

First Glance: Quality of Life of Women and Girls in Monterey County

This study represents the first ever look at what is known specifically about the lives of women and girls in Monterey County. It incorporates the most current information available by gender at the time of its printing in 2004. After a year of planning and another year of broad-based community research, the result is *First Glance* produced by Tellus/Díganos Center for Community Research. Data was collected from a wide variety of existing local sources. Small focus groups and eight half-day meetings to gather primary information were also convened.

The researchers hope that the report provides a benchmark for future research and a starting point for more in-depth studies, and serves as a catalyst that brings the community together to support women and girls in reaching their full potential.

Report Overview

This report uses a community indicator model: through a community process a wide range of indicators were identified, each one potentially a telling and important facet of the larger picture. In selecting the final indicators, three criteria were applied:

1. The indicator provides the best possible picture of an issue
2. The indicator has data that stakeholders will need and utilize
3. There are reliable, up-to-date and accurate data to measure the indicator

In many cases, although community members identified a topic as important, no data was available. The report attempts to capture these data gaps and recognize them as issues that provoke questions and need further study.

Whenever possible, time trends, gender and age comparisons and observed differences between geographic areas of the county were incorporated into the report.

First Glance is divided into three sections:

1. Demographics and Economics looks at the size and characteristics of the county's female population and provides a context for understanding the other two sections.
2. Girls and Young Women highlights issues for Monterey County's young and teenage girls (age 17 and under).
3. Adult Women and Seniors highlights issues for adult women (age 18-64) and senior women (age 65 and older).

Expanding the View

As previously noted, much of the information contained in *First Glance* comes from secondary data sources. However, focus groups were conducted with both young women and senior women that allowed a glimpse into how these two groups of women think about their lives. The responses and experiences of these women reinforced the findings from the data.

South County Teens Speak Out

Focus groups with teens were held at two South County high schools. South County has the highest concentration of girls and young women in the County.

1. What do you want to do after high school?
 - Go to college and get a degree
 - Move out of my town; travel
 - Become independent
2. What do your friends & family want you to do?
 - Go to college
 - Have a good career
 - Be happy, follow my dreams
3. What are your challenges?
 - Not enough money
 - Fear of failure
 - Safety; fear of being away from home

Monterey Peninsula Seniors Speak Out

Focus groups with senior women were held at two Peninsula senior centers. The Monterey Peninsula has the highest concentration of senior women in the County.

1. What does being healthy mean to you?
 - Keeping a positive outlook
 - Being involved in the community
 - Energy, stamina, ability to think clearly
2. What are some health problems you are concerned about?
 - Blood pressure and cholesterol
 - Vision problems
 - Cancer
3. What are some of the barriers to getting the health or social services you need?
 - Not enough money; inadequate health coverage
 - Being turned down by doctors
 - Transportation; physical access to services
4. What are some services you would like to see in your community?
 - Simple information sources
 - Support groups
 - Local network of service technicians with experience helping seniors

Demographics and Economics

Highlights:

- ✓ The median earnings of men who worked full-time, year-round are 28% higher than women who worked full-time, year-round
- ✓ Of women ages 18 – 24, 22% are below the federal poverty level as are 30% of single mothers living with their children
- ✓ Almost 30% of women over age 25 do not have a high school diploma
- ✓ Almost half of newborn babies have mothers with less than a 12th grade education
- ✓ More women than men receive undergraduate degrees; men receive more graduate degrees

Population

Women and girls make up 48% of Monterey County's population. According to the 2000 Census, there were 138,520 adult women and 55,301 girls under 18. Hispanic or Latina women represent 45% of the female population.

Education

Thirty percent of women and 28% of men over age 25 held an associate, bachelors, masters or doctoral degree. In contrast, the number of births to mothers with less than 12 years of education rose from 45% in 1998 to 47% in 2002. By 2005, the percentage was again 45%.

Income

Approximately 14% of women and girls fall below the federal poverty level, with the highest poverty rates among women ages 18 – 24. In comparison, only 7% of women ages 65-74 fall below the poverty line. Nearly 1 out of every 5 girls under age 18 was living in poverty in 2000. Women head 13% of households; in Carmel that number jumps to 26%. Over 10,000 women and girls receive food stamps each month. Eighty-six percent of births to teens under age 18 were funded by Medi-Cal.

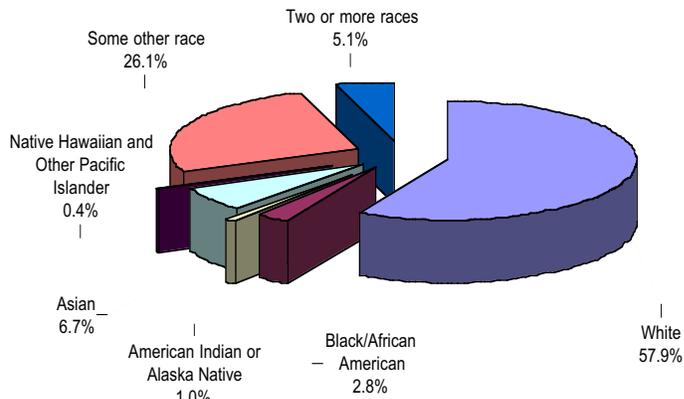
Employment

Of women 16 and older, 44% were employed full time in comparison to 69% of men. The unemployment rate for women and men was similar: 9.8% vs. 9.4%. The greatest gender disparity between elected city and district officials as of the fall of 2003 was in district offices with men holding 77% of the offices.

Questions Remain:

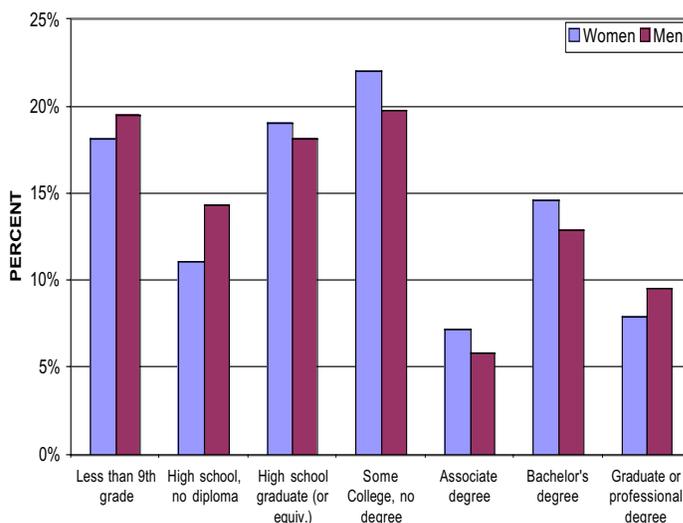
- ✓ Are men making better wages than women in the same occupations?
- ✓ How many women over 65 are still working? Are they working because they can't afford to retire?
- ✓ Does the lack of affordable housing affect women more than men?
- ✓ How large is the informal job sector for women - work such as unlicensed childcare, house-cleaning and cooking for undeclared cash payments?

WOMEN BY RACE

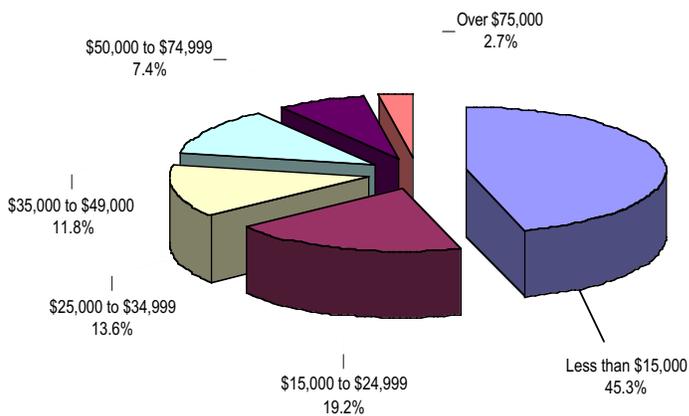


Source: United States Census Bureau, Census 2000.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY GENDER



EARNINGS OF WOMEN IN MONTEREY COUNTY



Source: United States Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Girls and Young Women

Highlights

- ✓ Only 27% of girls graduating from public high schools have completed the required classes to enter the UC or CSU systems. This is 11% lower than the state average.
- ✓ The number of girls receiving county mental health services increased by 43% from 1998 to 2002.
- ✓ Between 2000 and 2002, calls by girls to local crisis centers increased by 29%.
- ✓ Performance of girls on standardized math tests declines with age.

Education (2002)

A greater percentage of girls than boys scored at or above 50th National Percentile Ranking (NPR) on the STAR math test in 5th, 7th and 9th grades; but not in 3rd or 11th grades. At all grade levels, a greater percentage of girls than boys scored at or above the 50th NPR on the STAR reading test. An equal percentage of girls and boys drop out of school (9%), slightly lower than the state average.

Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

In 2002, there were 319 births to mothers age 17 and under, and 555 births to mothers age 18 and 19. In 2005, the numbers are strikingly similar: 319 and 591. Only 5% of all new fathers in 2002 were under age 20. Chlamydia was the most frequently reported STD. Although the numbers are low, the average ratio over a 5-year period is 10 to 1 (213 girls to 20 boys).

Substance Abuse

The numbers of girls and boys reporting use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs is remarkably similar for students in 7th, 9th and 11th grades. However, the number of boys arrested for drug felonies and misdemeanors (199) far outstrips the number of girls (37) in 2002.

Community Safety

The percentages of boys and girls reporting on harassment and safety issues is similar, with the exception of physical fights, where the percentage of boys in fights is more than double the percentage for girls.

Juvenile Crime

Between the years 1998 and 2002, boys were three times more likely than girls to be arrested. The rate of arrest for both boys and girls is declining.

Questions Remain

- ✓ What kinds of support are available to help girls improve achievement?
- ✓ How many girls are struggling with problems associated with eating disorders and body image?
- ✓ Do girls have adequate access to health and mental health services?
- ✓ Do after school activities exist for girls that incorporate leadership opportunities?

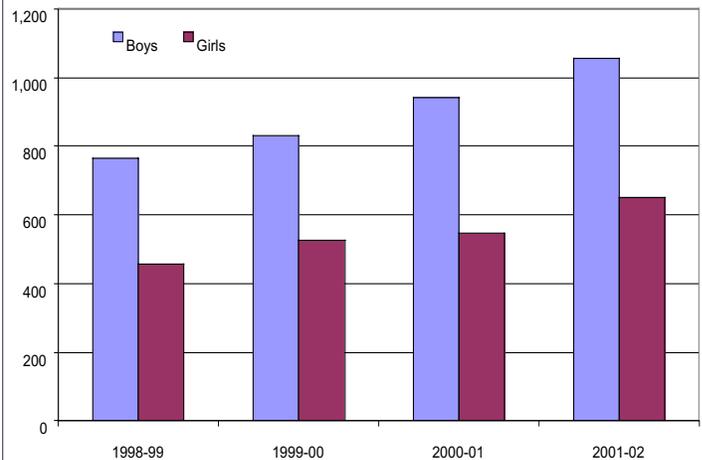
SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Percentage of girls and boys that responded "yes" to the following questions:

During your life, did you ever smoke a cigarette?		
	boys	girls
7th grade	14%	12%
9th grade	25%	20%
11th grade	45%	38%
During your life, did you ever drink alcohol (a glass)?		
7th grade	38%	30%
9th grade	55%	54%
11th grade	69%	71%
During your life, did you ever smoke marijuana?		
7th grade	16%	10%
9th grade	29%	31%
11th grade	45%	44%

Source: California Health Kids Survey, 2000.

YOUTH TREATED BY COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



COMMUNITY SAFETY

Percentage of girls and boys that responded "yes" to the following survey questions:

During the past 12 months at school, have you been harassed because of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or disability?		
7th grade	15% of boys	20% of girls
9th grade	23% of boys	23% of girls
11th grade	30% of boys	25% of girls
During the past 12 months at school have you been in a physical fight?		
7th grade	40% of boys	20% of girls
9th grade	25% of boys	14% of girls
11th grade	26% of boys	8% of girls
Do you feel safe in your neighborhood?		
7th grade	87% of boys	89% of girls
9th grade	89% of boys	87% of girls
11th grade	87% of boys	93% of girls
Have you ever belonged to a street gang?		
7th grade	10% of boys	6% of girls
9th grade	13% of boys	8% of girls
11th grade	14% of boys	8% of girls

Source: California Health Kids Survey, 2000.

Adult Women and Seniors

Highlights

- ✓ More than half (55%) of the students at CSUMB, MPC and Hartnell College are women. They earned 62% of degrees awarded in 2001.
- ✓ The number of domestic violence-related calls increased by 18% from 2001 – 2002.
- ✓ Women are treated for depressive disorders three times more often, and diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder 10 times more often, than men.

Health and Mental Health Access

The majority of women (62%) usually go to a doctor's office or an HMO for treatment when sick or needing health advice. Fourteen percent of women did not have a usual source for healthcare. Nineteen percent of adult women and 7% of senior women reported needing help for an emotional/mental disorder.

Reproductive Health and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Eighty-three percent of mothers giving birth in 2002 received pre-natal care in the 1st trimester of pregnancy. By 2005, that percentage had dropped to 77%. There was a 14% increase in low birth weight babies from 1998 – 2002. Chlamydia cases increased by 81%. From 2001-2002, Hepatitis C cases dropped by 50%.

Substance Abuse

There was a 10% increase in the number of women admitted to treatment for substance abuse and a 51% increase among men from 2000 – 2002. Among adult women, 48% drank alcohol and 11% considered themselves smokers. For seniors, 52% drank alcohol and 8% were current smokers.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

In 2002, 122 women and 524 men were arrested for spousal abuse. In 2002, there were 36 forcible rape arrests; the number of Sexual Assault Response Team exams given to women increased by 58% and the number of rape arrests increased by 16% from 2001 to 2002.

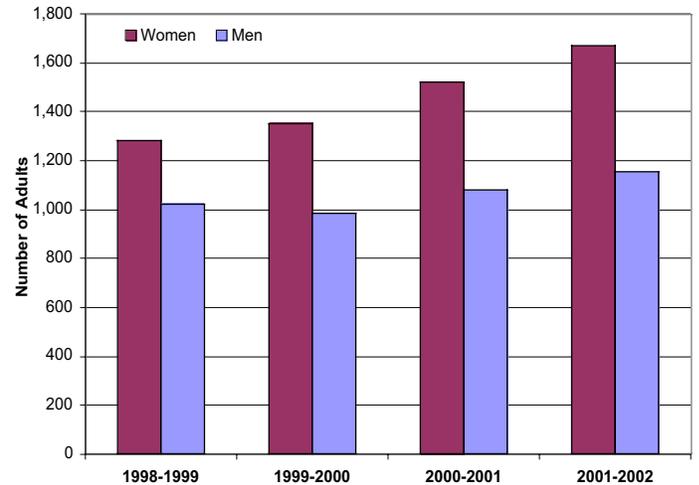
Injuries and Mortality

Among adult women, there were 36 fatal injuries compared with 16 for senior women in 2001. The leading cause of non-fatal injuries for seniors was falls. Men were twice as likely as women to die in accidents and four times as likely to commit suicide.

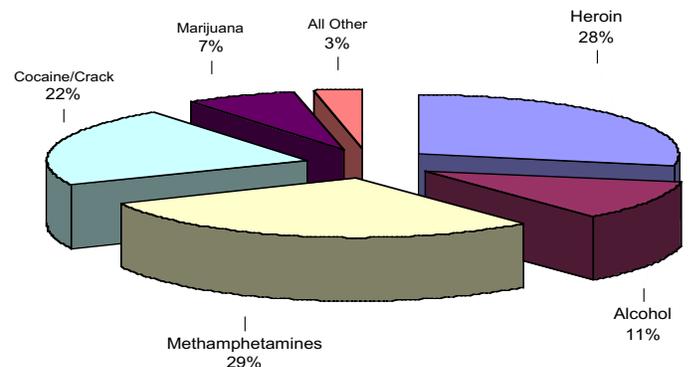
Questions Remain

- ✓ How many local support services are available to help women continue their education?
- ✓ How many seniors report feeling isolated?
- ✓ Do women have adequate access to health and mental health services?
- ✓ Are more women than men victims of workplace harassment or job discrimination?

WOMEN TREATED BY COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



FEMALE DRUG TREATMENT BY TYPE



CAUSES OF DEATH IN ADULT WOMEN

