weapon<sup>\*</sup> (29.8%) than females (7.1%). By contrast, male and female students are almost equally likely to report dating violence<sup>◇</sup>.<sup>4</sup>

\*These abbreviations apply to all figures and text throughout the fact sheet:

NH(s)=non Hispanic(s)

AI/AN=American Indian/Alaskan Native

A/PI=Asian/Pacific Islander

## Data and Figure Sources & Other Notes:

1. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control [NCIPC]. (2006). Leading Causes of Death and Fatal Injuries Mortality Reports [Online Database]. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Available online at URL (2/07): <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>]
2. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. (2006). Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2004 Statistical Tables. [Available online at URL (2/07): <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv04.htm>]
3. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. (1997). Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1994 Statistical Tables. [Available online at URL (2/07): <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cvius94.htm>]
4. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System [YRBSS], Division of Adolescent and School Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2006). Youth Online [Online Database]. [Available online at URL (2/07): <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbss/>]

+ Violent crimes include aggravated assault (attack with a weapon that may result in injury or attack without a weapon resulting in serious injury), simple assault (attack without a weapon that may result in minor or no injury), robbery (theft by force, with or without a weapon, that may result in injury) and rape/sexual assault (forced sexual intercourse or other attacks of unwanted sexual contact and verbal threats).<sup>2,3</sup>

☆ "Carried a weapon" refers to the percentage of students who carried a weapon such as a gun, knife or club on one or more of the past 30 days.<sup>4</sup>

◇ "Dating violence" refers to the percentage of students who were hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past year.<sup>4</sup>

In all cases, the most recent available data were used. Some data are released 1-3 years after collection. In some cases, trend data with demographic breakdowns (e.g., racial/ethnic) are relatively limited. The category names presented are those of the data sources used (eg., racial/ethnic and accidents/crashes data). Every attempt was made to standardize age ranges; when this was not possible, age ranges are those of the data sources used. For any questions regarding data presented, please contact NAHIC.

## NAHIC Briefs & Fact Sheets

A Health Profile of Adolescent & Young Adult Males

A Mental Health Profile of Adolescents

Fact Sheet on Demographics: Adolescents & Young Adults

Fact Sheet on Mortality: Adolescents & Young Adults

Fact Sheet on Reproductive Health: Adolescents & Young Adults

Fact Sheet on Substance Use: Adolescents & Young Adults

Fact Sheet on Suicide: Adolescents & Young Adults

Fact Sheet on Unintentional Injury: Adolescents & Young Adults

Fact Sheet on Violence: Adolescents & Young Adults

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### Background on NAHIC

The National Adolescent Health Information Center (NAHIC) was established with funding from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau in 1993 (U45MC 00002) to serve as a national resource for adolescent health research and information and to assure the integration, synthesis, coordination and dissemination of adolescent health-related information.

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All listed Briefs & Fact Sheets can be downloaded at <http://nahic.ucsf.edu/>.

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