Hospital Emergency Room as Usual Source of Care

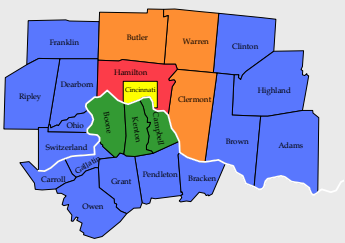
Results from the 2005 *Child Well Being Survey (CWB)*
Child Policy Research Center, The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, and United Way of Greater Cincinnati

The Child Well Being Survey (CWB) is a project of the Child Policy Research Center, The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati and United Way of Greater Cincinnati. The University of Cincinnati's Institute for Policy Research administered the random telephone survey of caregivers of children in a 22-county area in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana from October through December 2005. The survey provides policy-makers, decision-makers, public agencies, and academicians with population-based information to describe and monitor the well being of children in the tri-state area.

Topics include: child health status, selected chronic conditions, medical home, injury requiring medical attention, health insurance, middle childhood activity, food security, child care arrangements, child's behavioral and emotional health, parent perception of substance use, caregiver's health status and selected adult health measures. Many questions were taken from the National Survey of American Families, the National Children's Health Survey, and the National Health Interview Survey. These questions provide national estimates to compare to CWB estimates.

The sample includes 1,559 completed interviews. The sampling area was grouped into five geographic regions: city of Cincinnati; Hamilton County outside the city, Ohio suburban counties (Butler/Clermont/ Warren); Northern Kentucky suburban counties (Boone/ Campbell/Kenton); and 15 rural counties in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. The 2005 sample data is weighted to provide accurate population estimates.

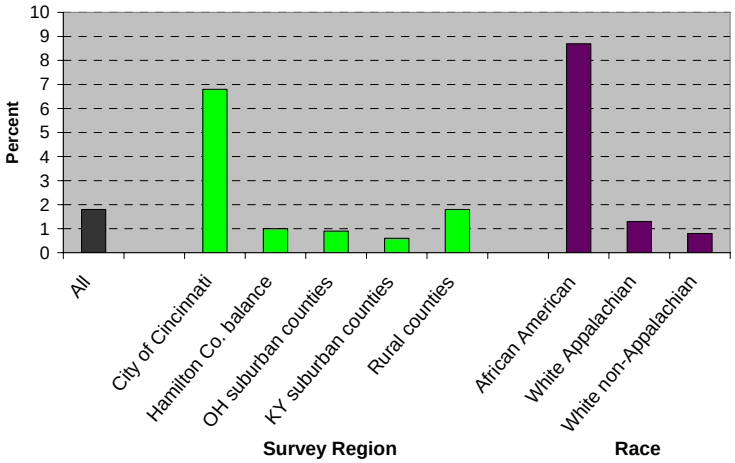
Five Geographic Regions



Selected Findings

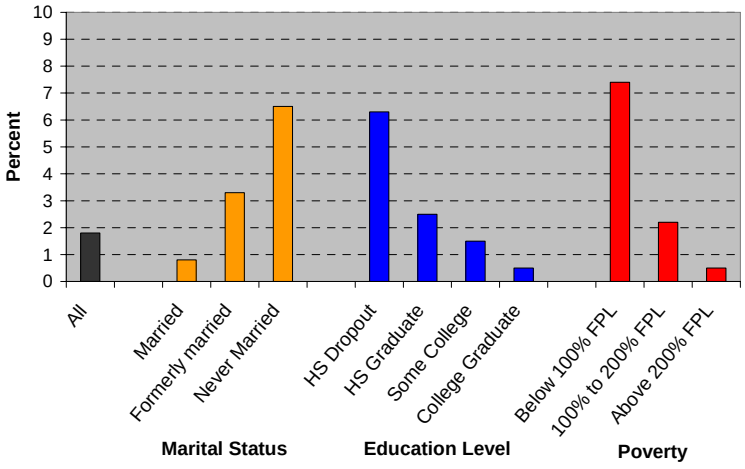
Although fewer than 2% of caregivers reported that they use a hospital emergency room as their child's usual source of medical care, there is considerable variation across regions, race/ethnic groups, and socio-economic classifications. Use of a hospital emergency room (ER) as the usual source of pediatric care is highest in Cincinnati, in part because of proximity but also due to the city's demographic composition. Almost 9% of African American children in the 22-county survey area are brought to an ER when they're sick or their caregiver needs advice regarding the child's health. This usage rate is 10 times higher than the comparable rate for white non-Appalachian children, and almost seven times higher than the rate for white Appalachian kids.

Hospital ER as usual source of care, by selected characteristics



Use of a hospital ER is more common among caregivers with income below the federal poverty level, as well as never-married caregivers and those who failed to complete high school. A high school dropout is 12 times more likely than a college graduate to bring her child to the ER for non-emergency care. Similarly, use of the ER is eight times higher for children with never-married caregivers than it is among kids with a married caregiver, and two times higher than among children of caregivers who are separated, divorced, or widowed. Children in households below the poverty level come to the ER for routine care at a rate almost 15 times higher than children in higher-income households, above 200% of poverty level.

Hospital ER as usual source of care, by selected caregiver characterics



For more information about this health topic and other child health issues or for a custom analysis of the data, please contact the Child Policy Research Center at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Phone (513) 636-0180; fax (513) 636-0171; or Email at ***www.cincinnatichildrens.org/cprc****.*

Child Policy Research Center
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center