

Unintentional Injury and Violence-Related Behaviors and Academic Achievement

What is the relationship between unintentional injury and violence-related behaviors and academic achievement?

Data presented below from the 2009 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) show a negative association between unintentional injury and violence-related behaviors and academic achievement after controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and grade level. This means that students with higher grades are less likely to engage in unintentional injury and violence-related behaviors than their classmates with lower grades, and students who do not engage in unintentional injury and violence-related behaviors receive higher grades than their classmates who do engage in unintentional injury and violence-related behaviors. These associations do not prove causation. Further research is needed to determine whether low grades lead to behaviors related to unintentional injury and violence, behaviors related to unintentional injury and violence lead to low grades, or some other factors lead to both of these problems.

Students with higher grades are significantly less likely to have engaged in behaviors such as

- **Riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol** (in a car or other vehicle one or more times during the 30 days before the survey).
- **Carrying a weapon** (for example, a gun, knife, or club on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey).
- **Being in a physical fight** (one or more times during the 12 months before the survey).
- **Feeling sad or hopeless** (almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities during the 12 months before the survey).
- **Attempting suicide** (one or more times during the 12 months before the survey).

Percentage of high school students who engaged in unintentional injury or violence-related behaviors, by type of grades earned (mostly A's, B's, C's, or D's/F's)—United States, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009*

Unintentional Injury and Violence-Related Behaviors	Percentage of U.S. high school students who engaged in each risk behavior, by type of grades mostly earned			
	A's	B's	C's	D's/F's
Unintentional Injury-Related Behaviors				
Rarely or never wore a seat belt (when riding in a car driven by someone else)	6	8	14	24
Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol (in a car or other vehicle one or more times during the 30 days before the survey)	21	27	35	47
Drove a car or other vehicle when they had been drinking alcohol (one or more times during the 30 days before the survey)	6	9	12	21
Rarely or never wore a motorcycle helmet (among those who had ridden a motorcycle during the 12 months before the survey)	23	27	39	55
Violence-Related Behaviors				
Carried a weapon (for example, a gun, knife, or club on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey)	12	16	21	37
Carried a gun (on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey)	4	5	6	17
In a physical fight (one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	19	30	41	58
In a physical fight on school property (one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	7	9	14	27
Injured in a physical fight (injuries had to be treated by a doctor or nurse one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	2	3	5	11
Dating violence (hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the 12 months before the survey)	6	9	12	20
Ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse (when they did not want to)	5	7	8	18
Threatened or injured with a weapon on school property (for example, a gun, knife, or club one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	6	6	9	18
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school (on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey)	3	4	6	13
Bullied on school property (during the 12 months before the survey)	19	19	20	28
Felt sad or hopeless (almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities during the 12 months before the survey)	18	26	30	42
Seriously considered attempting suicide (during the 12 months before the survey)	11	13	16	27
Made a suicide plan (during the 12 months before the survey)	8	10	13	21
Attempted suicide (one or more times during the 12 months before the survey)	4	5	8	18
Suicide attempt resulted in an injury, poisoning, or an overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse (during the 12 months before the survey)	1	1	2	7

* All associations are significant at $p < 0.0001$, using logistic regression and controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and grade level.

Figure 1. Percentage of high school students who rarely or never wore a seat belt, rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol, and drove when they had been drinking alcohol, by type of grades earned (mostly A's, B's, C's, or D's/F's)—United States, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009

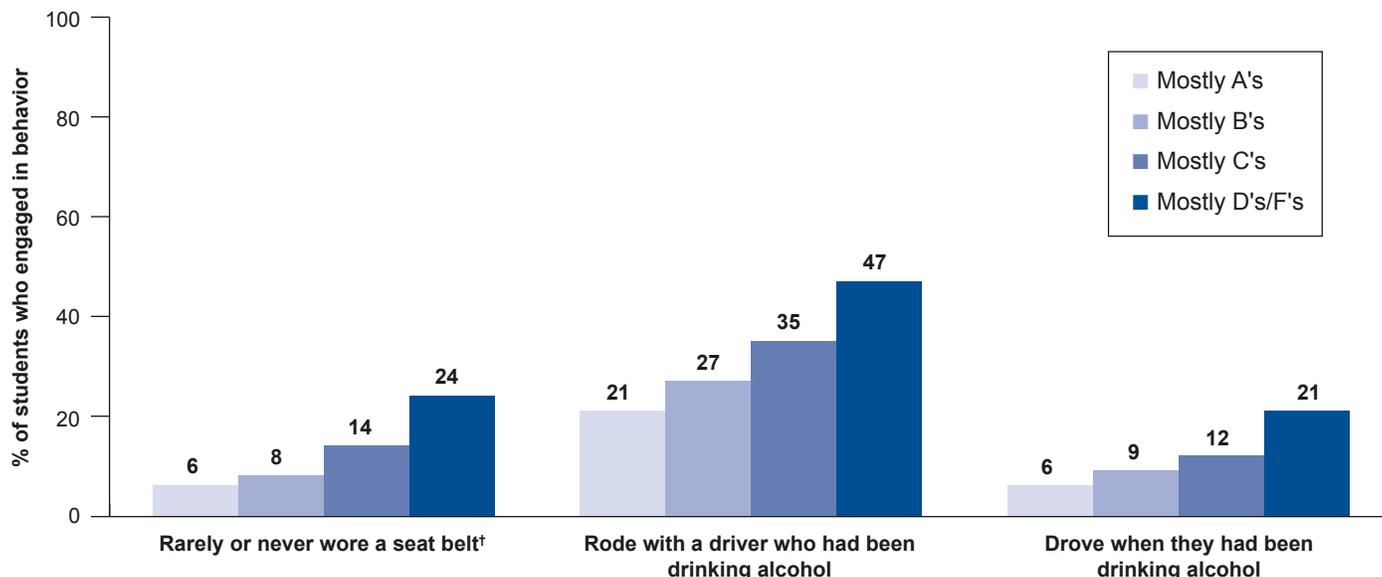
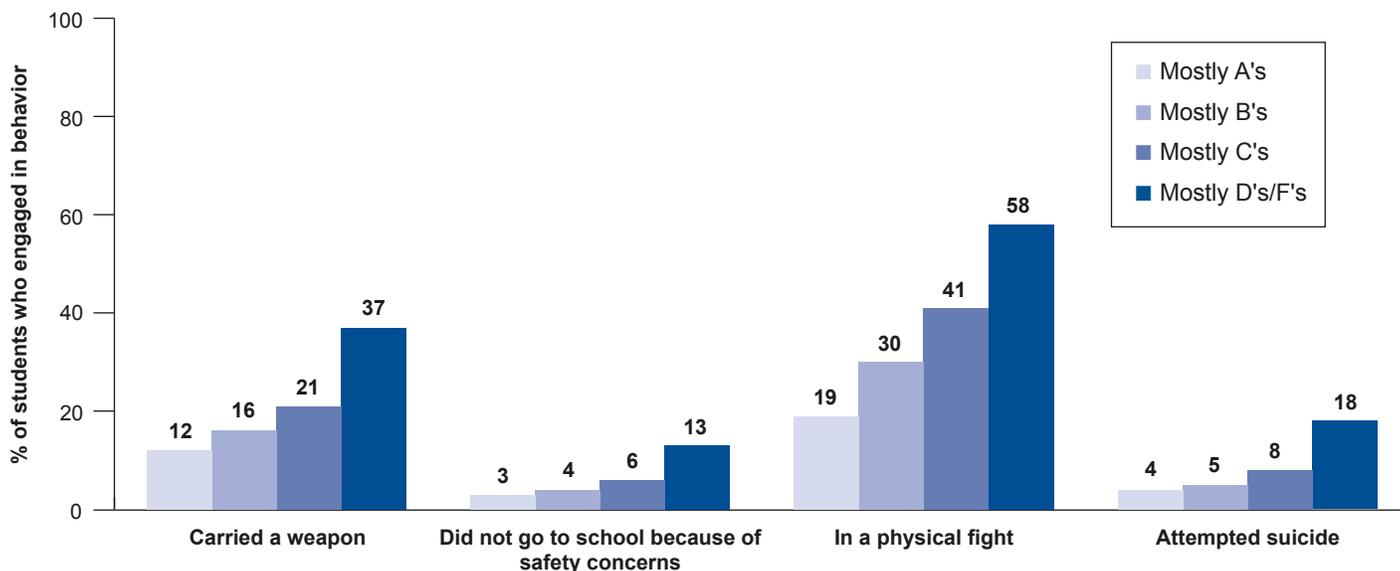


Figure 2. Percentage of high school students who carried a weapon, did not go to school because of safety concerns, were in a physical fight, and attempted suicide, by type of grades earned (mostly A's, B's, C's, or D's/F's)—United States, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009



† This means that 6% of students with mostly A's rarely or never wore a seat belt and 24% of students with mostly D's or F's rarely or never wore a seat belt.

The national YRBS monitors priority health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. It is conducted every 2 years during the spring and provides data representative of 9th- through 12th-grade students in public and private schools throughout the nation. In 2009, students completing the YRBS were asked, "During the past 12 months, how would you describe your grades in school?" and given seven response options (Mostly A's, Mostly B's, Mostly C's, Mostly D's, Mostly F's, None of these grades, Not sure). In 2009, 31% of students received mostly A's, 40% received mostly B's, 19% received mostly C's, 6% received mostly D's or F's, and 4% reported receiving none of these grades or not sure.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics or call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).



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