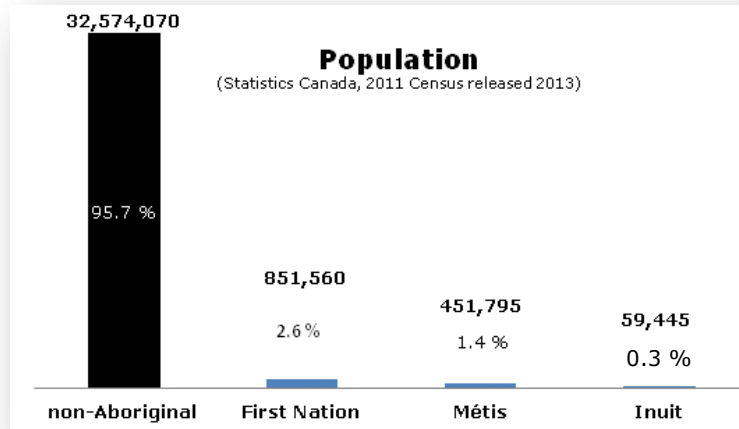


Indigenous health fact sheet

July 8, 2013

Canada's indigenous population faces a litany of complex health issues[♦]



First Nations children on reserves have an immunization rate 20 per cent less than children in the non-Indigenous population. *Source: Canadian supplement to the state of the world's children, Indigenous children's health, UNICEF, 2009.*

63 per cent of First Nations children on reserves accessed a doctor in the past year; 85 per cent of all children in Canada accessed a doctor in the past year. *Source: Canadian supplement to the state of the world's children, Indigenous children's health, UNICEF, 2009.*

Early childhood development and maternal health is comparable to developing countries^{1,2}

- Birth rate is 1.5 times higher for Indigenous women than mainstream Canadian women.
- Infant mortality rates equal to those of developing countries: Chile, Sri Lanka, Fiji and greater than Latvia and Lithuania's.
- Infant mortality rates are up to four times greater than those of non-Indigenous newborns.
- Infant mortality rates on reserves of First Nations people is 8/1,000 live births; in Nunavut the statistic is doubled for live births of Inuit babies — national rate is closer to 5 per 1,000.
- Indigenous children are 50 times more likely than mainstream Canadian children to be hospitalized with preventable illness such as Chicken Pox.

Community health facts show that Indigenous communities are broken down³

- Compared to the general population, overcrowded housing on reserves is more than five times as prevalent; adequate shelter was lacking in more than 40 per cent of First Nations homes in 2000.⁴
- Tuberculosis rates are 0.027 per cent compared to 0.005 per cent for the Canadian population — or more than five times higher.
- Single parent families are common in Indigenous communities; 35 per cent of Indigenous children live with one parent compared to 17 per cent of non-Indigenous children.⁵
- On average 55.6 per cent of Indigenous people living in Canadian cities was poor in 1995; 52.3 per cent of Indigenous children were poor in 2003.⁶

Mental health

- Twelve per cent of First Nations people living on reserve had an episode of major depression compared with seven per cent of the general population.⁷
- Retrospective studies found an array of mental disorders in 70 – 90 per cent of youth suicides: mood, substance-related, disruptive behaviour, anxiety; 18 per cent had no evidence of psychiatric disorder.⁸
- Statistics from Correctional Service Canada show that while Indigenous people represent less than four per cent of the Canadian population, they represent almost one in five people incarcerated in federal institutions.⁹
- Indigenous people are three times more likely than non-Indigenous people to experience violent victimization (319/1,000 versus 101/1,000 respectively); Indigenous women are 3.5 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be victims of violence (343/1,000 versus 96/1,000 respectively).¹⁰

[♦] Statistics Canada. 2013. *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit*. Retrieved from Stats Canada website: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm>

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Addictions and substance abuse

- Alcohol intoxication is the major factor contributing to suicide in Indigenous people.¹¹
- Alcohol and drug abuse were considered problems in 73 and 59 per cent of First Nations communities respectively.¹²
- More than one quarter of Indigenous Canadians have a substance use problem.¹³
- One in five Indigenous youth reported having used solvents; of these, one in three were under 15.¹⁴

Injury and suicide^{15,16}

- Injury patterns in the Indigenous population are similar to the total Canadian population but rates are significantly higher.¹⁷
- Inuit suicide rates is 135/100,000 people.
- First Nations suicide rate is 24/100,000 people; global suicide rate is 14/100,000 people.
- Canadian suicide rate is 12/100,000 people.
- Suicide mainly affects Indigenous youth from the ages of 14 – 24.

HIV/AIDS

- The proportion of AIDS cases among Indigenous people climbed from 1.7 per cent of all cases in Canada in 1992 to 7.2 per cent in 2011.¹⁸
- Of all positive HIV test reports, 48.1 per cent were Indigenous women, 32.4 per cent were Indigenous people under 30 compared to 21 per cent and 20.7 per cent for non-Indigenous persons respectively.¹⁹

Obesity

Self-reported data from 2007 shows that obesity rates are higher among off-reserve Indigenous adults compared to non-Indigenous people (24.8% vs. 16.6%); the prevalence of obesity is high among on-reserve First Nations people: 31.8% of adult men, 41.1% of adult women, 14.0% of youth and 36.2% of children.²⁰

Chronic disease²¹

- Over half of all Métis people more than 15 years of age reported a chronic condition; the most common were arthritis or rheumatism, high blood pressure and asthma at rates higher than the Canadian population.
- Dental decay rates for Indigenous children in Ontario are two to five times higher than rates among non-Indigenous children.²²
- The prevalence of diabetes was 17.2 per cent among First Nations individuals living on-reserve, 10.3% for people living off-reserve, and 7.3% of Métis people, compared to 5.0% in the non-Indigenous population.²³

For additional information please contact

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