
Female and Maternal Health Fact Sheet

Results from Enhanced Street Youth Study (ESYS) 2009

Over half of female youth¹ had been pregnant

- 61% (25) of female youth had been pregnant; 10%² were currently pregnant.
- 37% (15) had given birth; 16%² had miscarried; 4%² had resulted in an abortion.
- 29% (12) of youth who had been pregnant had either been told they were hepatitis C positive or tested positive for hepatitis C in this study.³
- 20% (5) of female youth who had been pregnant had been told by a health professional they have HIV.
- 32% (8) of youth who had been pregnant rated their physical health as "excellent or very good"; 32% (8) rated their physical health as "fair or poor".
- 44% (11) of youth who had been pregnant rated their mental health as "excellent or very good;" 40% (10) rated their mental health as "fair or poor".

Pregnant youth face special challenges

- Of the youth currently pregnant,⁴ half earned their main income from government cheques and half from family or theft.
- 50%⁴ had experienced abuse.
- 25%⁴ were currently registered in school; 75%⁴ had been expelled or dropped out.
- 50%⁴ had completed grade nine or less.

Pregnant youth face addictions

- None who were currently pregnant reported drinking alcohol; half used marijuana in the past three months; half used non-injection cocaine in the past 3 months.
- 75%⁴ reported they never shared non-injection drug equipment, for example, pipes.
- 25%⁴ had used injection drugs in the last 3 months including cocaine and methadone.

Pregnant youth have mixed perceptions of their health and risk

- 75%⁴ of currently pregnant youth rated their current physical health and mental health "excellent or very good".
- 75%⁴ related their personal risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection, HIV or hepatitis C as "low or no risk".
- 75%⁴ used a condom the last time they had sex.

Street youth mothers⁵ face challenges with employment and education

- Of the fifteen youth who had given birth, government income was the main source of income.
- Other sources of main income (in order of frequency) included:
 - bottle recycling and odd jobs,
 - regular work,
 - family,
 - sex trade work,
 - selling drugs.
- All (15) had experienced abuse.
- 33% (5) were currently registered in school; 47% (7) had been expelled or dropped out of school; 40% (6) had achieved grade 9 or less.

Street youth mothers face addictions

- All (15) young women who had given birth used marijuana in the past 3 months; 53% (8) used non-injection cocaine, 40% (6) used ecstasy, 47% (7) used prescription pain killers, 40% (6) used prescription stimulants.
- 47% (7) reported having used injection drugs in the past 3 months; 33% (5) used cocaine and 33% (5) used dilaudid.
- 33% (5) rated their personal risk of getting an STI, HIV or hepatitis C as "high," 9 rated it as "low or no risk at all."



Public Health Observatory
Public Health Services

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¹ 41 females participated in the 2009 ESYS study. Pregnancy is self reported.

² Counts under 5 are suppressed.

³ Several street moms were unaware of their hepatitis C status before this study (not necessarily positive at time of birth).

⁴ Counts less than five have been suppressed.

⁵ It is unknown whether females who had given birth had custody of their children.

Enhanced Street Youth Study (ESYS)

What is the ESYS study about?

- The purpose of the ESYS is to **better understand risk behaviours in street involved youth**, especially risks associated with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and blood borne infections. The study contains much information about education, income, interaction with the justice system and social services and homelessness.
- ESYS is part of a national surveillance project which began in 1997. It is supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Saskatoon joined the study in 1999. Saskatoon has conducted the survey and testing for five of the past six phases. The sixth phase of the study ran from June to October, 2009.

Who participated?

- In 2009 one hundred and thirty one (131) street involved youth in Saskatoon participated in the national ESYS study. Street-involved youth were defined as individuals aged 15 to 24 years who, in the last six months, had run away from home,

were thrown out or were without a fixed address for three days or more.

- In Saskatoon youth who participated in 2009 ranged in age from 16 to 23 years and were informally recruited through the Saskatoon Health Region - Public Health Services, AIDS Saskatoon, Core Neighbourhood Youth Coop, Indian and Métis Friendship Centre and the John Howard Society, Friendship Inn.
- Youth received up to \$20 for their time to complete the survey and testing.
- 68% (90) of the study participants were male; ninety-two percent (120) were Aboriginal.**

Next steps?

- Results will be shared with youth groups and participating community based organizations early in 2011.
- Dissemination of ESYS results will include digital stories and other creative media.

What did the ESYS Saskatoon study find in 2009 compared to 2005?

Selected characteristics		2009 (n=131)	2005 (n=185)
Demographics	Aboriginal ethnicity	92% (120)	95% (175)
	Male participants	68% (90)	56% (103)
Homelessness	Not having a place to sleep	36% (47)	55% (101)
Education	Dropped out or expelled	41% (54)	43% (79)
Justice	History of incarceration	79% (104)	66%(122)
STI & Sexual risk	History of STI	Chlamydia 23% (30) Gonorrhea 10% (13)	STI (all) 35% (64)
	Tested positive for Chlamydia	5% (6)	16% (30)
	Did not use condom at last encounter	23% (30)	40% (74)
Injection Drug Use	Injection drug use ¹	33% (43)	36% (53)
	Injection drug use, and no condom ²	34% (13)	50% (27)
Health	Tested positive for HIV	5% (6)	4% (6)
	Tested positive for Hepatitis C Virus	17%(22)	15% (27)

¹Calculated as the proportion of all persons who had tried injection drug use one or more times

²Calculated as the proportion of all persons who did not use a condom at last sexual encounter out of the total who had used injection drugs more than once

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