



SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

QANUILIRPITAA? 2017

Nunavik Inuit Health Survey

Sexual and reproductive health are an integral part of overall health and well-being. Sexual and reproductive health encompasses, among other factors, sexual behaviours, sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs), contraception, pregnancy and diverse psychosocial aspects of sexuality. The objective of this thematic report is to describe sexual and reproductive health among men and women aged 16 and over.

Questions on sexual behaviour targeted Nunavimmiut aged 16 to 30 years old. Among the individuals in that age group, 40% had had their first consensual sexual intercourse at age 14 or 15. Among those who had ever had sexual intercourse, more than half (57%) reported having had one sexual partner in the year preceding the survey; 17%, two partners; and 18%, three partners or more. Still among Nunavimmiut aged 16 to 30 who had ever had sexual intercourse, three out of ten (31%) reported that either they or their partner had always used birth control methods in the preceding year. Regarding condom use more specifically, more than half (56%) stated that either they or their partner had used a condom during their last sexual intercourse. This represents an increase compared to the *Qanuippitaa?* 2004 data (47%).

Results from the STBBI screening tests offered during the survey to 16 to 30 year old Nunavimmiut indicated that the most frequent STBBI present at the time of the survey was chlamydia: one individual out of ten tested positive for this infection (10%), whereas laboratory results indicated that 2% had a gonorrhoea infection. The prevalence of syphilis infection was lower than 1%. No differences were observed according to sex or age.

Pregnancy-related questions were answered by men and women of all ages, including those aged 31 and older. Three out of four (76%) Nunavimmiut had been pregnant or had gotten someone pregnant in their lifetime, with the proportion of women who reported having been pregnant (85%) being higher than the proportion of men who reported having gotten someone pregnant (66%). Approximately six Nunavimmiut out of ten (57%) were aged between 15 and 19 years old when they became pregnant or had gotten someone pregnant for the first time. Concerning customary adoption, 43% of Nunavimmiut had given at least one child up for adoption.

Among women of all ages, the majority (67%) had breastfed the last child they had given birth to. This was especially the case of those aged 31 to 49 years old compared to younger women (73% vs. 61%). A little more than half (56%) reported reported smoking cigarettes daily during their last pregnancy, and one out of five (22%) reported occasional or more frequent consumption of alcohol.

Holding positive views on parenthood was documented among Nunavimmiut aged 16 to 30 years old. There was no difference according to sex, although people aged 21 to 30 years old presented more positive views of childbearing compared to those aged 16 to 20. Greater positive views of parenthood were associated with having been pregnant or having gotten someone pregnant in their lifetime.

Questions on the psychosocial aspects of sexuality were answered by Nunavimmiut aged 16 to 30 years old. Half of them (50%) reported having had sexual education at school and about one out of four (24%) had openly talked about sex with family members at one point in their lifetime. The majority of Nunavimmiut indicated that they felt confident asking questions about sexual health to a doctor or a nurse (78%), a friend (61%) or a close family member

(58%). Six out of ten (61%) felt confident that they would be able to date someone without feeling obligated to engage in sexual activity. A similar proportion (59%) felt confident that they would be able to choose when and where to engage in sexual activity, and 75% felt confident they would be able to refuse sexual activity with someone with whom they were not comfortable. Finally, 83% felt confident that they could ask their partner to get tested for STBBIs or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). No differences were observed according to sex.

Diverse social and cultural indicators of health were associated with sexual and reproductive health indicators. Greater social support and family cohesion, as well as embracing Inuit cultural identity were associated with favourable aspects of sexuality, such as talking openly about sexuality, feeling more confident with regard to setting clear sexual limits, and engaging in safe sexual behaviours such as consistent condom use. These results provide useful information for enhancing and developing culturally responsive interventions and programs aimed at supporting informed, safe and responsible reproductive and sexual behaviours among Nunavimmiut youth.



Qanuillirpitaa? 2017 is a population health survey carried out in Nunavik from August to October 2017. A total of 1 326 Nunavimmiut aged 16 and over from all 14 villages participated to this survey.

Nakurmiik to all Nunavimmiut who contributed to this important health survey!

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