



Strengthening and Building Sexual Health of Aboriginal Youth and Young Adults

Fact Sheet #10 HIV/AIDS



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Community Agencies (from Regina, Saskatchewan): Elder Norma Jean Byrd, Aboriginal Family Services, AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan, All Nations Hope, Cornwall Alternative School, Indian Metis Christian Fellowship (I.M.C.F.), Mobile Crisis Unit/Safety Services, Peyakowak, Rainbow Youth Centre, Regina Friendship Centre, Street Culture Kidz Project, and Street Workers Advocacy Project (S.W.A.P.)

Definition of HIV/AIDS

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) (Health Canada 1999). HIV positive status refers to the presence of HIV antibodies in blood, which means that the person has been exposed to HIV. The main routes of HIV transmission are: through specific sexual activities such as unprotected anal and vaginal intercourse; through injection drug use by sharing used or uncleaned needles or syringes; from mother to child, in the uterus, during childbirth or through breastfeeding. AIDS, a progressive symptom of HIV, is a syndrome characterized by specific symptoms and/or diseases. The time between initial infection with HIV and the development of AIDS can be 10 years or more. New treatments have increased the life span of people living with HIV/AIDS and improved their quality of life (Health Canada, 1999).

*Note: N varies from question to question because it represents the number of youth who actually responded to each question. Otherwise, the totals = 201 Community Aboriginal Youth; 241 High School Aboriginal Youth; 1875 High School Non-Aboriginal Youth.
Refer to FACT SHEET #1 for background in formation

This research was supported with funding from the CIHR HIV/AIDS Research Program (#HHP-56967), a component of the Canadian Strategy on HIV/AIDS

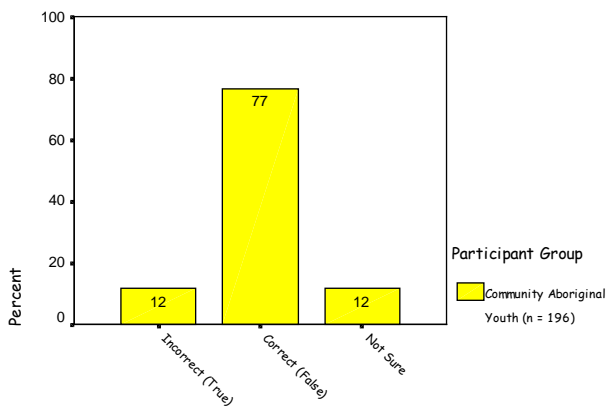
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Questions about HIV/AIDS

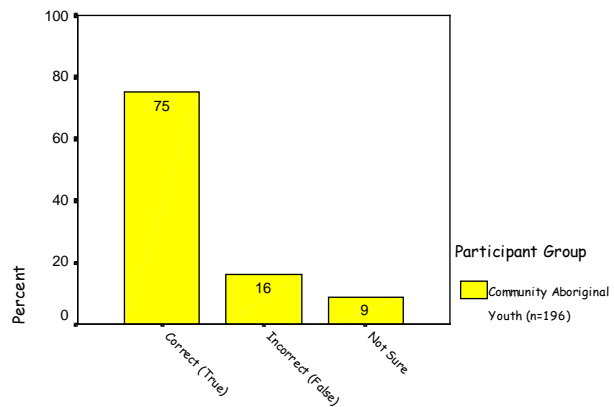
This fact sheet does not offer comparisons because these questions were not asked in the survey of the high school youth.

Do you think these statements about HIV/AIDS are true or false?

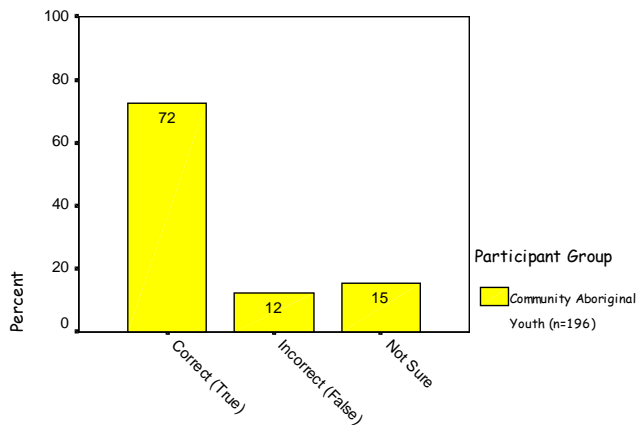
Only people who look sick have HIV/AIDS (False)



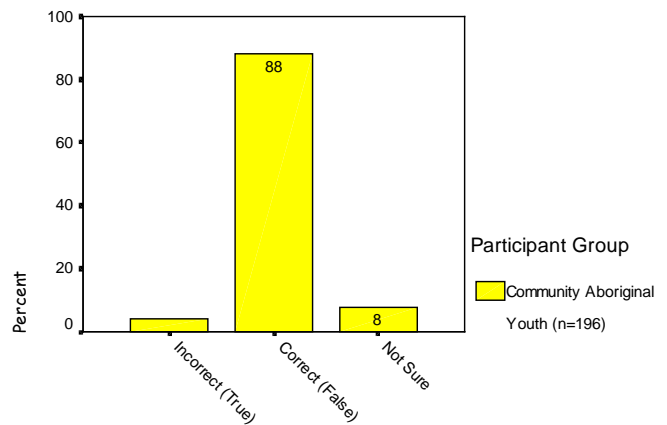
Condoms reduce the risk of getting the HIV virus (True)



A person can get the HIV virus even if he or she has sex (putting a penis in a vagina) just one time without a condom (True)



A person can get HIV by touching or hugging someone with HIV/AIDS (False)

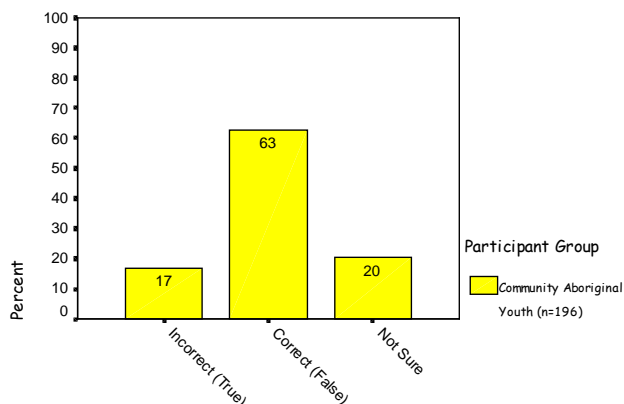


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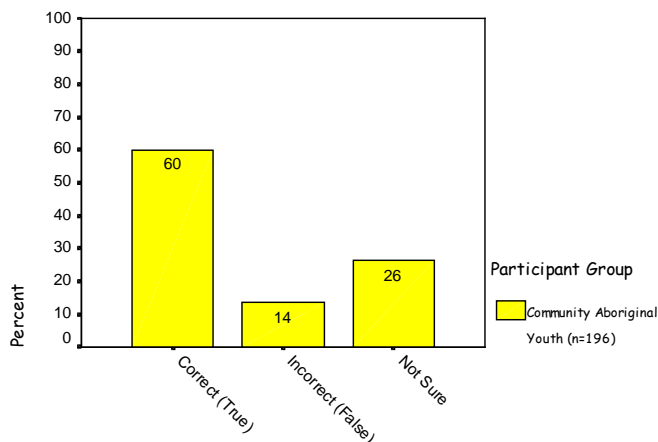
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Do you think these statements about HIV/AIDS are true or false?

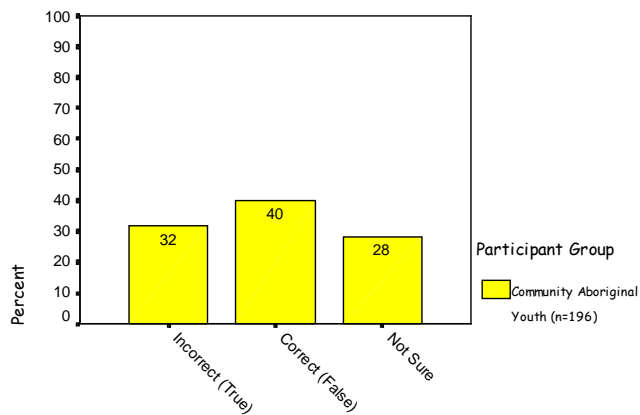
Most people who have AIDS show signs of being sick right away (False)



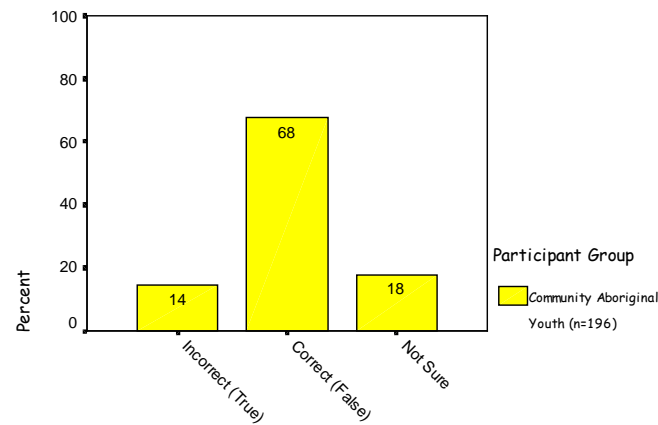
You can get HIV by having anal sex without a condom (True)
(by anal sex, we mean putting a penis in another persons anus[butt].)



You can get HIV by being bitten by a mosquito that has bitten someone with AIDS (False)



Only people who have sexual intercourse with homosexual people get HIV (False)

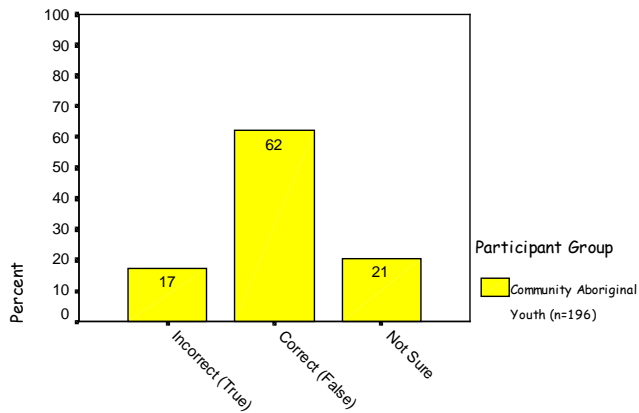


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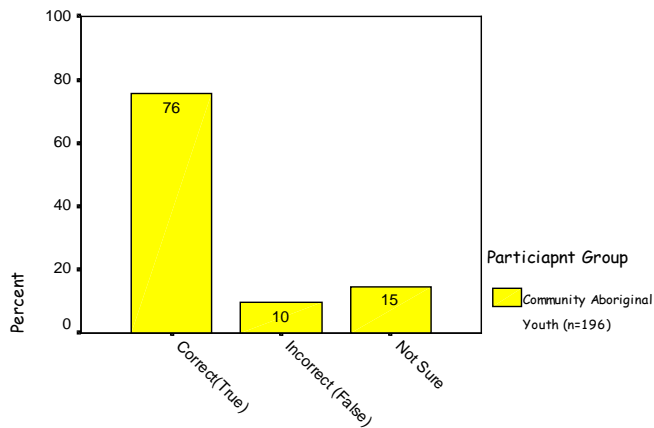
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Do you think these statements about HIV/AIDS are true or false?

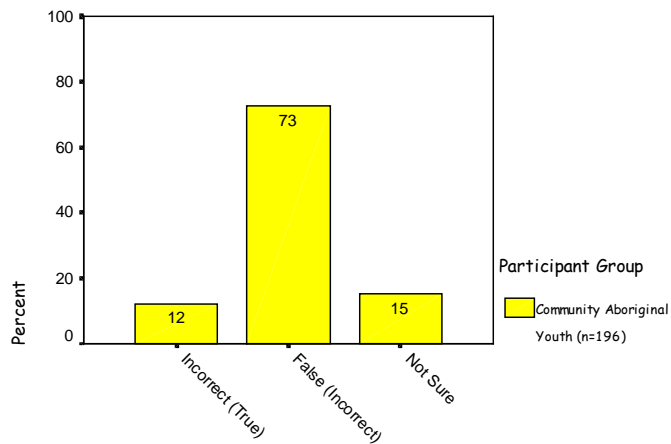
You can get HIV from kissing someone who has AIDS (False)



You can get HIV by having sexual intercourse with someone who has shared injection drug needles (True)



Birth control pills protect a woman from getting the HIV virus (False)



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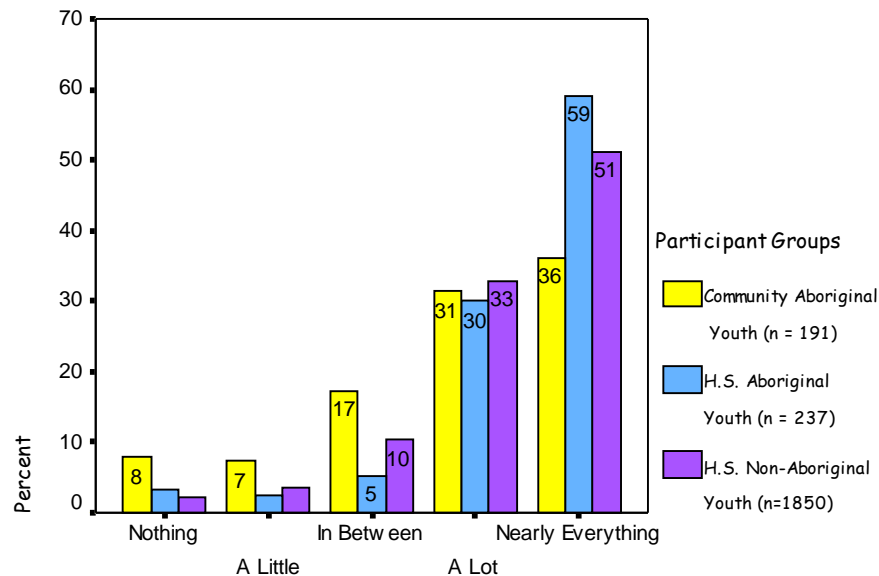
Scales

The **AIDS Knowledge Scale** is an 11-item instrument with scores ranging from 0 to 11 (CAPS Instruments, 2002). It covers True/False questions about HIV/AIDS/STD-related knowledge. The total score reflects how much youth know. A higher score reflects greater knowledge.

- ✂ On average, Community Aboriginal Youth score 7.32 out of 11 (n=201*). In other words, they got approximately **67%** of the questions correct.
- ✂ This is just less than a 7th grade baseline average of 7.9 out of 11, where **72%** of the questions are answered correctly (CAPS Instruments, 2002).
- ✂ There is no difference between the way Community Aboriginal females and males score on this scale.
- ✂ There is no difference between the way First Nations and Metis youth score on this scale.

Right Now How Much Do You Feel You Know About HIV/AIDS?

How Much Do You Know About
HIV/AIDS?



- ✂ Community Aboriginal Youth report knowing less than both High School Aboriginal Youth and High School Non-Aboriginal Youth about HIV/AIDS.
- ✂ Over half of each of the High School Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Youth report knowing "nearly everything" about HIV/AIDS compared to only 36% of Community Aboriginal youth who report knowing "nearly everything".

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HIV/AIDS Statistics

- ✚ Statistics from Health Canada (June 30, 2002) state that 18,332 AIDS cases with age information were reported the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Of those reported cases, 627(3.4%) were among youth aged 10-24.
- ✚ The proportion of females among positive HIV tests varies by age and is highest among adolescents and young adults.
- ✚ In 2001, females accounted for 44.5% of positive HIV test reports among those aged 15-29 years old; this is an increase from 41% reported in 2000.
- ✚ HIV/AIDS is affecting many subgroups of the Canadian population, including youth. More incidence and prevalence information as well as trend data on HIV-related risk behaviours are needed in order to guide and evaluate prevention programs for young Canadians.

Source: Health Canada (2003). HIV/AIDS EPI Updates. Centre for infectious diseases Prevention and Control.
