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Special points of interest:

- Fewer rural youth wear seatbelts or bike helmets compared to Canadian youth
- Male youth are more likely to report fighting than female youth
- About 10% had been threatened or injured by a weapon in the last year
- Female youth are more likely to have been forced to have sex

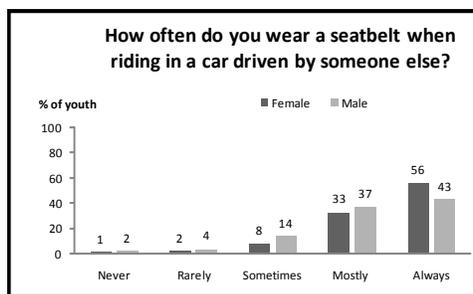
Personal Safety

Injuries

- Injuries are the leading cause of death for Canadian youth and male youth are more likely than girls to die of injury-related causes (CCSD 2006). Across Canada, motor vehicle crashes account for more than one-third (35%) of all deaths among 15- to 19-year-olds. In 2004, 324 Canadian teenagers (15 to 19 years) died in road crashes, 72% of those were males. (Statistics Canada 2007) Risk factors for this group include speeding, alcohol use and inexperience in driving itself (Health Canada, 1999).
- Using bike helmets and seat belts are two important ways that youth can try to protect themselves against injury (Health Canada, 1997). However, rates of bike helmet use and seatbelt use are comparatively low among rural youth in this study.
- Violence in the rural context is not well understood, but is thought to have a number of different characteristics from urban violence, including fewer gangs, fewer ethnic tensions and lower levels of substance abuse as well as fewer available services and differences arising from community relationships (Kulig et al 2006). The only comparable data to this study was a study conducted in northern Alberta almost 10 years ago (Lai 1999) in which rates of violence reported by youth in grades 7 to 10 were much higher than the rates reported here. The percentage reporting having property stolen or damaged ranged from 45% to almost 70% compared with only 35% in this study.
- However, the proportion reporting being threatened or injured with a weapon is comparable, with 9.6% of Saskatchewan rural youth reporting compared to a range of 6.6% to 15% in the rural northern Alberta study (Lai 1999).
- The percentage of rural youth reporting forced sexual activity is low, but represents the experience of over 30 youth in the region.

Seatbelt Use

The vast majority of Canadian 12 and 13 year olds (90% in 1996 and 92% in 2000) said they always or often wore a seatbelt. (Canadian Council on Social Development 2006). Injuries sustained in motor vehicle accidents are more serious among children and youth unprotected by a restraint system. Occupant injuries are generally due to ejection from the vehicle or to collision of the occupant with the interior of the vehicle or with another occupant. Use of seatbelts in this study is lower than the Canadian average as only 85.3% of rural youth in all age groups reported they always or mostly use a seat belt when riding in a car. 1.4% of the youth from age 12 to 17 reported they never use a seat belt.



- There is no significant difference in age as youth in all age groups have similar responses to wearing a seat belt when riding in a car.
- Female youth are significantly more likely to always use a seat belt than male youth.

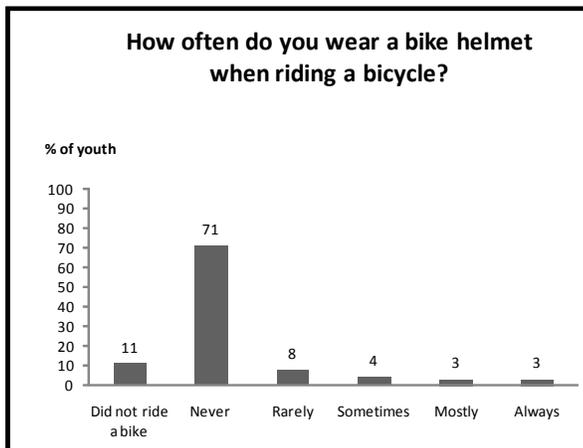
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Most youth don't wear bike helmets

“Head injuries are sustained by more than half of hospitalized bicyclists and are the single most serious injury incurred by 30%, with higher rates among younger bicyclists” (Health Canada, 1997a, p. 108). Bicycle helmets reduce the severity of head injuries. According to CCSD (2006) the use of bike helmets by Canadian children and youth increased from 1998 to 2002/3. There were no gender differences in the 12 to 14 year old group, but males 15-19 were less likely to use bike helmets than females 15-19. Use of bike helmets declined with age from 73% of 12-14 year olds to 36% of 15 to 19 year olds.

Bike helmet use has been shown to be lower in rural areas, even though the risk of serious and fatal injury is higher and this study supports that



finding. Most rural youth never wear a bike helmet when they ride a bike regardless of their age.

As well, the older they are, the less likely youth are to use a helmet. For instance, youth who are 12 years old or less are most likely to wear a bike helmet, however, even at this age half of them stated they never

wore a helmet. Older youth are even less likely to wear a helmet, 78% of those 17 years old and over reported never using a helmet.

There was no significant difference between males and females in wearing a helmet.

“I think more people don't wear seatbelts, like when you go cruising, you don't wear your seatbelt when you go cruising.”- Youth Focus Group Participant

Male youth more likely to be threatened or injured

About 10% of the youth from all age groups had been threatened or injured by a weapon during the past twelve months.

Statistical analysis indicates that there is a relationship between being threatened or injured with a weapon and age ($p < 0.05$) with older youth more likely to have been threatened or injured.

More male youth reported being threatened or injured than female youth. 13% of males experienced threats or injuries, almost double the female percentage of 6.9%.

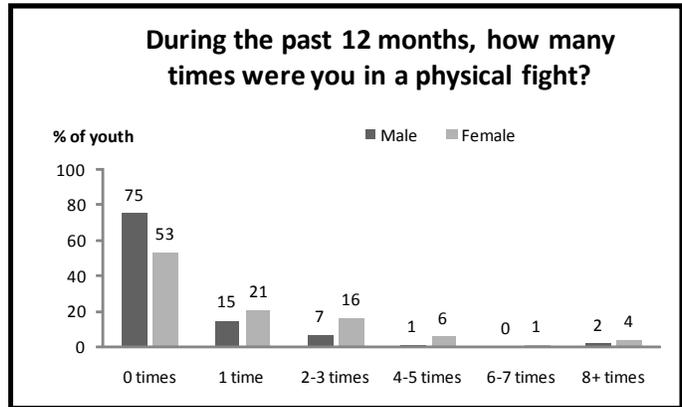


“...a guy wants to look tough so he goes and gets in a fight with some stranger he doesn't even know and felt cool in front of his friends and all the girls that might be there.”- Youth Focus Group Participant

“...maybe just cause guys don't know how to talk it out more, his first instinct is ah, I'll beat the crap out of you.”- Youth Focus Group Participant

Fighting

- 34% of the youth had been involved in a physical fight in the past year.
- A small number, an average of 2.5% of the youth in all age groups reported frequently (8+ times) fighting during the past year.
- Male youth are significantly more likely than female youth to have been involved in a physical fight in the past year. 25% of female youth were in a physical fight compared to 47% of the male youth. In



In addition, male youth are more likely to fight frequently with 12+ times as compared to only 1.5% of female youth. 3.5% reporting fighting

“Girls are more manipulating. Back stab, mess with your head a lot, they are a lot better doing that torture thing...” Youth Focus Group Participant

35% of youth had their property stolen or deliberately damaged in the past year



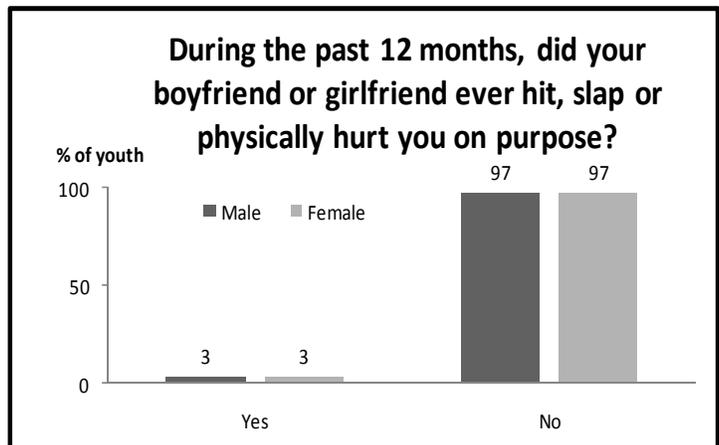
35% of rural youth have experienced stolen or damaged property during the past year.

The age of youth made no significant difference in the likelihood of having property stolen or damaged.

There is a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between the responses of female and male youth. 32% of female youth experienced stolen or deliberately damaged personal property compared to 39% of male youth.

Boyfriend/Girlfriend Violence

- The number of youth from all age groups who experienced boyfriend/girlfriend violence is 3.3%.
- Boyfriend/girlfriend violence increases with age, likely as relationships develop; with only 0.8% of 12 year olds reporting boyfriend/girlfriend violence compared to 6% of 16 and 17 year olds.
- There is no statistically significant difference in responses between female and male youth, with less than 4% of the youth having experienced violent behaviour.



“Youth violence is a significant issue for public health because of the potential for long-term impacts on individuals, families and communities.” (Kulig et al 2005)

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Saskatchewan Rural Youth Healthy Lifestyles and Risk Behaviour Study

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Views, conclusions, and recommendations in this fact sheet do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the organizations or agencies sponsoring or contributing to the research in various ways.

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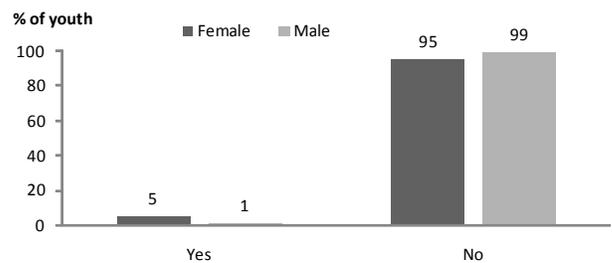
Martz, D. and A. Wagner (2008) Saskatchewan Rural Youth Healthy Lifestyles and Risk Behaviour Project Fact Sheet. (Health Canada DSCIF Study #6558-08-2005/3480566). Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan.

Female youth more likely to have been forced to have sex.

- 3.1% of youth reported they had been forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to.
- This increases from 0.8% at 12 years old to 7.8% at 17 years old, thus the older they are, the more likely they have experienced this.
- Female youth are significantly more likely to report they were forced to have intercourse than male youth (4.5% vs 1.3%).
- Different aspects of youth sexuality were compared to whether or not youth have been forced to have sex. Close to 30% of youth who reported they first had sex at the age of 12 or younger reported they had been forced to have sex, compared to 7.9% of youth

It's not always, like forced, holding them down or anything. But it's constantly nagging at them, like come on, come on, come on, and then eventually the girl isn't going to run away but she doesn't want to be in that situation but she's just kind of sick of hearing it so she just lets it happen."- Youth Focus Group Participant

Physically forced to have sexual intercourse



who first had sex at 15 years old or older.

- As well, the percentages of youth reporting being forced to have sex increases with the number of sex partners a student has had over the span of his/her life. For example, while 6.0% of youth who had 1 sex partner said they were forced to have sex,

over 19% of youth who had 4 or more sex partners said they had been forced to have sex in the past.