



E-SYS QUICK FACTS



Filling the Gaps in Our Knowledge of Youth Health: Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth (E-SYS)

What is E-SYS?

E-SYS is a sentinel surveillance system that monitors rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and blood-borne infections (BBIs), risk behaviours and health determinants in the Canadian street youth population.

Who are street youth?

Street youth are as diverse as Canada's population. However, they all face unstable living conditions and have been subjected to complex social factors in their daily lives, such as poverty and family violence. They are more likely to have dropped out of school than other youth. The conditions that street youth are faced with tend to promote high-risk behaviours, which may lead to exposure to STIs and BBIs, substance use, and abuse.

Why was E-SYS developed?

E-SYS was developed to provide data on infection prevalence and risk behaviours in a hard-to-reach population not often represented in school-based or residence-based studies. It was a direct response to recommendations made at the 1997 national meeting of provincial and territorial STI directors.

E-SYS cycles and data collection

A pilot project was launched in 1998 to investigate the feasibility of studying the street youth population. Data collection was conducted in large urban centres across Canada, starting in 1999 and continuing in 2001, 2003 and 2005–06. Three sites, Vancouver, Ottawa and Halifax, were involved in the initial phase of the project. The surveillance system has now been expanded to seven urban centres. Current and past participating cities are Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax.

“E-SYS is a collaboration between the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Surveillance and Epidemiology Section (Community Acquired Infections Division, Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control), participating surveillance sites and the youth who provide the data and samples collected.”

Recruitment of E-SYS participants

Participants aged from 15 to 24 years inclusively are recruited through drop-in centres and outreach work. Interviewers collect the information required by administering two questionnaires. Street youth who consent to participate in E-SYS are also asked to provide urine and blood samples for STI and BBI testing.

Benefits of E-SYS

Findings from this surveillance system support the development of programs and policies to improve the health of street youth. In addition to providing the public health benefits of monitoring trends in STIs, BBIs and risk behaviours, E-SYS facilitates counselling, testing and treatment for these infections in this hard-to-reach population.

Contact

For further information please contact:

Olayemi Agboola, Epidemiologist
Surveillance and Epidemiology Section
Community Acquired Infections Division (CAID)
Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control (CIDPC)
Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
Jeanne Mance Building, AL 1906B
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

Tel. 613-941-8422

Fax. 613-957-0381

www.publichealth.gc.ca/sti

www.santepublique.gc.ca/its

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Health (2006)

Cat. N° HP5-15/2006
ISBN 0-662-49069-X

• Cat. N° HP5-15/2006E-PDF
ISBN 0-662-43488-9