

#RegionIIIYouthToday: Risk Behavior of Young People in Central Luzon¹

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Background

The paper provides a summary of key findings from the 2013 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality (YAFS) study with particular focus on the various sexual and non-sexual risk behaviors, teen pregnancy and HIV-AIDS among youth living in Region 3.

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). The series includes surveys conducted in 1982, 1994 and 2002. 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.

YAFS aims to provide up to date information on a broad range of adolescent sexuality and reproductive health issues – its antecedents and manifestations - which can be used in formulating intervention measures that will promote and 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 is also rich on data regarding young people's educational 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. These are relevant to our understanding of today's young people.

The recent YAFS data 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 in San Fernando, Pampanga on 6th August 2014.

Region III Key Findings

Socio-economic-demographic background

- Based on the 2010 Census, Region III has a total of 1,928,626 youth aged 15-24. This constitutes about 10.7 percent of the country's total youth population.
- While most of the youth have at least some high school education, ten percent have no schooling or have at most an elementary education. The proportion with some college education (21.9%) is slightly higher than the national average (21%) and is among the highest in the country. The region, however, has the least proportion of youth who are currently studying at the time of the survey (21.9%).
- 3 in 10 youth in the region are working, the highest in the country.
- But, the region also has the highest proportion of unemployed youth (11.4%).
- 14 in 100 youth in Region III are idle (neither studying nor working), the second highest next only to ARMM.
- More youth are in a live-in arrangement (16.1%) than in a formal union (11.2%) - a pattern consistent with the national figure. Region III is among the regions with the highest proportions of youth who are in live-in arrangement.
- Region III youth are digitally wired. 85.7% own a cellular phone and 67.8% of them use the internet, own an email account or have a social networking account.

Non-sexual risk behaviors

- There is increased proportion of youth who are currently smoking – from 20.1 percent in 2002 to 24.7 percent in 2013. This is the second highest in the country, next to NCR.
- The percentage of youth who are currently drinking alcoholic beverages also increased from 40.2 to 41 percent in the last decade and is above the national average of 36.7 percent.
- The percentage of Region III youth who ever used drugs, however, significantly declined from 8.1 to 0.9 percent in the past decade, making it the lowest in the country.
- Between 2002 and 2013, the region's proportion of youth who ever thought of committing suicide substantially decreased from 12.8 to 3.1 percent following the national pattern. The region has the lowest percentage of youth who ever thought of committing suicide in the country.
- Similarly, the percentage who attempted to commit suicide decreased from 3.6 to 2.2 percent.
- Considerable proportions of Region III youth have experienced physical violence both as aggressors (23.6%) and as victims (16.4%).

- The region has the least proportion of youth who experienced harassment using technology (1.8%).

Sources of information about sex

- 3 in 10 do not have any source of information about sex.
- Friends of the same sex, mothers, and medical professionals are the most preferred sources of information about sex and reproduction.
- Mothers and friends are the persons most young people in the region will consult if they have questions about sex.
- 3 in 5 youth reported that they can find help in school regarding sex-related problems.
- Only 9 in 100 youth have discussed sex at home while growing up.
- Most discussions of sex at home are between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, brothers, and sisters.

Sex and media

- 1 in 3 youth has read pornographic materials (47.2 percent among males and 20.4 percent among females). The proportion of youth who have read pornographic materials has slightly increased from 32.7 percent in 2002 to 32.9 percent in 2013.
- Nearly 3 in 5 youth have watched x-rated movies and videos (81.5 percent among males and 33.8 percent among females). The proportion of youth who have watched x-rated movies and videos has marginally increased from 55.1 percent in 2002 to 56 percent in 2013.
- Young people also engage in other media-related sexual activities.
 - 16.7 percent have visited websites with sexually-explicit content
 - More than 1 in 5 have sent or received sex videos through cellphones or internet
 - 4 in 100 have engaged in phone sex
 - 4 in 100 had sex with someone they met online or through text messages
 - 1 in 100 had recorded himself/herself having sex

Sexual risks

- More than 2 in 5 youth aged 15-24 in Region 3 have sexual experience.
- The youth's sexual debut is getting younger as indicated by the mean age at first sex which declined from 18.5 years in 1994 to 17.4 years in 2013 for males. The corresponding figures for females are 18.6 years and 17.9 years, respectively.
- There is increased proportion of youth who engaged in early sex, particularly among males
 - The proportion of male youth who had engaged in sex before age 15 increased from 2.1 percent in 2002 to 5.4 percent in 2013. However, for females, there was a slight decline from 2.4 to 2 percent within the same period.
 - The proportion of youth aged 18-24 who had engaged in sex before age 18 nearly tripled from 10.8 percent in 1994 to 29.5 percent in 2013 for the males. The figures for the females are 9 percent and 22.6 percent, respectively.
- 2 in 5 Region III youth aged 15-24 in 2013 had engaged in sex before marriage. (Region III has the 2nd highest prevalence of premarital sex next to NCR) This is almost double the percentage found 10 years ago (21.4%).
- Narrowing gap in levels of premarital sex (PMS) between males and females over time: 24.6 percent of male youth and 9.3 percent of their female counterparts had PMS experience back in 1994, a difference of 15.3 percentage points. Such gap has been reduced to 7.3 points in 2013, with the percentages up to 43.2 and 35.9 for young males and females, respectively.
- Most of the premarital sexual encounters are unprotected against unintended pregnancy and/or STIs, i.e., 82.1 percent of the first premarital sex encounters are unprotected. Condom is the most common method used among those who used some methods of contraception.
- There is low but above-national average level of commercial sex and most of which are unprotected. Among the youth in Region III, 2.1 percent have paid for sex and 1.6 percent have received payment for sex in 2013.
- 4.7 percent of the youth engage in casual sex, with low level of protection
- 3.1 percent of the youth, mostly males also have FUBU (fuck buddies).
- 1.2 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 percentage of females aged 15-19 who are already mothers increased from 7.2 percent in 2002 to 11.4 percent in 2013
 - The percentage of females aged 15-19 who are pregnant with their first child increased from 1 percent in 2002 to 3.7 percent in 2013
 - Percent of females aged 15-19 who have begun childbearing almost doubled from 8.2 percent in 2002 to 15.1 percent in 2013
- The proportion of women who have begun childbearing generally increases with age, i.e., from 2 percent among those aged 15 to 35.1 percent among those aged 19.

HIV-AIDS

The proportion of youth who have heard of AIDS has been declining from 97.3 percent in 1994 to 89.6 percent in 2013.

- Region III youth have moderate level of knowledge about HIV transmission prevention methods
 - 81.9 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
 - 71.4 percent agree that the risk of HIV transmission can be reduced by using a condom every time they have sex
 - 66.9 percent agree that a healthy looking person can have HIV
 - 72.6 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV from mosquito bites
 - 42.8 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV by sharing food with someone who is infected
 - 38.5 percent think that AIDS is curable
- Nine in ten youth feel invincible to AIDS, i.e., they think there is no chance of them getting AIDS, the highest proportion in the country.

For more information:

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