

#RegionVIIYouthToday: Risk Behavior of Young People in Central Visayas¹

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Background

The region of Central Visayas has a total of 1.3 million youth ages 15-24 in 2010 and this constitutes 9.6 percent of the total population of the region. Compared with the other regions, Central Visayas is the fifth region with the highest share of the 18M youth population in the country.

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 the youth living in Region VII.

The YAFS is a series of 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), and Department of Health (DOH) through Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD). The **2013 YAFS or YAFS4** interviewed a total of 19,178 young people in the country representing all sectors including males and females, single and married and the Muslim youth. For Central Visayas, the survey covered 1,037 youth respondents.

¹ Paper presented in the YAFS4 Regional Dissemination in Cebu City on September 1, 2014.

Region VII Key Findings from the 2013 YAFS

Socio-economic-demographic background

- Two in five youth are studying while nearly one-fourth each is working (23%) or doing housework (24%).
- Majority (82%) of the youth has at least some high school level education, the fourth highest percentage compared with the other regions. However, the proportion with at least some college education is below the national level.
- Some (3.7 %) are working students
- Six in 100 youth are idle, the fifth lowest in the country (9.4%).
- Majority of the youth have never been married (79 %) and is higher than the national level of 76.6 percent. But among those in a marital union, those who are currently living-in outnumber those in a formal union (13.3 % vs 6.4 %) - a pattern consistent with the national figure.

Media

- Region VII youth are digitally wired. 77.6 percent own a cellular phone and 67.0 percent use the internet, 54.6 percent have a social networking account, and 54.5 percent own an email account.
- 72.2 percent of the youth watch the television regularly.
- More than one-third of the young people in Central Visayas have text mates they have not personally met. Slightly over one-fourth of the young people in the region have online friends they have not met in person
- Less than one percent has a personal blog.

Lifestyle and Health

- 56 percent of Region VII youth exercise at least two to three times a week – the second highest in the country.
- Region VII youth are high consumers of unhealthy foods and drinks. At least once a week,
 - 59% consume instant noodles
 - 27% eat hamburger
 - 39% eat fried chicken
 - 38% consume fried street food
 - 50% eat grilled street food
 - 57% drink carbonated drinks, the third lowest in the country
 - 61% drink coffee or tea, the second lowest in the country

Non-sexual risk behaviors

- The proportion of Region VII youth who are currently smoking (18.5 %) has increased though still below the national level.
- The percentage of youth who are currently drinking alcoholic beverages (43 %) has declined but is the second highest in the country.
- Six in 100 youth have ever used drugs. Such proportion has declined in the past decade but is still the 4th highest in the country.
- 12.4 percent of Region VII youth have ever contemplated suicide, the second highest in the country.
- The percentage of youth who attempted to commit suicide (3.2%) has slightly decreased and is the same as the national level.
- Considerable proportions of Region VII youth have experienced physical violence both as aggressors (18.7 %) and as victims (14.7 %). Compared to other regions, such proportions are relatively low.
- One in twenty of the region's youth has experienced harassment using technology.

Sources of information about sex

- 47.7 percent of Region VII 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.
- 51.4 percent 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.
- Only nine in 100 youth have discussed sex at home while growing up.
- More male youth discuss sex at home with their brothers; the female youth with their mothers.

Sex and media

- 34.5 percent of Region VII youth have read pornographic materials (38.4 percent among males and 30.2 percent among females), which is below the national level.
- 62.4 percent have watched x-rated movies and videos (76.0 percent among males and 47.5 percent among females), the third highest among all regions in the country.
- The youth also engage in other media-related sexual activities.
 - 16 in 100 have visited websites with sexually-explicit content.
 - 22 in 100 have sent or received sex videos through cellphones or internet
 - 1.3 percent have recorded themselves having sex.
 - 3.5 percent had sex with someone they met online or through text messages.
 - Nearly 1 in 10 has engaged in phone sex.

Sexual risks

- Two in five youth in the region have sexual experience.
- Region VII youth engage in sex at young ages.
 - The mean age at first sex is 17.6 years for males and 18.1 years for females.

- Nearly 3 in 100 male youth and 1 in 100 female youth had sex before age 15.
- 22 percent of the male youth and 18.2 percent of the female youth had sex before age 18.
- More than one in three youth had engaged in sex before marriage, the fourth highest in the country.
- 7 in 10 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 Region VII, 1.2 percent have paid for sex and 1.7 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.
 - 5.1 percent of the youth have engaged in casual sex.
 - 3.2 percent of the youth, mostly males also have FUBU.
 - 4.0 percent of male youth have engaged in sex with a fellow male.
 - 2.1 percent of married youth (including those in living-in arrangement) have engaged in extramarital sex.

Teenage fertility

- Sharp rise in teenage fertility in the past decade.
 - 11.2 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.
 - 13.1 percent of females aged 15-19 have begun childbearing.

- The proportion of women who have begun childbearing increases with age, i.e., from 2.1 percent among those aged 15 to 35.7 percent among those aged 19.
 - The level of teenage fertility in Region VII is below the national level.
- 71.1 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV from mosquito bites.
 - 42.6 percent agree that a person cannot get HIV by sharing food with someone who is infected.
 - 36.9 percent think that AIDS is curable.
 - 61.9 percent of the youth feel invincible to AIDS, i.e., they think there is no chance of them getting AIDS.

HIV-AIDS

- As of 2013, only 83.3 percent of Region VII youth have heard of AIDS. Such proportion is the same level as the national.
- Misconceptions about HIV transmission are common among Region VII youth.
 - 64.0 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.
 - 54.9 percent agree that the risk of HIV transmission can be reduced by using a condom every time they have sex.
 - 60.5 percent agree that a healthy-looking person can have HIV.



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