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Fact Sheet

Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2006 An Overview of the Health of the Métis Population: Fact Sheet



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The 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) provides an extensive set of data about Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve First Nations adults 15 years and over and children 6 to 14, living in urban, rural, and northern locations across Canada. The APS was designed to provide a picture of the lifestyles and living conditions of Métis, Inuit, and First Nations peoples in Canada.

The survey was developed by Statistics Canada in partnership with the following national Aboriginal organizations: Congress of Aboriginal Peoples; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Métis National Council; National Association of Friendship Centres; and the Native Women's Association of Canada. The following federal departments sponsored the 2006 APS: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Health Canada, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Canadian Heritage.

An Overview of the Health of the Métis Population

This fact sheet provides information about Métis children aged 6 to 14 and Métis aged 15 and over, as reported in the 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the 2006 Census. Comparable findings related to the health of the total population of Canada are available for those aged 15 and over from the 2005 Canadian Community Health Survey.

According to the 2006 Census, 389,785 people in Canada identified themselves as Métis, an increase of 33% since 2001. The Métis made up 33% of the Aboriginal identity population, which numbered 1,172,790.

The Métis population is younger than the total population of Canada. In 2006, the median age of Métis was 30 years, 9 years younger than that for the total population of Canada.

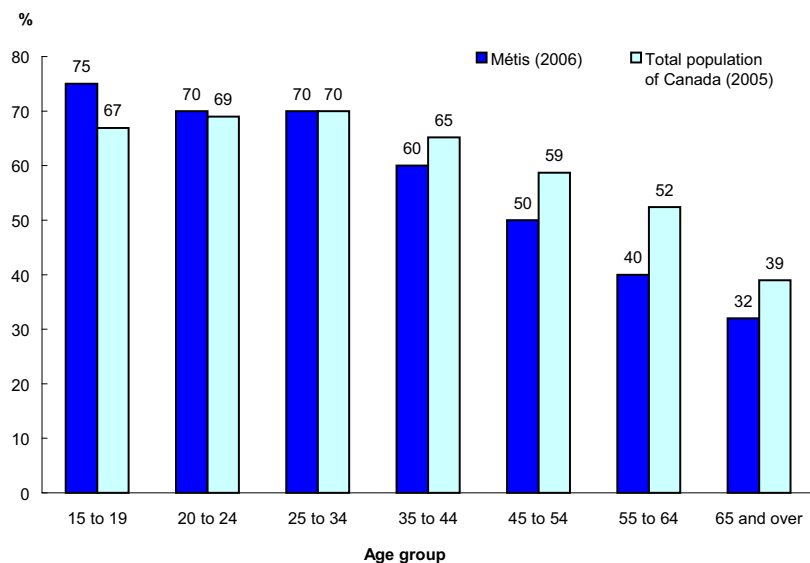
Most Métis (87%) lived in the West and in Ontario, while about 7% lived in Quebec, 5% in Atlantic Canada, and the remaining 1% in one of the three Territories.

Self-Rated Health of Métis

Nearly six in ten (58%) Métis aged 15 and over reported their health as excellent or very good in 2006. This proportion was unchanged from 2001. About 62% of the population of Canada aged 15 and over rated their health as excellent or very good after standardizing for age. In contrast, comparisons by age group identify important differences between the Métis population and the population of Canada. Among people aged 15 to 19, Métis were more likely than the total population of Canada to rate their health as excellent or very good (75% versus 67% respectively). The trend reverses for Métis aged 35 years and over, with Métis in all older age groups being less likely to rate their health as excellent or very good than the total population of Canada in older age groups (see chart 1).

Chart 1

Excellent or very good self-rated health, Métis and total population of Canada aged 15 and over, by age group, 2005 and 2006



Sources: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2006 and Canadian Community Health Survey, 2005.

The majority (84%) of Métis children aged 6 to 14 were reported by their parents/guardians to be in excellent or very good health, about the same percentage as in 2001. Among Métis children, self-rated health was similar for girls and boys.

Chronic Conditions

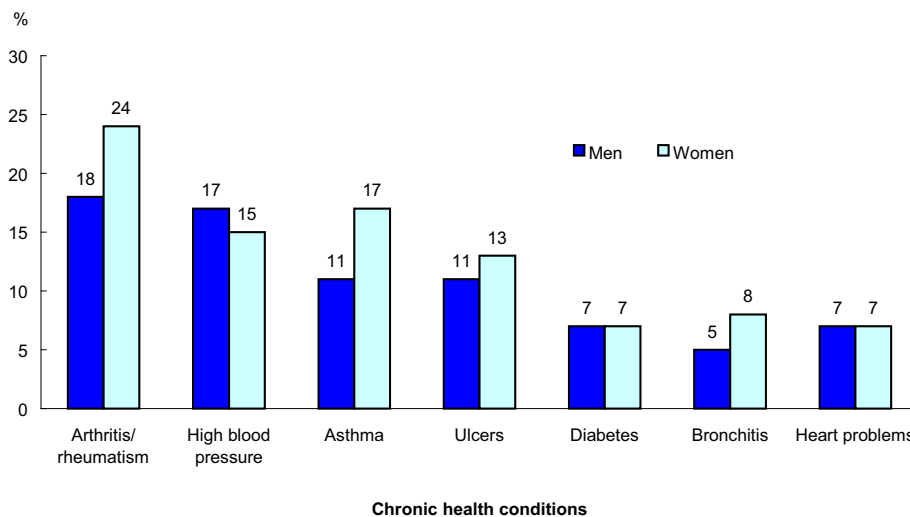
In 2006, just over half (54%) of all Métis aged 15 and over reported that they had been diagnosed with a chronic condition, about the same as in 2001. Of these, about 25% reported one condition, whereas 28% had two or more chronic conditions.

The most commonly reported chronic health conditions among Métis aged 15 and over in 2006 were arthritis or rheumatism (21%), high blood pressure (16%), asthma (14%), and stomach problems or intestinal ulcers (12%), all similar to the percentages reported in 2001.

Métis women were more likely than men to indicate they had at least one chronic condition (57% versus 50%). Women were also more likely than men to report two or more chronic conditions (31% versus 24%).

Métis women were more likely than men to have arthritis or rheumatism (24% versus 18%), asthma (17% versus 11%), and bronchitis (8% versus 5%) (see Chart 2). Métis women and men reported similar rates of high blood pressure, ulcers, diabetes and heart problems.

Chart 2
Selected chronic conditions, Métis population aged 15 and over by sex, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, 2006.

Parents/guardians reported that the most common chronic health conditions among Métis children aged 6 to 14 were allergies (19%), asthma (15%), and ear infections or ear problems (9%). A slightly smaller share of Métis girls than boys had asthma (12% versus 18%). Asthma was, however, more prevalent among Métis children living in urban than rural areas (16% versus 12%).

Health Care

Health care utilization by Métis adults

While the majority of Métis adults reported they had a family doctor in 2006, they were slightly less likely to have a family doctor (81%) compared to the total population of Canada (86%).

In 2006, over half (57%) of Métis adults said they were very satisfied with the way their care was provided the last time they saw a health care professional. This is slightly lower than the figure for the total population (61%).

About one in ten Métis (11%) said that in the last year there was a time when they needed health care but did not receive it, about the same proportion for the total population of Canada (12%). For 23% of Métis adults, “long wait times” was the most common reason for not receiving care.

The APS also asks about other types of health care. For example, about 32% of Métis reported that traditional medicines or wellness practices were available in their community. Those living in urban areas were more likely than those in rural areas to report the availability of such practices (35% versus 25%).

Health care utilization by Métis children

Over half (54%) of Métis children aged 6 to 14 were reported to have seen a family doctor, pediatrician or general practitioner during the 12 months prior to the survey. About 32% saw a medical specialist, 18% saw a nurse, and 82% received dental care. All figures were similar for Métis boys and girls. The findings were similar in 2001 except that Métis children were slightly more likely to have seen a medical specialist in 2006 (32%) than in 2001 (27%).

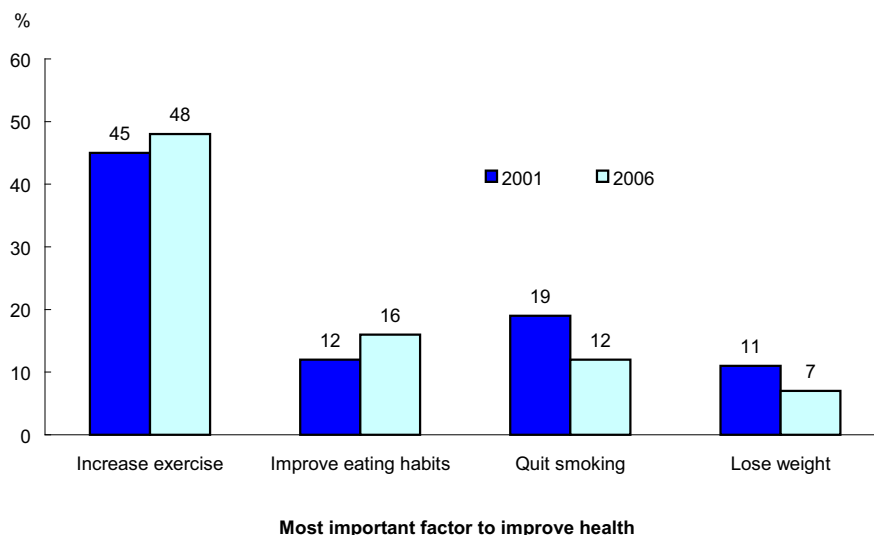
Ways to Improve Health

In both 2001 and 2006, about seven in 10 of Métis adults reported that there was something they could do to improve their health. In 2006, Métis women (74%) were slightly more likely than men (68%) to report they could do something to improve their health.

In 2006, almost half (48%) of Métis reported that “increasing exercise” was the most important thing they could do to improve their health. A similar percentage was reported in 2001. Additionally, in 2006, 16% said they should improve their eating habits and 12% said they should quit smoking. These figures were consistent for both men and women.

However, in 2006, Métis were less likely to report either quitting smoking or losing weight as the most important things to improve their health compared with 2001 (see Chart 3). This decline could be related to the fact that many had already reduced their smoking. In 2006, 31% of Métis adults smoked on a daily basis, down from 37% in 2001.

Chart 3
Most important factor to improve health, Métis population aged 15 and over, 2001 and 2006



Note: Percentages in this chart do not sum to 100% because some of the possible response categories have not been included.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001 and 2006.

How to obtain more information

Specific inquiries about this product and related statistics or services should be directed to: Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6 by telephone: 613-951-5979 or by e-mail at sasd-dssea@statcan.gc.ca.

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