

13 QUEBEC FIRST NATIONS: UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

Chapter 13 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS 2008) presents findings on unintentional injuries in First Nations communities in Quebec. This chapter describes the injuries that have occurred, their causes and locations. Activities associated with the injuries, including use of alcohol and drugs, are also presented.

This is a summary of the information included in Chapter 13. Therefore, it does not include all the knowledge covered by the survey, and may be open to different interpretations. To have a complete understanding of the results, the reader is invited to consult the entire chapter.

Unintentional injuries among First Nations

Unintentional injuries are more common among First Nations in Canada than among the general population. In some cases, the death rate for those injuries is three to six times higher than the Canadian average¹. The data collected during the RHS revealed that injury frequencies varied significantly by nation, income, age and gender (men and youth being more at risk in general). Lower incomes were highly correlated to injuries, with 43.5% of them occurring in the group of people making less than \$20,000 per year and 38.7% in the group of people with incomes between \$20,000-39,999. Rates of injury decreased significantly with education levels. For individuals with a primary education, the percentage was almost two times higher (24.2%) compared to people with college (11.0%) or university education (11.8%).

Description of injuries

"Unintentional injuries, [is] commonly referred to as accidents, are injuries for which there is no intent to harm, either by the victim or anyone else."² The number and percentages of the most common types of injuries among adults, youths and children is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Percentages of the most common types of injuries among adults, youths and children

Type of injury	Adults (2,603)	Youths (926)	Children (667)
	%	%	%
Cuts, scrapes, bruises	36.2	38.1	51.0
Major sprains	33.5	35.2	13.5
Fractures	28.2	28.0	27.9
Burns	6.2	20.2	2.1
Dental injury	5.3	9.5	4.2
Dislocation	4.6	5.1	–
Concussion	3.0	2.1	2.8
Injury to internal organ	2.0	–	–
Poisoning	0.8	–	–
Hypothermia, frost bite	0.5	0.6	0.7

The causes of these injuries varied with falling being the most frequent. Injuries due to accidental contact (involving a person or an animal) are the second leading cause of injuries for adults (15.9%) and youths (14.2%). For children, bicycle accidents rank second in causes of injuries with 12.1% (Table 2). As elders are not included in this table, it is important to note that the proportion of elders who sustain injuries from falling is the lowest at 3.8%.

Table 2: Percentages of the most common causes of injuries, adult, youth and children population

Causes of injuries	Adults	Youths	Children
	%	%	%
Fall	36.5	44.3	54.1
Accidental contact with another person or animal	15.9	14.2	5.1
Strenuous movement	14.9	5.9	2.1
Contact with a machine, tool	6.6	9.5	3.3
Motor vehicle collision	3.8	1.1	–
ATV collision	3.7	5.2	–
Riding a bicycle	2.8	10.2	12.1
Snowmobile collision	2.7	1.2	1.2
Contact with hot liquid, object	2.3	6.8	–
Thin ice	1.9	–	–
Hunting accident	1.2	1.4	–
Boating accident	0.8	1.1	1.5
Smoke, fire, flames	0.2	5.4	2.1

The locations where injuries occurred differ based on age group. However, the majority of injuries took place in five different locations for all respondents: at home, on the street, in the forest, at school or on sports fields. Nearly three times the injuries occurred in homes needing repair (31.8%) as opposed to those in homes with regular maintenance (10.8%). Sports and leisure activities were the activities most related to unintentional injuries, and men showed a significantly larger risk than women for both.

¹ Health Canada. 2001. *Unintentional and Intentional Injury Profile for Aboriginal People in Canada 1990-1999*.

² Ibid.

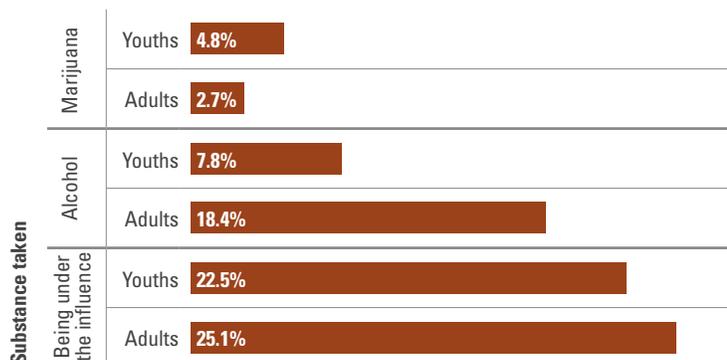
Use of health services

A number of different health services were used by respondents who had been injured. All groups used the emergency room more than any other services (43% for adults, 39.3% for youths and 53.6% for children), followed by community health centres (34.9% for adults, 29% for youths and 35.1% for children). Among adults and youths who suffered injuries, many reported not having consulted a specialist (10.1% for adults and 18.3% for youths). Many differences appear in the use of health services between First Nations and Canadians. Statistics Canada (2009) data shows that Canadians are treated in greater proportion in emergency rooms, for example, 18.9% more in the case of youths and 8.7% more in the case of adults. When it comes to injury cases for Canadian adults, 51.7% were treated in an emergency room, 17.7% were treated in a doctor's office and 13.6% were treated in a walk-in clinic.³

Use of alcohol or drugs and injuries

Globally, one quarter (25.1%) of adults and one fifth (22.5%) of youths reported being under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of their injury. Data was collected regarding the differences between these age groups and their substance use. These can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Percentage for different types of substances taken which influenced the occurrence of injuries among adults (N=2,603) and youths (N=926)



Conclusion

Among First Nations, unintentional injuries are considered a major health issue. They represent about one fourth of all deaths and more than half of lost potential years of life.⁴ For those who suffer from unintentional injuries in First Nations communities, healthcare follow-up is less common than for the general population. To close this gap, the risk factors for unintentional injuries identified by this survey can be used to re-examine existing programs and policy.

Finally, this summary provides an overview of Chapter 13 of the Quebec First Nations Regional Health Survey 2008. For more details on the survey results, the full chapter is available at the following link: <https://www.cssspnql.com/docs/centre-de-documentation/chapitre-13-blessures-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

³ Statistics Canada. *Activity-limiting Injuries, 2009*. Available: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-625-x/2010002/article/11272-eng.htm>

⁴ Health Canada. 2001. *Unintentional and Intentional Injury Profile for Aboriginal People in Canada 1990-1999*.

