

#MIMAROPAYouthToday: Risk Behavior of Young People in MIMAROPA¹

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Background

The region of MIMAROPA has a total of 528,813 youth ages 15-24 as of 2010. This constitutes about three percent of the Philippines' total youth population of 18 million. Compared with the other regions in the country, MIMAROPA has the third lowest regional share of the country's youth. Nonetheless, the region remains to have a young population with 19.4 percent of its population in the ages 15-24.

This 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 MIMAROPA.

The YAFS is a series of nationally representative cross-sectional surveys on the Filipino youth aged 15-24 conducted by the Demographic Research and Development Foundation (DRDF) and the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI). 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 updated 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 fourth round of YAFS was conducted 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 **2013 YAFS or YAFS4** 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 Forum at the Circon Hotel, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan on 18 August 2014.

MIMAROPA Key Findings from the 2013 YAFS

Socio-economic-demographic background

- Most of the youth have at least some high school education (87 %). The rest (13 %) have no schooling or have at most an elementary education.
- Although the percentage of those studying (39.4%) is the fourth highest in the country, the proportion with some college education (17.8%) is below the national average (21.0%).
- One in four youth in the region is working, the fourth highest in the country.
- 4.4 percent are working students, the fifth highest in the country.
- Unemployment among the youth (4.3%) is lowest in the region.
- Nearly seven in 100 youth are idle.
- More youth are in a live-in arrangement (15.3%) than in a formal union (9.6%) - a pattern consistent with the national figure. The proportions of youth who are formally married and who are cohabiting are both above the national average.

Media, lifestyle and health

- MIMAROPA youth are digitally wired. 79 % own a cellular phone and 48 % use the internet, 41 % have a social networking account, and 40 % own an email account.
- Three in four youth watch the television regularly.
- One in two MIMAROPA youth exercises at least two to three times a week – the fifth highest in the country.
- MIMAROPA youth are high consumers of unhealthy food and drink. At least once a week,
 - 40 % eat hamburger, the fifth highest in the country
 - 39 % eat fried chicken
 - 61 % consume instant noodles

- 46 % consume fried street food
- 45 % eat grilled street food
- 59 % drink carbonated drinks
- 45 % drink coffee or tea

Non-sexual risk behaviors

- The proportion of MIMAROPA youth who are currently smoking (17.3%) is below the national average.
- The percentage of youth who are currently drinking alcoholic beverages (31%) is the fifth lowest in the country.
- Nearly 2 in 100 youth have used drugs, the third lowest among all the regions in the country.
- Seven percent of MIMAROPA youth have ever contemplated suicide.
- Two percent of MIMAROPA youth attempted to commit suicide – the fifth lowest in the country.
- Considerable proportions of MIMAROPA youth have experienced physical violence both as aggressors (19.8%) and as victims (18.5%).
- Six percent of the region's youth have experienced harassment using technology, the fourth highest among the regions in the country.

Sources of information about sex

- More than one-third do not have any source of information about sex.
- Friends of the same sex, medical professionals, and mothers are the most preferred sources of information about sex and reproduction.
- 61 % of the youth reported that they can find help in school regarding sex-related problems, with their classmates as the leading source of such support.
- More than one in ten youth have discussed sex at home while growing up.

- Most discussions of sex at home are between fathers and sons, and mothers and daughters.

Sex and media

- 31.3 percent of MIMAROPA youth have read pornographic materials (34.0 percent among males and 28.3 percent among females).
- 53.6 percent have watched x-rated movies and videos (72.4 percent among males and 34.4 percent among females).
- Both the proportions of youth reading pornographic materials and watching x-rated movies and videos are below the national level.
- The youth also engage in other media-related sexual activities.
 - 9 in 100 have visited websites with sexually-explicit content.
 - 23 in 100 have sent or received sex videos through cellphones or internet, the fourth highest in the country.
 - One in 200 has recorded himself/herself having sex.
 - 4 in 100 had sex with someone they met online or through text messages, which is higher than the national level.
 - Nearly 5 in 100 have engaged in phone sex.

Sexual risks

- Almost two in five youth in the region have sexual experience.
- MIMAROPA youth engage in sex at young ages.
 - The mean age at first sex is 17.8 years for males and 18.3 years for females.
 - Nearly 1 in 50 youth had sex before age 15 while more than 1 in 5 had sex before age 18.

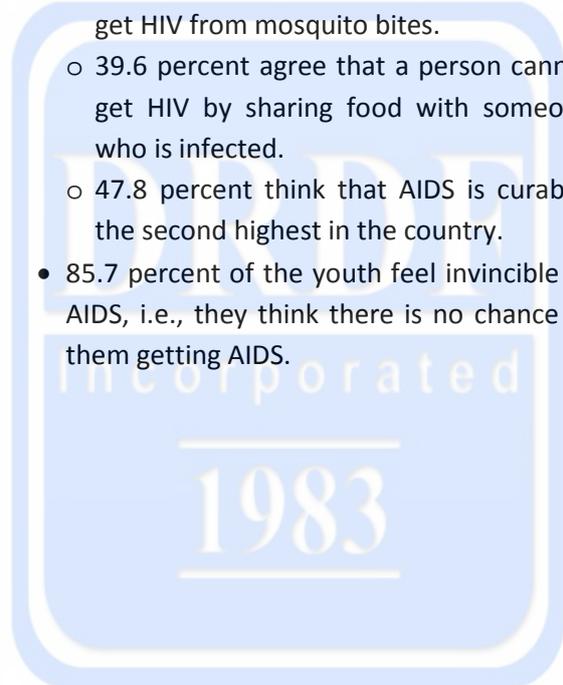
- More than 3 in 10 youth had engaged in sex before marriage, nearly the same proportion as the national level.
- 77.1 percent of first premarital sexual encounters are unprotected against unintended pregnancy and/or STIs. Withdrawal is the most common method used by those who used some methods of contraception.
- There is a low level of commercial sex activities, most of which are unprotected. Among the youth in MIMAROPA, 1.8 percent have paid for sex and 1.4 percent have received payment for sex in 2013.
- The youth have also engaged in other sexual activities with low level of protection against unintended pregnancy and STIs.
 - 4.5 percent of the youth have engaged in casual sex.
 - 2.5 percent of the youth, mostly males also have FUBU (fuck buddies).
 - 6.5 percent of male youth have engaged in sex with a fellow male.
 - 2.7 percent of married youth (including those in living-in arrangement) have engaged in extramarital sex.

Teenage fertility

- Increased teenage fertility in the past decade.
 - 10.3 percent of females aged 15-19 are already mothers.
 - 1.9 percent of females aged 15-19 were pregnant with their first child at the time of the survey interview.
 - 12.3 percent of females aged 15-19 have begun childbearing.
- The proportion of women who have begun childbearing increases with age, i.e., from 3.0 percent among those aged 16 to 32 percent among those aged 19.
- The level of teenage fertility in MIMAROPA is the fifth lowest among all regions in the country.

HIV-AIDS

- As of 2013, only 85.9 percent of MIMAROPA youth have heard of AIDS. Such proportion, however, is among the highest in the country.
- Misconceptions about HIV transmission are common among MIMAROPA youth.
 - 72.8 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.
 - 58.1 percent agree that the risk of HIV transmission can be reduced by using a condom every time they have sex.
 - 49.4 percent agree that a healthy-looking person can have HIV.
 - 66.4 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV from mosquito bites.
 - 39.6 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV by sharing food with someone who is infected.
 - 47.8 percent think that AIDS is curable, the second highest in the country.
- 85.7 percent of the youth feel invincible to AIDS, i.e., they think there is no chance of them getting AIDS.



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