

#RegionXIYouthToday: Risk Behavior of Young People in Southern Mindanao¹

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Background

The paper presents the result of the series of Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS) studies conducted in 1982, 1994, 2002 and 2013 with particular focus on the various sexual and non-sexual risk behaviors, teen pregnancy and HIV-AIDS among youth living in Southern Mindanao.

The YAFS is a series of nationally representative cross-sectional surveys on the Filipino youth aged 15-24 conducted by the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI) and the Demographic Research and Development Foundation (DRDF). YAFS is the only survey of young people that is nationally and regionally representative covering a wide range of topics of relevance to this significant segment of the population. The main goal of the study is to provide updated information on a broad framework of adolescent sexuality and reproductive health issues including their antecedents and manifestations that can be used in various intervention measures

in order to safeguard the health and welfare of the youth. Largely quoted for its findings on sexual and non-sexual risk behaviors and its determinants, the YAFS series covers a wide range of information about today's youth such as their education trajectories, labor force participation, family relationships and the role of parents in their lives, attitudes and values, personal characteristics like self-esteem, and adverse conditions like suicidal ideation and depression symptoms, all of which are of relevance to our understanding of this significant segment of Philippine society.

The most recent data on YAFS was collected in 2013 with funding from the Australian Government, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Department of Health (DOH) and Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD). The study interviewed a total of 19,178 young people representing all sectors including males and females, single and married and the Muslim youth.

¹ Paper presented in the YAFS4 Regional Dissemination held at El Bajada Hotel, Davao City on July 16, 2014.

Region XI Findings

Socio-economic-demographic background

- There are 903, 278 youth ages 15-24 in Region XI as of the last census of population taken in 2010. This constitutes about 5 percent of the country's total youth population.
- While most of the youth have at least some high school education, 16 percent have no schooling or have at most an elementary education. The proportion with some college education is lower than the national average and is among the lowest in the country. The region is also among the lowest in terms of the level of youth who are currently studying at the time of the survey.
- One in four youth in the region is working, among the highest in the country.
- Region XI has the second highest proportion of unemployed youth (9.6%), next to Central Luzon (11.4%).
- One in 10 youth in Region XI is idle (not studying nor working).
- More youth who are in a live-in arrangement (16.3%) than in a formal union (6.1%), a pattern consistent with the national picture. Region XI is among the highest regional proportion of youth who are living-in.
- Region XI youth are digitally wired. Three in four own a cellular phone and more than half of them use the internet, have an email account or a social networking account.

Non-sexual risk behaviors

- There is a declining proportion of youth who are currently smoking.
- The percentage of youth who are currently smoking is 18.1 percent which is below the national average.
- The percentage of youth who are currently drinking alcoholic beverages declined in the last decade and is below the national average.
- While the percentage of Region XI youth who ever used drugs declined in the past decade, it is highest among all regions in the country.
- Between 2002 and 2013, the proportion of youth who ever thought of committing suicide increased in Region XI, which goes against the declining pattern at the national level. The region registers the third highest (next to CARAGA and Region VII) percentage of youth who ever thought of committing suicide (12.3%).
- For the same period, the percentage who attempted to commit suicide also increased, again contradicting the declining national trajectory.
- Considerable proportion of Region XI youth have experienced physical violence both as aggressors (23%) and as victims (14.2%).
- Region XI has the second biggest proportion of youth who have experienced harassment using technology (7.3%).

Sources of information about sex

- Almost three in five Region XI youth do not have any source of information

about sex, the second highest among all regions in the country.

- Friends of the same sex, medical professionals and mothers are Region XI youth's most preferred sources of information about sex and reproduction.
- Friends and mothers are the persons most Region XI youth will consult if they have questions about sex.
- Region XI has the second smallest proportion of youth who can find help in school regarding sex-related problems.
- Only one in 20 Region XI youth has discussed sex at home while growing up.
- Most discussions of sex at home are between brothers, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, and sisters.

Sex and media

- One in three youth has read pornographic materials (46.7 percent among males and 25.9 percent among females). The proportion of youth who have read pornographic materials has declined slightly from 37.0 percent in 2002 to 35.6 percent in 2013.
- Nearly 3 in 5 youth have watched x-rated movies and videos (79.1 percent among males and 40.4 percent among females). The proportion of youth who have watched x-rated movies and videos has increased from 54.0 percent in 2002 to 58.4 percent in 2013.
- The youth also engage in other media-related sexual activities.
 - 14.5 percent have visited websites with sexually-explicit content

- 1 in 5 has sent or received sex videos through cellphones or internet
- 8 in 100 have engaged in phone sex
- 4 in 100 had sex with someone they met online or through text messages
- 1 in 100 has recorded himself/herself having sex

Sexual risks

- Two in five Region XI youth ages 15-24 have sexual experience.
- The youth's sexual debut is getting younger as indicated by the mean age at first sex which declined from 18.0 years in 1994 to 17.2 years in 2013 for males. The corresponding figures for females are 18.6 years and 17.4 years, respectively.
- Increasing proportion of youth who engage in early sex, particularly among males
 - The proportion of male youth who have engaged in sex before age 15 increased from less than one percent in 1994 to 4.1 percent in 2013. However, for females, there was a slight decline from 3.1 percent in 2002 to 2.3 percent in 2013.
 - The proportion of youth ages 18-24 who have engaged in sex before age 18 also increased from 19.5 percent in 1994 to 30.5 percent in 2013 for the males. The figures for the females are 12.0 percent and 30.3 percent, respectively.
- Almost two in five Region XI youth aged 15-24 in 2013 had engaged in sex before marriage. (Region XI is the region with the 3rd highest prevalence of premarital sex.) This is a considerable

increase from the level in 1994 at 23.5 percent.

- Narrowing gap in levels of premarital sex between males and females over time
- Most of the premarital sexual encounters are unprotected against unintended pregnancy and/or STIs, i.e., 80.2 percent of the first premarital sex encounters are unprotected. Condom and withdrawal are the most common methods used among those who used some methods of contraception.
- Low but above-national average level of commercial sex most of which are unprotected
- 6.3 percent of the youth engage in casual sex, with low level of protection
- 4 percent of the youth, mostly males also have FUBU (fuck buddies).
- 2.6 percent of married youth (including those in living-in arrangement) have engaged in extramarital sex

Teenage fertility

- Increased teenage fertility in the past decade
 - The level of females 15-19 who are mothers increased from 5.8 percent in 2002 to 13.6 percent in 2013
 - The percent of females 15-19 who are pregnant with the first child increased from 2.1 percent in 2002 to 3.1 percent in 2013
 - Percent of females 15-19 who have begun childbearing more than

doubled from 7.9 percent in 2002 to 16.7 percent in 2013

- The proportion of women who have begun childbearing increases with age, i.e., from 3.2 percent among those aged 15 to 34.0 percent among those aged 19.

HIV-AIDS

- The proportion of youth who have heard of AIDS has declined from 93.0 percent in 2002 to 90.8 percent in 2013.
- Region XI youth have moderate level of knowledge about HIV transmission prevention methods
 - 69.4 percent agree that the risk of HIV transmission can be reduced by having sex with only one uninfected partner who has no other sexual partners
 - 59.5 percent agree that the risk of HIV transmission can be reduced by using a condom every time they have sex
 - 65.4 percent agree that a healthy looking person can have HIV
 - 65.5 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV from mosquito bites
 - 49.8 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV by sharing food with someone who is infected
 - 26.6 percent think that AIDS is curable
- 3 in 4 youth feel invincible to AIDS, i.e., they think there is no chance of them getting AIDS.



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