
Homelessness and Social Services Fact Sheet

Preliminary Results from Enhanced Street Youth Study (ESYS)

Over half of all youth spent the previous three months away from home¹

- 37% (48) youth reported conflict as the main reason for homelessness; about half of conflict was related to alcohol and drug problems, not necessarily their own.
- 21% (28) youth reported lack of affordability as the main reason for homelessness.
- 11% (14) youth reported poor safety as the main reason for homelessness.

One in four youth used a shelter² in the past year

- Of the thirty-three youth who used a shelter average age was 18 years; 21% (7) had used a shelter when 15 years or younger.
- 55% (18) who used a shelter cited conflict as the main reason for homelessness; 18% (6) cited lack of affordable housing as the reason for homelessness.

Almost half of all youth had a social worker in the past year

- 15% (20) were in foster care in the last year.
- 16% (21) were in a group home.

The main income for less than one in four youth was government cheques

- 24% (31) received their main income from government cheques; 18% (24) from regular work; 18% (24) from family; 17% (23) from stealing or selling drugs; 7% (9) from bottle recycling; 7% (9) received their main income from odd jobs.

One in 20 youth were involved in sex work in the last three months

- 6% (8) of all youth were involved in sex trade work in the past three months.
- 3%³ received their main income from sex trade work.
- The average age for first time sex trade work was 15 years and ranged from 13 to 21 years.
- 15% (20) of youth said that they felt they owed someone sex in return for something; items exchanged for sex were a place to stay, food, clothing, alcohol and cigarettes.

Over half of youth who had been detained or incarcerated⁴ experienced homelessness in the past three months

- 27% (27) of detained or incarcerated youth used a shelter in the past year.
- 11% (11) slept in a street, park or public place, for example, under bridges.
- 43% (43) slept at the home of a friend; 34% (34) slept in the home of a parent, relative, group or foster home.
- 41% (41) reported conflict as the main reason for homelessness; 23% (23) said affordability was the main reason for homelessness.

For the majority of youth, income through regular work was inadequate to meet their needs. Earning income through regular work was significantly associated with having used a shelter in the past year

- 51% (33) of those who had used a shelter in the past year had regular work.
- Youth who earned money through regular work were more than twice as likely to have used a shelter than other youth (OR = 2.5 p = 0.02).⁵
- No other main income category was significantly associated with using a shelter.

Homelessness is significantly associated with injection drug use

- Youth who were injection drug users were three times more likely to have slept in a public place in the past three months (park, bridge, doorway) than other youth (OR=3.3 p = 0.04)².



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¹ 61% (80) of all youth lived away from home. Home was defined as parent, care-giver, group home or own home.

² 33 youth used a shelter.

³ Counts less than 5 are suppressed.

⁴ 99 youth had experienced detention or incarceration as youth

⁵ OR (odds ratio) is a statistical test of association between two characteristics. A p value under 0.05 expresses "statistical significance."

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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