

#RegionVIYouthToday: Risk Behavior of Young People in Western Visayas¹

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Background

The region of Western Visayas has a total of 1,398,701 youth age 15-24 years as of 2010. This constitutes 7.8 percent of the Philippines' total youth population of 18 million. Region VI remains to have a young population with 19.7 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 knowledge and awareness of HIV-AIDS among youth residing in Region VI.

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 (PCHR). 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 held in Sarabia Manor Hotel, Iloilo City on 3 September 2014.

Region VI Key Findings from the 2013 YAFS

Socio-economic-demographic background

- Most of the youth have at least some high school education (88 %). The rest (12 %) have no schooling or have at most an elementary education.
- 36.2 percent of the youth are studying. The proportion of youth with elementary and lower education and the proportion who have reached college are both below the national level.
- One in four youth in the region is working, which is at par with the national level.
- One in 20 youth is working while studying which is the second highest in the country.
- Unemployment among the youth (8.2 %) is the fifth highest in the country.
- 11 in 100 youth are idle, the fifth highest in the country.
- More youth are in a live-in arrangement (12.8 %) than in a formal union (5.7 %) - a pattern consistent with the national figure. The proportion of never-married youth (81.3 %) is the highest among all regions in the country. Consequently, the region's proportions of youth who are in formal union and who are in live-in arrangement are at the lower end of the national spectrum.

Media, lifestyle and health

- Region VI youth are digitally wired. 75.8 % own a cellular phone and 44.2 % use the internet, 40 % have a social networking account, and 38.2 % own an email account.
- 80.7 percent of the youth watch the television regularly.
- 54.6 percent of Region VI youth exercise at least two to three times a week – the third highest in the country.
- Region VI youth are high consumers of unhealthy food and drink. For at least once a week, the proportion of youth consume:

- 39 % eat hamburger
- 50 % eat fried chicken
- 64 % consume instant noodles
- 48 % consume fried street food
- 57 % eat grilled street food, the fourth highest in the country
- 74 % drink carbonated drinks, the fifth highest in the country
- 60 % drink coffee or tea, the lowest in the country

Non-sexual risk behaviors

- The proportion of Region VI youth who are currently smoking has increased making it the third highest in the country.
- The percentage of youth who are currently drinking alcoholic beverages (34 %) has declined and is below the national level.
- Three in 100 youth have ever used drugs. Such proportion has declined in the past decade and is below the national level.
- 8.4 percent of Region VI youth have ever contemplated suicide, placing the region below the national level.
- The percentage of youth who attempted to commit suicide (4 %) has risen making it the third highest in the country.
- Considerable proportions of Region VI youth have experienced physical violence both as aggressors (15.6 %) and as victims (11 %). Compared to other regions, both proportions are the third lowest.
- Three in 100 of the region's youth have experienced harassment using technology.

Sources of information about sex

- 46.1 percent of Region VI youth 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.
- 41.5 percent of the youth reported that they can find help in school regarding sex-

related problems, with their teachers as the leading source of such support.

- Only eight in 100 youth have discussed sex at home while growing up.
- More youth whether male or female discuss sex at home with their mothers.

Sex and media

- 28.4 percent of Region VI youth have read pornographic materials (32.5 percent among males and 24.1 percent among females), which is the second lowest among all regions in the country. The proportion of youth who have read pornographic materials has declined from 39.1 percent in 2002 to 28.4 percent in 2013.
- Half (50.3%) of the youth have watched x-rated movies and videos (63.8 percent among males and 36.1 percent among females), which is the third lowest among all regions in the country. The proportion of youth who have read pornographic materials has increased slightly from 48.9 percent in 2002 to 50.3 percent in 2013.
- The youth also engage in other media-related sexual activities.
 - 8.4 percent have visited websites with sexually-explicit content. The level is the third lowest among all regions in the country.
 - 23.6 percent have sent or received sex videos through cellphones or internet. The level is the third highest in the country.
 - 0.1 percent have recorded themselves having sex.
 - 1.7 percent had sex with someone they met online or through text messages.
 - 1 in 20 engaged in phone sex.

Sexual risks

- 36 percent of the youth in the region have sexual experience. This proportion is the

fifth lowest among all regions in the country.

- Region VI youth engage in sex at younger ages.
 - The mean age at first sex is 17.6 years for males and 18.1 years for females.
 - 2 in 100 male youth and nearly 1 in 100 female youth had sex before age 15.
 - 22.4 percent of male youth and 20.5 percent of female youth had sex before age 18.
 - The proportions of youth who have engaged in sex before age 18 have been increasing from 9.2 percent in 1994 to 22.4 percent in 2013 among males, and from 6.1 percent in 1994 to 20.5 percent in 2013 among females.
- Nearly one in three youth (31.5%) had engaged in sex before marriage, which is at par with the national level.
- 87.6 percent of first premarital sexual encounters are unprotected against unintended pregnancy and/or STIs – the 5th highest in the country. Condom is the most common method used by those who used some form of contraception.
- There is a low and declining level of commercial sex activities but most of which are unprotected. Among the youth in Region VI, 1.2 percent have paid for sex while 0.9 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.
 - 3.8 percent of the youth have engaged in casual sex.
 - 3.1 percent of the youth, mostly males also have FUBU (fuck buddies).
 - 3.9 percent of male youth have engaged in sex with a fellow male.
 - 1.1 percent of married youth (including those in living-in arrangement) have engaged in extramarital sex.

Teenage fertility

- The level of teenage fertility nearly quadrupled in the past decade.
 - 10.9 percent of females aged 15-19 are already mothers.
 - 4.2 percent of females aged 15-19 were pregnant with their first child at the time of the survey interview.
 - 15.1 percent of females aged 15-19 have begun childbearing. This proportion is nearly 4 times the level of 4.1 percent in 2002.
- The proportion of women who have begun childbearing increases with age, i.e., from 2.7 percent among those aged 15 to 43.5 percent among those aged 19.
- The level of teenage fertility in Region VI is above the national level of 13.6 percent.

HIV-AIDS

- As of 2013, only 79.4 percent of Region VI youth have heard of AIDS, lower than the national level of 83.3 percent.
- Awareness of AIDS among Region VI youth has declined sharply in the past decade; from 98.2 percent in 1994 to 79.4 percent in 2013.
- Misconceptions about HIV transmission are common among Region VI youth.
 - 58.9 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.
 - 52.3 percent agree that the risk of HIV transmission can be reduced by using a condom every time they have sex.
 - 61.3 percent agree that a healthy-looking person can have HIV.
 - 60.4 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV from mosquito bites.
 - 43.9 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV by sharing food with someone who is infected.
 - 35.6 percent think that AIDS is curable.
- 71.6 percent of the youth feel invincible to AIDS, i.e., they think there is no chance of them getting AIDS.



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