

# Health and Health-Related Behaviours among Young People: Yukon Report

A comparison of Yukon students to other Canadian students

2012

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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Knowledge about young people's attitudes, behaviours, and physical and psychological well-being, and the factors that influence them is essential for the development of effective health education and school health promotion policy, programs, and practice. Since 1990, the Social Program Evaluation Group (SPEG) at Queen's University, Faculty of Education has been collecting national data on these issues every four years from students ages 11 to 15 through a large-scale survey, the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study. The purpose of the HBSC study is to gain insight about and increase our understanding of young people's health, well-being, and health behaviours within their social contexts.

There are now 43 HBSC participating countries and regions, in Europe, North America, and Israel. The HBSC researchers come from a variety of countries, disciplines, and theoretical perspectives. For example, the Canadian team based at Queen's University includes researchers from the areas of community health and epidemiology, education, kinesiology and health studies, and psychology. HBSC is sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and funded nationally by the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada and supported by the Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH).

In accordance with the World Health Organization (WHO) perspective, health is acknowledged as a resource for everyday living and not just the absence of disease. As such, the HBSC regards young people's health in its broadest sense, encompassing physical, social, and emotional well-being. The HBSC is concerned about adolescent development so examines differences across grades and between the two genders. Furthermore, it incorporates contextual determinants – such as the home, school, peers, neighbourhoods, and geographic locations – that may shape or influence a variety of behaviours, attitudes, and outcomes for young people. A broad range of outcomes are examined in the study in relation to the above three dimensions; these include the conventional health-compromising behavioural outcomes, such as smoking, alcohol use, limited physical activity, bullying, and injuries. In addition, the HBSC measures positive adolescent developmental outcomes such as happiness, life satisfaction, emotional well-being, relationships with others, attachment and connectedness to school, and student participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities (Currie et al., 2008).

The primary purpose of the HBSC study in Canada is to collect data on school-aged young people that allows researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners to gain insights into young people's attitudes and behaviours, and examine the relationships between contextual factors and health behaviours. By having such data over time and across different jurisdictions, it is possible to effect changes that could promote healthier lives for adolescents.

Table 1 details the sample size for the HBSC study. The overall sample is 26,047 including Yukon and 24636 without Yukon. For presentation purposes the students are combined into Grades 6 to 8 and Grades 9 and 10 groupings, corresponding to the two versions of the questionnaire used to collect the data.

**TABLE 1      Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Grade**

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Grades 6 to 8</b>			
<b>Yukon</b>	448	421	869
<b>Rest of Canada</b>	7293	7448	14741
<b>Grades 9 and 10</b>			
<b>Yukon</b>	275	267	542
<b>Rest of Canada</b>	4862	5033	9895

## Outline of Report

This report presents key findings from the 2009/10 cycle of the HBSC survey in Yukon and includes chapters on the following topics:

- Mental Health
- Environmental Influences (neighbourhood and parents; friends; school setting)
- Health Promoting Behaviours (eating and diet, physical activity)
- Health Risk Behaviours (sedentary behaviour, substance abuse, sexual practices, bullying, injuries)

The choice of these focus topics was made in consultation with the JCSH, departments of health and education in the provincial/territorial jurisdictions, and researchers at Queen's University. These youth health outcomes are examined in relation to gender and age. A good rule of thumb is that differences between Canada and Yukon are statistically significant if they are 5% or higher, although differences of 3% or more are significant for questions with very high (greater than 85%) or very low (less than 15%) agreement.

The final chapter of the report pulls together the results Yukon to the rest of the country, pinpointing areas where Yukon has reasons to celebrate and areas where there are ongoing concerns.

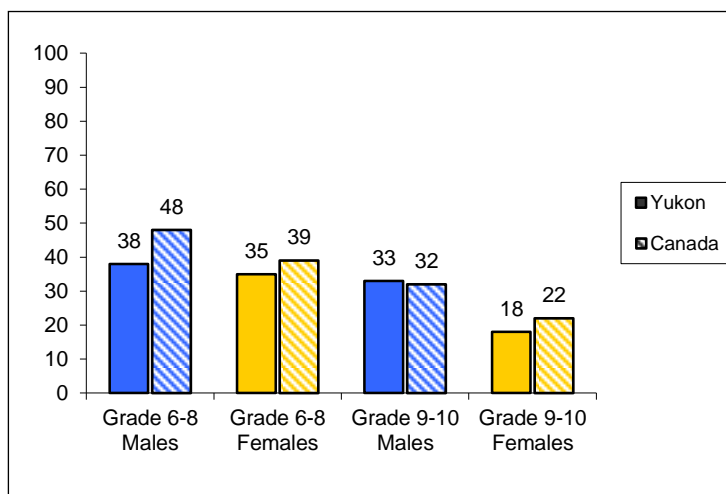
## 2 MENTAL HEALTH

There is growing recognition within Canada of the critical nature of improving the mental health of young Canadians with a particular emphasis on positive mental health in contrast to what has historically been a focus on mental illness. Children with positive mental health tend to have better outcomes throughout life, while children with more mental health difficulties experience a range of lifetime difficulties (Buote, 2009). This trend to move away from a deficit model of mental health toward a more balanced view (Keyes, 2006) measuring the dual (positive and negative) nature of mental health is further reinforced by a growing acknowledgment of the importance of developmental assets in young people's lives (Benson & Scales, 2009). Assets tend to promote greater personal resilience, namely, the ability to achieve success despite obstacles (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

### EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Emotional well-being is related to both grade and gender with males tending to report higher levels than females and Grade 6-8 students higher levels than Grade 9-10 students (see Appendix A for scale items). As a result, Grade 6-8 males are most likely to be in the highest group in emotional well-being (38% Yukon; 48% rest of Canada), while Grade 9-10 females are least likely to be in this group (18% and 22% respectively). Grade 6-8 males in Yukon report 10% lower emotional well-being than their counterparts in the rest of Canada.

**FIGURE 1** Students in group with highest score on emotional well-being scale, by grade and gender (36.9% of all students are in this group)

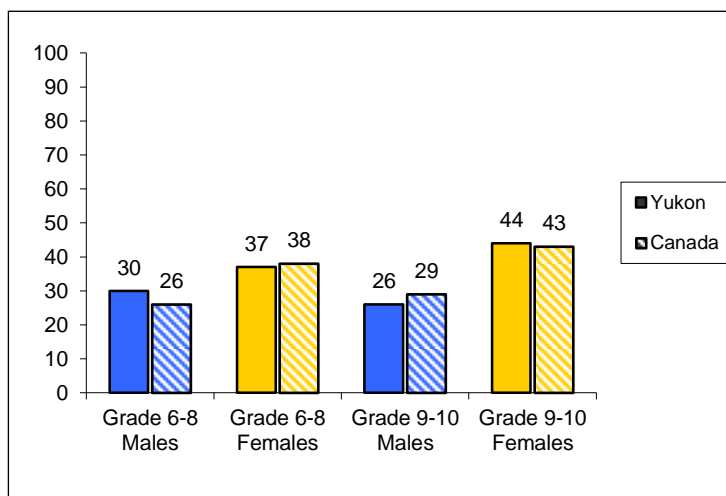


## EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Emotional problems are more often reported by females than males in Yukon and the rest of Canada (see Appendix A for scale items). They increase across grades for females but remain fairly stable for males. Students in Yukon are roughly on par with students in the rest of Canada with respect to emotional problems.

**FIGURE 2**

**Students in group with highest score on emotional problems scale, by grade and gender (33.8% of all students are in this group)**

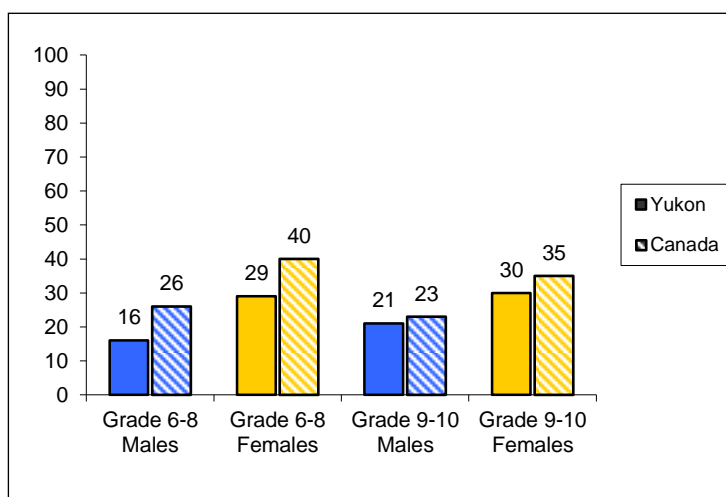


## PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

For both Yukon and the rest of Canada, females report more prosocial behaviour than males (such behaviours reflect helping others voluntarily; see Appendix A for scale items). While younger students report more prosocial behaviour than older students in the rest of Canada, age groups are relatively similar in Yukon. Grade 6-8 students in Yukon report less prosocial behaviour than students in the rest of the country (16% vs. 26% for males; 29% vs. 40% for females).

**FIGURE 3**

**Students in group with highest score on prosocial behaviours scale, by grade and gender (31.5% of all students are in this group)**



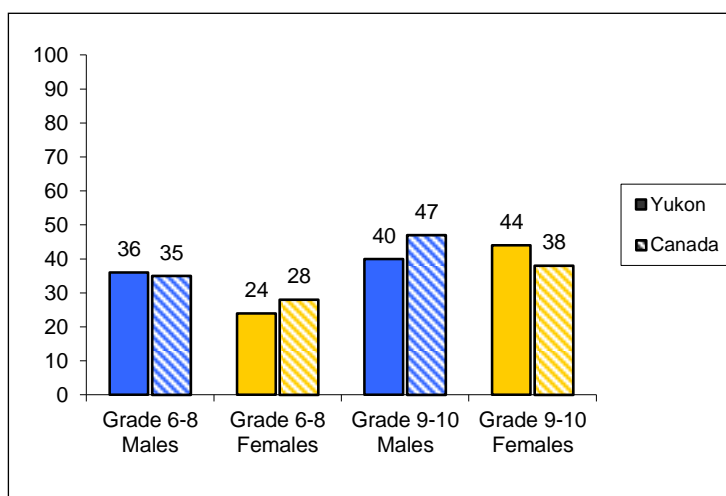


## BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

In Yukon, Grade 6-8 males and Grade 9-10 females report more behavioural problems than students in the rest of the Canada (1% more and 6% more, respectively; see Appendix A for scale items). Grade 6-8 females and Grade 9-10 males, on the other hand, report fewer behavioural problems than others in Canada (4% less and 7% less, respectively). While both genders report an increase in behavioural problems across the grades, females in Yukon in Grade 9-10 report a much higher increase than their male peers (20% increase females; 4% increase males).

**FIGURE 4**

**Students in group with highest score on behavioural problems scale, by grade and gender (35.8% of all students are in this group)**

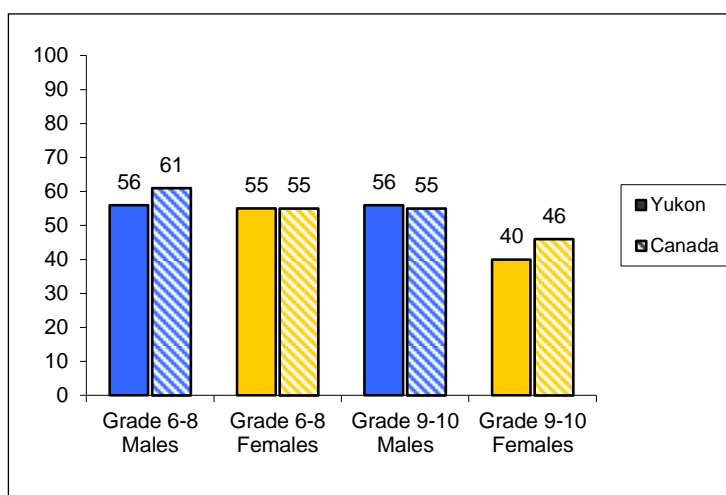


## LIFE SATISFACTION

The percentage of students reporting high life satisfaction decreases with age, especially for females (55% decreasing to 40% for Yukon females; 55% decreasing to 46% for females in the rest of Canada). Females, regardless of grade or location, report lower levels of life satisfaction than males. While Grade 6-8 males and Grade 9-10 females in Yukon indicate they have lower life satisfaction than their peers in the rest of Canada, Grade 6-8 Yukon females and Grade 9-10 Yukon males are basically on par with the rest of the country.

**FIGURE 5**

**Students who responded 8 to 10 on a 0=worst possible to 10=best possible life satisfaction scale, by grade and gender (%)**

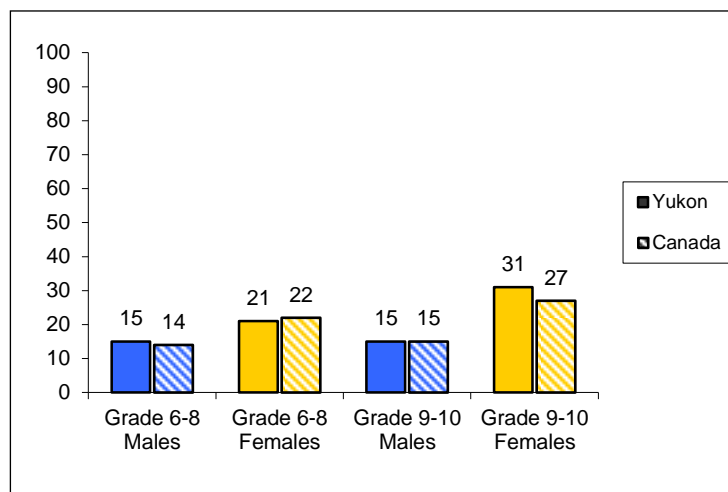


## FEELING SAD OR HOPELESS

Males in Yukon and the rest of Canada report feeling sad or hopeless every day for two weeks or more in a row less often than their female counterparts. While males' sadness/hopelessness remains stable across grades, females' sadness/hopelessness increases across grades. Yukon students are similar with their peers elsewhere in feeling sad or hopeless.

**FIGURE 6**

**Students who felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities in the last 12 months, by grade and gender (%)**



### 3 ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

#### Neighbourhood and Parents

Neighbourhoods represent key environmental settings for youth, as policies, physical spaces, and structures, and cultural, social, and interpersonal interactions that occur in these environments influence their subsequent behaviour, and ultimately their health experiences (Bernard et al., 2007; Green et al., 1996; Sallis & Owen, 2002).

While neighbourhoods delimit the surroundings of a young person, the family provides the first socializing context in a young person's development and has the central role in socialization (Parke & Buriel, 2006). Children learn and develop values and norms based on those modelled, taught, and enforced within the family environment. Patterning health and healthy behaviours begins with the family.

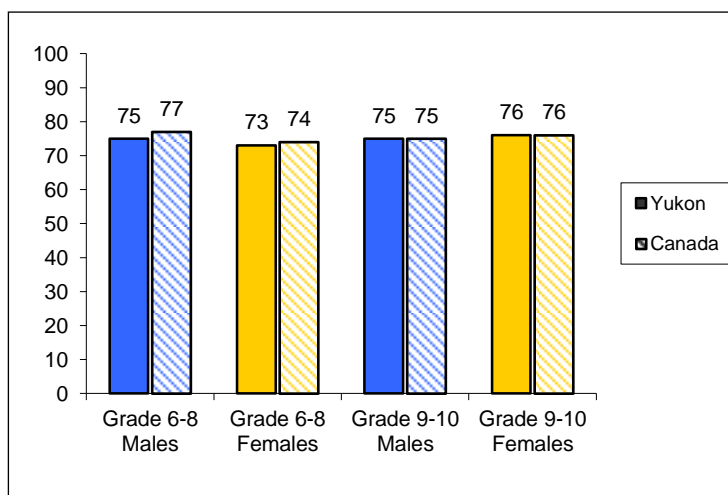
The family tends to decrease in influence as young people mature, with adolescence typically being a time when young people begin to challenge parental controls and values and to turn more to their peers (Collins & Steinberg, 2006). This growth in personal autonomy during the period of adolescence can result in varying degrees of conflict with parents. However, the family remains an essential source of support and a critical agent of intervention and health promotion throughout the school years. Relationships with parents, including communication and connectedness with family, have been shown to be highly correlated to reduced delinquent behaviour and lower rates of depression and psychosomatic symptoms (Currie et al., 2008).

#### SAFE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN TO PLAY

Relatively high numbers (around three-quarters) of students believe their neighbourhoods are safe for children to play in. Yukon is roughly on par with the rest of Canada in perceptions of neighbourhood safety.

**FIGURE 7**

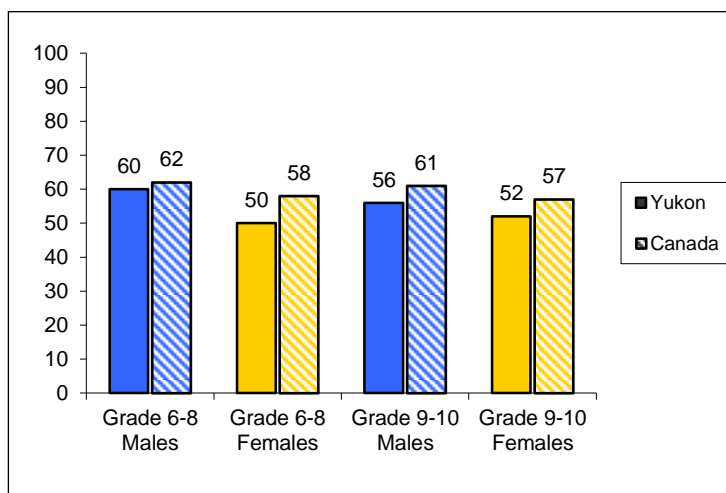
**Students that either agree or strongly agree that "it is safe for younger children to play outside during the day," by grade and gender (%)**



## TRUSTING PEOPLE

Just over 60% of males and a somewhat smaller percentage of females across the rest of Canada feel that they can trust people in their neighbourhood. The percentages are slightly lower in Yukon than the national average in all age-gender groups, with the largest difference being Grade 6-8 females (8% lower).

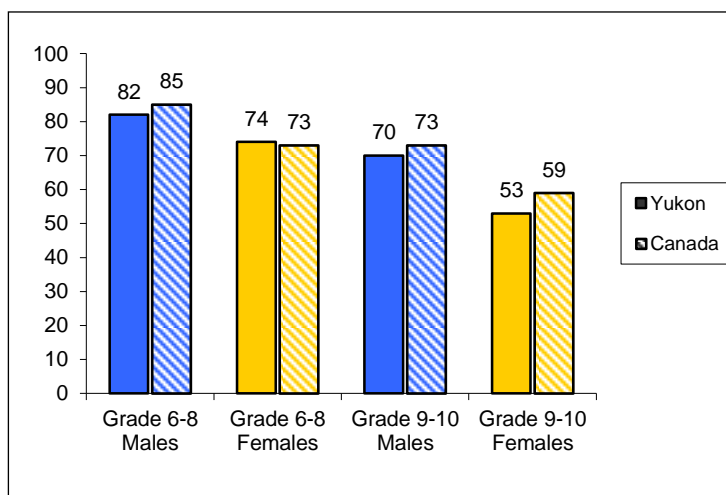
**FIGURE 8** Students that either agree or strongly agree that “you can trust people around here,” by grade and gender (%)



## PARENTS ARE UNDERSTANDING

More males than females see their parents as understanding them with the rate highest for Grade 6-8 males at 82% (for Yukon) and 85% (for the rest of Canada). Grade 9-10 students see their parents as less understanding than Grade 6-8 students such that the lowest agreement to the statement is for Grade 9-10 females (59% rest of Canada; 53% Yukon). The numbers for Yukon and the rest of Canada are roughly on par with each other with the highest discrepancy in Grade 9-10 females (Yukon 6% lower than the rest of the country).

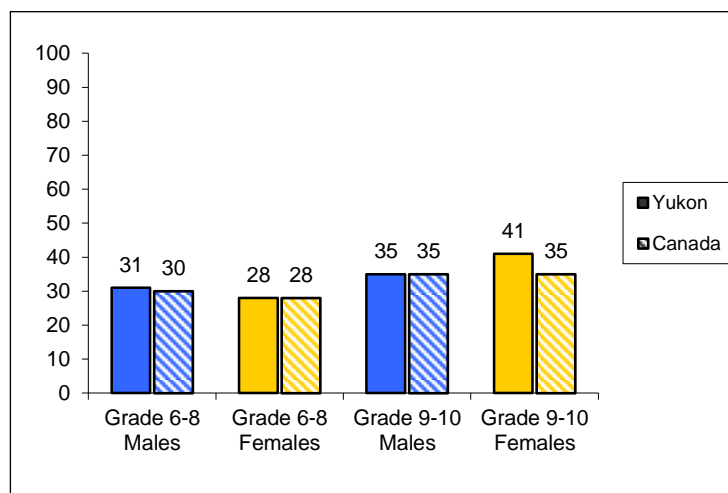
**FIGURE 9** Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement “My parents understand me,” by grade and gender (%)



## PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS

Parents' expectations are related to grade and gender in that females' reports of overly high expectations increase more than males' across grades. Grade 9-10 Yukon females are more likely to see their parents as expecting too much of them than are Grade 9-10 females in the rest of Canada.

**FIGURE 10** Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement "My parents expect too much of me," by grade and gender (%)



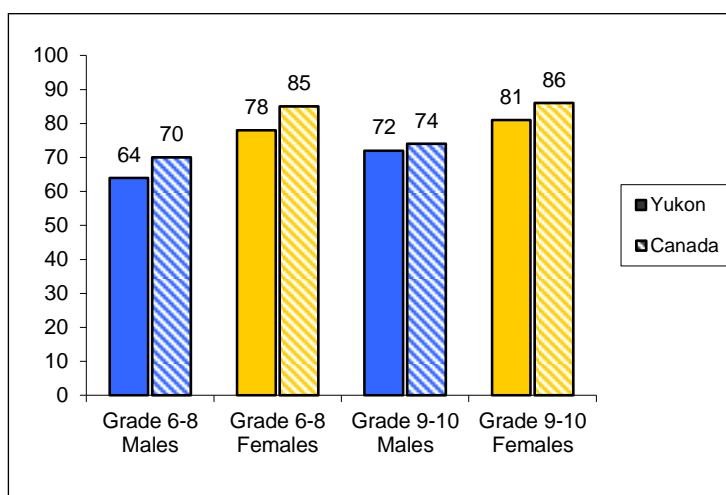
## Friends

From childhood to adolescence, peer relationships become increasingly significant sources of support, companionship, information and advice. Peers can have short- and long-term beneficial effects on social, cognitive and academic adjustment (Hartup, 1993; Savin-Williams, & Berndt, 1990; Scholte & Van Aken, 2006). Peers provide young people with developmental opportunities and social possibilities that are not available through relationships with adults, (Scholte & Van Aken, 2006). Having friends, and having supportive friendships are associated with positive outcomes, such as feeling good about oneself, feeling connected with others, being positive in outlook, and contributing to successes in subsequent romantic relationships (Hartup, 1993).

### FRIENDS OF SAME-SEX: EASY TO TALK TO

For both Yukon and the rest of Canada, females find it easier to talk to friends of the same sex than do males with about 80% of females saying it is easy or very easy for them to do so and about 70% of males giving those responses. In all age-gender groups, students in Yukon find it more difficult to talk to their same-sex friends than do their peers in the rest of Canada.

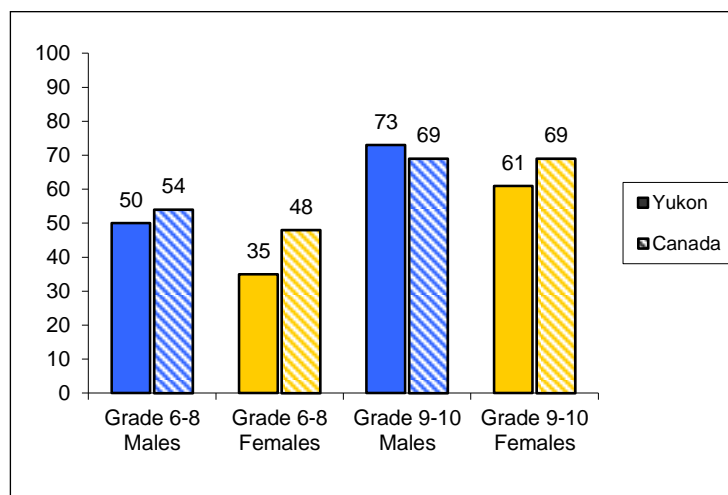
**FIGURE 11** Students who find it easy or very easy to talk to same-sex friends about things that really bother them, by age and gender (%)



## FRIENDS OF OPPOSITE-SEX: EASY TO TALK TO

As students move from Grades 6-8, they increase their ease in talking with friends of the opposite sex considerably. While there is a gender difference in Grade 6-8 such that males find it easier to talk to opposite-sex friends than females, the gender gap disappears by Grade 9-10 for students in the rest of Canada, although it persists in Yukon. As a result, Grade 9-10 males in Yukon are more likely to find talking to opposite-sex friends easy or very easy when compared to other Grade 9-10 males in Canada.

**FIGURE 12** Students who find it easy or very easy to talk to opposite-sex friends about things that really bother them, by age and gender (%)



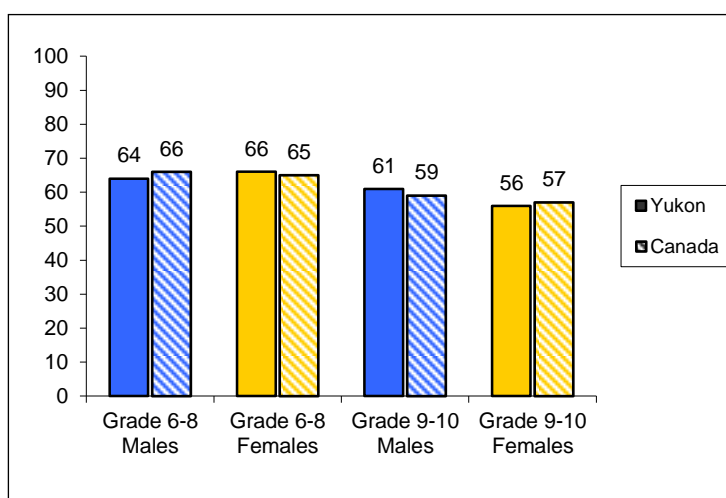
## School Setting

Schools provide a “critical context for shaping children’s self-esteem, self-efficacy and sense of control over their lives” (Stewart, Sun, Patterson, Lemerle, & Hardie, 2004, p. 27). As children move forward into their early and later teen years, schools become more important, and the support of teachers and peer connections within schools may have an even greater influence than their home context (Stewart, 2008; Stewart et al., 2004). Young people who feel connected with their school and have positive experiences with teachers and peers are more likely to develop strong emotional bonds and self-confidence. They are much less likely to engage in health-compromising activities or struggle with their mental health (e.g., Wold, Samdal, Nutbeam, & Kannas, 1998). Those young people who do not feel accepted by their peers or connected with school are the most likely to have lower levels of confidence and sense of self (King, Vidourek, Davis, & McLellan, 2002).

### FEELING OF BELONGING AT SCHOOL

Males and females are similar in the extent to which they feel they belong at their school. However, older students report lower belongingness than younger students. The students in Yukon respond in a manner that is roughly similar to students in the rest of Canada.

**FIGURE 13** Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement “I feel I belong at this school,” by grade and gender (%)

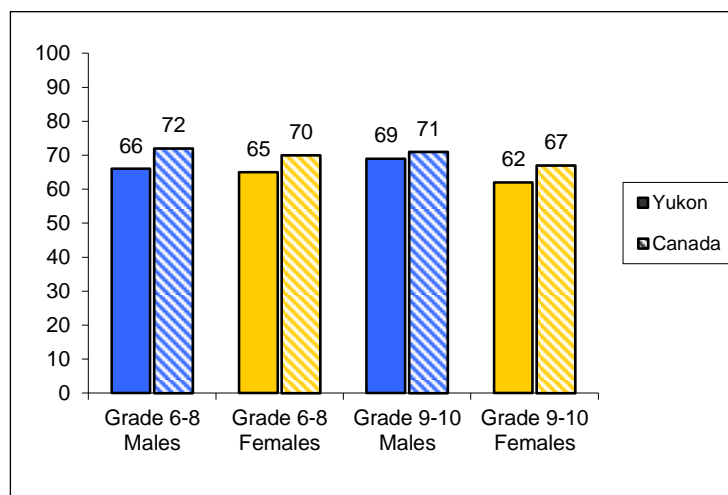




### ACCEPTANCE BY CLASSMATES

There are relatively few differences in the rest of Canada with respect to feelings of acceptance, regardless of grade level or gender. Students in Yukon on average feel less accepted than others in the rest of Canada for all gender-grade groups, particularly for Grade 6-8 males (6% lower).

**FIGURE 14** Students who agree or strongly agree with the statement “Other students accept me as I am,” by grade and gender (%)



## **4 HEALTH PROMOTING BEHAVIOURS**

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### **Healthy Eating**

Following the eating pattern in Canada's Food Guide will help children and teenagers maintain good health and achieve optimal growth and development. Healthy and nutritious food items, such as fruits and vegetables, need to be part of a healthy eating pattern and should be consumed frequently. Conversely, young people should limit the frequency in which they consume foods and beverages high in calories fat, sugar and/or salt(Gore, Foster et al., 2003). Youth should also avoid frequently eating at fast food restaurants, as the foods sold at these establishments, while affordable, are high in calories and linked to obesity and poor health (Bowman, Gortmaker et al., 2004).

## FOOD AND BEVERAGE FREQUENCY PATTERNS

### Grades 6 to 8

Females are more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, dark green vegetables, and orange vegetables and to drink fruit juice than males in Yukon and the rest of Canada.

Students in Yukon in Grade 6-8 eat more game meat than the rest of Canada.

Otherwise, the numbers for food consumption in Grade 6-8 Yukon students are roughly on par with students in the rest of the country.

### Grades 9 and 10

As students move across grades, Yukon males slightly decrease their intake of fruits by 2% whereas they increase their intake of vegetables by 6%. Females increase both their fruit and vegetable intake by approximately 3%. The result is that, while Yukon students resemble students elsewhere in Grade 6-8 in fruit and vegetable consumption, they exceed other students in Grade 9-10. Yukon females increase their intake of soft drinks, whereas Yukon males increase their intake of energy drinks as they move across grades. Eating game from hunting remains higher in the Yukon than elsewhere.

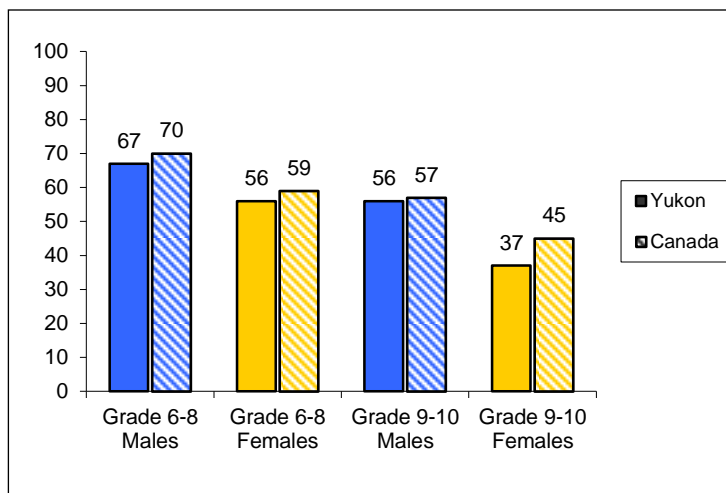
**TABLE 2** Students eating food items or drinking beverages once per day or more often, by grade and gender (%)

Grades	Males		Females	
	Yukon	Canada	Yukon	Canada
<b>6 to 8</b>				
Fruit	42	42	50	50
Vegetables	38	40	49	48
Sweets/candy/chocolate	17	17	16	17
Soft drinks with sugar	11	13	7	8
Potato chips	5	5	3	4
French fries	2	3	2	2
Dark green vegetables	14	15	18	17
Orange vegetables	18	17	20	18
Fruit juice	30	39	38	42
Whole grain breads or cereals	41	42	47	40
Energy drinks	4	3	2	2
Game from hunting	16	5	13	3
<b>9 and 10</b>				
Fruit	40	36	53	44
Vegetables	44	38	54	47
Sweets/candy/chocolate	18	21	16	19
Soft drinks with sugar	14	18	10	11
Potato chips	3	6	3	3
French fries	2	4	2	1
Dark green vegetables	12	12	13	15
Orange vegetables	14	13	15	14
Fruit juice	33	36	37	38
Whole grain breads or cereals	41	37	41	39
Energy drinks	7	4	2	1
Game from hunting	17	5	9	3

### WEEKDAY BREAKFAST CONSUMPTION

Breakfast consumption is affected by both grade and gender in that younger students and males are more likely to report eating breakfast daily, such that the highest consumption is for Grade 6-8 males (67% Yukon; 70% rest of Canada) and the lowest is for Grade 9-10 females (37% Yukon; 45% rest of Canada). Grade 9-10 Yukon females report lower rates of breakfast consumption than their peers elsewhere.

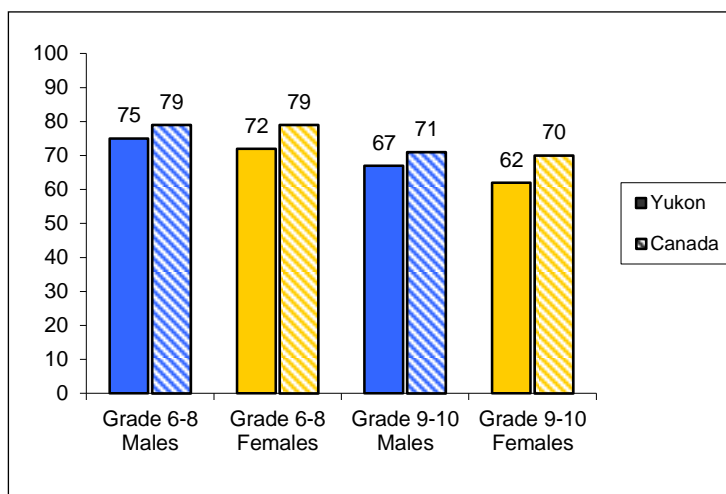
**FIGURE 15** Students eating breakfast five days a week on weekdays, by grade and gender (%)



### WEEKEND BREAKFAST CONSUMPTION

Weekend breakfast consumption, unlike weekday breakfast consumption, is largely unrelated to gender, although older students continue to report lower rates of weekend breakfast consumption than younger students. Students in Yukon, regardless of grade or gender, report lower levels of weekend breakfast consumption, than students in other parts of Canada.

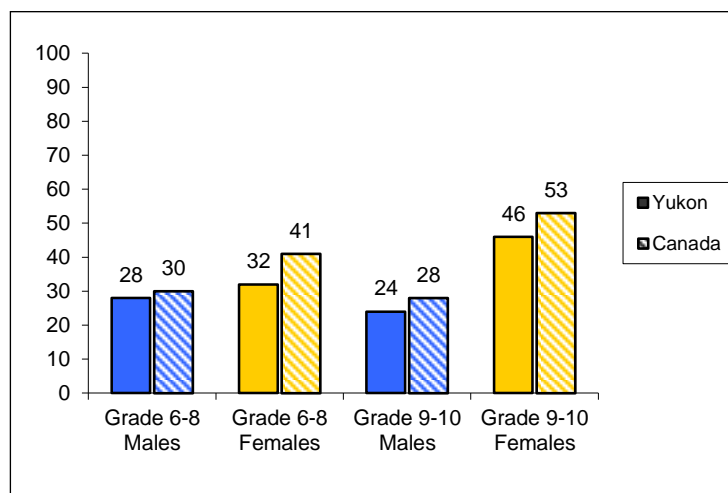
**FIGURE 16** Students eating breakfast both days on the weekend, by grade and gender (%)



## DIET IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Figure 17 shows the proportion of students who have dieted or changed eating habits to lose weight in the past 12 months. While approximately 40% of females in Grades 6-8 report having tried to lose weight in the past year, about 50% of females in Grades 9-10 indicate that they have done so. In contrast, less than 30% of males across grades report trying to lose weight. Students in the Yukon consistently report lower rates than the rest of Canada when asked about dieting. Most of the discrepancy was seen with females in the Yukon where Grade 6-8 females report 9% lower and Grade 9-10 females report 7% lower.

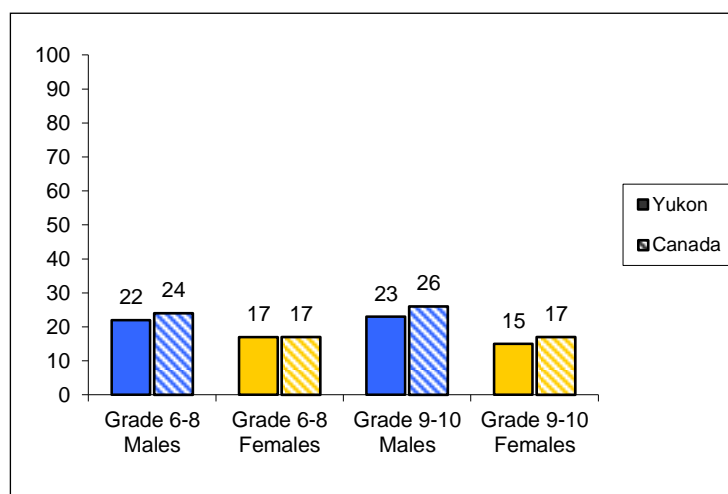
**FIGURE 17** Students who have dieted or changed eating habits to lose weight in the past 12 months, by grade and gender (%)



## BMI CLASSIFICATION

The reported BMI for males in both Yukon and the rest of Canada is higher than the reported BMI for females. The numbers for Yukon and the rest of Canada are similar.

**FIGURE 18** Students classified as overweight or obese on the Body mass Index (BMI), by grade and gender (%)



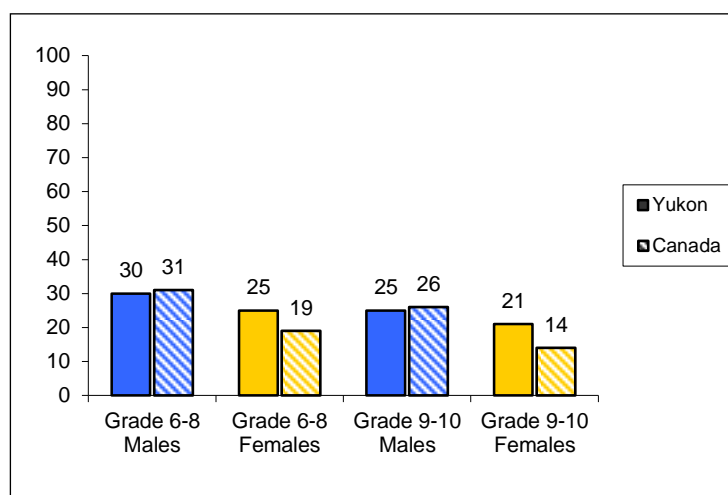
## Physical Activity

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by the muscles that result in an increase in energy expenditure. It includes non-vigorous tasks, such as light walking, and moderate or vigorous tasks, such as brisk walking, jogging, bicycling, playing soccer, and playing basketball. Physical activity needs to be of at least a moderate intensity to generate health benefits (Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010). Physical activities of moderate to vigorous intensity are those that will make the individual breathe more deeply and rapidly and increase his or her body temperature (e.g., makes him or her feel warm, sweat). The health benefits of moderate to vigorous physical activity in children and youth include the regulation of body weight and chronic-disease risk factors, improved fitness, the development of healthy and strong bones, and improved mental health (Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010).

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE PAST SEVEN DAYS

Compared to males, relatively fewer females report engaging in one hour of physical activity on a daily basis. However, females in Yukon report higher levels than the rest of Canada in daily physical activity (25% versus 19% for Grade 6-8; 21% versus 14% for Grade 9-10). As a result, the gender gap in the Yukon is much smaller than that in the rest of Canada.

**FIGURE 19** Students physically active every day over the past seven days for a total of at least 60 minutes per day, by grade and gender (%)

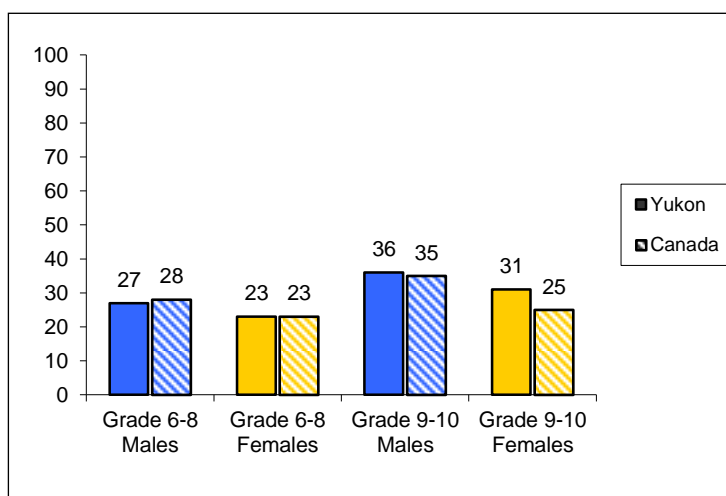


### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CLASS TIME AT SCHOOL (NOT JUST PHYS. ED. CLASS)

Across the rest of Canada, males spend more time doing physical activity in class time than females. For males, the amount of class time spent in physical activity increases substantially from Grade 6-8 to Grade 9-10, while the time remains fairly level for females. In Yukon, both genders increase across grades. Students in Yukon are generally on par with their Canadian counterparts. Grade 9-10 females, however, exceed their counterparts across the rest of Canada in physical activity in class time (6% higher).

**FIGURE 20**

**Students spending four or more hours per week doing physical activity in class time at school, by grade and gender (%)**

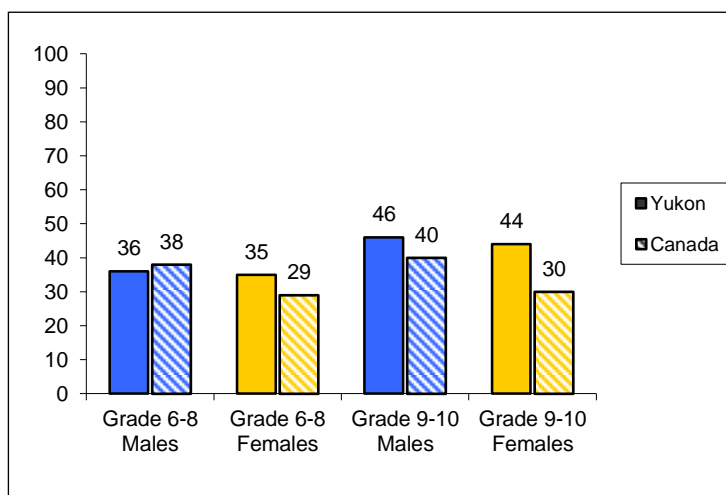


### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS

There is a gender gap in physical activity outside of school hours whereby males exceed females in both Yukon and the rest of Canada, although the gender gap is minimal in Yukon. In the rest of Canada, there is a slight increase in outside-of-school activity for both females and males across grades. In Yukon, the cross-grade increase is substantial. In both grades, Yukon females report higher numbers than females elsewhere in Canada.

**FIGURE 21**

**Students spending four or more hours per week doing physical activity outside of school hours, by grade and gender (%)**



## 5 HEALTH RISK BEHAVIOURS

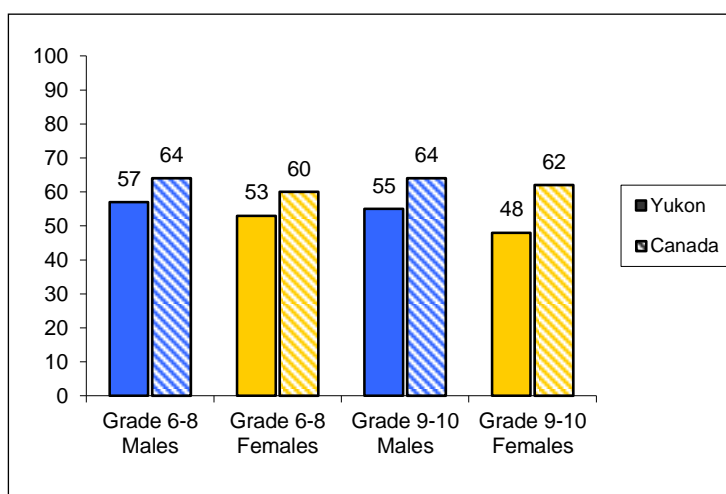
### Sedentary Behaviour

Sedentary behaviour is different from physical activity and consists of activities in which there is little movement or energy expenditure. These activities include watching television, playing video games, using the computer, doing homework, reading, and motorized travel. The goal is to keep young people's sedentary behaviour levels to a reasonable and healthy level. Increased time spent engaging in sedentary behaviour, especially screen activities, such as watching television, using the computer, and playing video games, have been linked to several negative health outcomes (Tremblay, Colley et al., 2010). For example, obesity, unhealthy eating, decreased fitness, and substance use and abuse are all associated with excessive screen time.

#### HOURS WATCHING TELEVISION: WEEKDAY

In comparison to the rest of Canada, students in Yukon for all gender-grade groups watch less television with the gap largest for Grade 9-10 females (14%; 48% Yukon; 62% rest of Canada). Both Yukon males and Yukon females in Grade 9-10 watch less television than their Grade 6-8 counterparts (5% lower for females; 2% lower for males).

**FIGURE 22** Students who spend two hours or more watching television on a weekday, by grade and gender (%)

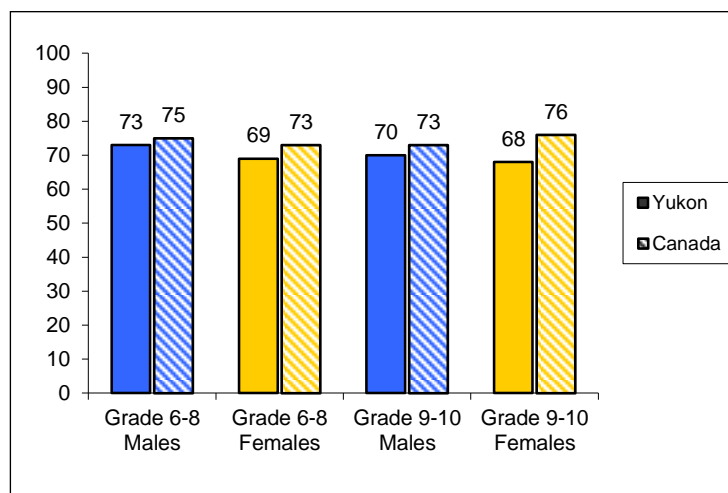




### HOURS WATCHING TELEVISION: WEEKEND

About 70% of students in the rest of Canada and the Yukon watch two or more hours of television on weekends. The numbers are somewhat lower in the Yukon than the rest of Canada, particularly for females: 4% lower for Grade 6-8 (69% versus 73%) and 8% lower for Grade 9-10 (68% versus 76%).

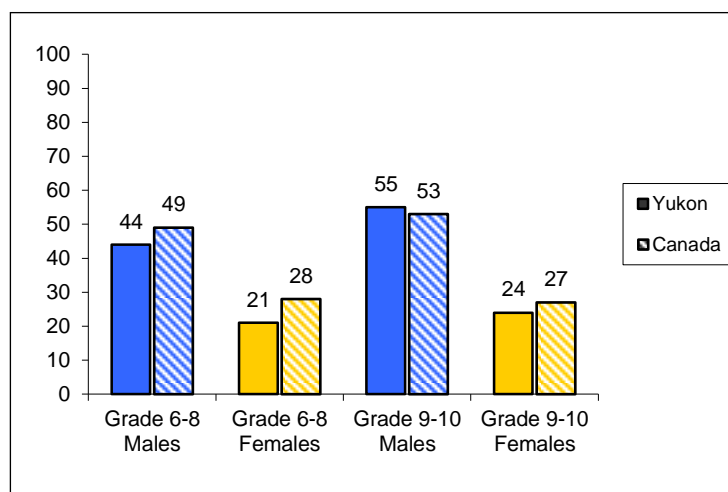
**FIGURE 23** Students who spend two hours or more watching television per day on a weekend, by grade and gender (%)



### HOURS PLAYING ON A COMPUTER OR GAMES CONSOLE: WEEKDAY

Considerably more males than females spend two hours or more playing computer games in both Yukon and the rest of Canada. Grade 6-8 students in Yukon report less computer game playing than Grade 6-8 students in other parts of Canada.

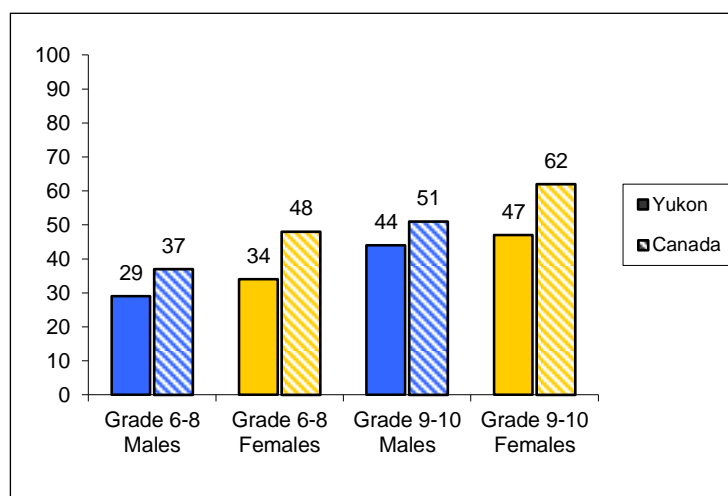
**FIGURE 24** Students who spend two hours or more playing on a computer or a games console on a weekday, by grade and gender (%)



### HOURS USING A COMPUTER FOR CHATTING ON-LINE: WEEKDAY

Females and students in Grade 9-10 report more on-line chatting than males and students in Grade 6-8, such that Grade 6-8 males have the lowest frequency (29% for the Yukon; 37% for the rest of Canada) and Grade 9-10 females have the highest (47% for the Yukon; 62% for the rest of Canada). Males and females in Yukon across all grades on-line chat significantly less than their peers from the rest of Canada. The gender gap in the Yukon is smaller than it is in the rest of Canada.

**FIGURE 25** Students who spend two hours or more using a computer for chatting on-line on a weekday, by grade and gender (%)



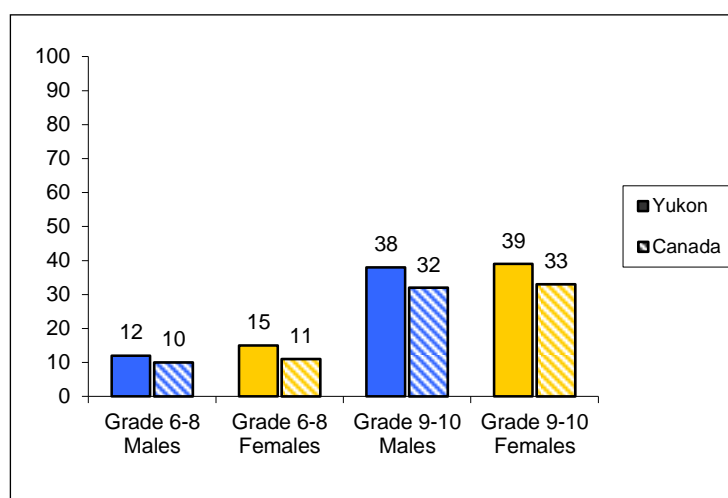
## Substance Abuse

During the adolescent years many lifelong health habits are established. It is also a period of experimentation with smoking, alcohol, and drugs and other risky behaviours (Chassin, Pitts, & Prost, 2002). For most adolescents, these behaviours are occasional in nature and a normal part of growing up (Nell, 2002). However, for a sizable minority of adolescents, these behaviours escalate and become more serious problems. Several risky behaviours tend to co-occur with other health problems in youth, such as injuries (Collin, 2006), cognitive and psychomotor impairment (Squeglia, Jacobus & Tapert, 2009), and social and emotional problems (Elgar, Knight, Worrall, & Sherman, 2003).

### EVER SMOKED

Students in Yukon are more likely to have tried smoking than students in the rest of Canada. The greatest difference is seen in Grade 9-10 students (6% higher for Yukon males; 6% higher for Yukon females). Having ever smoked tobacco increases substantially across grades.

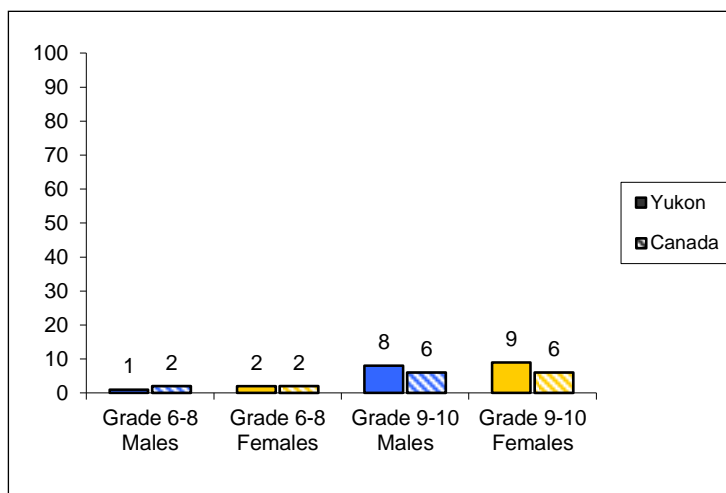
**FIGURE 26** Having ever smoked tobacco, by grade and gender (%)



### DAILY SMOKERS

Less than 2% of Grade 6-8 students and approximately 6% of Grade 9-10 students in the rest of Canada are daily smokers with a gender gap of less than 1%. The daily smoking numbers are slightly higher in the Yukon than the rest of the country for Grade 9-10 (males report 2% higher; females report 3% higher than their peers in the rest of Canada).

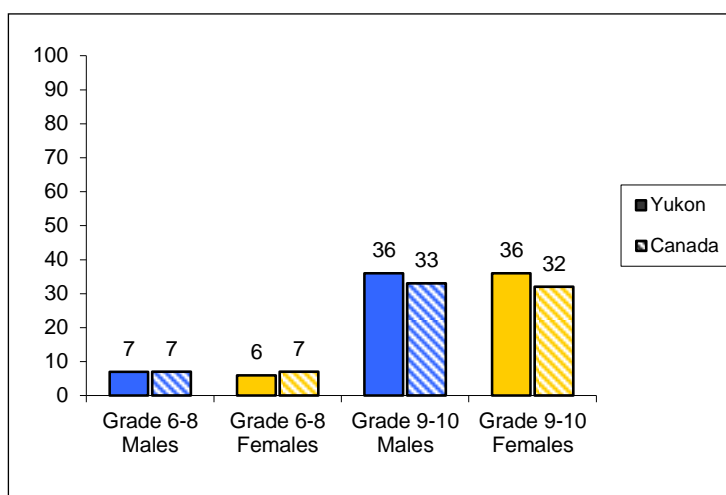
**FIGURE 27** Daily smokers, by grade and gender (%)



### HAVING BEEN DRUNK

Less than 10% of students in Grade 6-8 report having been really drunk at least twice. This number increases to around 30% for Grade 9-10 students. There is little difference between males and females in reported drunkenness. The numbers in Yukon are roughly on par with the rest of the country.

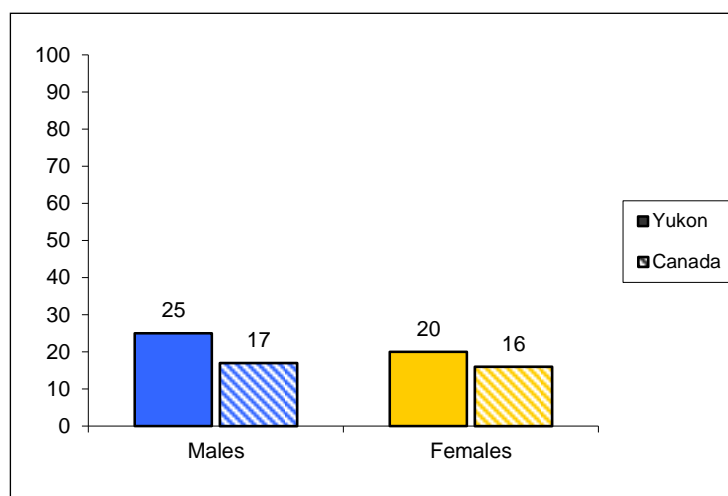
**FIGURE 28** Students who report being really drunk at least twice by grade and gender (%)



### HAVING FIVE OR MORE DRINKS (FOUR OR MORE FOR FEMALES) ON ONE OCCASION

The proportion of Grade 9-10 students who report drinking heavily more than once a month is similar for male and females. Yukon adolescents report higher levels of drinking than adolescents in the rest of Canada (8% higher for males; 4% higher for females).

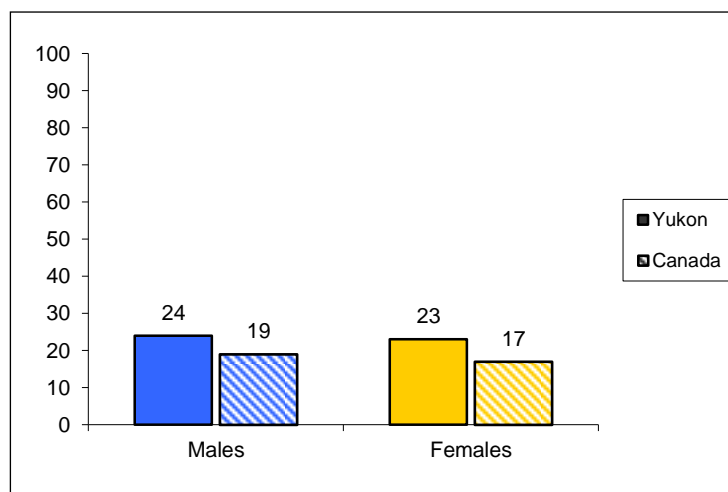
**FIGURE 29** Grades 9 and 10 students having five or more drinks (four or more for females) more than once a month, by gender (%)



### CANNABIS USE IN THE LAST 30 DAYS

Adolescent reports of cannabis use in the last 30 days are slightly higher for males than females (24% males, 23% females in Yukon; 19% males, 17% females in the rest of Canada). The reported cannabis use for both males and females in Yukon is higher than for males and females in the rest of Canada (5% higher for males; 6% higher for females).

**FIGURE 30** Grades 9 and 10 students reporting cannabis use in the last 30 days, by gender (%)



## RISK PERCEPTION

Table 3 shows the percentage of students who feel there is “slight” or “no risk” in the use of cigarettes, alcohol, and various drugs on an occasional or a regular basis. For students in both Yukon and the rest of Canada, drinking alcohol once in a while is seen as least risky, while use of Ecstasy and use of hallucinogens on a regular basis are seen as most risky. Students in Yukon find fewer risks in smoking marijuana than do students in the rest of Canada. For other substances, the Yukon results are similar to those in other parts of Canada.

**TABLE 3** Students indicating risk behaviours pose “slight” or “no risk” to health, by grade and gender (%)

	Grades	Males		Females	
		Yukon	Canada	Yukon	Canada
smoking cigarettes once in a while	6 to 8	40	39	38	37
	9 and 10	44	44	41	43
smoking cigarettes on a regular basis	6 to 8	14	11	11	9
	9 and 10	9	9	8	6
smoking marijuana once in a while	6 to 8	29	23	20	18
	9 and 10	48	39	41	31
smoking marijuana on a regular basis	6 to 8	17	12	11	9
	9 and 10	24	19	20	11
drinking alcohol once in a while	6 to 8	62	62	60	59
	9 and 10	64	64	65	66
drinking alcohol on a regular basis	6 to 8	21	20	15	13
	9 and 10	20	19	11	12
Use Ecstasy once in a while	9 and 10	14	15	16	13
Use Ecstasy on a regular basis	9 and 10	8	7	5	4
Use hallucinogens, LSD or PCP once in a while	9 and 10	14	12	11	9
Use hallucinogens, LSD or PCP on a regular basis	9 and 10	8	7	5	4
Use glue or solvents once in a while	9 and 10	17	16	13	13
Use glue or solvents on a regular basis	9 and 10	11	8	6	5
Use pain relievers, tranquilizers or stimulants once in a while	9 and 10	16	15	15	13
Use pain relievers, tranquilizers or stimulants on a regular basis	9 and 10	8	8	7	5

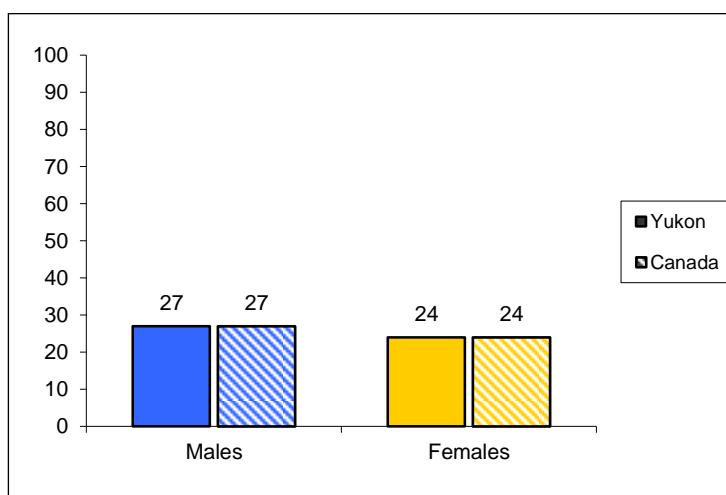
## Sexual Practices

In thinking about sexual health for adolescents, two issues are prominent. First, while having sex is not unhealthy in and of itself, early sexual onset has been connected to negative consequences in adulthood including a greater number of recent sexual partners, increased number of recent risky sexual partners, greater history of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and having sex while intoxicated, and (for males) increased sexual dysfunction (Sandfort, Orr, Hirsch, & Santelli, 2008). Second, adolescents are at relatively high risk for STIs (Weinstock, Berman, & Cates, 2004), which could be greatly lessened through consistent use of condoms.

### EVER HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

About a quarter of Grade 9-10 students in Yukon and the rest of Canada report ever having had sexual intercourse. The numbers are higher for males in both cases than for females. The numbers for Yukon males and females are virtually identical to the rest of the country.

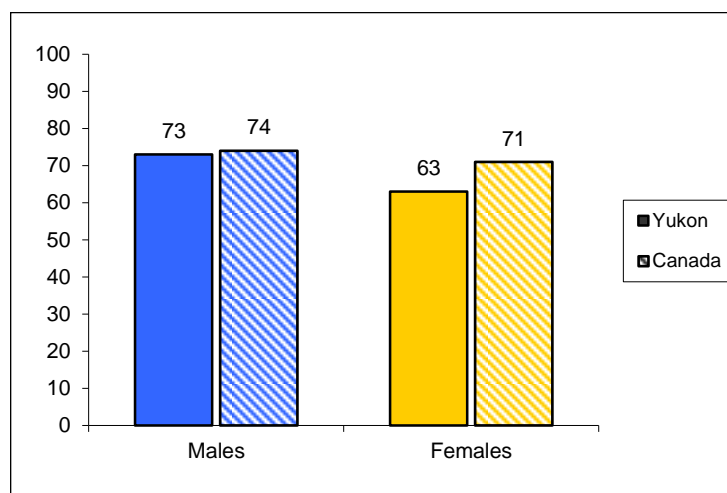
**FIGURE 31** Grades 9 and 10 students who report having had sexual intercourse, by gender (%)



## CONDOM USE

Reported condom use during sexual intercourse is just over 70% for Yukon males but under 65% for Yukon females. Yukon females report condom use less commonly than females elsewhere (63% versus 71%).

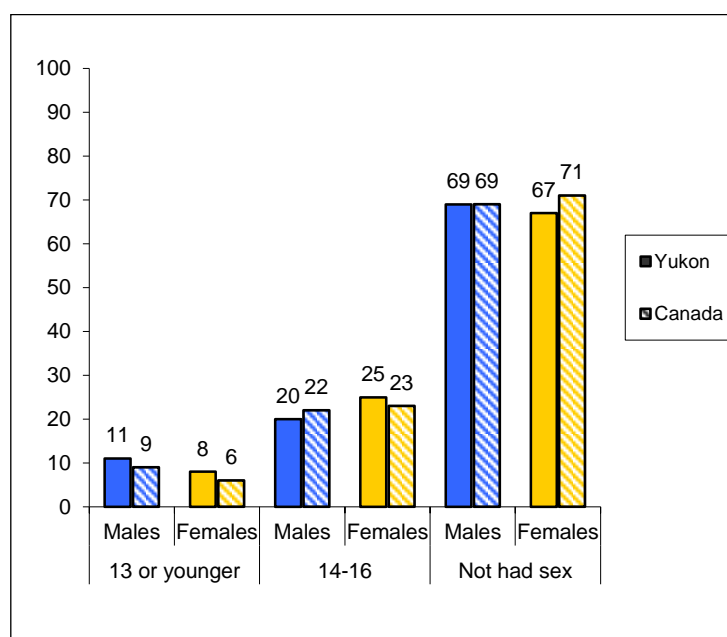
**FIGURE 32** Grades 9 and 10 students who report a condom was used the last time they had sexual intercourse, by gender (%)



## AGE OF FIRST SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

A higher percentage of students in Yukon report their first sexual intercourse at age “13 or younger” than students in other parts of Canada (11% vs. 9% for males; 8% vs. 6% for females).

**FIGURE 33** Grades 9 and 10 students who report age of first sexual intercourse, by gender (%)





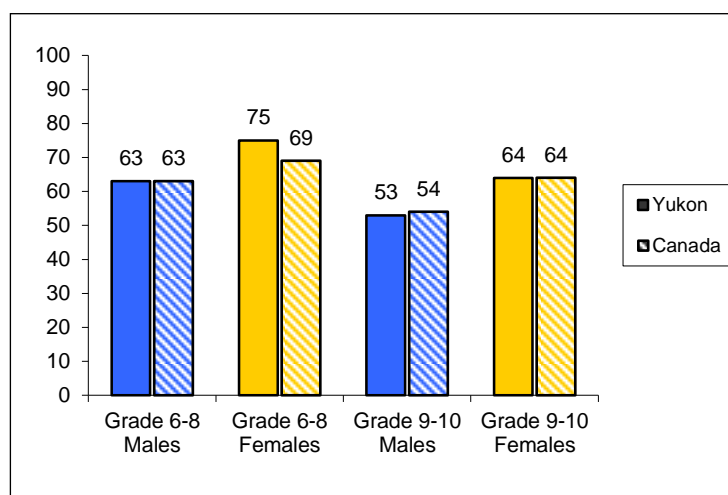
## Bullying

Bullying puts young people at immediate and long-term risk for many emotional, behavioural, and relationship problems. These risks affect young people who bully others, young people who are victimized, and young people who both bully others and are victimized. Lessons of power and aggression learned through childhood bullying can lead to sexual harassment (McMaster et al., 2002) and dating aggression (Pepler et al., 2008) and may later extend to workplace harassment, and marital, child, and elder abuse perpetrated in other types of relationships. Victimized youth may also carry the hurt and fear from bullying forward into adulthood. Indeed, research on bullying has identified an intergenerational link: parents who bully in childhood are likely to have children who bully their peers (Farrington & Ttofi, 2011).

### HAVING BEEN BULLIED

For both Yukon and the rest of Canada, more females report having been bullied at school recently than males. Bullying decreases with increasing grades. Thus the lowest reported incidence of having been bullied is for Grade 9-10 males (53% Yukon; 54% rest of Canada). With the exception of Grade 6-8 females where the Yukon number is 6% higher, Yukon is on par with the rest of the country.

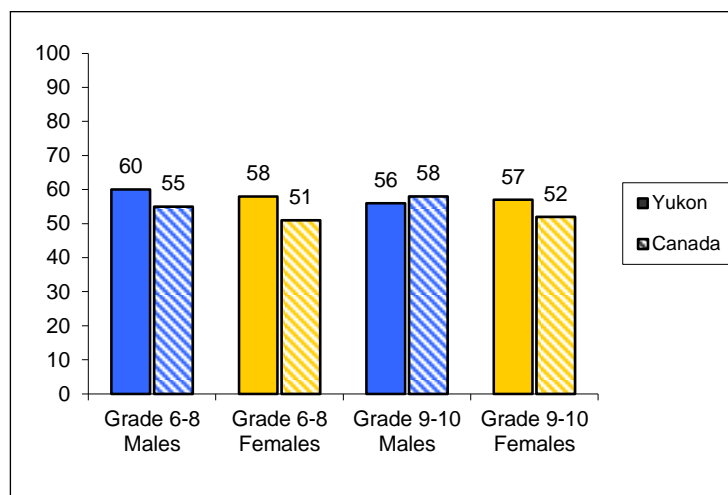
**FIGURE 34** Students who report having been bullied at school in the past couple of months, by grade and gender (%)



## BULLYING OTHERS

Reports of having bullied others are largely unaffected by grade or gender. With the exception of Grade 9-10 males, students in Yukon are more likely to report having bullied others in the past couple of months than students in the rest of Canada.

**FIGURE 35** Students who report having bullied others at school in the past couple of months, by grade and gender (%)



## TYPES OF BULLYING

The most common form of bullying for Grade 6-8 students in Yukon and the rest of Canada is being called mean names/teased hurtfully. This form is followed by being left out for Yukon male students and lies/rumours for Yukon female students. Being left out of things and physical bullying have higher reported prevalence in the Yukon than in other parts of Canada.

While the two most common forms of bullying remain the same for Grade 9-10 females from Yukon, Grade 9-10 male students report lies/rumours as the second most common form. Sexual jokes bullying, which has very little gender gap in Grade 6-8 students, is more often reported by Grade 9-10 females than Grade 9-10 males. While most other forms of bullying decrease across grades, electronic bullying increases for both genders, and lies/rumours increases for females. Bullying through sexual jokes is less common for Grade 9-10 Yukon students than other Canadian students.

**TABLE 4** Most common types of bullying, by grade and gender (%)

	Males		Females	
	Yukon	Canada	Yukon	Canada
<b>Grades 6 to 8</b>				
called mean names, or being made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way.	66	67	61	64
being left out of things on purpose, being excluded from a group of friends, or being completely ignored.	53	40	50	47
being hit, kicked, shoved around, or locked indoors.	44	39	31	21
others told lies or spread false rumours about them and tried to make others dislike them.	50	47	55	55
sexual jokes, comments, or gestures made to them.	36	33	39	34
someone sent mean instant messages, wall postings, emails and text messages, or created a Web site that made fun of me.	17	12	17	18
<b>Grades 9 and 10</b>				
called mean names, or being made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way.	59	65	56	55
being left out of things on purpose, being excluded from a group of friends, or being completely ignored.	34	35	46	39
being hit, kicked, shoved around, or locked indoors.	31	31	18	13
others told lies or spread false rumours about them and tried to make others dislike them.	43	39	58	54
sexual jokes, comments, or gestures made to them.	27	36	40	44
someone sent mean instant messages, wall postings, emails and text messages, or created a Web site that made fun of me.	18	17	22	19

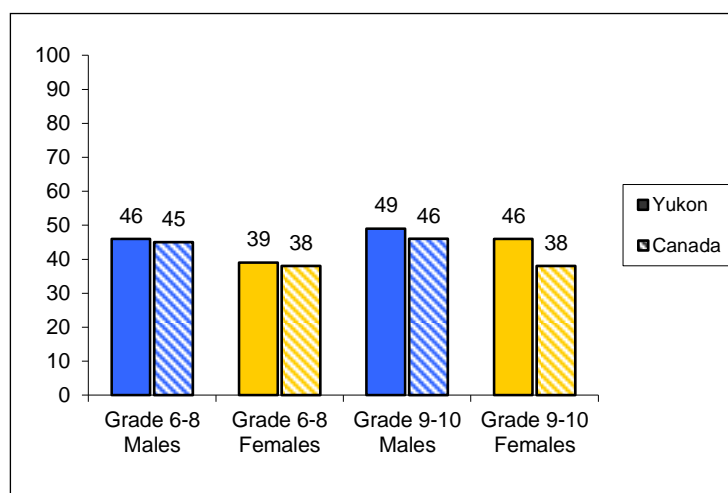
## Injuries

Injury is defined as any physical harm to the body caused typically by an external force. The most common causes of injury are physical forces, and in young people these often happen while playing sports, during motor vehicle collisions, while cycling, or during physical fights (Molcho et al., 2006). Injuries can also include poisoning and ingestions, as well as burns. Injury is recognized as a leading health public health issue in populations of young people around the world (Peden et al., 2008). Injuries are costly to society in terms of health care expenditures and time lost from productive activities for both adolescents and adults who care for them when they are injured (Ameratunga, 2009; Leitch, 2007; Peden et al., 2008).

### INJURIES IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

In both Yukon and the rest of Canada, more males than females report serious injuries. The number of injuries reported by females from Yukon increases across grades, so that Grade 9-10 females report more serious injuries (46%) than Grade 9-10 females elsewhere in Canada (38%).

**FIGURE 36** Students reporting an injury during the past 12 months requiring treatment by a doctor or nurse, by grade and gender (%)



### LOCATION WHERE MOST SERIOUS INJURY OCCURRED

For male students, the most serious injury is most likely to occur at a sports facility or field (31% Grade 6-8 Yukon, 37% Grade 9-10 Yukon; 33% Grade 6-8 rest of Canada, 40% Grade 9-10 rest of Canada). For female Grade 6-8 students in Yukon, a sports facility or field is also the most likely (28%), as it is for Grade 9-10 females (32% Yukon; 37% rest of Canada). However, Grade 6-8 females in the rest of Canada more often report the most serious injury occurring at home or in the yard (29%) than at other places. Yukon males report a decrease in injury at home or in the yard and at “other location” over grades, while there is a reported increase for them in injuries at all other places.

**TABLE 5** Locations of the most serious injury in the past 12 months, by grade and gender (%)

Grades	Males		Females	
	Yukon	Canada	Yukon	Canada
<b>6 to 8</b>				
At home or in the yard	23	24	22	29
At school during school hours	9	16	16	18
At school outside of school hours	1	3	8	5
At a sports facility or field	31	33	28	26
In the street or parking lot	10	7	6	6
Other location	27	17	20	16
<b>9 and 10</b>				
At home or in the yard	13	16	20	24
At school during school hours	11	13	12	13
At school outside of school hours	5	5	7	5
At a sports facility or field	37	40	32	37
In the street or parking lot	11	9	9	6
Other location	24	17	21	16

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## 6 SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

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In many respects, students in Yukon show similar patterns to their counterparts in the rest of Canada, so that priorities across Canada, such as ameliorating mental health, reducing bullying, and addressing cannabis use (among others), resonate for policy-makers and practitioners in Yukon. What this report shows are areas where Yukon seems to be doing better than or worse than expected on comparative terms.

### **Causes of Celebration**

1. **Fruit and Vegetable Consumption:** Grade 6-8 Yukon students, compared to other Canadian students, are just as likely to consume fruit and vegetables. By Grade 9-10, they are more likely to do so.
2. **Dieting to Lose Weight:** Yukon students, particularly females, are less likely to report having dieted to lose weight in the past year.
3. **Females and Physical Activity:** Yukon females, compared to other Canadian females, report more daily physical activity and more physical activity outside class time. Grade 9-10 Yukon females also report comparatively higher physical activity during class time.
4. **Sedentary Activity:** Yukon adolescents are less likely than adolescents elsewhere in Canada to watch TV on weekdays or on weekends and to chat on-line. The differences between Yukon and the rest of Canada are particularly striking for Grade 9-10 females. In addition, Grade 6-8 Yukon students tend to play computer games less than other Canadian students.

## Causes of Concern

In addition to places where Yukon students are doing better than other Canadian students, there are a few areas where they are not doing as well. These issues deserve increased scrutiny within the territory.

1. **Interpersonal Relations:** Students in Yukon are less likely to trust other people, to communicate easily with same-sex friends, to feel their classmates accept them, and (with the exception of Grade 9-10 males) to communicate easily with opposite-sex friends, when compared to other students in Canada.
2. **Smoking and Heavy Drinking:** Grade 9-10 Yukon students are more likely to have ever smoked and to have drunk heavily more than once a month than students in other parts of Canada.
3. **Cannabis:** Grade 9-10 students in Yukon are more likely to have used cannabis in the past 30 days than students elsewhere (the question is not asked of Grade 6-8 students). Compared to their Canadian peers, Yukon students across grade and gender are less likely to see marijuana use on either an occasional or regular basis as risky.
4. **Grade 9-10 Females:** Compared to females in the rest of Canada, Grade 9-10 females report more behaviour problems, poorer life satisfaction, lower parental understanding, greater parental expectations, lower condom use, less likelihood of having eaten breakfast on a weekday, and greater likelihood of having bullied others. In none of these instances do Grade 9-10 Yukon males report significantly poorer outcomes than other Grade 9-10 Canadian males.

There is a cluster of behaviours in the healthy eating and healthy activity where Yukon students are doing comparatively well, including fruit and vegetable consumption, higher levels of physical activity for females, and lower levels of sedentary behaviour. The biggest concern for Yukon seems to be substance use, particularly use of cannabis and perceptions of the risks of marijuana. In addition, there is a gender discrepancy in the Yukon between Grade 9-10 females and males, where the females tend to have more negative outcomes, except with respect to physical and sedentary activities. A gender-differentiated approach might well be warranted at this grade level.

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## APPENDIX A

### Emotional Well-Being Items

- Thinking about the last week ... Have you felt fit and well?
- Thinking about the last week ... Have you felt full of energy?
- Thinking about the last week ... Have you had fun with your friends?
- I have a happy home life.
- I have confidence in myself.

### Emotional Problems Items

- Felt depressed or low in last six months.
- Felt nervous in last six months.
- Difficulties getting to sleep last six months.
- I have trouble making decisions.
- I often wish I were someone else.
- I often feel helpless.
- I often feel left out of things.
- I often feel lonely.
- Thinking about the last week ... Have you felt lonely?

### Prosocial Behaviour Items

- I often do favours for people without being asked.
- I often lend things to people without being asked.
- I often help people without being asked.
- I often compliment people without being asked.
- I often share things with people without being asked.

### Behavioural Problems Items

- I cut classes or skip school.
- I make other people do what I want.
- I talk back to my teachers.
- I get into fights.
- I often say mean things to people to get what I want.
- I take things that are not mine from home, school, or elsewhere.

