

Study: Inuit health: Selected findings from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey

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In 2012, Inuit aged 15 years and older were less likely to report excellent or very good health compared with the Canadian population as a whole.

Data drawn from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey provide a number of basic health indicators for the Inuit population, as well as information on health behaviours and selected social determinants of health.

Inuit were less likely to have seen or talked to a medical doctor in the year prior to the survey and were more likely to have smoked cigarettes daily and experienced household food insecurity compared with the total population of Canada.

Health indicators: Less than half of Inuit report excellent or very good health

The survey revealed that 45% of Inuit aged 15 and older reported excellent or very good health in 2012, while the figure for the entire Canadian population was 63%. Between 2001 and 2012, the percentage of Inuit who reported excellent or very good health fell from 56% to 45%.

In addition, 43% of Inuit aged 15 and older had been diagnosed with a chronic condition by a health professional. The conditions most commonly reported were high blood pressure (12%), arthritis (12%), asthma (7%), mood disorders (7%) and diabetes (5%).

Health behaviours: The proportion of Inuit who report smoking cigarettes on a daily basis declines between 2001 and 2012

Just over half (52%) of Inuit aged 15 and older reported that they smoked cigarettes daily in 2012, compared with 16% of Canadians overall. Between 2001 and 2012, the prevalence of daily smoking among Inuit fell from 61% to 52%.

Furthermore, while 33% of Inuit reported that they had not consumed alcohol in the 12 months prior to the survey, 26% reported heavy drinking, that is, five or more drinks on a single occasion at least once a month. The proportion of Inuit who reported heavy drinking in 2001 was not significantly different from 2012.

Selected social determinants of health: Inuit face limited access to health care and are more likely to experience household food insecurity

With respect to access to health care, 59% of Inuit aged 15 and older had seen or talked to a medical doctor, while 49% had consulted a nurse in the year prior to the survey. Among the Canadian population as a whole, 79% had seen a doctor, while 12% had consulted a nurse. Between 2001 and 2012, the percentage of Inuit who had consulted a doctor rose from 50% to 59%; the percentage who had consulted a nurse in 2012 did not differ significantly from 2001.

In the year prior to the survey, 14% of Inuit reported needing health care but not receiving it. The most common reason for not receiving this care was that it was not available in the area.

Just over 4 in 10 (41%) Inuit aged 15 and older lived in households that experienced food insecurity, compared with 8% of the total population of Canada. As well, 22% reported that they had personally experienced hunger in the 12 months prior to the survey because they could not afford to buy enough food.



Note to readers

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) is a national survey on the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal Peoples (First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit) aged 6 years and older. The 2012 APS represents the fourth cycle of the survey and focuses on issues of education, employment and health.

The article "Inuit health: Selected findings from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey" reports on the self-reported health status and chronic conditions of Inuit aged 15 years and older. Also covered are health behaviors such as smoking and drinking, and selected determinants of health such as food insecurity, access to health care, housing and culture. The results are for all Inuit in Canada, presented by the total population, inside and outside Inuit Nunangat and the four Inuit regions.

Data for the overall population of Canada were drawn from the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3250.

The article "Inuit health: Selected findings from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey" is now available in the publication *Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2012* (89-653-X). From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, choose *Publications*.

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