

Social Class, Religiosity, Sexual  
Behavior, Substance Use, and  
Well-Being:

Self Esteem  
and  
Depression

# Variables

# Social Class

Measured as an ordinal variable of parents' education:

- Both parents with college degree (45%)
- One or more parents, some college (45%)
- Neither parent with any college background (10%)

# Religiosity

A Scale of:

- Strength of Religious Faith (Non-Existent to Very Strong)
- Frequency of Prayer (< Once/week to Several Times a Day)
- Closeness to God (Not Close At All to Very Close)
- Church Attendance (Never to Weekly or More Often)

Range = 4 to 20

**Mean Scale Score = 12.8**

Chronbach's Alpha Measure of Reliability = .872

Davis, J.A., T.W. Smith, and P.V. Marsden. 2004. *General Social Surveys, 1972-2004: [CUMULATIVE FILE]*[Computer File]. ICPSR 04295-v. 2. Chicago, IL: National Opinion Research Center [producer], 2005. Storrs, CT: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut/Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributors], 2006-04-05.

# Sexual Behavior Measured As:

- Ever had sexual intercourse?  
62% % report “Yes.”
- Number of sex partners in previous year.  
Average # = 1.24
- Number of lifetime sex partners.  
Average # = 2.24

# Substance Use:

- Monthly or more alcohol use  
(70% = “Yes.”)
- Monthly or more marijuana use  
(19% = “Yes.”)

# Self Esteem

A Scale of Ten Questions:

On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

I am able to do things as well as most other people.

I feel I am a person of worth.

I take a positive attitude toward myself (Above were reverse-coded.)

At times I think I am no good at all.

I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

I certainly feel useless at times.

I wish I could have more respect for myself.

All in all, I'm inclined to think that I am a failure.

Response Choices: “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”

Range: 10 to 50

**Mean Scale Score = 38.6**

Chronbach's Alpha Measure of Reliability = .864

# Depression

A Scale of six questions:

To what extent do you currently feel you cannot eat; your appetite is poor?

To what extent do you feel you cannot shake off the blues even with the help of family or friends?

To what extent do you feel everything is an effort?

To what extent is your sleep currently restless?

To what extent do you currently feel sad?

To what extent do you feel you cannot “get going?”

Responses:

- Rarely or none of the time (< 1 day/wk).
- Some of a little of the time 1-2 days/wk)
- Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days/wk)
- Most all of the time (5-7 days/wk).

Range = 0 – 18

**Mean Scale Score = 4.50**

Chronbach' s Alpha Measure of Reliability = .785



# Regression Analyses

Those from higher social class backgrounds are significantly more likely:

- To be sexually abstinent (lifetime virgins);
- To have had fewer sex partners in the previous year;
- To have had fewer sex partners in their lifetime.
- To report higher levels of self-esteem
- To report lower levels of depression

Those with higher reported level of religiosity  
also report significantly:

- Fewer sex partners, lifetime and previous year;
- Higher levels of self-esteem;
- Lower levels of depression.

Those reporting higher levels of depression  
also report significantly:

- More sex partners, lifetime and previous year;
- Lower religiosity;
- Lower self-esteem.

Those reporting higher levels of self-esteem  
also report significantly:

- More sex partners, lifetime and previous year;
- Higher religiosity;
- Lower depression.

# Sexually Active vs. Abstinent

- Sexually active respondents report:
  - Higher levels of self-esteem
  - Higher levels of depression
- Sexually abstinent respondents (lifetime virgins) report:
  - Higher religiosity
  - Higher social class

Those reporting monthly or more alcohol use also report significantly:

- Lower religiosity;
- Higher depression.

Those reporting monthly or more marijuana use also report significantly:

- Lower religiosity;
- Higher depression.