

RHS

Our Voice, Our Survey, Our Reality

***Selected Results from
RHS Phase 1 (2002/03)***



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This report is available in English and French electronically at: www.rhs-ers.ca.

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Special thanks to Health Canada for its continued support for the RHS process.
Les versions françaises de cette publication sont disponibles sur demande.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **RHS Quick Facts!** This booklet highlights results from the First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS) 2002/03 National Report. It provides a snapshot of the health and living conditions in First Nations communities for the following topics:

SURVEY SAMPLING	2
AGE GROUPS	5
MARITAL STATUS AND FAMILY STRUCTURE	5
EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT	6
LANGUAGE AND TRADITION	8
HOUSING	9
CHRONIC DISEASE	11
DIABETES	13
BMI AND OBESITY	14
INJURIES	15
DENTAL CARE	16
SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE	17
DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE	19
HEALTH CARE ACCESS	20
NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS	20
DISABILITY	21
MENTAL HEALTH	22
SEXUAL HEALTH	23
SENIORS	24
LIST OF FIGURES	25

The RHS was conducted in 238 First Nations on-reserve and other communities between August 2002 and November 2003, with more than 22,000 participants across the country. The RHS includes three questionnaires designed for adults (18 years and over), youth (12 to 17 years), and children (0 to 11 years). The RHS is coordinated nationally at the Assembly of First Nations and with ten First Nations regional organizations. Nationally, the First Nations Information Governance Committee (a standing committee of the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs Committee on Health) oversees and guides the survey.

We wish to thank all First Nations who participated directly or indirectly in the RHS process. For detailed results, please refer to *The Peoples' Report* and the First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey 2003/03: Results for Adults, Youth and Children in First Nations Communities (34 chapters), available on CD and on our website at

www.rhs-ers.ca

SURVEY SAMPLING

Figure 1. Number of sub-regions, communities, and the proportion of the on-reserve population sampled by region.

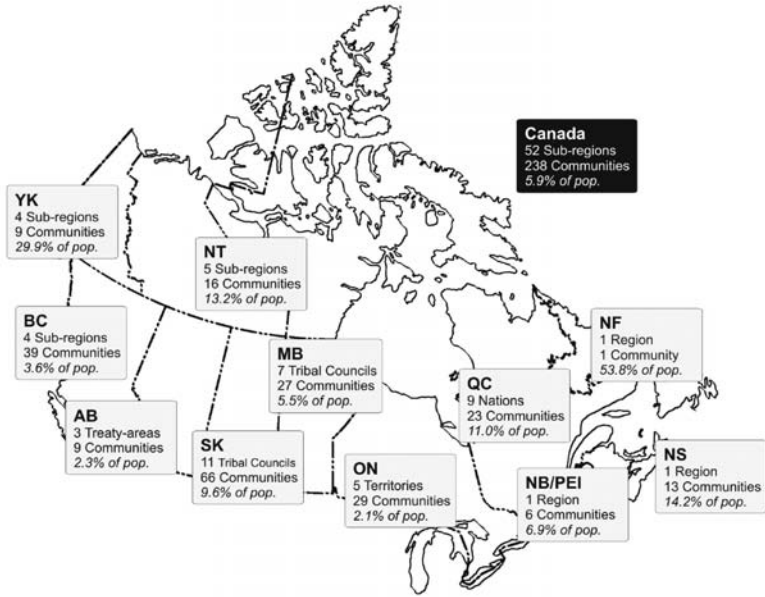


Table 1. Listing of participating communities by region.

Alberta

Alexander First Nation
 Driftpile First Nation
 Kainai
 Kapawe'no First Nation
 Nakoda Bearspaw
 Piikani First Nation
 Siksika Nation
 Sucker Creek First Nation
 Swan River First Nation

British Columbia

Adams Lake Indian Band
 Cambell River (We Wai Kum First Nation)
 Canim Lake Indian Band
 Columbia Lake Indian Band
 Cowichan Tribes
 Ehattesaht First Nation
 Fort Nelson First Nation
 Gitlakdamix Village Government (New Aiyansh)
 Glen Vowell Indian Band
 Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw Nation
 Heiltsuk Nation
 Katzie First Nation
 Kwadacha Band

Laxgalts'ap Village Government
 Leq'a'mel First Nation
 Malahat First Nation
 Metlakatla Band
 Mount Currie Band Council
 Musqueam Indian Band
 Nadleh Whuten Band (Nadleh Whuden)
 Nanoose First Nation
 Nee-Tahi-Buhn Band
 N'Quat'qua Band
 Okanagan Indian Band
 Osoyoos Indian Band
 Scowltz First Nation
 Seabird Island Band
 Sechelt Indian Band
 Skway First Nation
 Sliammon
 Soowahlie First Nation
 Stone Indian Band (Yunesit'in)
 Takla Lake First Nation
 Tl'azt'en Nation (T'slasden)
 Tsartlip First Nation
 T'sesahlt First Nation
 T'zeachten First Nation
 Westbank First Nation

Williams Lake Indian Band (Sugar Cane)

Manitoba*

Barren Lands
Bloodvein
Borkehead Ojibway First Nations
Canupawakpa Dakota First Nation
Ebb and Flow
Fairford
Fisher River
Fort Alexander
Garden Hill First Nation
Grand Rapids First Nation
Hollow Water
Kinojeoshtegon First Nation
Little Black River
Long Plain
Mathias Colomb
Norway House First Nation
Opaskwayak Cree Nation
Pine Creek
Rolling River
Roseau River
Sayisi Dene First Nation
Sioux Valley Dakota Nation
Split Lake Cree, First Nation
St. Theresa Point
Waywayseecappo
Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation
York Factory First Nation

New Brunswick*

Big Cove
Eel Ground
Kingsclear
Madawaska Maliseet First Nation
Saint Mary's
Woodstock

Northwest Territories*

Dechi Laot'I First Nations
Deh Gah Gotie Dene Council
Deninu K'ue First Nation
Dog Rib Rae
Fort Good Hope
Gwitchia Gwich'in
Hay River Dene
Jean Marie River First Nation
Liidii Kue First Nation
Lutsel K'e Dene
Pehdzeh Ki First Nation
Tetlit Gwich'in
Tulita Dene
Wha Ti First Nation
Yellowknives Fene First Nation

Nova Scotia/Newfoundland

Acadia
Afton (Paq'tnkek)
Annalopsis Valley
Bear River
Chapel Island First Nation (Potlotek)

Eskasoni
Horton
Membertou
Miawpukek
Millbrook
Pictou Landing
Shubenacadie
Wagmatcook
Waycocomagh (We'koqma'q)

Ontario

Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation
Bkejwanong Territory (Walpole Island)
Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point
Chippewas of Mnjikaning First Nation
Chippewas of the Thames First Nations
Couchiching First Nation
Delaware First Nation (Moravian of the Thames)
Eabametoong First Nation
Eagle Lake
Ginoogaming First Nation
Grassy Narrows First Nations
Kee-Way-Win
Lac Seul
Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte
Naotkamegwanning Anishinabe First Nation
Ojibways of Batchewana
Ojibways of Pic River First Nation
Oneida Nation of the Thames
Sachigo Lake
Sagamok Anishnawbek
Sandy Lake
Saugeen
Temagami First Nation
Upper Mohawk: Six Nations (plus other 12 bands)
Wabigoon First Nation
Wahta Mohawks
Wasauksing First Nation
Whitefish Lake First Nation
Whitefish River

Quebec

Betsiamites
Eagle Village - Kipawa
Essipit
Gesgapegiag
Kanesatake
Kawawachikamach
Kitigan Zibi
Lac Simon
Listuguj
Malécites de Viger
Manawan
gMashteuatish
Natashquan
Odanak
Opticivan
Pakua Shipi
Pikogan
Timiskaming
Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam
Unamen Shipu

Wemotaci
Wendake
Wôlinak

Saskatchewan

Ahtahkakoop First Nation
Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation
Big River First Nation
Birch Narrows First Nation
Black Lake First Nation
Buffalo River Dene Nation
Canoe Lake First Nation
Carry The Kettle First Nation
Clearwater River Dene First Nation
Cote First Nation 366
Cowessess First Nation
Cumberland House Cree Nation
Day Star First Nation
English River First Nation
Fishing Lake First Nation
Flying Dust First Nation
Fond du Lac First Nation
Gordon First Nation
Hatchet Lake First Nation
Island Lake First Nation
James Smith First Nation
Kahkewistahaw First Nation
Kawacatoose First Nation
Keeseekoose First Nation
Key First Nation
La La Ronge First Nation
Little Black Bear First Nation
Little Pine First Nation
Makwa Sahgaiehcán First Nation
Mistiwasia First Nation
Montreal Lake First Nation
Moosomin First Nation
Mosquito-Grizzly Bear's Head First Nation
Muscowpetung First Nation
Muskeg Lake First Nation
Muskoday First Nation
Muskowekwan First Nation
Nekaneet First Nation
Ocean Man First Nation
Ochapowace First Nation
Okanese First Nation
One Arrow First Nation
Onion Lake First Nation
Pasqua First Nation #79
Peepeekisis First Nation
Pelican Lake First Nation
Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation
Pheasant Rump Nakota First Nation
Piapot First Nation
Poundmaker First Nation
Red Earth First Nation
Red Pheasant First Nation
Sakimay First Nation
Saulteaux First Nation
Shoal Lake of The Cree Nation
Star Blanket First Nation
Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Sweetgrass First Nation
Thunderchild First Nation
Wahpeton Dakota Nation
Waterhen Lake First Nation
Whitebear First Nation
Whitecap Dakota/Sioux First Nation
Witchehan Lake First Nation
Wood Mountain First Nation
Yellow Quill First Nation

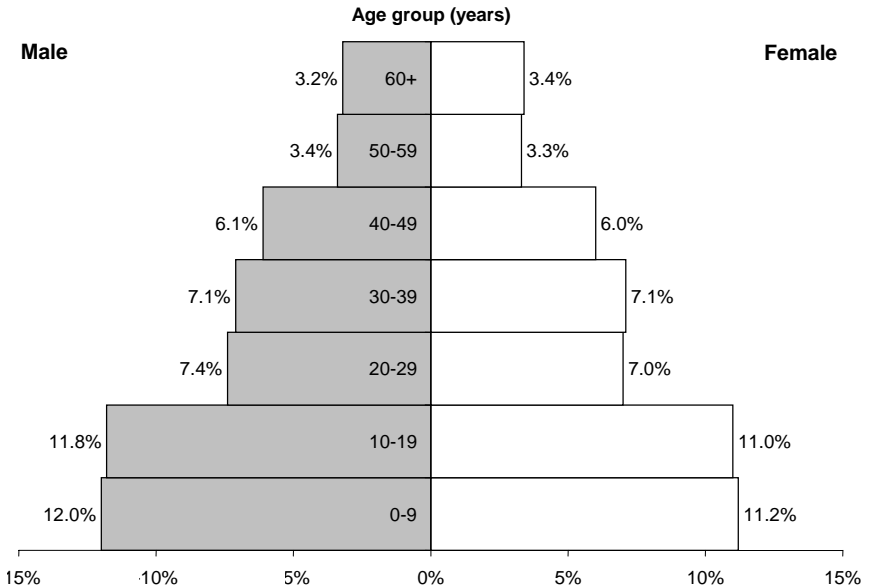
Yukon

Kluane First Nation
Kwanlin Dun First Nation
Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation
Ross River Dena Council
Selkirk First Nation
Teslin Tlingit Council
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

**Community names are those used in the 2002 Indian Register maintained by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and may not be the communities' preferred names/ spellings.*

AGE GROUPS

Figure 1 First Nations population pyramid



- One fifth of the First Nations population is 19 years old or younger. This is double the proportion of young people in the Canadian population.
- There are a much smaller proportion of seniors (aged 60 years and above) in First Nation communities, amounting to only 3.3% of the total population. In the Canadian population, 8.8% are seniors.

MARITAL STATUS AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

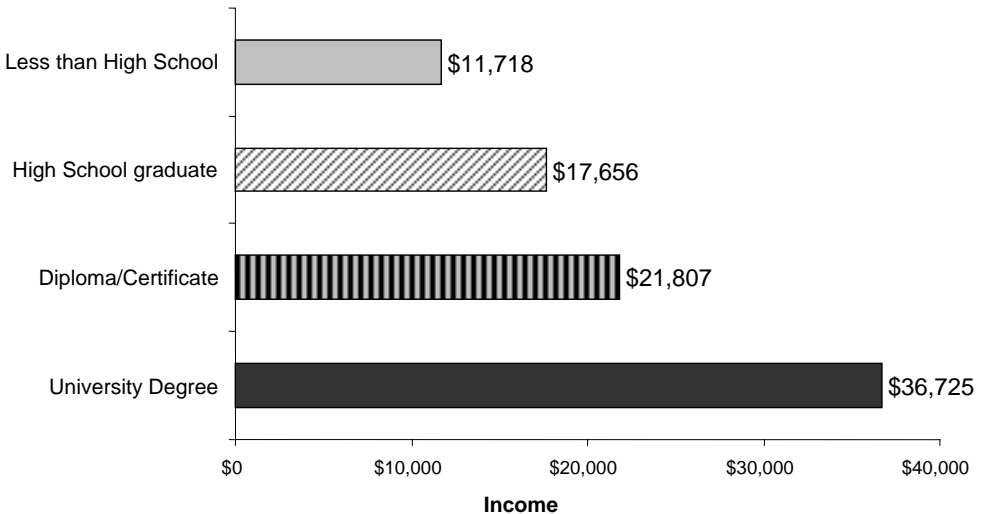
- Almost a third of First Nation adults are married, and 19% in common law relationships. Combined married and common-law status accounts for fifty percent of First Nation adults.
- First Nation men were more likely to be single (40.7%) compared to First Nation women (33.5%). Compared to men, women were more likely to have been previously married (11.6%).

- Almost all First Nations children live with one or both of their parents, accounting for 95.6% of the data. Of those, forty percent of First Nations children grow up in a single parent household.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

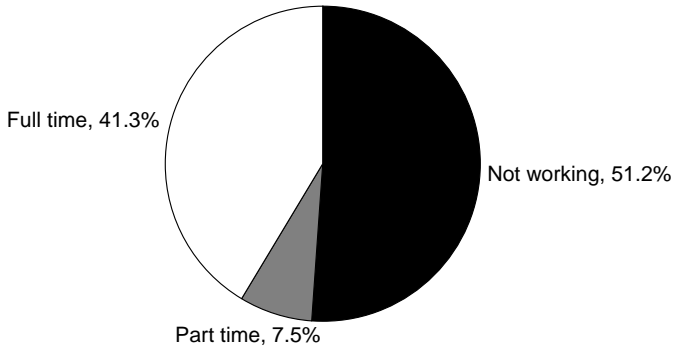
- Over fifty percent of FN adults did not graduate high school, compared to 33.2% in the Canadian population.
- Only 27.4% of First Nations adults completed a diploma or a Bachelors degree, compared with 40.1% of the Canadian population.
- 6.7% of First Nation females completed a university degree, compared to 3.7% of First Nations males.
- Isolated communities had a higher proportion of First Nation adults who did not completed high school (65.6%), compared to non-isolated communities (47.8%).

Figure 2 Personal Income by highest level of education



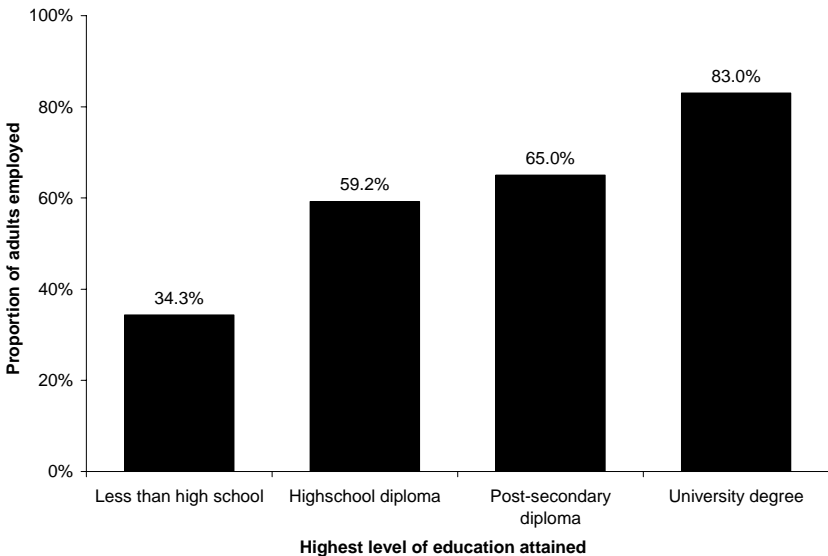
- First Nations who completed a university degree had more than three times the personal income, compared to those who did not complete high school.

Figure 3 Employment status of First Nation adults



- Over half of First Nations adults are currently not working for pay. Of the 48.8% of adults that are working for pay, the majority (83%) are working full-time.
- Compared to First Nation adults with less than high school, those with post-secondary diplomas were almost twice as likely to be employed. First Nation adults with university degrees had the highest proportion of employed, almost 50% greater compared to those with less than high school.

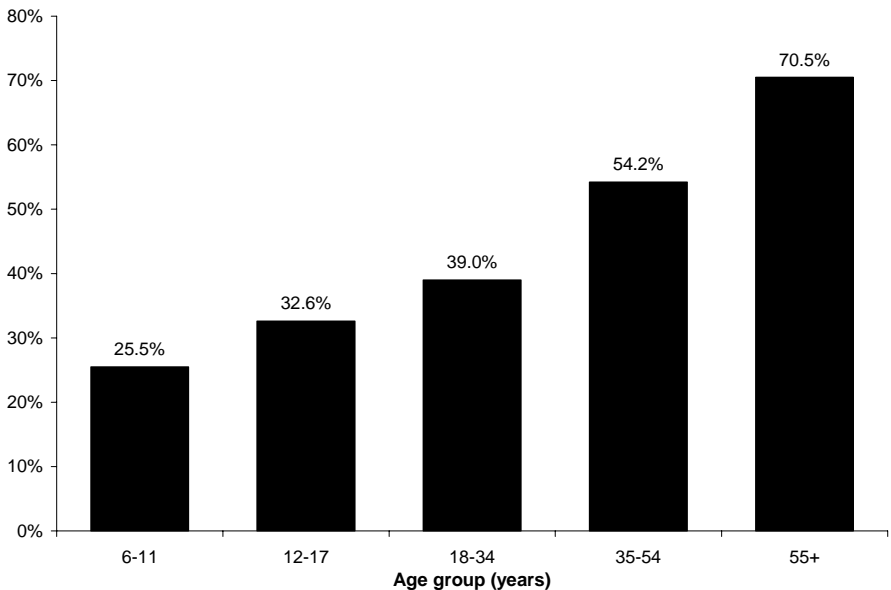
Figure 4 Proportion of FN adults employed, by level of education attained



LANGUAGE AND TRADITION

- About half of First Nation adults understood at least one First Nation language ‘relatively well’ or ‘fluently’.
- Younger generations of First Nations had lower proportions who could understand a First Nations language ‘relatively well’ or ‘fluently’, compared to the older age groups.
- One in four of First Nations children can understand a First Nations language ‘relatively well or fluently, compared to 70.5% of First Nations seniors.

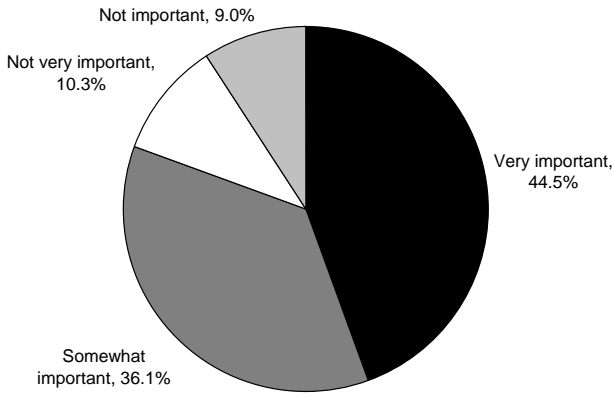
Figure 5 Proportion of First Nation children who understand a First Nations language ‘relatively well’ or ‘fluently’ by age group.



- 12.6% of First Nations youth use a First Nations language exclusively in their daily lives. The majority of First Nations youths speak English in their daily lives (85.4%), while 2.4% speak French.

- Traditional cultural events are important to 80.6% of First Nation adults. For the majority of First Nation adults, traditional spirituality (76.4%) and religion (70.3%) were deemed important in their daily lives.

Figure 6 Importance of traditional cultural events in First Nation adult's lives

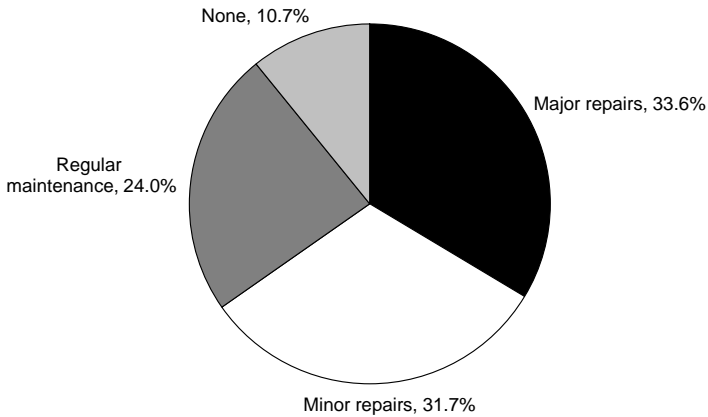


- First Nation youth understanding of their culture comes from four main sources:
 - the family (54.3%)
 - the extended family (53.5%)
 - teachers (30.8%)
 - elders (29.5%)

HOUSING

- Two-thirds (33.6%) of First Nations adults reported that their household was in need of some type of repair
- One in three First Nations adults reported that their household needed major repairs

Figure 7 Reported repair needs by First Nations households



- On average, there are more individuals living in each First Nations household than the general Canadian population.
- The average number of individuals living in each First Nations household was higher in RHS 2002/03 than was reported in the 1991 Census. The household occupant density (average number of persons per house) rose from 3.5 in 1991 to 4.8 in 2002/3, compared to 2.6 occupants per house in the Canadian population (2001).
- Overall, 17.2% of First Nations households are overcrowded. For First Nation households with children, one in four households are overcrowded.
- Almost one in five (18.3%) of First Nations households do not have telephone service in their homes, compared to 3% in the rest of Canada. In remote-isolated First Nations households, over a third of households (34.4%) do not have a telephone with services.

Figure 8 Proportion of First Nations households lacking basic amenities, compared to the rest of Canada

Amenity	RHS 2002/03	Canada
Internet connection	70.7%	45.7%
Computer	59.2%	46.1%
Telephone with service	18.3%	3.0%
Hot running water	3.7%	-
Flush toilet	3.5%	0.2%
Cold running water	3.5%	-
Refrigerator	1.3%	0.2%
Cooking stove	0.7%	-
Electricity	0.5%	-

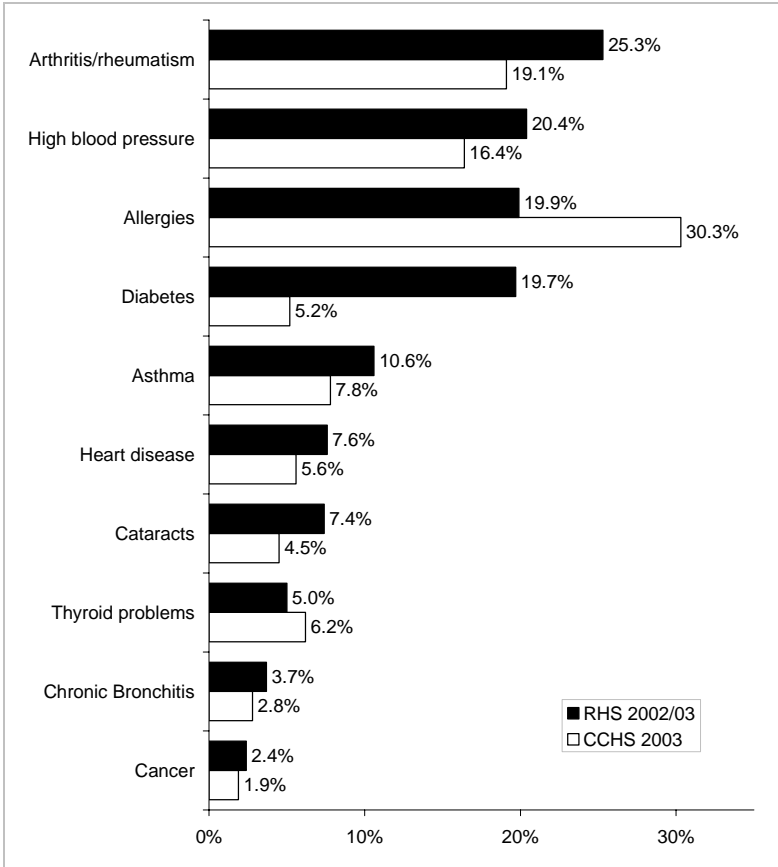
- More than half of First Nations households do not have a computer and 7 out of 10 do not have an internet connection. For FN households that are remote-isolated, over three fourths do not have access to a computer (77.8%) and 84.5% do not have an internet connection.
- 3.5% of First Nation households do not have cold running water or a flush toilet.
- One out of five of adults (21.6%) reported no access to garbage collection services for their household.
- Almost half of First Nations households (44%) reported mould and mildew present in their homes.

CHRONIC DISEASE

- Compared to the general Canadian population, First Nations adults have a higher frequency of arthritis/rheumatism, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, heart disease, cataracts, chronic bronchitis, and cancer.
- One in four First Nation adults has arthritis/rheumatism

- One in five First Nation adults has high blood pressure

Figure 9 Age-adjusted prevalence of chronic conditions compared to the general Canadian adult population

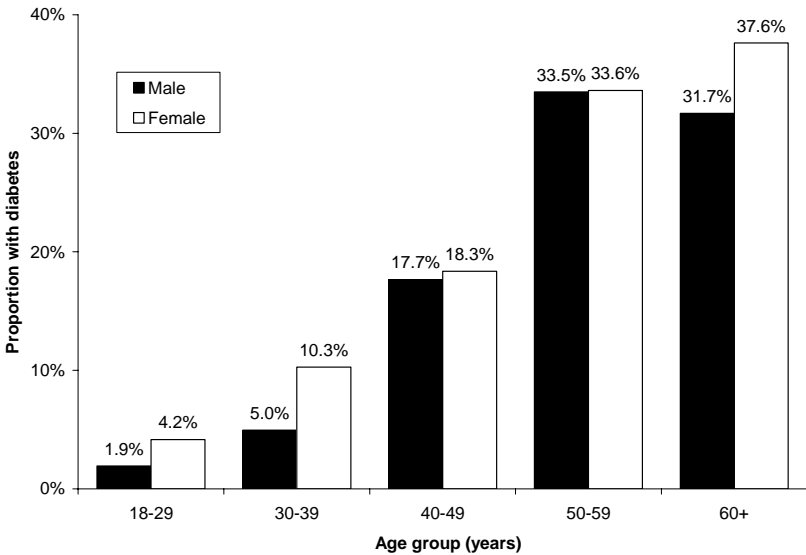


- The top five most prevalent medical conditions of FN youth are allergies (15.1%), asthma (13.6%), chronic ear infections/problems (4.8%), learning disabilities (3.5%), and chronic bronchitis (2.4%)
- The top five most prevalent medical conditions of First Nation children are asthma (14.6%), allergies (12.2%), chronic ear infections/problems (9.2%), chronic bronchitis (3.6%), and learning disabilities (2.9%).

DIABETES

- The frequency (prevalence) of diabetes among First Nations adults is nearly four times as great as the general Canadian population. The general prevalence of diabetes in First Nation adults is 19.7%.
- One in three First Nations adults aged 50-59 years have diabetes
- First Nation females have a higher prevalence of diabetes compared to FN males across all age categories.
- Diabetes is most prevalent among the senior First Nations females (37.6%)

Figure 10 Prevalence of diabetes among First Nation adults, by gender and age group



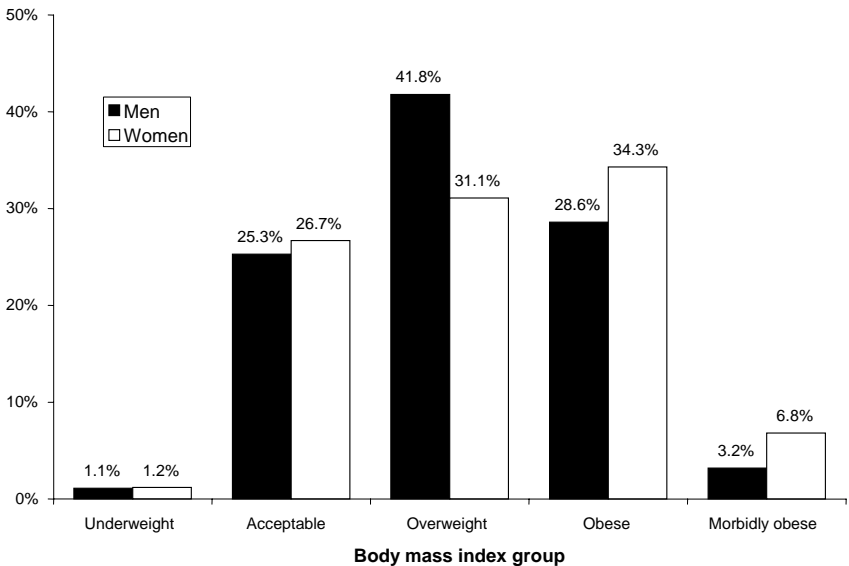
- Treatments for diabetes used by First Nation adults include: pills (68%), diet (65.5%), exercise (52.9%), insulin (16.7%), traditional medicines (12.9%), and traditional healers/ceremonies (6.0%).
- Nearly nine out of ten First Nation adults report adverse consequences related to their diabetes, including vision problems, problems with legs and feet, kidney function and infection, and heart problems.

- The average age of diagnosis of diabetes is 11 years old in First Nation youth

BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) AND OBESITY

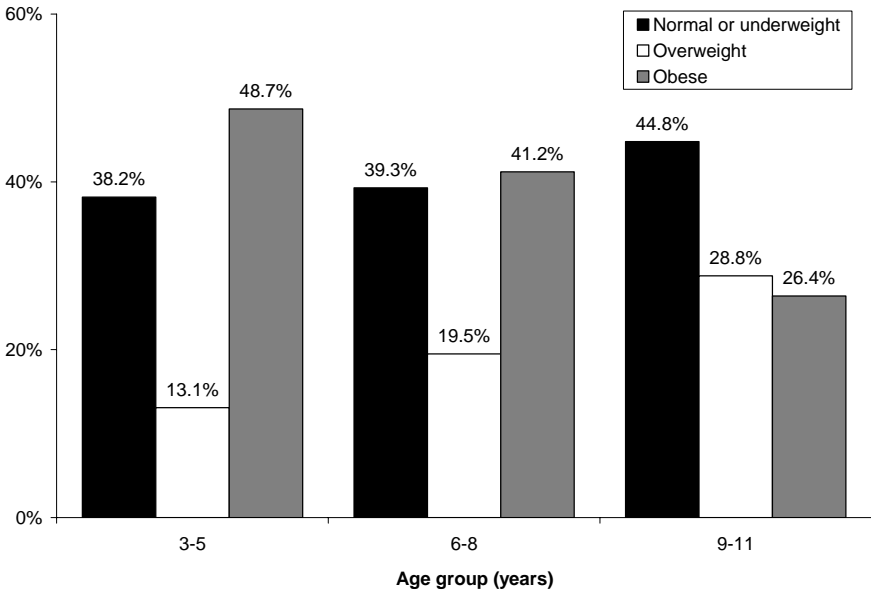
- About one in four First Nation adults are a healthy weight (an acceptable BMI)
- First Nation female adults are more likely to be obese (34.3%) or morbidly obese (6.8%), compared to First Nation males. Over 40% of First Nation males are overweight.

Figure 11 Distribution of body mass index (BMI) among FN adults, by gender



- Over half of First Nations youth are normal or underweight (57.8%). Twenty-eight percent of First Nation youth are overweight, and 14.1% are obese.
- The majority of First Nations children are of normal weight or underweight (41.5%). Twenty-two percent of First Nations children are overweight and thirty-six percent of First Nations children are obese.

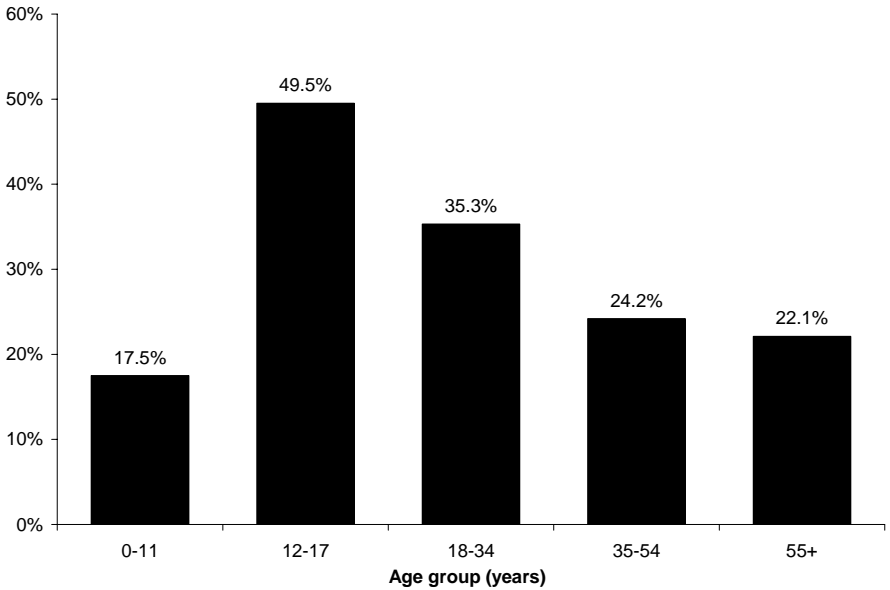
Figure 12 Proportion of First Nation children by BMI status, by age group



INJURIES

- First Nation youth have the highest incidence of injuries, with almost half of the population (49.5%) reporting an injury requiring medical attention.
- The most common causes of injury in First Nation youth are: falls (20.7%), sports (20.1%), motor vehicles (11.9%), bicycles (10.8%), burns (7.6%), and assault (5.3%).
- The most common causes of injury in First Nations children are: falls (7.6%), riding a bicycle (2.8%), sports (2.1%) and motor vehicles (1.5%).

Figure 13 Incidence of injury (one or more requiring the attention of a health professional) among First Nations, by age group



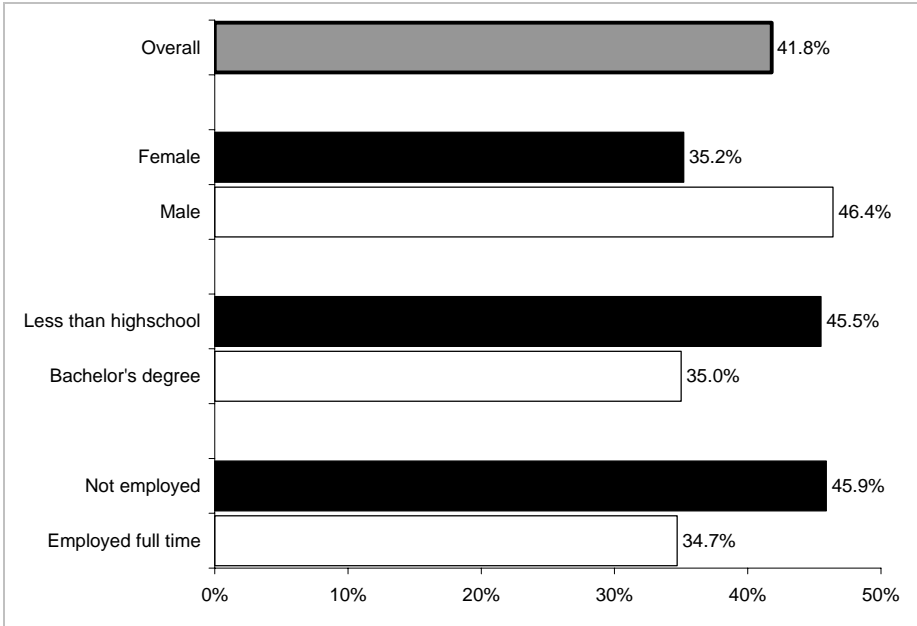
- Leading causes of injury among First Nations adults are: falls (10.7%), sports (6.2%), motor vehicles (5.4%) and domestic violence (4.8%).

DENTAL CARE

- Over forty percent of First Nations adults (41.8%) have not had any dental care in the past year.
- First Nations men were less likely than women to have received any dental care in the past year.
- First Nations who did not complete high school were less likely than those who completed an undergraduate degree to have received any dental care in the past year (45.5% versus 35.0%).
- First Nations who were unemployed were 10% less likely than those who were employed (full time) to have received any dental care in the past year.

- The most common types of dental work needed by First nation adults are: general maintenance (48.8%), cavities/restorative work (36.9%), and prosthetic work. Urgent dental care was required by 5.5% of First Nation adults.

Figure 14 Proportion of First Nation adults who have not had any dental care in the past years, by subgroups

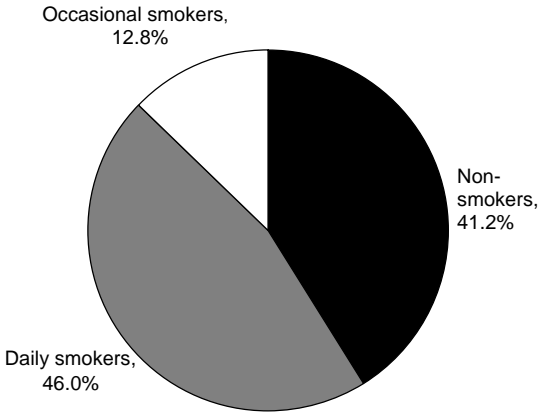


- Almost one in five First Nations children have never had dental care
- There is a high prevalence of Baby Bottle Tooth Decay in First Nations communities, reaching 11.9% of First Nations children (less than three years old).

SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

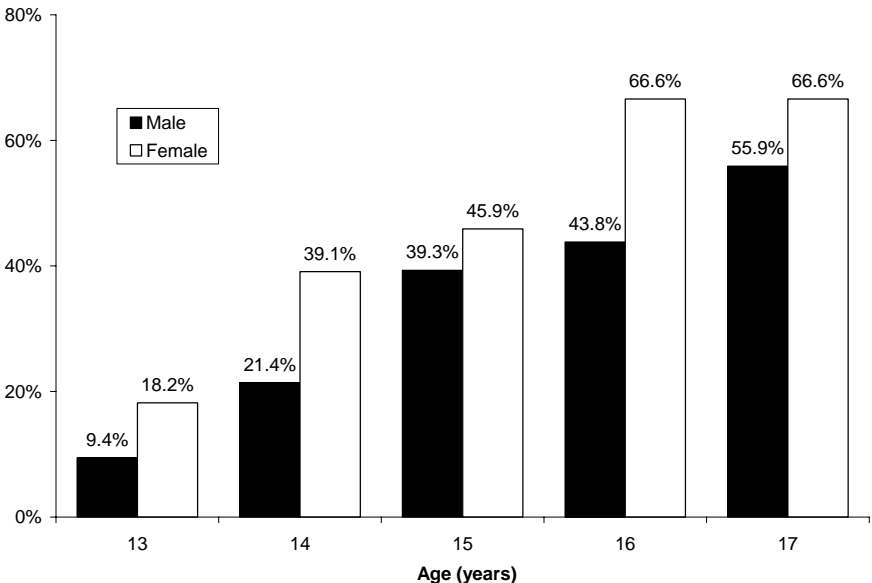
- Almost half of all First Nations are daily smokers (46.0%), with an addition 12.8% self-identifying as occasional smokers.
- Younger First Nations adults, aged 18-29 years, have the highest proportion of daily smokers (53.9%).

Figure 15 Smoking status among First Nation adults



- There are significantly fewer daily smokers in the older age categories (23.5% for age 60+) compared to the younger age groups.
- There is a higher prevalence of smoking among First Nations female youth, across all age groups.
- 36.6% of First Nations children were exposed to some maternal smoking use

Figure 16 Smoking rates among First Nation youth, by age and gender

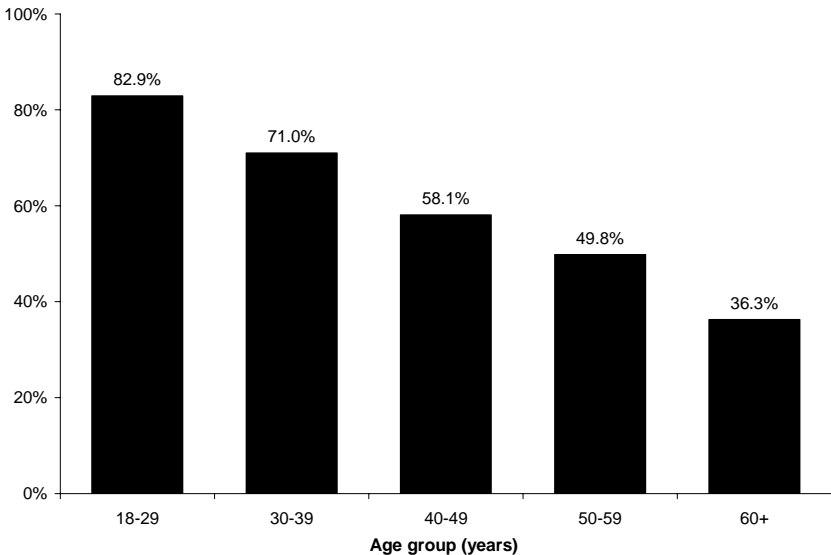


- There are higher proportions of smokers in First Nation youth with increased age.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

- Alcohol consumption is highest in young First Nation adults, with 82.9% drinking in the past year. There is a decrease in the consumption of alcohol in the older age groups.
- Over a third of First Nation adults did not consume alcohol in the past year (34.4%) compared to 20.7% in the Canadian population.
- First Nation males were twice as likely to be weekly drinkers (22.8%) compared to First Nation females (11.9%).
- One in five First Nation males report heavy drinking (five or more drinks) on a weekly basis

Figure 17 Any consumption of alcohol in the past year among First Nation adults, by age



- One in three First Nation youth self-reported using cannabis (marijuana, weed, grass) in the past year. Along a similar line, the heaviest users of cannabis in the First Nation adult population were in the youngest age group (age 18 to 39 years), where 29% of males reported using on a daily basis.
- In general, 26.7% of First Nation adults used marijuana over the past year, compared to 14.1% in the Canadian population

HEALTH CARE ACCESS

- One in three First Nation adults reported that they encountered waiting lists which were too long.
- One in five First Nation adults experienced a barrier to health care because they sought treatment not covered by the non-insured health benefits (NIHB) program.
- Nearly one in five First Nation adults had no doctor or nurse available in their area (18.5%)
- Women are more likely than men to experience difficulties with:
 - long waiting lists;
 - the availability of a doctor or nurse in their area;
 - seeking approval for NIHB covered services;
 - arranging for and costs of transportation; and
 - the costs of childcare.

NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS

- Half of all First Nations adults reported at least one problem in accessing NIHB funded services within the past year.
- The most prevalent problems with accessing NIHB funded services are related to medication, dental care, and vision care.

- Women were significantly more likely than men to have problems with NIHB funded services such as: accessing medication (20.1%), vision care (19.4%), dental care (19.1%) and transportation services or costs (11.3%).

Figure 18 Issues with NIHB funded services when assessing health care

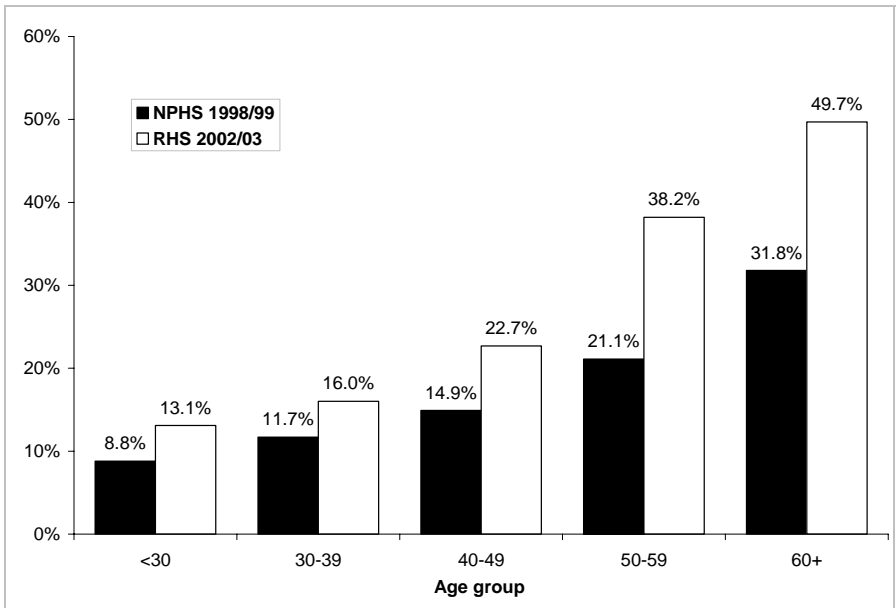
	Men	Women	Total
1+ problems with NIHB	46.2%	53.0%	50.5%
Medication	15.6%	20.1%	17.8%
Dental care	15.4%	19.1%	17.2%
Vision care	15.1%	19.4%	17.2%
Hearing aid	4.4%	2.5%	3.4%
Other medical supplies	6.4%	6.6%	6.5%
Escort travel	6.4%	9.1%	7.8%
Transportation service or cost	6.9%	11.3%	9.1%

DISABILITY

- The age-adjusted prevalence of disability is 31.3% for First Nation females and 25.7% for First Nation males.
- Overall, the proportion of First Nations adults living with a disability is 1.6 times greater than the general Canadian population (NPHS 1998/99¹).
- At all ages, a higher proportion of First Nations adults are living with a disability compared to the general Canadian population.
- One in three First Nations adults have trouble assessing health care because the service was not covered by NIHB

¹ National Population Health Survey

Figure 19 Disability among First Nation adults by age, compared to Canada



- First Nations with disabilities are twice as likely to have problems with the direct costs of the service (22.4%), costs of transportation (23.1%), and arranging transportation (23.3%) compared to First Nation adults with no reported disabilities.

MENTAL HEALTH

- For First Nation adults, felt in balance physically (70.9%), felt in balance emotionally (71.0%), felt in balance spiritually (69.0%), and felt in balance mentally (75.0%).
- 30.1% of First Nation adults felt sad, blue, or depressed for two weeks or more in a row
- 37.9% of First Nation adults experienced instances of racism in the past 12 months

- Most First Nation adults sought emotional or mental support from their immediate family (60.6%) or from a friend (60.0%). Fifteen percent of FN adults sought emotional or mental support from a traditional healer, with 23.5% receiving support from their family physicians.
- Overall 30.9% of First Nation adults reported having suicidal thoughts over their lifetime
- Fifteen percent of First Nation adults report attempting suicide in their lives, and females were more likely to have attempted suicide (18.5%) compared to males (13.1%).
- More than one in four First Nation youths reported sad, blue or depressed feelings for two weeks in a row (27.2%).
- 9.6% of First Nation youths had attempted suicide. Twenty-one percent of First Nation youths had thoughts of suicide.

SEXUAL HEALTH

- The majority of First Nation adults in common-law relationship were sexually active (90.4%). Four out of five married First Nation adults were sexually active (79.1%), and seventy percent of single people were sexually active
- Over a third of First Nation adults have been tested for HIV over their lifetime (34.2%)
- 28.4% of First Nation youth were sexually active at the time of the survey. Thirty percent of First Nation youths had sexual intercourse in the past 12 months.
- One in five First Nation youth who had sexual intercourse in the past year used the birth control pill. Ten percent of First Nation youth used no form of birth control. Two thirds of First nation youth report always using a condom (66.6%).

SENIORS (age 55+)

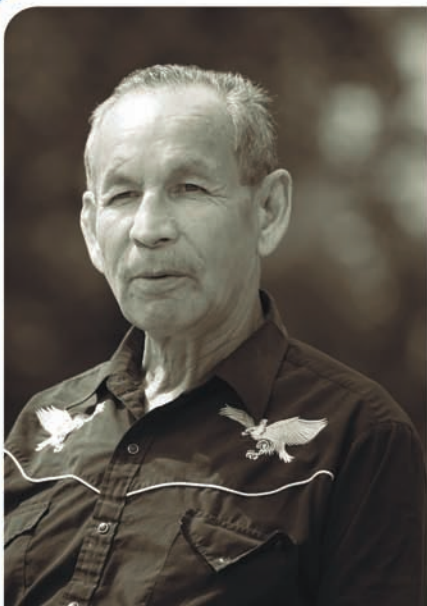
- First Nation seniors are more than twice as likely to report themselves to be in fair or poor health compared to their younger counterparts (41.0% vs. 16.5%)
- Eighty-five percent of First Nation seniors reported having one or more chronic conditions. Two thirds of First Nation seniors reported having two or more chronic conditions.
- Sixty-five percent of First Nation seniors did not graduate from high school.
- Seven out of ten First Nation seniors can understand a First Nation language, and nearly the same proportion can speak a First Nations language

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 First Nations population pyramid	5
Figure 2 Personal Income by highest level of education	6
Figure 3 Employment status of First Nation adults	7
Figure 4 Proportion of FN adults employed, by level of education attained	7
Figure 5 Proportion who understand a First Nations language by age group.....	8
Figure 6 Importance of traditional cultural events in adult's lives	9
Figure 7 Reported repair needs by First Nations households.....	10
Figure 8 Proportion of First Nations households lacking basic amenities	11
Figure 9 Age-adjusted prevalence of chronic conditions.....	12
Figure 10 Prevalence of diabetes among First Nation adults.....	13
Figure 11 Distribution of body mass index (BMI), by gender.....	14
Figure 12 Proportion of First Nation children by BMI status, by age group...	15
Figure 13 Incidence of injury among First Nations, by age group.....	16
Figure 14 Proportion of First Nation adults who have not had any dental care in the past years, by subgroups	17
Figure 15 Smoking status among First Nation adults	18
Figure 16 Smoking rates among First Nation youth, by age and gender	18
Figure 17 Any consumption of alcohol in the past year by age.....	19
Figure 18 Issues with NIHB funded services when assessing health care	21
Figure 19 Disability among First Nation adults by age.....	22



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