

# Why Don't More Children Walk to School?

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# Acknowledgments

- Arlene Greenspan, DrPH, MPH
  - ◆ *Co-author*
- Office of Statistics and Programming, NCIPC
  - ◆ *Coordination of survey*



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# Background

- In recent decades...
  - ◆ Decline in rates of children walking to school
  - ◆ Increase in overweight among children
  - ◆ Low physical activity levels among children



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# Background (2)

- **School-aged children and traffic safety**
  - ◆ **Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death among children 5-14 years**
  - ◆ **School-aged children disproportionately likely to be killed as pedestrians**



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# Study Purpose

- To identify students' usual mode of travel to school
- For those who don't walk to school, to identify the primary reason why not



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# Methods/ Analysis



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# Data Source: Second Injury Control and Risk Survey (ICARIS-2)

- Nationally representative, telephone survey; July 2001-Feb 2003
- English- and Spanish-speaking households
- Sample size = 2,274



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# Analysis

- Prevalence of usual mode of travel to school
- Prevalence of primary barrier to walking more often



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# Analysis (2)

- Sociodemographic variables included...
  - ◆ Child's sex
  - ◆ Child's age group
  - ◆ Annual household income
  - ◆ Census region



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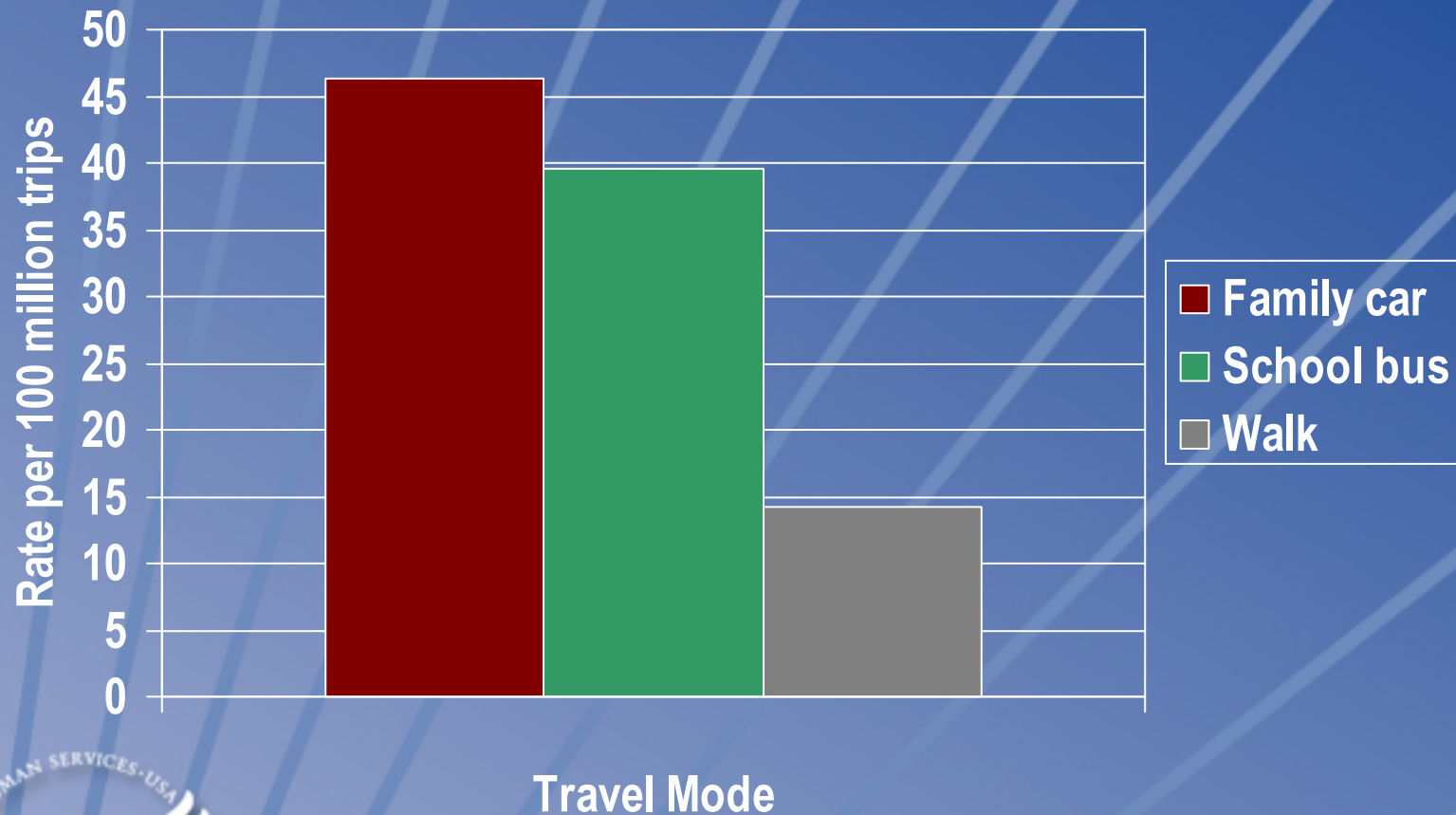
# Results



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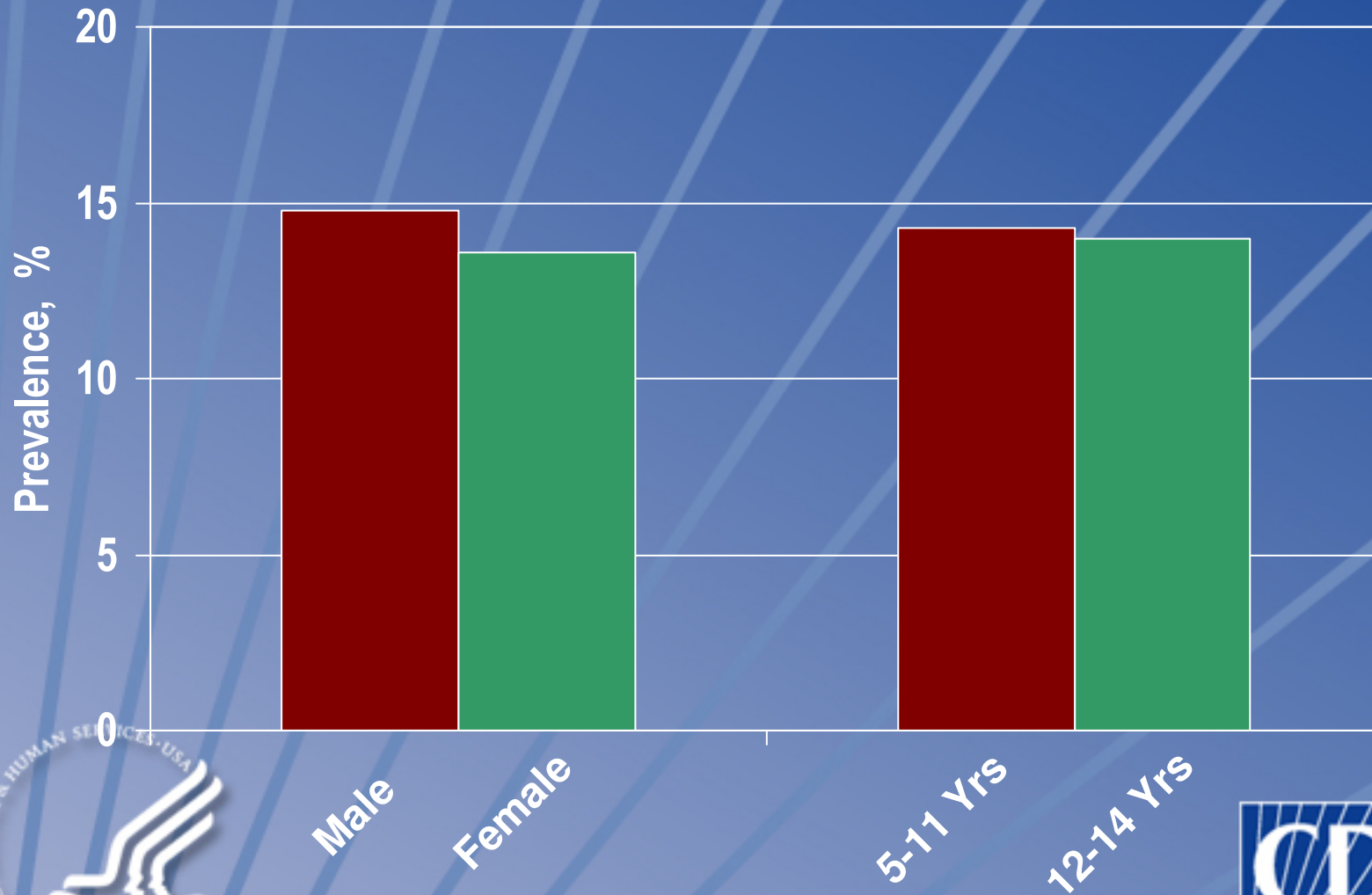
# Usual Mode of Travel to School, Ages 5-14 Years



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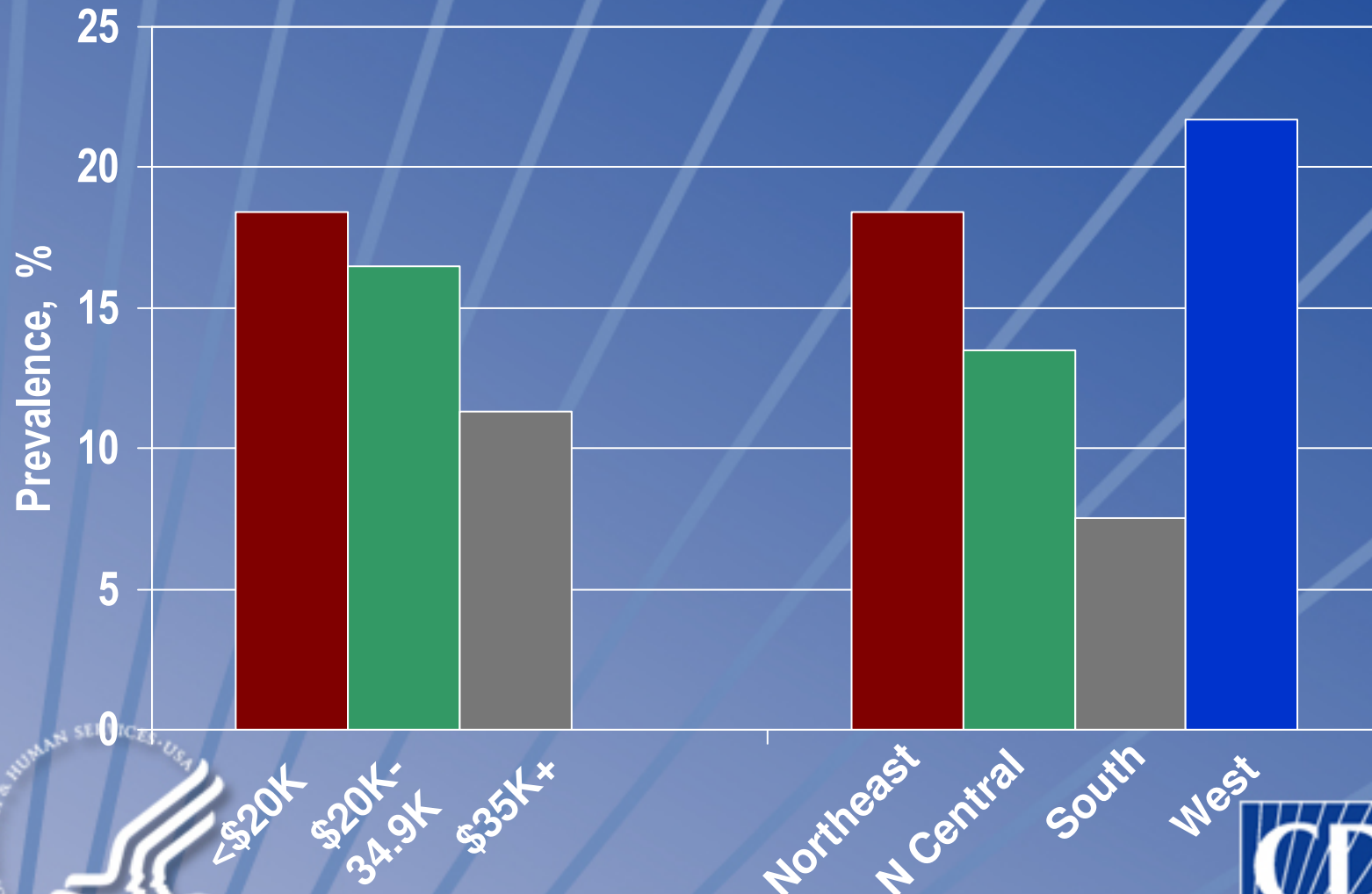
# Prevalence of Walking to School, by Sex and Age



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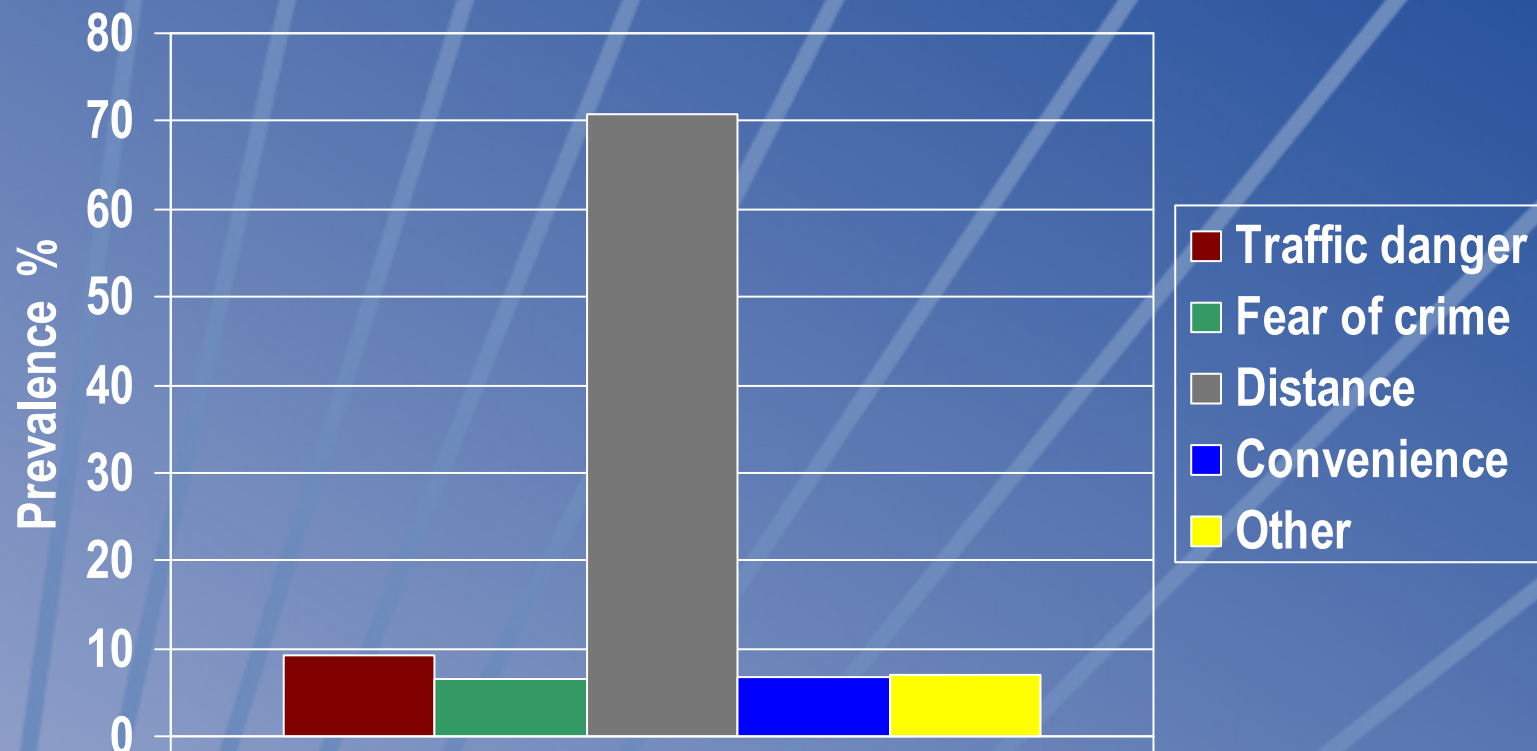
# Prevalence of Walking to School, by Income and Region



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# Primary Barrier to Walking to School, Ages 5-14 Years



Primary Barrier



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# Key Findings/ Conclusions



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# Key Findings

- Distance and traffic safety must be addressed
- Low levels of walking to school continue in US – especially in the South
- Regional differences – could the built environment be a factor?



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# Conclusions

- **Improve pedestrian safety**
  - ◆ Infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, traffic signals, etc.)
  - ◆ Speed limit reductions and enforcement
  - ◆ Pedestrian safety education, adult supervision, crossing guards
- **Reduce distance to school with better school siting**



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# Thank you!

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*Disclaimer: The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.*



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