

# Study: Lifetime suicidal thoughts among First Nations, Inuit and Métis

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More than one in five First Nations living off reserve, Métis and Inuit adults reported having had suicidal thoughts at some point in their lives. Prevalence of suicidal thoughts was higher among women in all Aboriginal groups than non-Aboriginal women. This was also the case for men, with the exception of Métis males.

These findings, taken from a new study, "Lifetime suicidal thoughts among First Nations living off reserve, Métis and Inuit aged 26 to 59: Prevalence and associated characteristics," are based on data from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health.

## **Prevalence of suicidal thoughts higher among Aboriginal women than non-Aboriginal women**

Women in all three Aboriginal groups (25.8% of off reserve First Nations, 23.8% of Inuit and 23.4% of Métis) were more likely than non-Aboriginal women to report suicidal thoughts (13.8%).

Compared with non-Aboriginal men (11.1%), Inuit men (23.1%) and off reserve First Nations (21.4%) were also more likely to have had suicidal thoughts.

## **Mood and/or anxiety disorders, drug use and lack of high self-worth associated with suicidal thoughts**

After controlling for other factors, off reserve First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and men who reported having been diagnosed with mood and/or anxiety disorders or ever using drugs were more likely to have had suicidal thoughts. In contrast, those who reported high self-worth were less likely to have had suicidal thoughts. For example, Inuit women who had high self-worth were much less likely to have had suicidal thoughts (18.0%) than those without high self-worth (43.0%). These factors were also associated with suicidal thoughts in non-Aboriginal adults.

## **Being widowed, divorced or separated among other factors associated with suicidal thoughts in some Aboriginal populations**

First Nations women, Métis men and Inuit men who were widowed, divorced or separated were more likely to report suicidal thoughts. Inuit women who reported heavy, frequent drinking were also more likely to have had suicidal thoughts.

Conversely, First Nations men, Métis women and Inuit women who reported excellent or very good health were less likely to have had suicidal thoughts, after controlling for other factors.

### Note to readers

The article, "[Lifetime suicidal thoughts among First Nations living off reserve, Métis and Inuit aged 26 to 59: Prevalence and associated characteristics](#)," looks at the prevalence of lifetime suicidal thoughts and examines the association between health, socioeconomic and demographic factors and suicidal thoughts using logistic regression analysis. No causal relationships between these and suicidal thoughts can be inferred.

The findings are from the analysis of data from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) and the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health (CCHS—MH).

The 2012 APS was a national survey of First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit aged six or older. The survey excluded residents of Indian reserves and settlements and certain First Nations communities in Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

The 2012 CCHS—MH was a cross-sectional survey of the mental health status of Canadians and their use of mental health services administered to household population aged 15 or older in the provinces. The survey excluded residents of Indian reserves and settlements, full-time members of the Canadian Forces and the institutionalized population.

### Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3250](#) and [5015](#).

The article "[Lifetime suicidal thoughts among First Nations living off reserve, Métis and Inuit aged 26 to 59: Prevalence and associated characteristics](#)," which is part of the *Aboriginal People Survey, 2012 (89-653-X)*, is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*.

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