



Epidemiological Portrait of Physical Violence and Property Offences in Nunavik

Many Inuit community members have expressed their concern over increased violence in Nunavik homes and streets. Yet little is known about the actual prevalence of violent behaviour. The objective of this summary is to provide current data on physical violence, the characteristics of adults who are affected by violence, and the origin of perpetrators among the Inuit of Nunavik. Descriptive data on property offences are also provided.

During the course of the Nunavik Inuit Health Survey in fall 2004, a total of 969 individuals over the age of 15 completed a confidential questionnaire with questions relating to physical and community violence. Among both men and women, 53% reported having been physically abused and 46% reported having been a victim of property damage during the year prior to the survey. The likelihood of being affected by physical violence during adulthood is relatively high for both men and women, as well as for young adults and older people, though women and adults under 45 years of age bear the largest burden.

Violence within couples is widespread: two thirds of women and one third of men affected by physical violence were assaulted by their partner or ex-partner. Physical violence within a family context (aside from violence by the partner) is a current phenomenon, indeed one of four women and one of three men who are victims of violence were assaulted by a family member as an adult.

The annual rates of reported vandalism, robbery, break-ins and aggravated theft are very high (from 10% to 28%), much higher than those observed in the rest of Canada, suggesting that any single Nunavik resident is likely to experience many and severe forms of such violence during his or her lifetime.

Aggression is seen as contrary to Inuit tradition and culture and the people of Nunavik have suggested avenues of intervention that are primarily based on support for victims and aggressors, and on increasing community awareness.

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STATISTICAL ANALYSES

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