

ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA:

A Study of Selected Indicators for Off-Reserve
and Urban Aboriginal
and Non-Aboriginal Populations

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Aboriginal Population in British Columbia: A study of Selected Indicators for Off-reserve and Urban Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Populations

Executive Summary

General

- Based on the 2006 Census, 196,075 people in British Columbia (4.8 percent of BC's total population) identified themselves as Aboriginal. Sixty percent of the Aboriginal population in BC lived in urban areas, while 14 percent lived in rural BC, and just over a quarter lived on reserves.
- In 2006, the off-reserve Aboriginal population, (which includes both urban and rural) was considerably younger compared to the urban non-aboriginal population. Nearly half (46 percent) of the off-reserve Aboriginal population was less than 25 years of age, compared to 29 percent of the non-Aboriginal population.

Children and Families

- Over fifty percent of the urban non-Aboriginal population were legally married (including common-law and same sex), whereas just over a quarter of the urban Aboriginal population were legally married.
- In 2006, a little over 56,000 Aboriginal children (19 years of age and younger) in BC lived off-reserve. The majority of these children (74 percent) were 14 years of age and younger.
- As of August 2011, there were a total of 8,109 children in government care in BC. Of these children, over half were Aboriginal (56 percent). The vast majority (nearly 89 percent) of the Aboriginal children in care lived in urban areas of BC.

Crime and Justice

- In 2007, 20 percent of the prison population in BC was Aboriginal. Aboriginal females accounted for 29 percent of all female prison population in BC.
- The latest available data on the average daily rate of youth (age 12-18) in custody shows that although the rates for Aboriginal youth in custody decreased considerably since 2000/2001, their representation was still more than 8 times higher than the non-Aboriginal population in 2006/2007.

Education

- A little over half (51 percent) of Aboriginal students¹ who entered Grade 8 in the 2004/2005 school year completed high school, compared to 82 percent for the non-Aboriginal population (a difference of 31 percentage points).
- In 2003/2004, a decrease in the first-time graduation rate was seen for the off-reserve Aboriginal population and was followed by a steady increase for the next four years. In 2009/2010, off-reserve Aboriginal students had a first-time graduation rate of 62 percent—18 percentage points lower than the non-Aboriginal population.
- In 2006, over one-third of the Aboriginal population in urban areas did not have a certificate, diploma or degree, compared to about 1 in 5 of the non-Aboriginal population. While nearly the same percentage of urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population had a high school certificate or equivalent, at 27 percent and 28 percent respectively, considerably fewer had post-secondary credentials (39 percent vs. 54 percent), especially at the university level.
- Less than 7 percent of the urban Aboriginal population held a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 21 percent of the urban non-Aboriginal population.

Employment and Income

- At the time of the 2006 Census, the total unemployment rate for the urban and rural Aboriginal population, 15-24 years of age, was 16.4 percent and 13.4 percent respectively. The rate for the urban non-Aboriginal population at the same time was 10.6 percent.
- The unemployment rate for the urban and rural Aboriginal populations in the 25-54 age group was more than twice the rate of the non-Aboriginal population (10.7 percent, 11.8 percent, and 4.7 percent respectively).
- The income distribution patterns were notably different between the off-reserve Aboriginal population and non-Aboriginal population. There was a much higher proportion of Aboriginal people with lower incomes (under \$30,000) compared to the non-Aboriginal population. In contrast, the non-Aboriginal population had a much higher proportion of higher income levels of \$30,000 and more.
- Over 8,500 unattached urban Aboriginal people (47.7 percent) had income levels below the after-tax low income cut-offs in 2005 compared to 29.5 percent for the urban non-Aboriginal population.

¹ Aboriginal students are those who reported at least one Aboriginal ancestry (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit).

Health

- Presently, no health data is available for the urban Aboriginal population. The latest health data on First Nations (Status Indian) shows that this population has higher prevalence rates of chronic disease as well as higher mortality rates from heart disease, HIV/AIDS, alcohol-related deaths, motor vehicle deaths, drug-induced deaths, and suicide deaths.

Housing and Homelessness

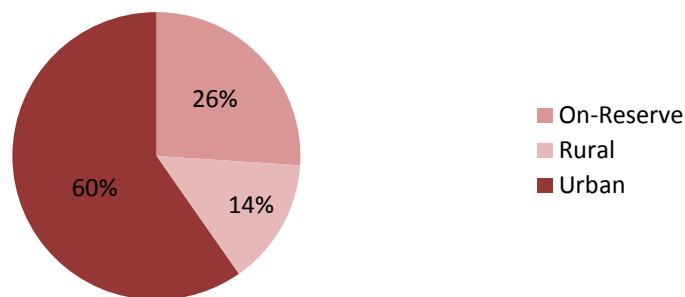
- Aboriginal people are more likely to live in houses that are crowded, in need of repair or consume more than 30 percent of their before-tax income. From 1994/95 to 2005/06, the percentage increase in the number of Aboriginal housing in need of major renovations (including structural repairs to the walls, floors, ceilings or roof, and replacement or upgrading of defective plumbing or electrical wiring) was 121 percent.
- Additionally, based on the 2006 Census, 21 percent of Aboriginal housing was in need of major repair compared to only 7 percent of the same for the non-Aboriginal population in BC. Similar patterns were also seen in many urban areas of the province. For example, in Vancouver, 15 percent of the Aboriginal population lived in housing in need of major repairs compared to 6 percent of the same for the non-Aboriginal population.

Introduction

Based on the 2006 Census, 196,075 people in British Columbia (4.8 percent of BC's total population) identified themselves as Aboriginal. The Aboriginal population included all those who self-identified with at least one Aboriginal group (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit) or who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian (as defined by the *Indian Act*) or who were members of an Indian Band or First Nation.

According to the 2006 Census, 60 percent of the Aboriginal population in BC were urban,² 14 percent lived in rural BC, and just over a quarter of the Aboriginal population lived on-reserve. For the most part, this report will focus on the off-reserve Aboriginal population (those living in urban and rural parts of BC). The vast majority (86 percent) of non-Aboriginal people live in urban areas of BC.

Proportion of On-Reserve, rural, and Urban Aboriginal Population in BC, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011.

Unless otherwise indicated, the information presented in this report summarizes characteristics of the off-reserve Aboriginal population in BC at the time of the 2006 Census. Currently, the Census provides the most complete picture of the off-reserve Aboriginal population. For more information about the on-reserve Aboriginal population, please visit BC Stats at: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/index.asp> This report provides basic demographic characteristics of the urban Aboriginal population with a comparison to the urban non-Aboriginal population whenever possible. This comparison provides a better understanding of the challenges facing the off-reserve/urban Aboriginal population in BC.

² Statistics Canada defines urban area as having at least 1,000 people with a density of 400 or more people per square kilometre.

Section 1: Characteristics of Aboriginal Population in BC

Off-Reserve Population

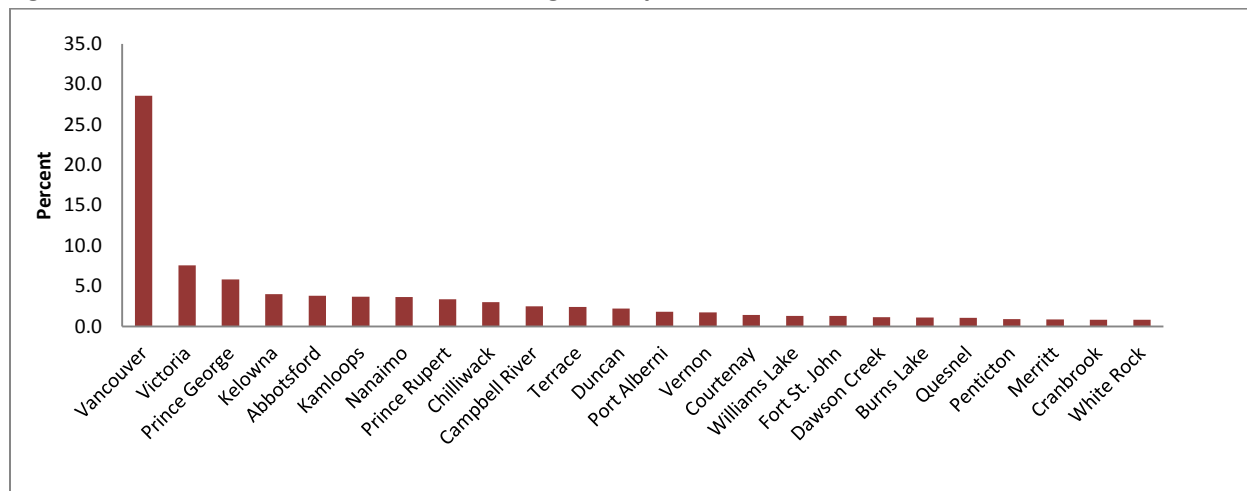
Based on the 2006 Census, close to 75 percent (or about 145,000) of the Aboriginal population lived off-reserve in urban and rural areas of the province (about 3.6 percent of the total population of BC). Among those living off-reserve, 81 percent resided in urban areas (3.4 percent of the total urban population in BC).

Urban Communities with High Proportions of Aboriginal People

In 2006, nearly 4 in 10 (37 percent) urban Aboriginal population (including those living on-reserve) resided in Vancouver (29 percent) or Victoria (8 percent). The next most popular areas to live included Prince George, Kelowna, Abbotsford and Kamloops.

While Prince Rupert was the eighth most common place where urban Aboriginal people live, it ranked 33rd among the urban non-Aboriginal population. On the other hand, White Rock was the sixth most popular place to live for the urban non-Aboriginal population, but was a distant twenty-fourth for urban Aboriginal population. Besides these two exceptions, the top nine communities were the same for the urban Aboriginal and urban non-Aboriginal populations (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Urban Communities Where Aboriginal Populations* Most Often Reside, BC, 2006



*Note: For this graph, urban includes Aboriginal population living on- and off-reserve. There were 11,205 Aboriginal people who lived in urban communities on-reserve in 2006, in addition to the 117,065 off-reserve.

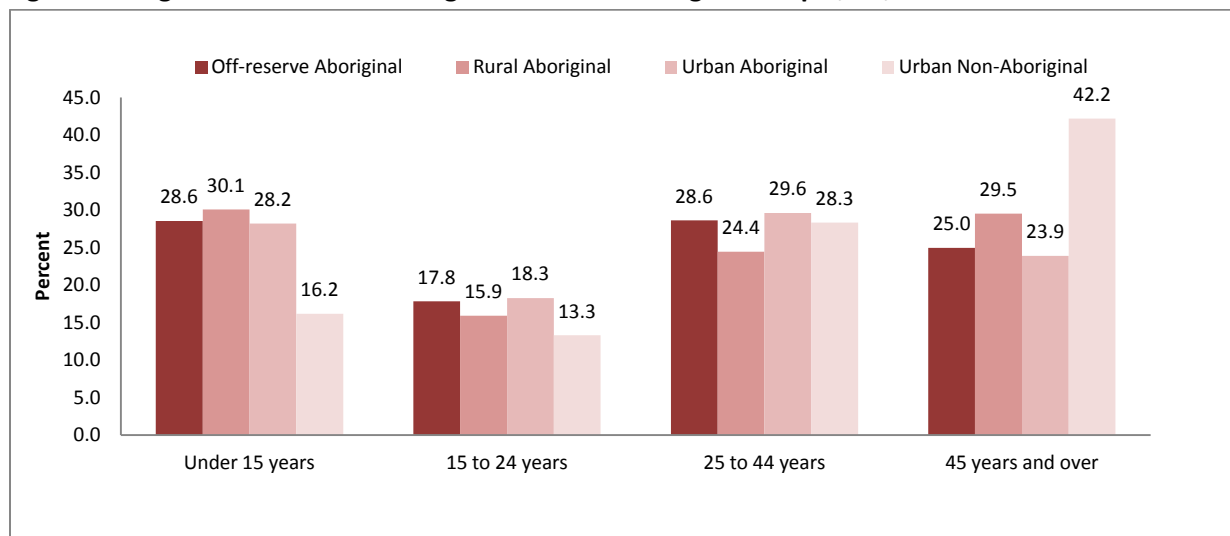
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Aboriginal Population Age and Gender Distribution

In 2006, the off-reserve Aboriginal population, (which includes both urban and rural), was considerably younger compared to the urban non-aboriginal population. Nearly half (46 percent) of the off-reserve Aboriginal population was less than 25 years of age, compared to 29 percent of the non-Aboriginal population. A pronounced difference between off-reserve Aboriginal and urban non-Aboriginal population was also evident at the other end of the age spectrum, with the proportion of urban non-

Aboriginal population aged 45 years and over being almost 1.7 times higher than the off-reserve Aboriginal population (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Age Distribution of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal People, BC, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

- Aboriginal people living in urban areas are less likely to be over 45 years of age compared to the Aboriginal population living in rural areas, further highlighting the difference between urban Aboriginal and urban non-Aboriginal populations.
- There was very little difference in the gender proportions for all the groups of interest— a consistently lower proportion (between 47 and 49 percent) of the population was male.

Section 2: Children and Families

Marital Status

In 2006, just over 100,000 of the Aboriginal population aged 15 years and older lived off-reserve—53 percent of the total Aboriginal population. The vast majority of this population (81 percent) lived in urban areas of the province compared to those who lived in rural areas (19 percent).

Just over half of the off-reserve urban Aboriginal population (15 years and older) indicated that they were single at the time of the 2006 Census. The urban Aboriginal population was more likely to be single compared to their rural counterparts (54 percent and 43 percent respectively). Additionally, the urban Aboriginal population was also more likely to be single compared to the non-Aboriginal population (54 percent compared to 32 percent respectively).

Over fifty percent of the urban non-Aboriginal population were legally married;³ whereas just over a quarter of the urban Aboriginal population were legally married.

Number of children

In 2006, a little over 56,000 Aboriginal children (19 years of age and younger) in BC lived off-reserve. The majority of these children (74 percent) were 14 years of age and younger.

Lone-Parents⁴

Based on the 2006 Census, approximately 70 percent of all Aboriginal lone-parents lived off-reserve. Nearly 87 percent of the off-reserve Aboriginal lone-parents lived in urban parts of the province compared to their rural counterparts (nearly 13 percent). Urban Aboriginal population comprises a little over 6 percent of all lone-parents in BC.

³ Includes common law and same sex.

⁴ Statistics Canada defines lone-parent as single parent with at least one never-married son or daughter living in the same household.

Children in Care

As of August 2011, there were a total of 8,109 children in government care in BC. Of these children, a total of 4,528 were Aboriginal (56 percent). The vast majority (nearly 89 percent) of the Aboriginal children in care lived in urban areas of BC.

Table 2.1 shows the percentage of Aboriginal children in care in all urban areas as of August 2011. Aboriginal children in care constituted 70 percent or more in a number of urban areas of BC. These were: Prince Rupert, Saanich, Terrace, Williams Lake, Merritt, Port Alberni, New Westminster, and Prince George. The urban areas with less than 20 percent of Aboriginal children in care were Nelson, Richmond, Parksville, Coquitlam, Delta, and White Rock.

Additionally, a 2007 BC Representative for Children and Youth report on the education of children in care showed that 1 in 7 Aboriginal children in British Columbia had been in care at some point in their life compared to 1 in 50 non-Aboriginal children. This suggests that an Aboriginal child is 14 times more likely to be in care during his/her school years compared to a non-Aboriginal child in BC. (PHO, 2008)

Table 2.1
Aboriginal Children in Care in Urban Areas, Aug. 2011

Urban Areas	% Aboriginal Children in Care
Prince Rupert	> 70%
Saanich	
Terrace	
Williams Lake	
Merritt	
Port Alberni	
New Westminster	
Prince George	
Duncan	50-69%
Quesnel	
Vancouver	
Chilliwack	
Penticton	
Kitimat	
Dawson Creek	
North Vancouver	
Campbell River	
Squamish	
Nanaimo	
Mission	
Surrey	
Sooke	
Maple Ridge	
Kamloops	
Cranbrook	
Kelowna	
Vernon	
Fort St. John	
Trail	
Langley	< 19%
Abbotsford	
Victoria	
Courtnay	
Castlegar	
Salmon Arm	
Burnaby	
Nelson	
Richmond	
Parksville	
Coquitlam	
Delta	
White Rock	

Source: Ministry of Children and Families, Special Request, August 2011, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Section 3: Crime and Justice

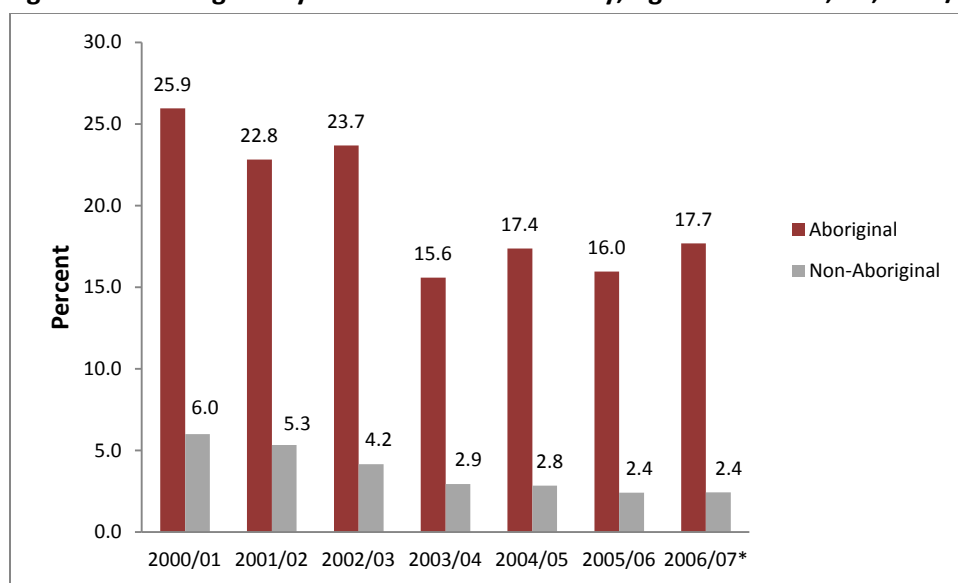
Presently, no crime or justice data is available for urban or off-reserve Aboriginal people in BC.

In 2007, Aboriginal people were over-represented in the prison system relative to their percentage of the overall population in Canada. Although the Aboriginal population represented 3 percent of the total Canadian population, they constituted 22 percent of all admitted provincial/territorial sentenced custodies. Female representation was higher compared to males (30 percent compared to 21 percent). In 2007, 20 percent of the prison population in British Columbia was Aboriginal. Aboriginal females accounted for 29 percent of all female admissions in BC. (Juristat, Statistics Canada, 2007)

In 2007, the Aboriginal youth population was approximately 5 percent of the Canadian population, but they comprised 22 percent of the prison population. Aboriginal females represented 25 percent of the youth in prison in Canada, while Aboriginal males represented 21 percent of the prison population. (Juristat, Statistics Canada, 2007)

The latest available data on the average daily rate of youth (age 12-18) in custody shows that although the rates for Aboriginal youth in custody decreased significantly since 2000/2001, their representation was still more than 7 times higher than the non-Aboriginal population in 2006/2007 (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Average Daily Rate of Youth in Custody, Age 12-18 Years, BC, 2000/01-2006/07



* April 1, 2006 to January 31, 2007.

Source: Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Section 4: Education

Each year, the Ministry of Education produces an annual report on the performance of Aboriginal students in the BC public school system entitled "*Aboriginal Report, How Are We Doing?*" The data and

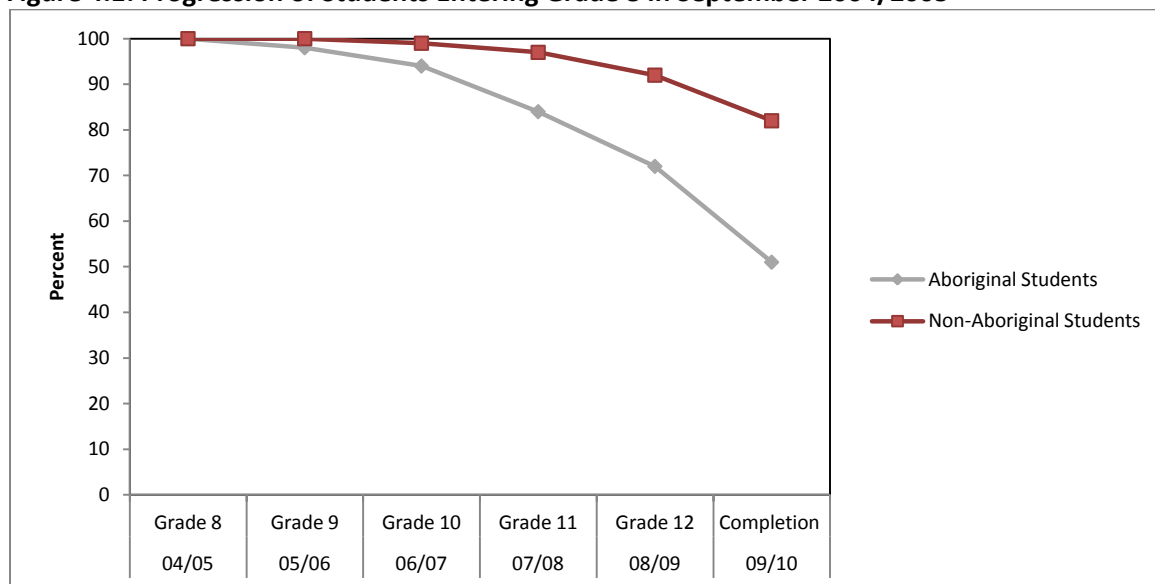
information in this report represents Aboriginal Students who have self-identified as being of *Aboriginal ancestry*⁵ as of September 30th of each school year. Once a student has self-identified as being of Aboriginal ancestry, the student is included in all subsequent reported outcomes for Aboriginal students.

According to the Ministry of Education, in the 2009/2010 school year, almost 11 percent of students in the public school system self identified as Aboriginal. The vast majority of Aboriginal Students (84 percent) in the public school system lived off-reserve.

Grade Transitions

There are considerable differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students when assessing educational completion rates.⁶ The gap is particularly noticeable in Grade 11, 12 and completion. A little over half (51 percent) of Aboriginal students who entered Grade 8 in the 2004/2005 school year completed high school, compared to 82 percent for non-Aboriginal population (a difference of 31 percentage points)(Figure 4.1). Aboriginal females are more likely to complete high school compared to their male counterparts (56 percent and 46 percent respectively) (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.1: Progression of Students Entering Grade 8 in September 2004/2005

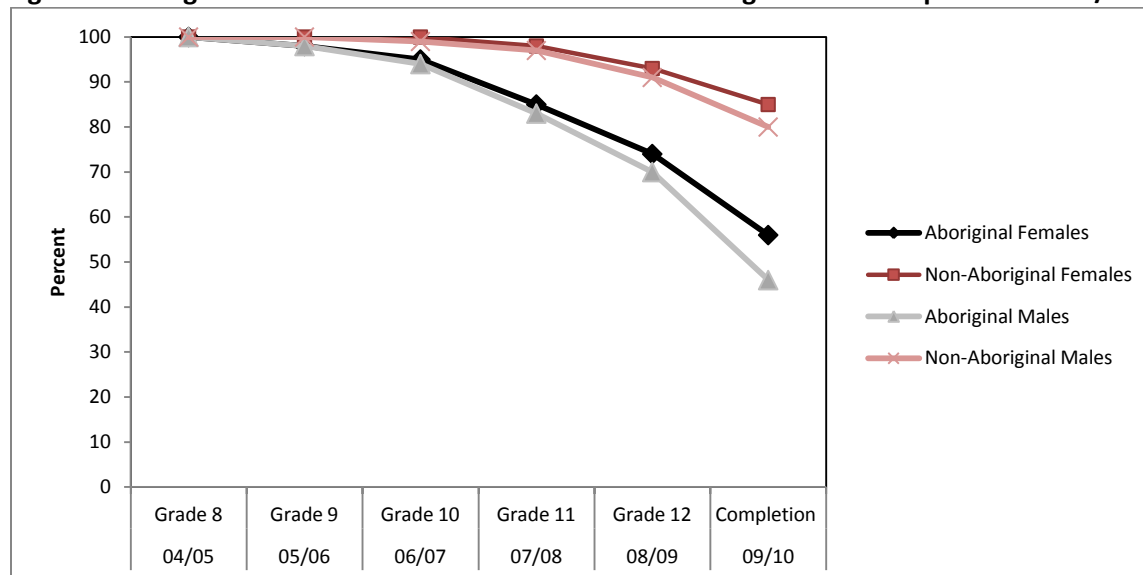


Note: Data includes all Aboriginal students.

Source: Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Report 2005/06- 2009/2010 How Are We Doing?

⁵ Refers to those persons who reported at least one Aboriginal ancestry (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit).

⁶ The percentage of students who enter a Grade for the first time from a lower Grade and make a transition to a higher Grade anywhere in the British Columbia school system in the following school year.

Figure 4.2: Progression of Male and Female Students Entering Grade 8 in September 2004/2005

Note: Data includes all Aboriginal students.

Source: Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Report 2005/06- 2009/2010 How Are We Doing?

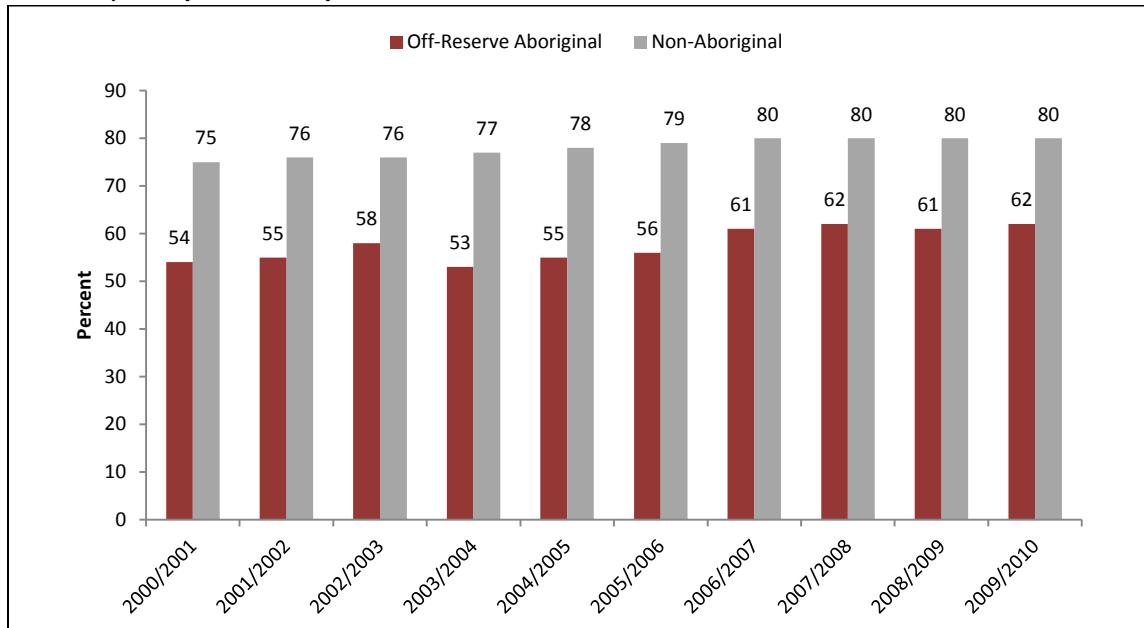
High school graduation can be classified as first time graduates and those who are eligible to graduate. First-time graduates are students who have reached Grade 12 for the first time, while those eligible to graduate include the first time graduates and the students who return to school at any age to complete their Grade 12.

As shown in Figure 4.3, from 2000/2001 to 2009/2010, there has been a slow and steady increase in the first-time graduation rates for the non-Aboriginal students from 75 to 80 percent. The rate of graduation for this population has remained at 80 percent for four years (from 2006/2007 to 2009/2010). However, this pattern does not hold true for the off-reserve Aboriginal students⁷. In 2003/2004, a decrease in the first-time graduation rate was seen for the off-reserve Aboriginal population and was followed by a steady increase for the next four years. In 2009/2010, off-reserve Aboriginal students had a first-time graduation rate of 62 percent—18 percentage points lower than the non-Aboriginal population.

Figure 4.4 shows the rates of off-reserve Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students who were eligible to graduate from 2001/2002 to 2009/2010. Since 2001/2002, the rate of those who were eligible to graduate has been between 94 and 96 percent for the non-Aboriginal population. Similarly, the same rate for the off-reserve Aboriginal students has been between 89 to 91 percent for the same time period. Although the rate of those who were eligible to graduate is slightly lower for Aboriginal students, nonetheless, it is encouraging to see so many of the Aboriginal off-reserve population returning to school at a later time in their life to finish their high school.

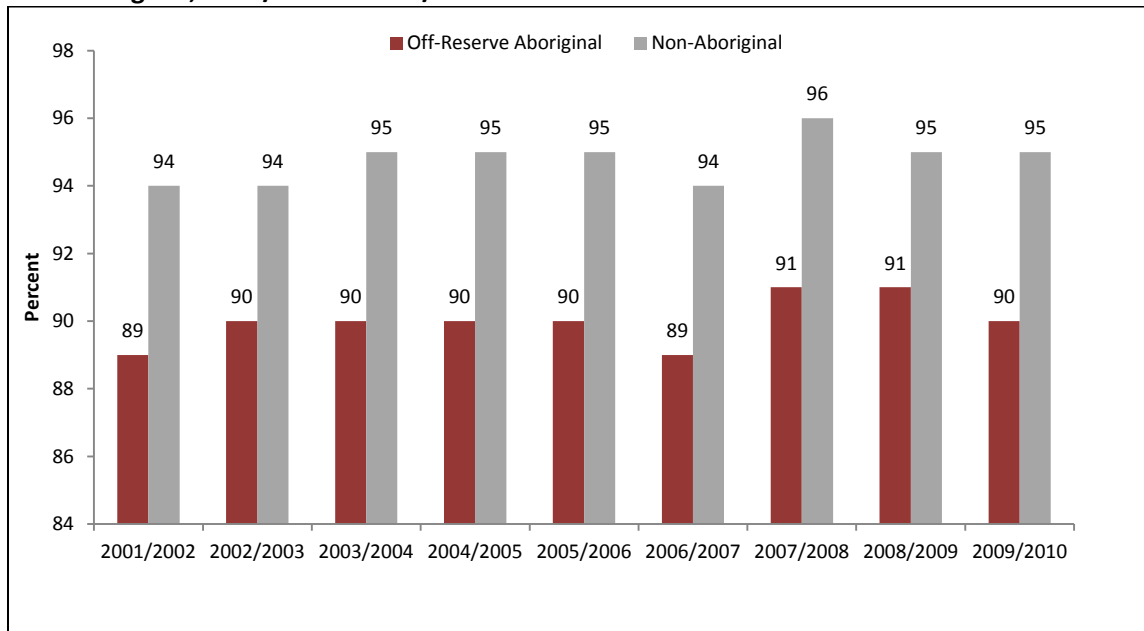
⁷ Includes only Aboriginal students who attend a school and who live off-reserve.

Figure 4.3: Graduation Rates, First-Time Graduates, Off-Reserve Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Students, 2000/2001-2009/2010



Source: Ministry of Education, Special Request, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Figure 4.4: Graduation Rates, Those Eligible to Graduate, Off-Reserve Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal, 2000/2001 – 2009/2010



Source: Ministry of Education, Special Request, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Educational Attainments

According to the 2006 Census, a total of 103,605 Aboriginal people 15 years of age and older lived off-reserve. Of these, 82 percent (84,065) lived in the urban areas of BC (2.9 percent of all the total urban population in this age group).

Over one-third of the Aboriginal population in urban areas did not have a certificate, diploma or degree, compared to about 1 in 5 of the non-Aboriginal population. While nearly the same percentage of urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population had a high school certificate or equivalent, at 27 percent and 28 percent respectively, considerably fewer had post-secondary credentials (39 percent vs. 54 percent), especially at the university level.

Less than 7 percent of the urban Aboriginal population held a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 21.0 percent of the urban non-Aboriginal population (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Educational Attainments for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Population, Age 15 and Over, BC, 2006

Highest Level of Education	Off-reserve Aboriginal	Rural Aboriginal	Urban Aboriginal	Urban Non- Aboriginal
No certificate, diploma or degree	34.6	36.8	34.1	18.5
High school certificate or equivalent	27.2	27.1	27.3	27.9
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	13.0	14.6	12.6	10.1
College, or other non-university certificate or diploma	15.5	14.2	15.8	16.7
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	3.5	3.0	3.6	5.7
University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor's level or above	6.3	4.4	6.7	21.0
Bachelor's degree	4.3	2.6	4.7	13.4
Above Bachelor's degree	2.0	1.8	2.0	7.6

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

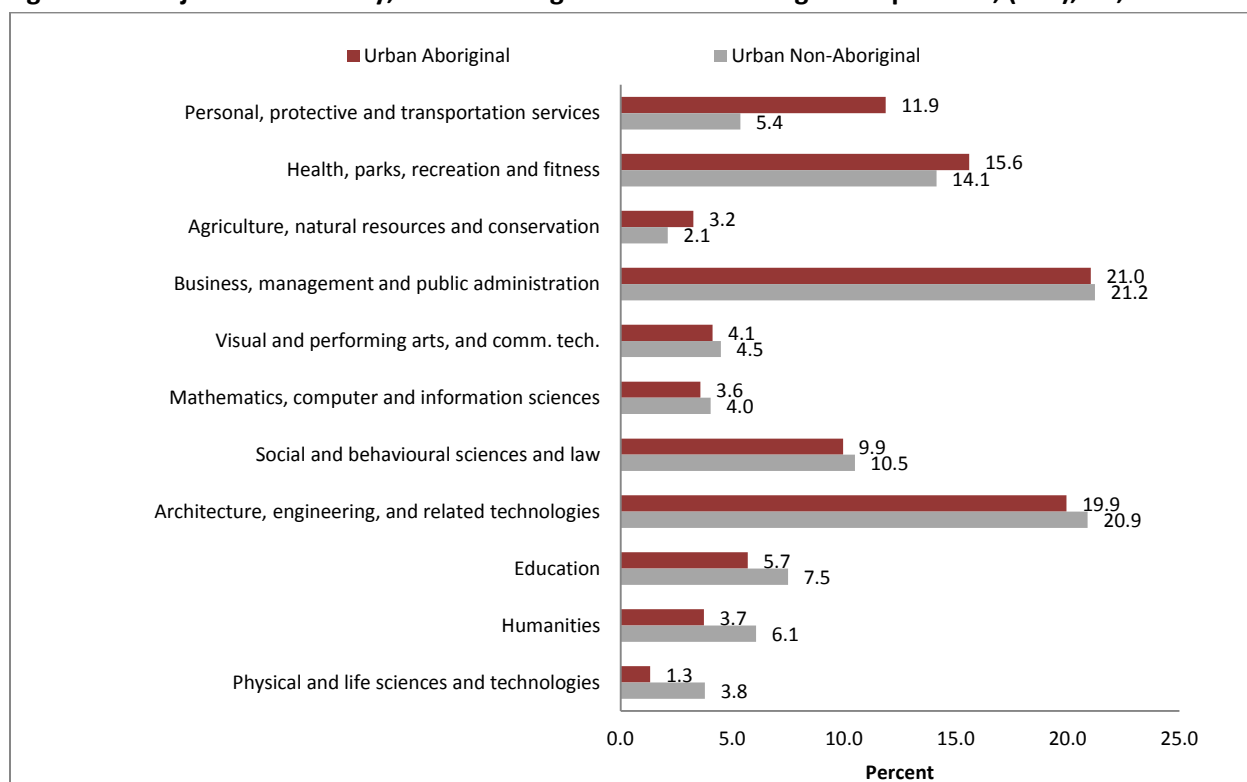
- The urban Aboriginal population was more likely to have a university certificate, diploma or degree compared to the rural Aboriginal population. However, urban Aboriginal people had attained an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma slightly more often compared to urban non-aboriginal population.
- More than 4 in 10 (42 percent) of the urban Métis population had a post-secondary credential, compared to 36 percent of urban First Nations. A higher proportion of the urban Métis population had completed a high school certificate or equivalent (29 percent) compared to urban First Nations (26 percent).

Field of Study for Urban Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Populations

For those aged 15 years and over who completed a post-secondary education credential, urban Aboriginal people were more often seen in particular fields of study compared to urban non-Aboriginal population. These included: Personal, protective and transportation services (11.9 percent vs. 5.4 percent), health, parks, recreation and fitness (15.6 percent vs. 14.1 percent), and agriculture, natural

resources and conservation (3.2 percent vs. 2.1 percent). The fields with a lower representation of the urban Aboriginal population included physical and life sciences and technologies (1.3 percent vs. 3.8 percent), humanities (3.7 percent vs. 6.1 percent), and education (5.7 percent vs. 7.5 percent) (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Major Field of Study, Urban Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Population, (15+), BC, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Compared to the urban Métis population, urban First Nations more often studied business, management and public administration (2.7 percentage point difference), social and behavioural sciences and law (1.5 percentage point difference) and agriculture, natural resources and conservation (3.6 percentage point difference). The fields urban Métis studied more often than urban First Nations included architecture, engineering, and related technologies (3.4 percentage points difference), health, parks, recreation and fitness (2.1 percentage point difference), and physical and life sciences and technologies (0.5 percentage point difference).

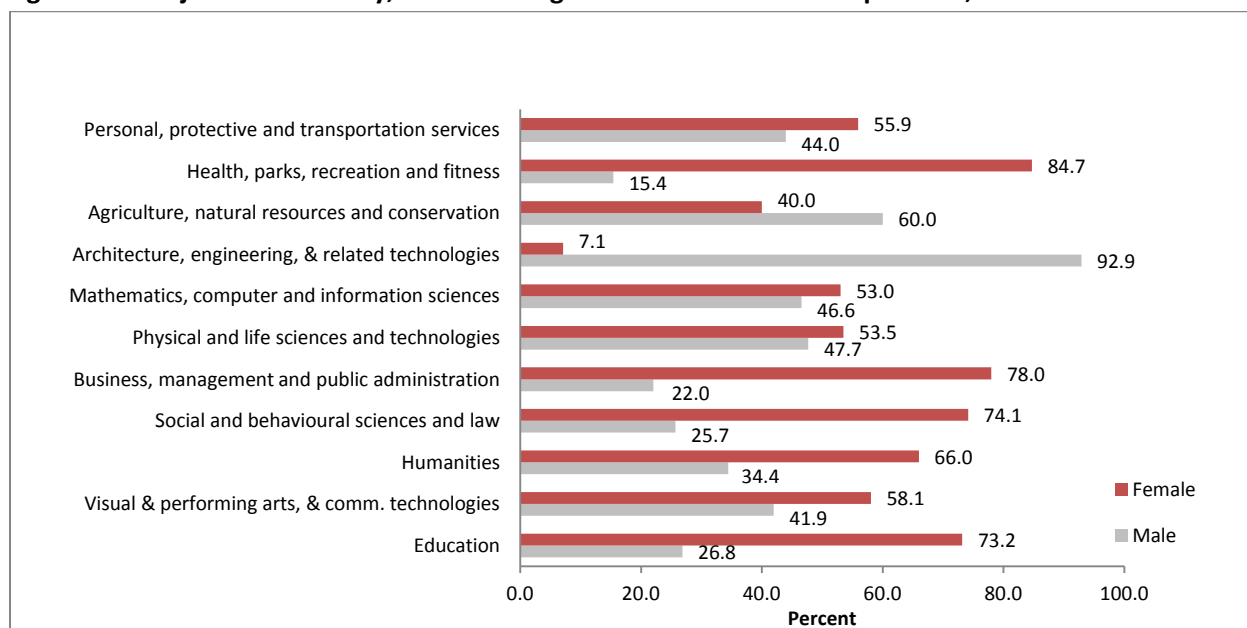
Field of Study—Gender Analysis

Just over half (50.6 percent) of the urban non-Aboriginal population aged 15 and over who had a post-secondary education credential were female, whereas amongst the urban Aboriginal population, 57.9 percent were female.

As in the case for the urban non-Aboriginal population, the representation of males and females differs greatly within fields of study for the urban Aboriginal population. In general, females had a higher representation in all areas except architecture, engineering and related technologies and agriculture, natural resources and conservation.

The field with the highest proportion of female urban Aboriginal population was health, parks, recreation and fitness (84.7 percent), while the field with the highest proportion of males was architecture, engineering and related technologies (92.9 percent) (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Major Field of Study, Urban Aboriginal Male and Female Population, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

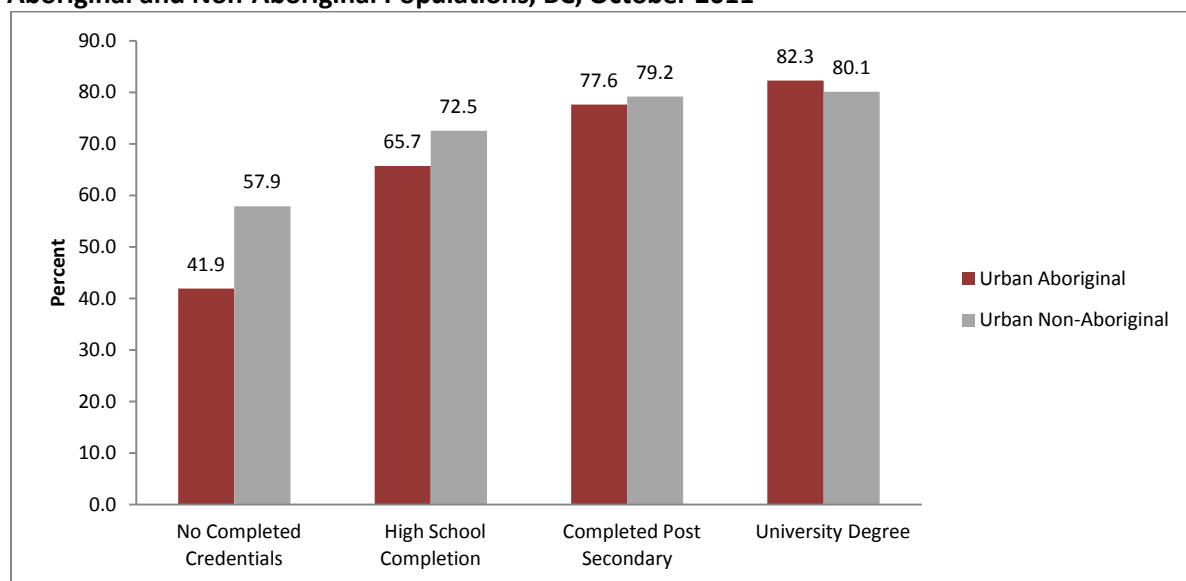
Section 5: Employment and Income

Since April 2004, Statistics Canada has been collecting data through the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS) on the labour market status of Aboriginal people living off-reserve in BC. To get more reliable information for the BC component of the survey, the Province sponsored an increased sample, which was phased in over six months starting in October 2004. BC now has several years of annual data covering the off-reserve First Nations and Métis populations living in BC.

Figure 5.1 shows the employment rates for the urban population,⁸ 25-64 years of age based on educational attainments. Compared to the urban non-Aboriginal population, the urban Aboriginal population with no completed credentials has a much lower proportion of employment (41.9 percent compared to 57.9 percent). However, as the educational attainments increase for the urban Aboriginal population so do their employment prospects. The employment gap between the two populations is substantially decreased for the urban Aboriginal population who completed their high school and also those who attained post-secondary credentials. In fact, the urban Aboriginal population who earned a university degree had a higher employment rate (82.3 percent) compared to the urban non-Aboriginal population (80.1 percent).

⁸ Urban includes the urban core and adjacent urban and rural areas (known as urban and rural fringes) that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core.

Figure 5.1: Employment Rates for 25-64 Age Group based on Educational Attainments, Urban Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Populations, BC, October 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, October 2011 (3 month moving average), prepared by BC Stats, 2011

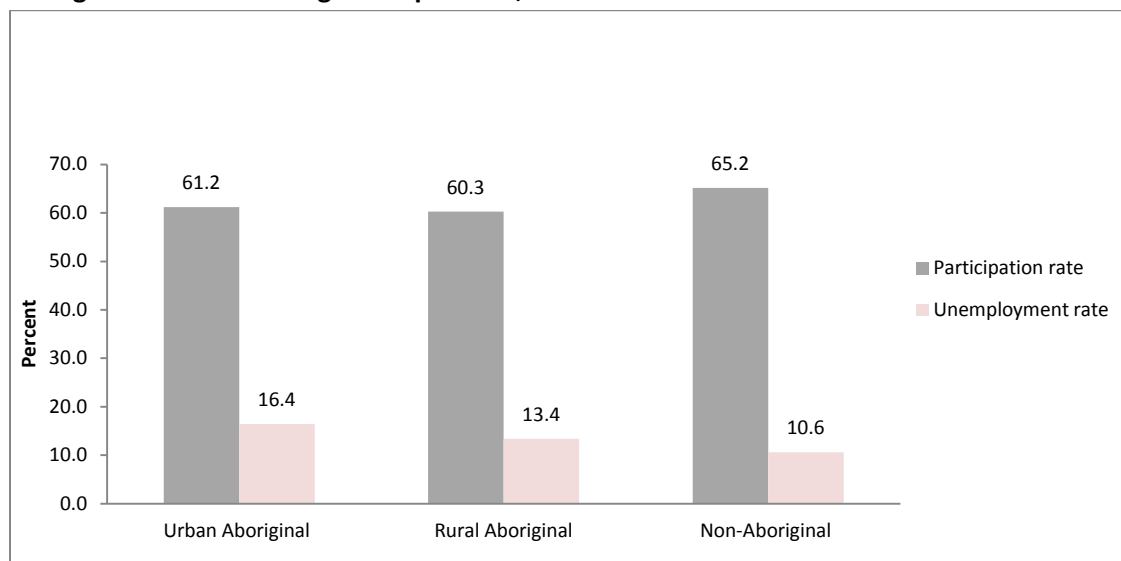
Employment – Age Group 15-24

At the time of the 2006 Census,⁹ the total unemployment rate for the urban and rural Aboriginal population, 15-24 years of age was 16.4 percent and 13.4 percent respectively. The rate for the urban non-Aboriginal population in the same year was 10.6 percent. The participation rate (all those who are eligible to work or are employed) for the age group of 15-24 was similar for the urban and rural Aboriginal population at 61.2 percent and 60.3 percent respectively. The participation rate for the non-Aboriginal population was slightly higher at 65.2 percent (Figure 5.2).

A notable difference was seen between the participation and unemployment rates for males and females in urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. Based on 2006 Census data, although the labour force participation rates between Aboriginal males and non-Aboriginal males were nearly the same (62.7 percent and 64.7 percent respectively), Aboriginal males had a much higher unemployment rate compared to non-Aboriginal males at nearly 17 percent and 11 percent respectively. The participation rate for Aboriginal females was lower compared to non-Aboriginal females (59.7 percent compared to 65.7 percent) and their unemployment rate was notably higher compared to non-Aboriginal females at 16.0 percent and 10.3 percent respectively. Labour force participation and unemployment rates were nearly the same for urban Aboriginal males and females (Figure 5.3).

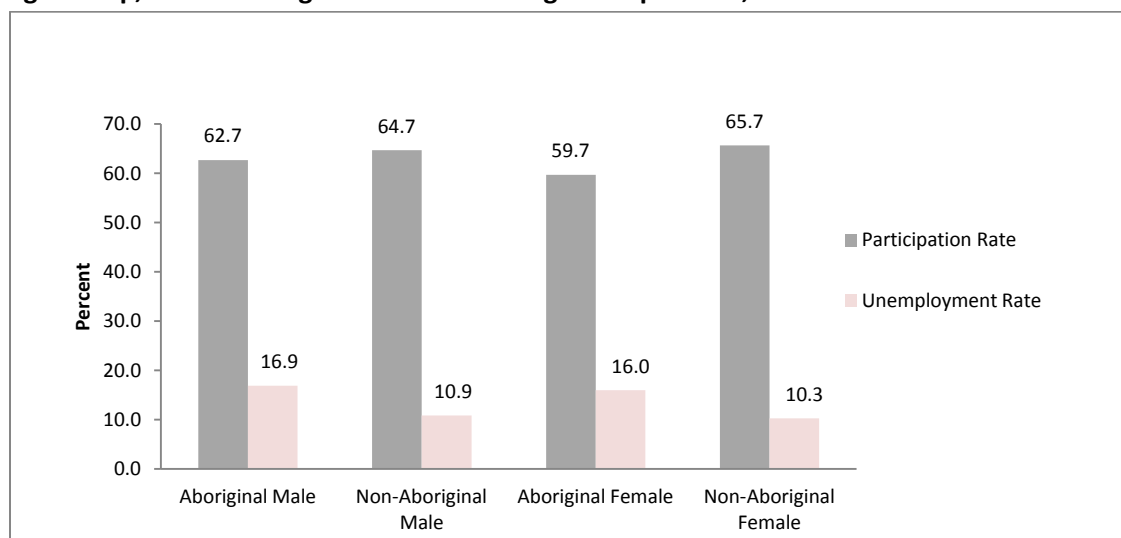
⁹ It is important to note at the time of the 2006 Census, BC's labour market was performing extremely well.

Figure 5.2: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment Rates for 15-24 Age Group, Urban Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Population, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Figure 5.3: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment Rates by Gender for 15-24 Age Group, Urban Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Population, 2006

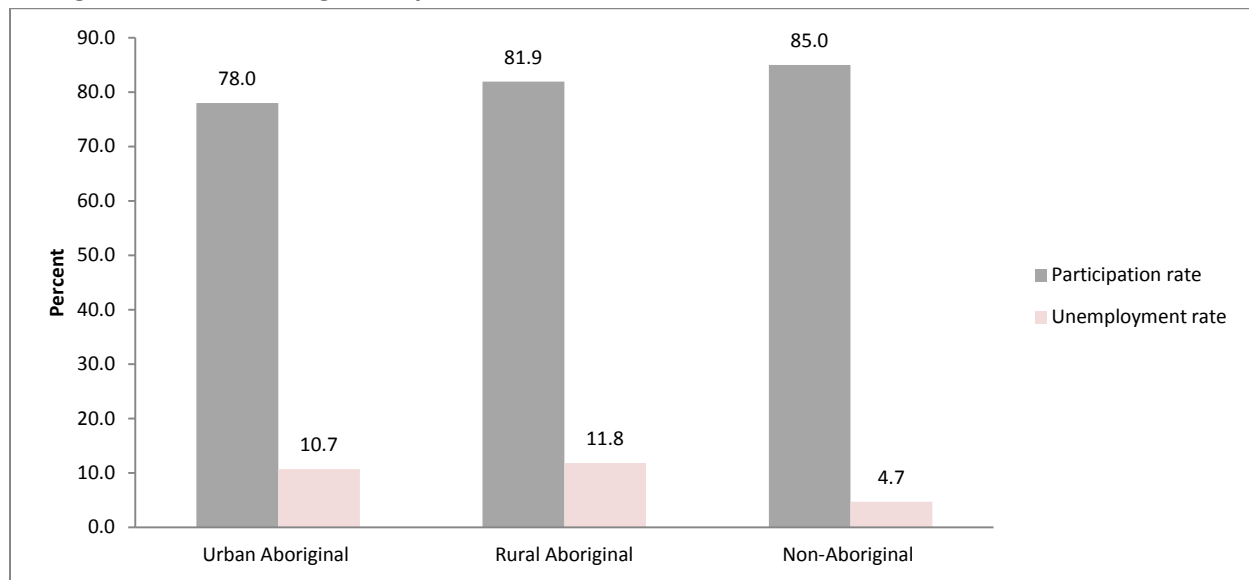


Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Employment – Age Group 25-54

For those in the 25-54 age group (the core working age population), the labour force participation rate was similar for rural Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, at 81.9 percent and 85.0 percent. The participation rate for the urban Aboriginal population was slightly lower at 78.0 percent. The unemployment rate for the urban and rural Aboriginal populations in this age group was more than twice the rate of the non-Aboriginal population (10.7 percent, 11.8 percent, and 4.7 percent respectively) (Figure 5.4).

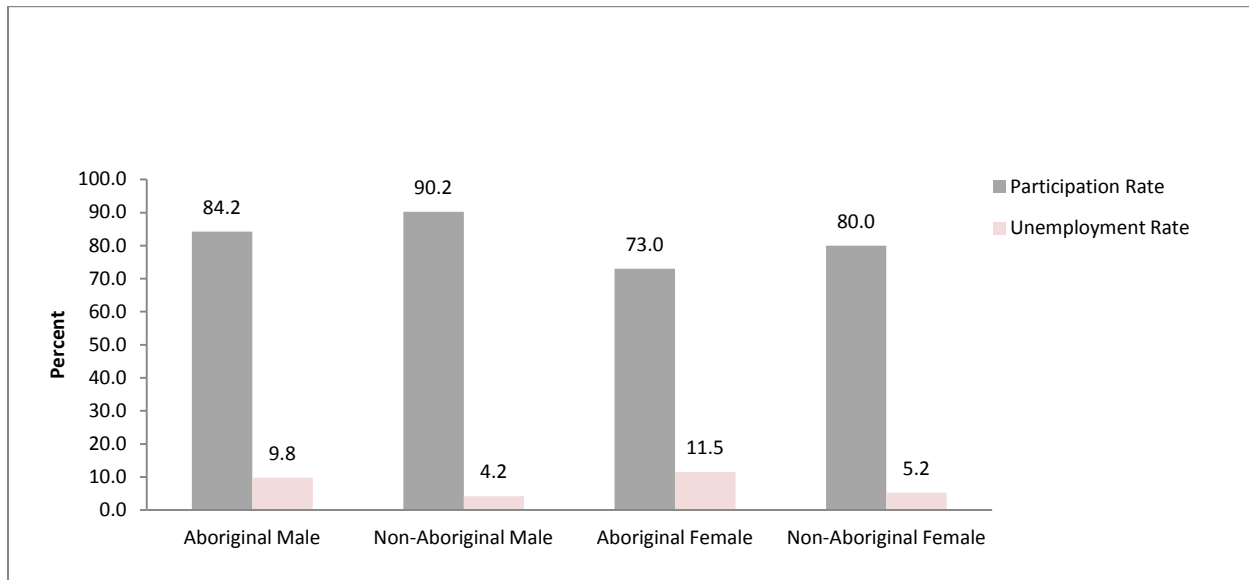
Figure 5.4: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment Rates for 25-54 Age Group, Urban and Rural Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Population, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

A notable difference was seen in the labour force participation and unemployment rates between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal male and female population in the 25-54 age group. The labour force participation rate for Aboriginal males in this age group was 84.2 percent, compared to 90.2 percent for non-Aboriginal males. Aboriginal males had an unemployment rate that was more than twice the rate of non-Aboriginal males (9.8 percent and 4.2 percent respectively). The patterns were similar for the female population. The urban Aboriginal females had a participation rate of 73 percent compared to non-Aboriginal females at 80 percent. Urban Aboriginal females in this age group also had an unemployment rate that was twice the rate of non-Aboriginal females (11.5 percent and 5.2 percent respectively) (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment rates by Gender for Age group 25-54, Urban Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Population, 2006

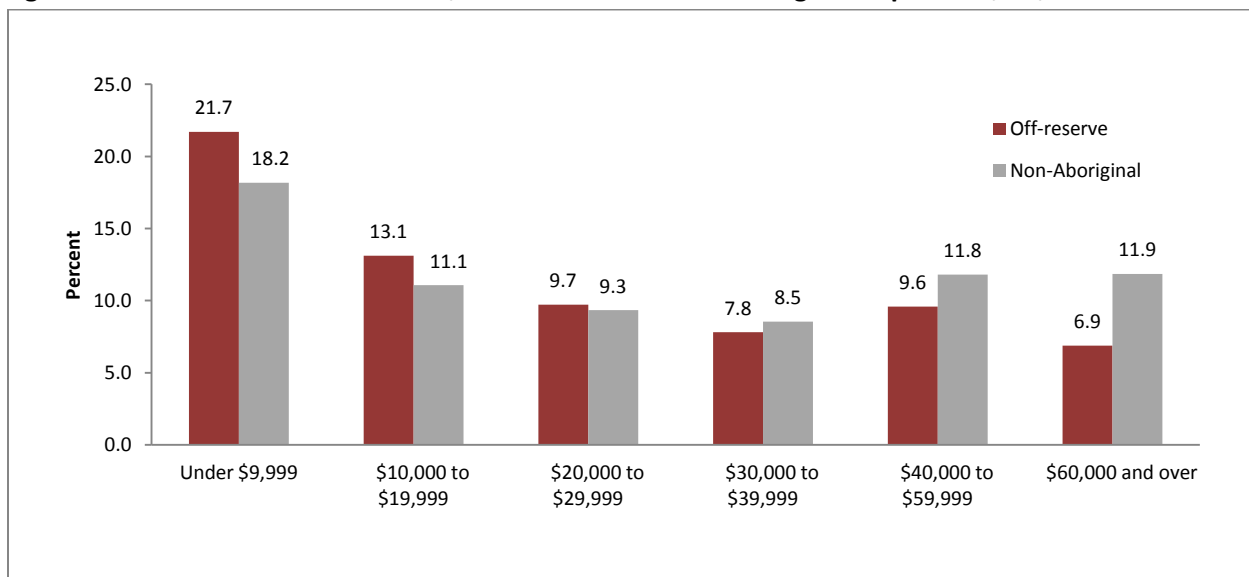


Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Income

The income distribution patterns were notably different between the off-reserve Aboriginal population and non-Aboriginal population. There were a much higher proportion of Aboriginal people with lower incomes (under \$30,000) compared to the non-Aboriginal population. In contrast, the non-Aboriginal population had a much higher proportion of higher income levels of \$30,000 and more. The greatest difference between off-reserve Aboriginal population and non-Aboriginal population was seen for those with incomes of \$60,000 and over (6.9 percent and 11.9 percent respectively) (Figure 5.6).

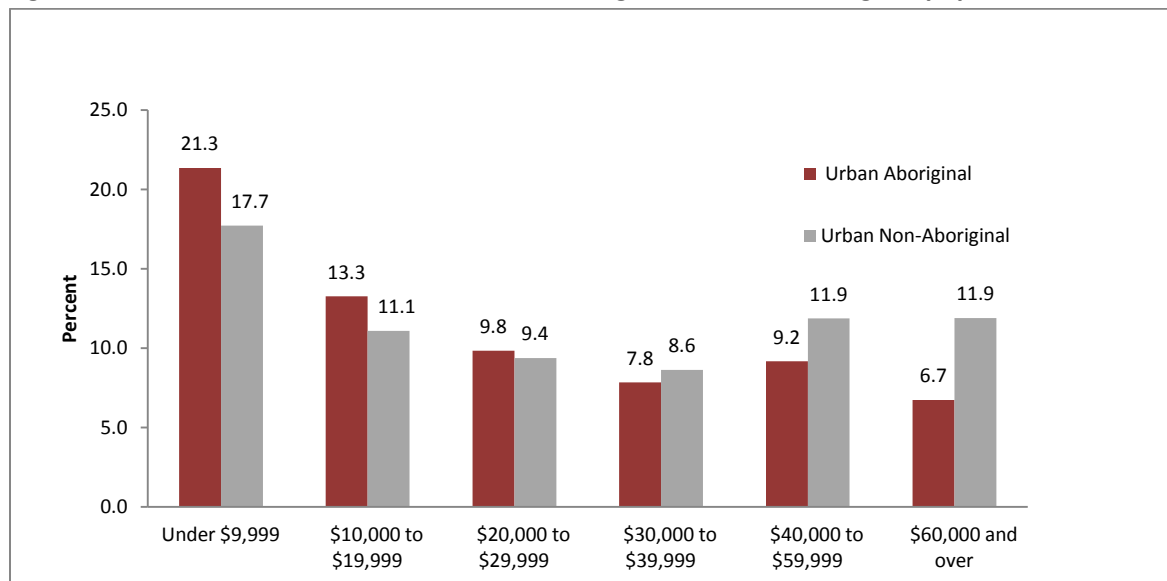
Figure 5.6: Total Income Distribution, Off-Reserve and Non-Aboriginal Population, BC, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Similarly, there was also a considerable difference in total income distribution when comparing the urban Aboriginal and urban non-Aboriginal populations. The portion of the urban Aboriginal population who earned less than \$29,000 was higher than the urban non-Aboriginal population. The income distribution for the urban Aboriginal population was considerably lower at \$30,000 and above, with the greatest difference seen in the \$60,000 and over range (6.7 percent vs. 11.9 percent) (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Total Income Distribution, Urban Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal population, BC, 2006

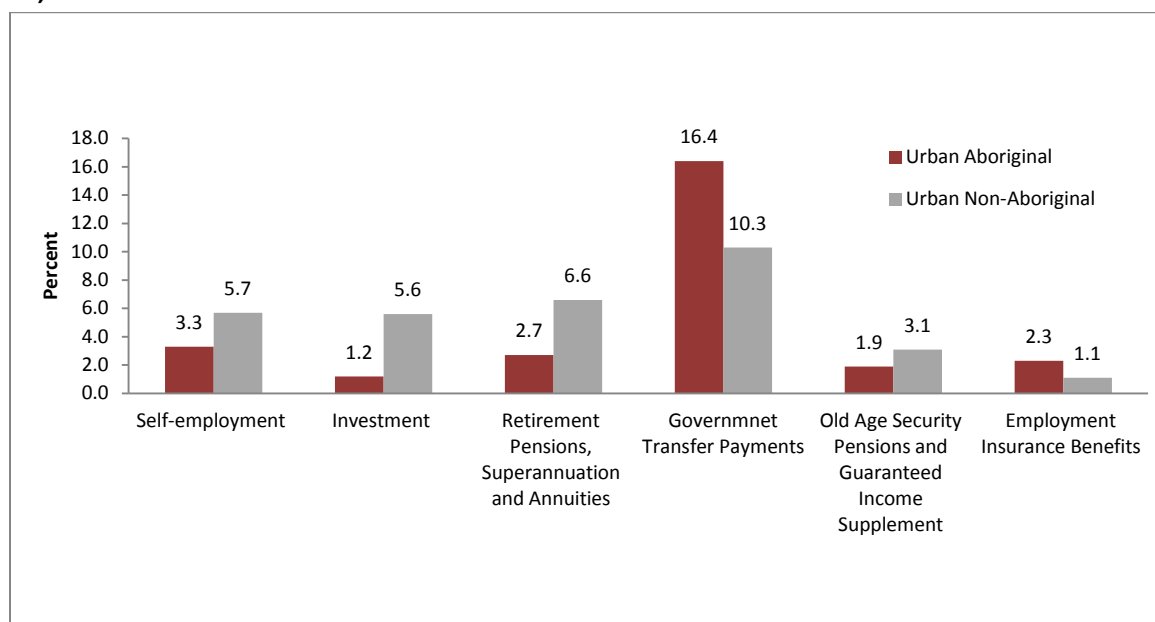


Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Composition of Income

Figure 5.8 shows a selected source of income composition for urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. The urban Aboriginal population had a much higher proportion of government transfer payments compared to the non-Aboriginal population (16.4 percent and 10.3 percent respectively). This was also the case for employment insurance benefits where the proportion of urban Aboriginal population was 2.3 percent compared to 1.1 percent for non-Aboriginal population. The urban Aboriginal population had a much lower proportion of income from other sources such as self-employment, investment, retirement pensions, superannuation and annuities, old age security pensions and guaranteed income supplement compared to the non-Aboriginal population (Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8: Selected Income Composition Sources, Urban Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Populations, BC, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Prevalence of Low income

Statistics Canada uses the term “low income cut-off” (LICO)¹⁰ to indicate an income level where family will likely spend a higher share of its income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family. According to the after-tax low income cut-offs, in 2005, over 20,500 urban Aboriginal people in economic families¹¹ in BC had low income (20.9 percent for economic family members). The rate for the urban non-Aboriginal population was 10.7 percent. Over 8,500 unattached urban Aboriginal people (47.7%) in 2005 had income below the after-tax low income cut-offs compared to 29.5 percent for the urban non-Aboriginal population.

Section 6: Health

Currently the only source of available data on the health of the urban and rural Aboriginal population is from the Statistics Canada’s Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). The CCHS collects information on health status, health care utilization and other health determinants of the Canadian population, including Aboriginal people. Unfortunately, the sample size for the BC urban Aboriginal population was approximately 375 which made the data unreliable for use. Where possible, we have included data from CCHS based on total BC Aboriginal population.

¹⁰ The low income cut-off is a statistical measure of the income threshold level below which Canadians are estimated to devote at least one-fifth or more of their income than the average family to the necessities of food, shelter and clothing. For the 2005 matrix of low income before-tax cut-offs and additional information, please refer to the Statistics Canada 2006 Census Dictionary.

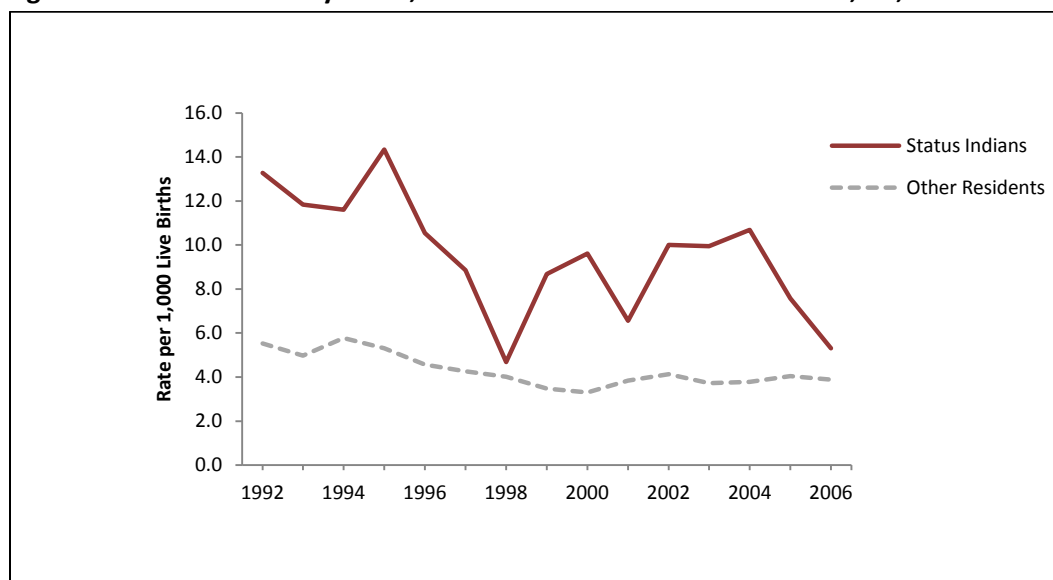
¹¹ Economic families refer to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. For 2006, foster children are included. For more information, please refer to the Statistics Canada 2006 Census Dictionary.

The only other source of data on the health of the Aboriginal population is the administrative data on First Nations (Status Indians). This data was reported extensively in the *Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on the Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia*, Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report 2007. The Provincial Health Officer's Report (PHO) was released in 2008. The data in this report is based on an agreement between BC Ministry of Health, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (now called Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada), and Health Canada to link the national and provincial data files in order to provide the best possible data on the Status Indian population in British Columbia. Through these linkages the data represents 167,782 registered Status Indians in BC. The following health indicators and the data presented in this report are from the PHO report.

Infant Mortality

Since 1992, infant mortality has been reduced considerably for both Status Indians and other residents; however, the change is much more notable for the Status Indian population (from 13.3 per 1,000 in 1992 to 5.3 per 1,000 in 2006) compared to other residents (from 5.5 per 1,000 in 1992 to 3.9 per 1,000 in 2006) (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Infant Mortality Rates, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 1992 to 2006

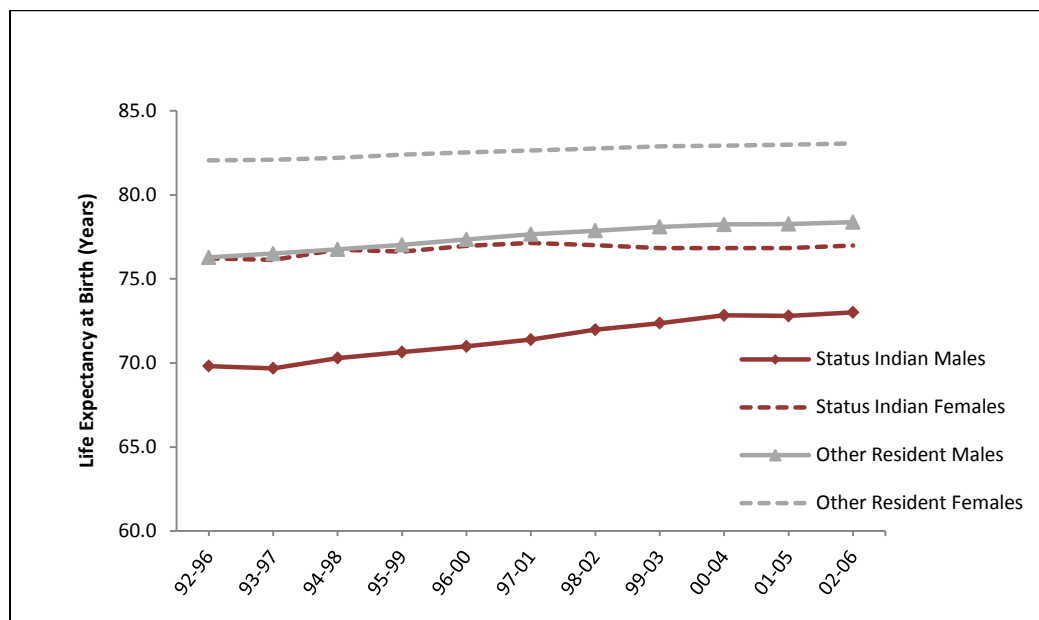


Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the *Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia*, 2008

Life Expectancy

Life expectancy for Status Indians has improved since 1992. Figure 6.2 shows the life expectancy for both male and female populations of Status Indians and other residents in BC from 1992 to 2006. The five year average life expectancy for Status Indian males increased from 69.8 in 1992-1996 to 73.0 in 2002-2006. The rates for other resident males were 76.3 and 78.4 respectively. Status Indian females had a more modest increase in their life expectancy for the same time period (76.2 to 77.0 respectively). Other resident females had an increase from 82.0 to 83.1 over the same period.

Figure 6.2: Life Expectancy at Birth, by Gender, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 1992-1996 to 2002-2006



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Chronic Diseases

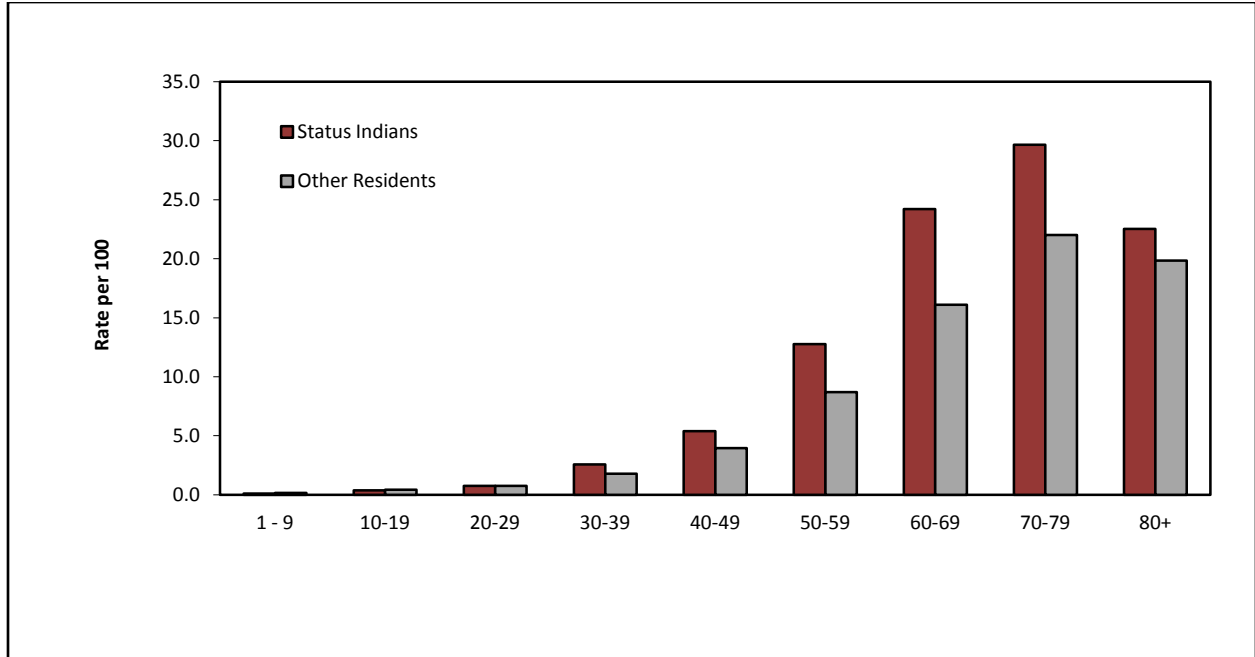
The data for all the chronic diseases in this section was produced for the PHO report using the National Diabetes and Chronic Disease Surveillance System, which was a collaboration among the provinces, territories, Aboriginal partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada. This project began for the purpose of improving the data and the analysis of these conditions to better measure the prevalence, incidence and mortality of diabetes and other chronic conditions.

Diabetes

The prevalence of diabetes has increased significantly among the First Nation population in the past 50 years. At the end of fiscal year 2006/2007, there were approximately 7,100 Status Indians (3,200 males and 3,900 females) who were diagnosed as having diabetes in British Columbia (PHO Report, 2008). The latest available data on age-specific prevalence rates for diabetes shows that the Status Indian population has a much higher rate of diabetes in all age groups starting at the age of 30 and over compared to other residents. The difference between the two populations is particularly significant in the 60 to 79 age groups (Figure 6.3). The age-standardized¹² prevalence rate of diabetes was 6.4 for Status Indian males and 6.9 percent for Status Indian females. These rates were much higher than the rates for other residents at 5.4 percent and 4.3 percent respectively (Figure 6.4).

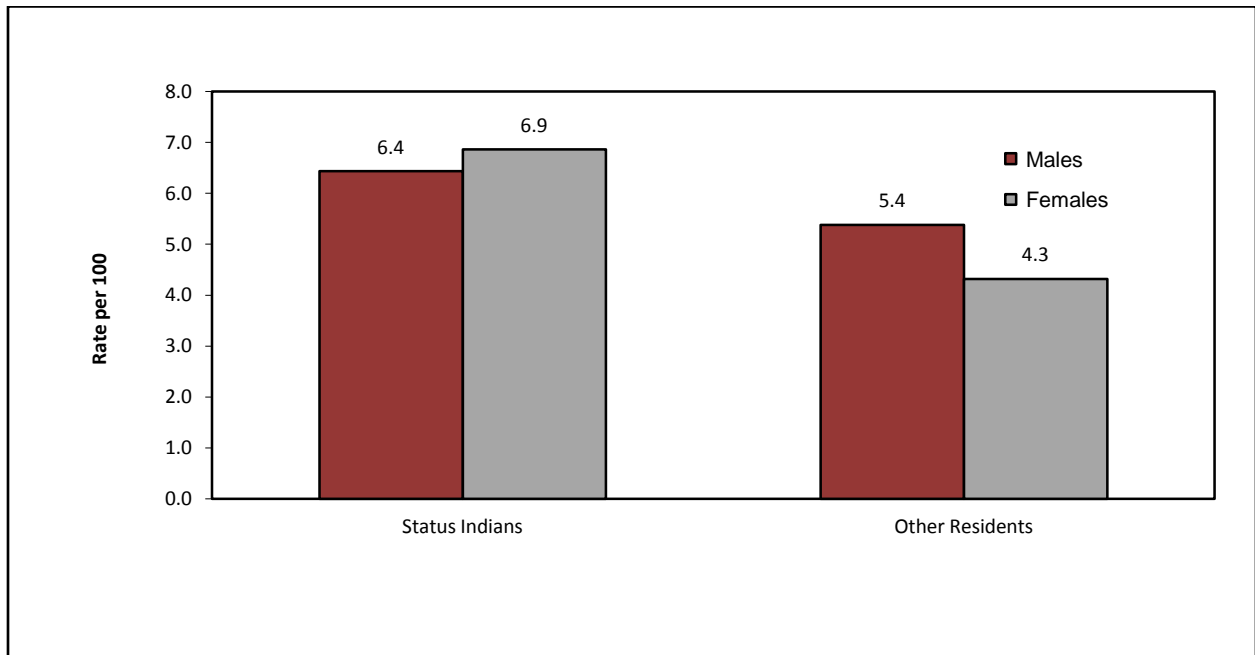
¹² Age standardization is a calculation that adjusts a statistical measure for differences in the age/gender structures between populations. With standardization, more meaningful comparisons can be made between genders, different time periods, or geographical areas, because the age standardization is calculated as if all populations had the same age/gender population distribution.

Figure 6.3: Diabetes, Age-Specific Prevalence Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Figure 6.4: Diabetes, Age-Standardized Prevalence Rate, by Gender, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007

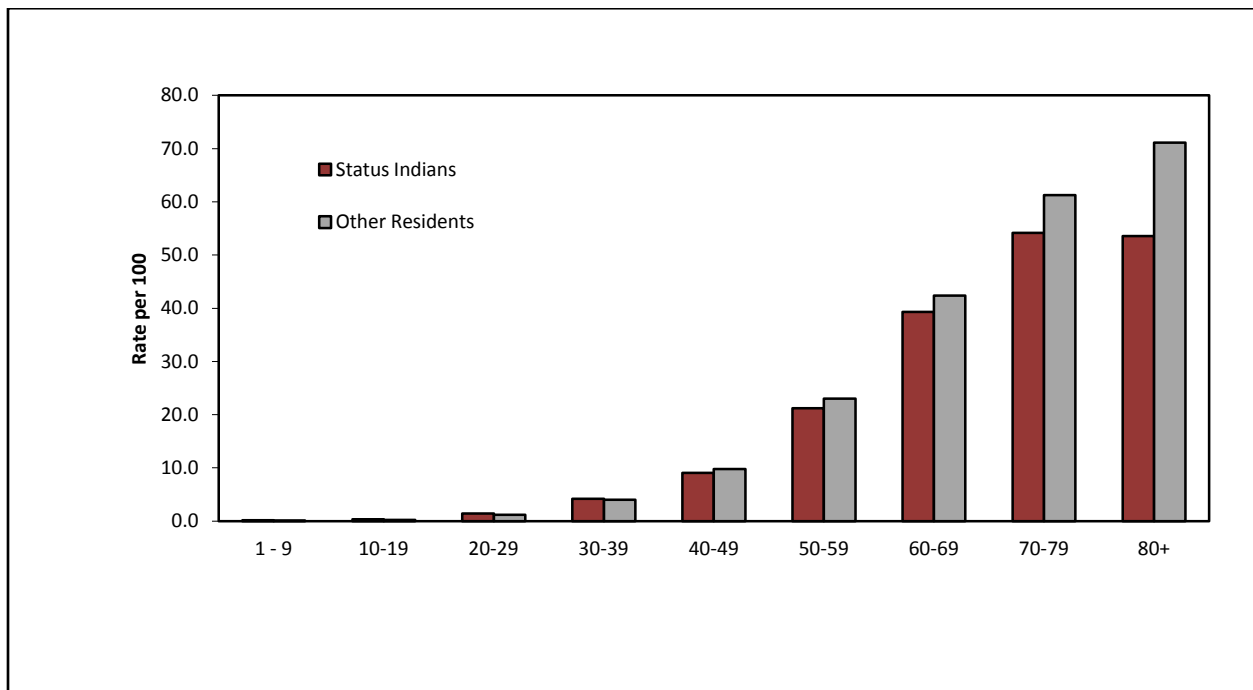


Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Hypertension

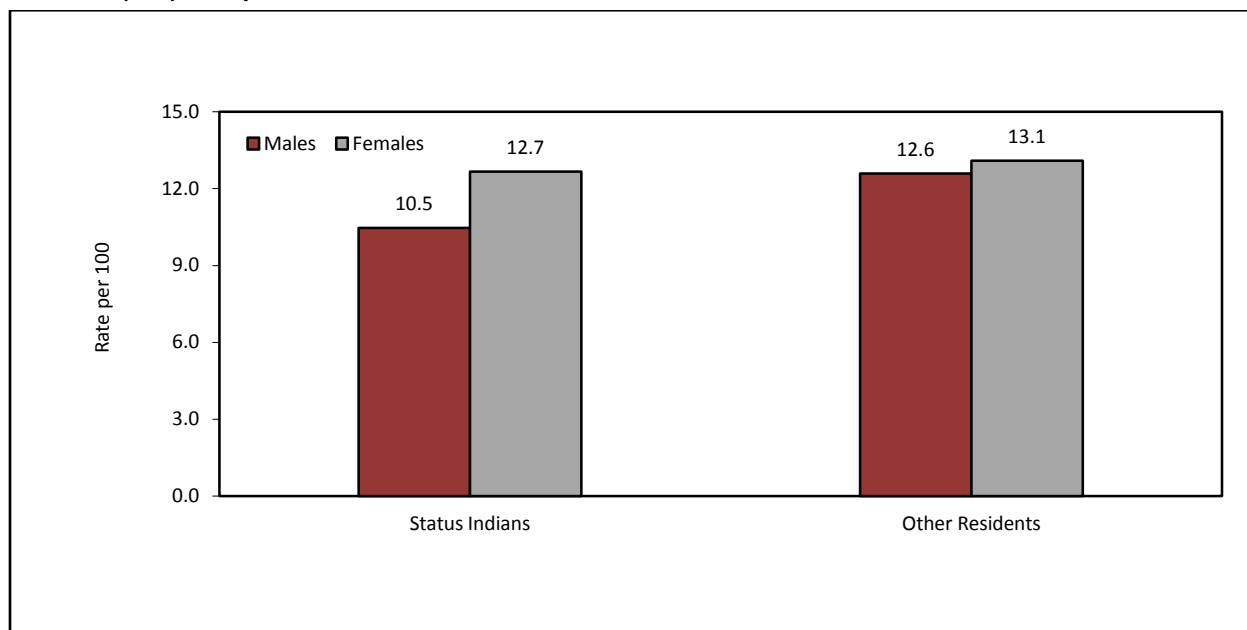
Hypertension (high blood pressure) is a serious condition that can lead to heart disease and stroke. Hypertension can also create complications for those who have diabetes (PHO, 2008). The age-specific prevalence rate of hypertension for both populations is nearly the same up to age 40. After 40, the rates for the Status Indian population tend to be lower compared to other residents (Figure 6.5). It should be noted that given the higher rates of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes for the Status population, it is perhaps possible that the Status Indian population have fewer routine medical examinations of their blood pressure compared to other residents. Females tend to have higher rates of hypertension compared to males. This difference is particularly significant for the Status Indian population, with females having an age-standardized rate of hypertension at 12.7 percent compared to Status Indian males at 10.5 percent. The rates for other residents were 13.1 percent and 12.6 percent respectively (Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.5: Hypertension, Age-Specific Prevalence Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Figure 6.6: Hypertension, Age-Standardized Prevalence Rate, by Gender, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

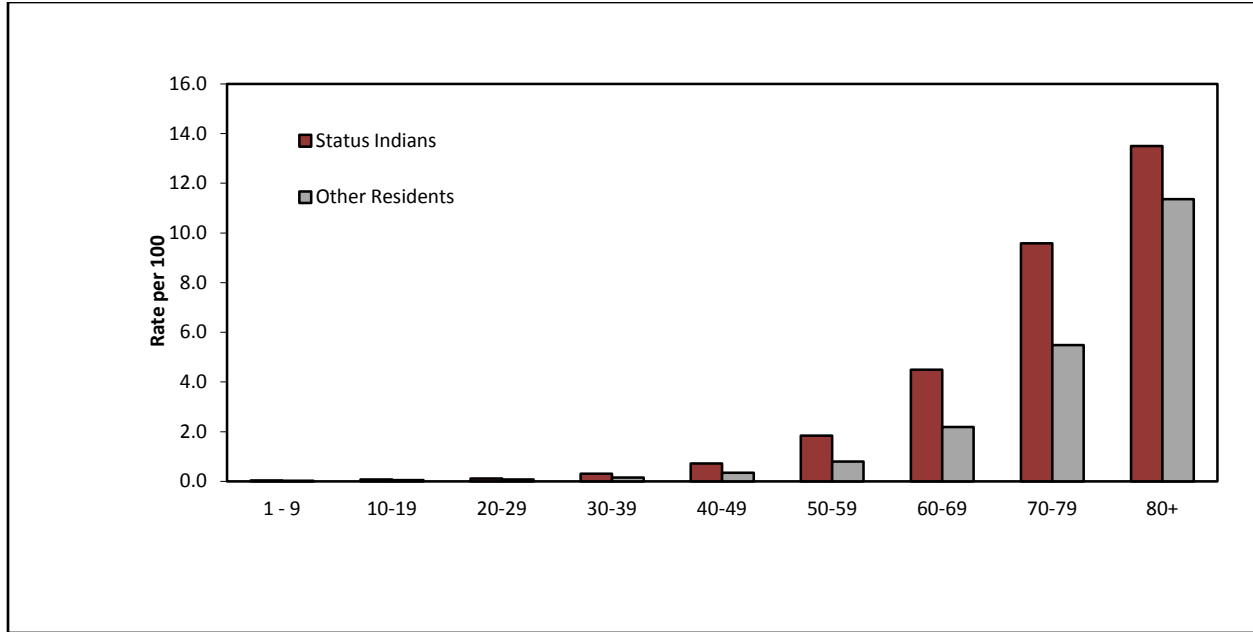
Stroke

Stroke is a condition that occurs when the blood supply to the brain is interrupted or reduced as a result of a blood clot or bleeding from a blood vessel supplying the brain. The results can range from a transitory weakness to permanent paralysis or death. Hypertension generally accounts for 35 to 50 percent of strokes (PHO, 2008 and Mayo Clinic, 2011).

In 2006/2007, the age-specific rates for strokes were consistently higher for the Status Indian population compared to other residents. The Status Indian population had a rate more than two times higher among those aged 60-69. (Figure 6.7)

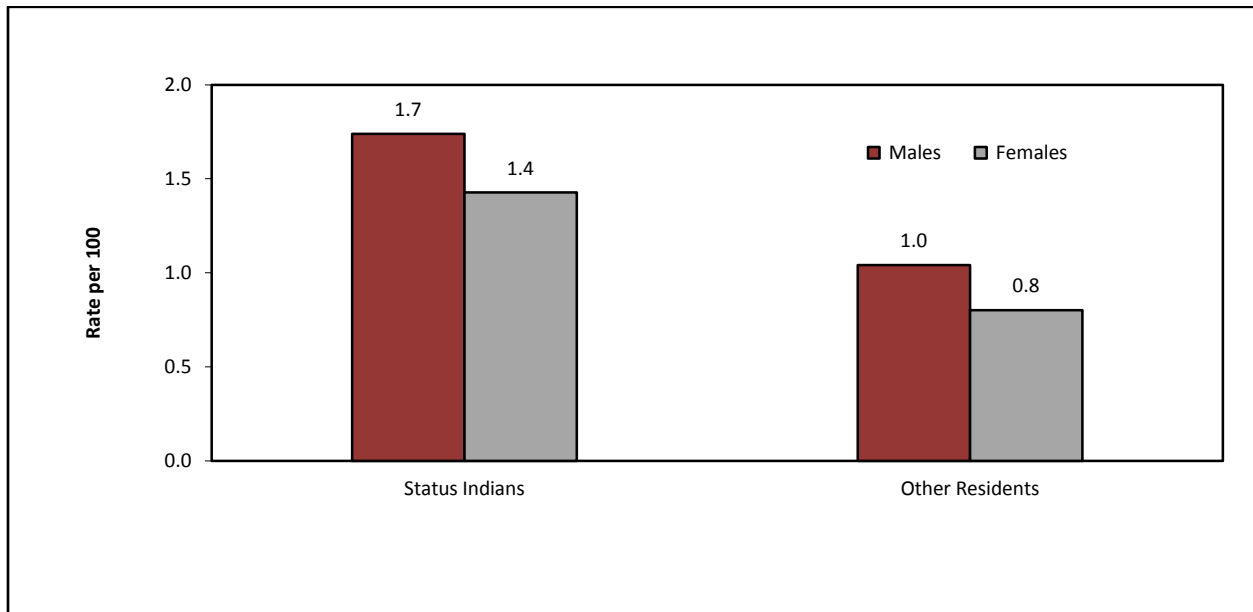
The age-standardized rate for stroke was much higher for males compared to females for both the Status Indian population and other residents. In 2006/2007, Status Indian males had a rate of 1.7 percent compared to 1.4 percent for Status Indian females. The rates for other residents were 1.0 and 0.8 respectively (Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.7: Stroke, Age-Specific Prevalence Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Figure 6.8: Stroke, Age-Standardized Prevalence Rate, by Gender, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

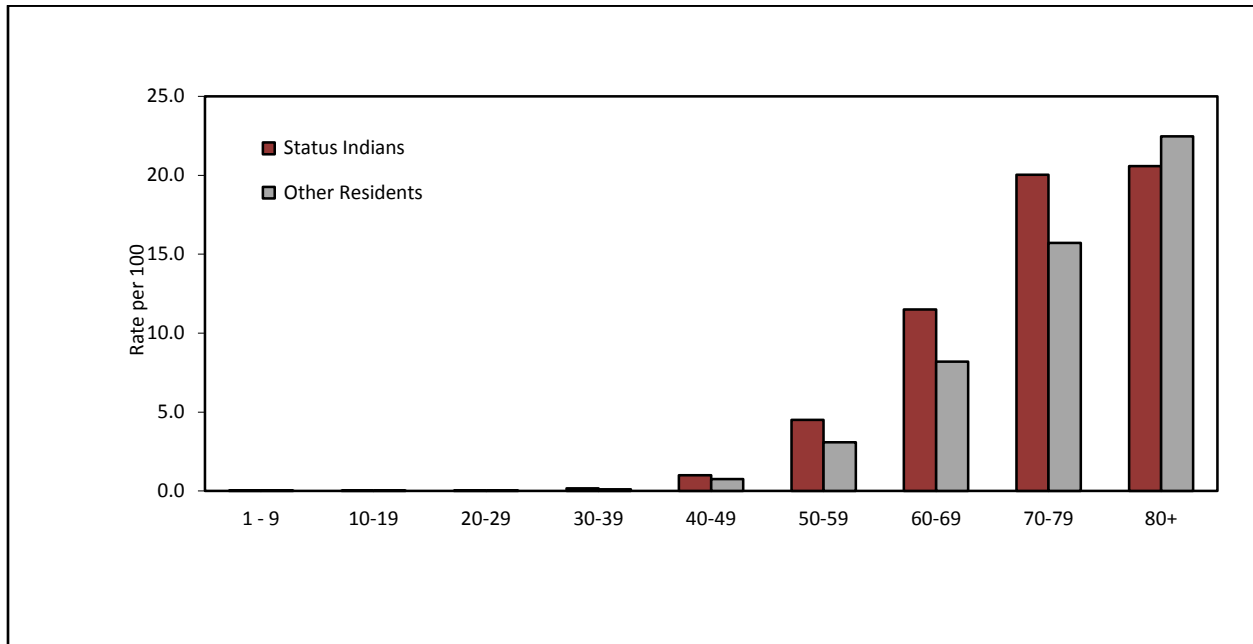
Ischemic Heart Disease

Ischemic heart disease (IHD) is a condition of narrowing or blockages of the blood vessels that leads to the heart. In some cases, the blockages of the blood vessels can cause heart attacks and death (PHO,

2008). In 2006/2007, the age-specific prevalence rate of IHD was higher for Status Indian population in the 40-79 age groups. The rates for other residents were higher for those 80+ (Figure 6.9).

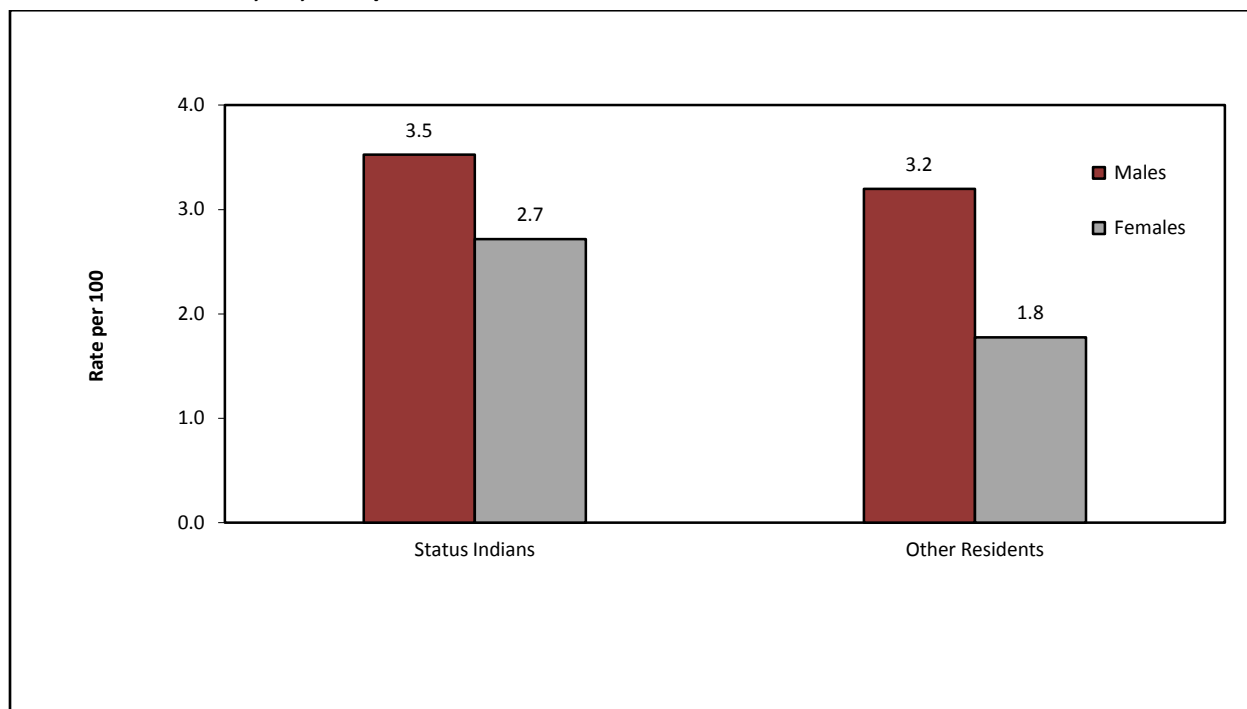
Males had a much higher prevalence rate of IHD compared to females in both populations. The age-standardized rate of IHD for Status Indian males was 3.5 percent compared to 2.7 percent for Status Indian females. The rate for other residents was 3.2 percent and 1.8 percent respectively (Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.9: Ischemic Heart Disease, Age-Specific Prevalence Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Figure 6.10: Ischemic Heart Disease, Age-Standardized Prevalence Rate, by Gender, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

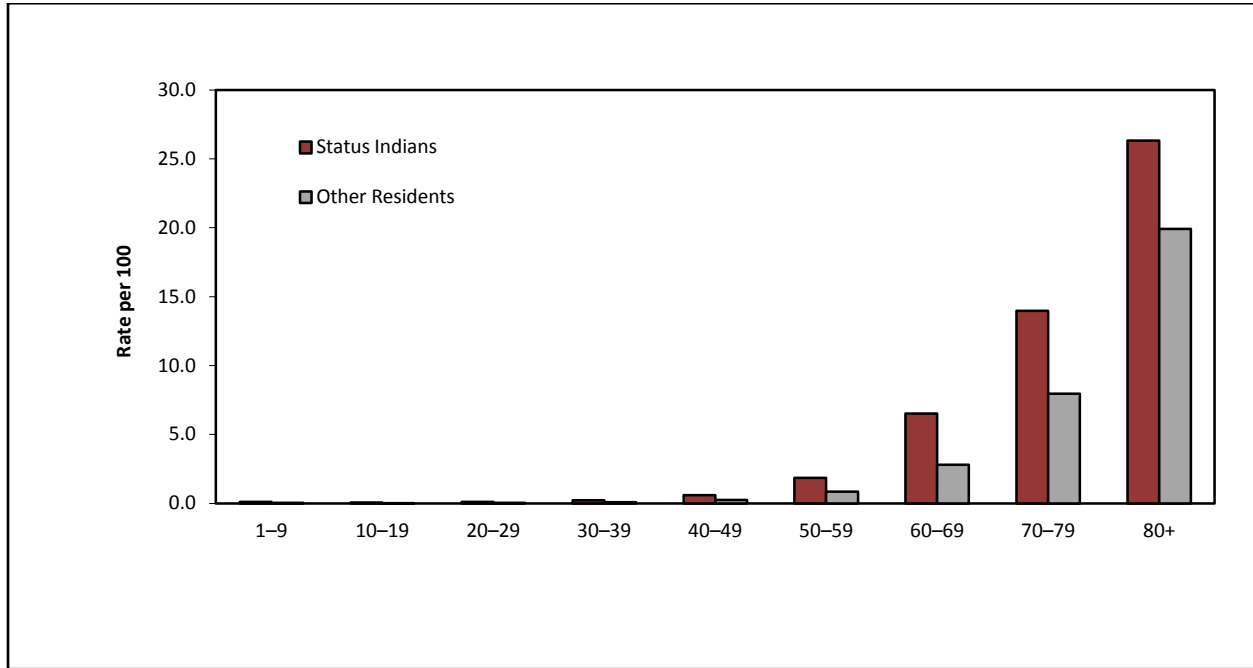
Congestive Heart Failure

Congestive heart failure is a condition where the heart cannot pump enough blood to supply other organs. This is due to the narrowing of the blood vessels and high blood pressure that leads to the heart being gradually too weak to pump blood efficiently (PHO report, 2008 and Mayo Clinic, 2011).

Based on the 2006/2007 data, the age-specific rate of congestive heart failure for the Status Indian population was much higher compared to other residents. This was particularly notable in the 60-69 and 70-79 age groups where the prevalence rates were 1.5 to nearly 2 times higher for Status Indian population compared to other residents (Figure 6.11).

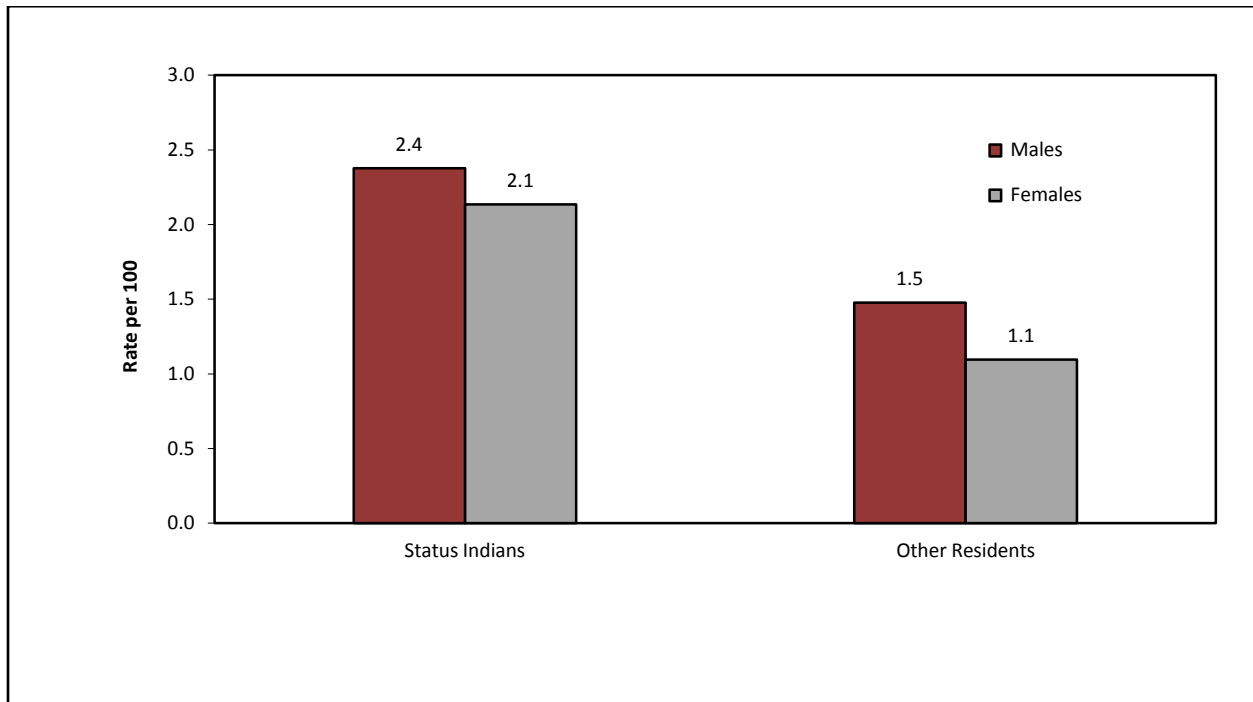
The age-standardized prevalence rates for congestive heart failure show that males in both populations have a slightly higher rate than females. The rate for Status Indian males was 2.4 percent compared to 2.1 percent for females. The rate for other residents was 1.5 percent and 1.1 percent respectively (Figure 6.12).

Figure 6.11: Congestive Heart Failure, Age-Specific Prevalence Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Figure 6.12: Congestive Heart Failure, Age-Standardized Prevalence Rate, by Gender, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007

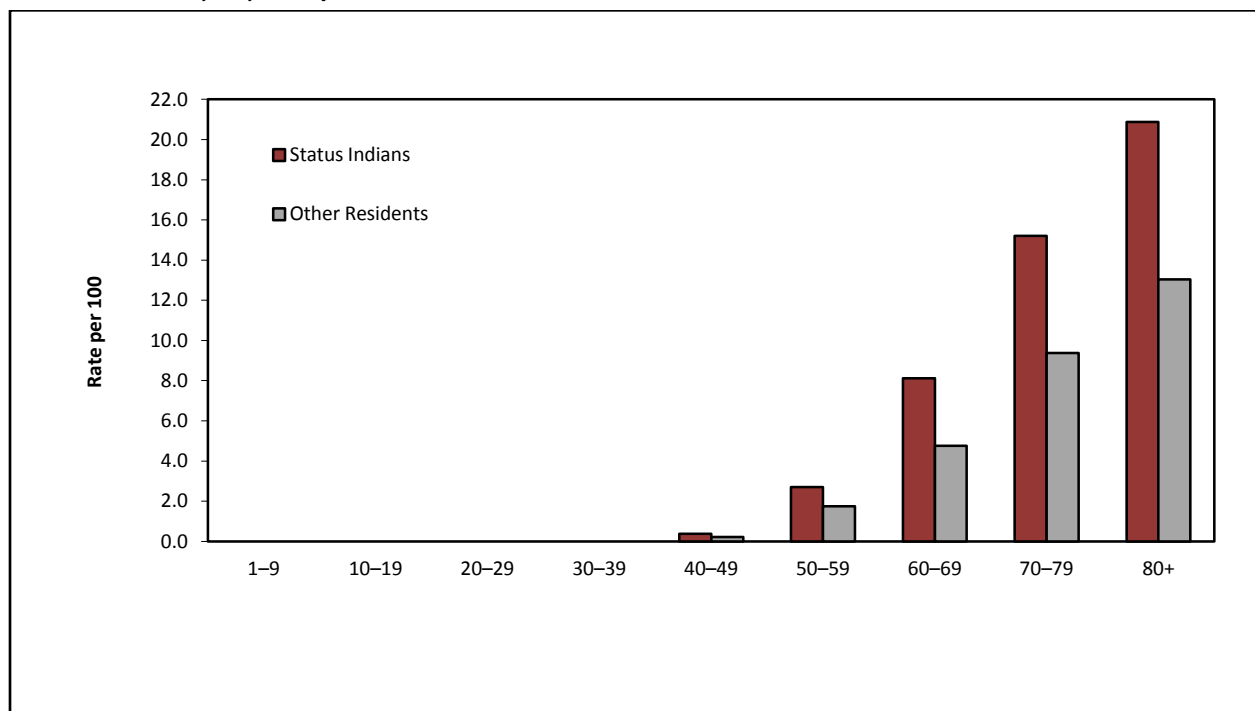


Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

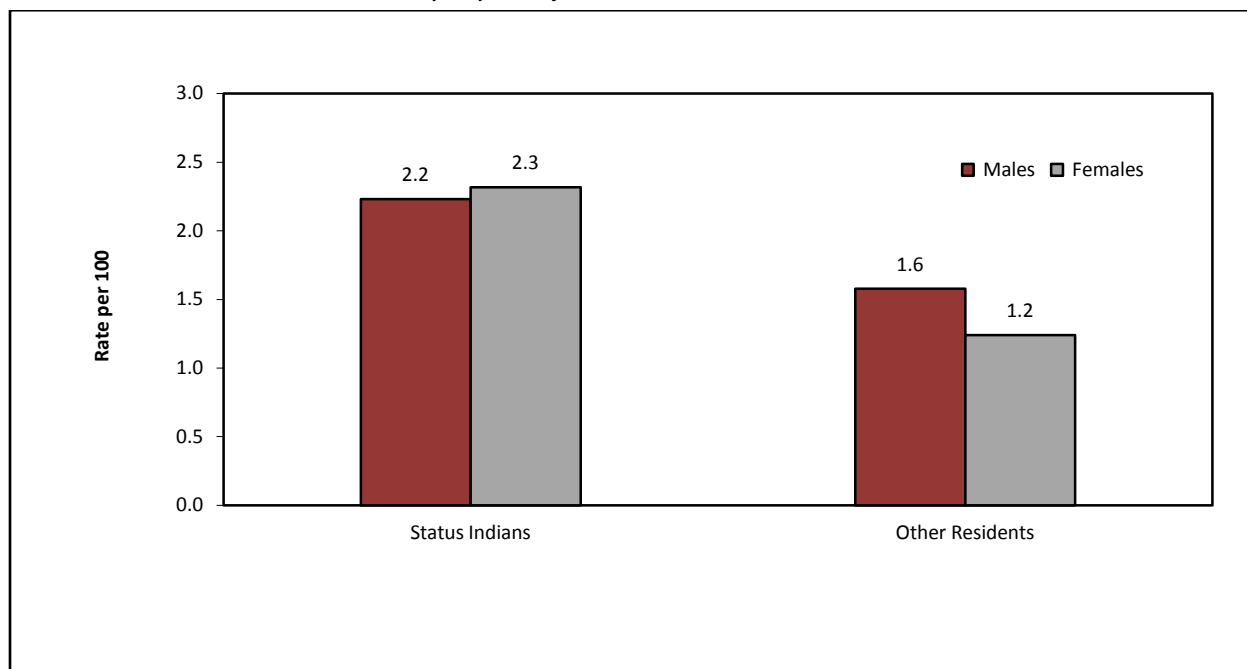
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a condition of narrowing of the airways limiting the flow of air to and from the lungs. Many cases of COPD are a result of smoking, exposure to smoke or an occupational exposure (PHO, 2008). The Age specific rates for COPD were significant for both populations after the age of 50; however, the rates were considerably higher for the Status Indian population (Figure 6.13). The age-standardized rates of COPD were higher for the Status Indian population compared to other residents. The rate of COPD was similar for Status Indian males and females at 2.2 and 2.3 percent respectively, while a small difference was seen between males and females for other residents at 1.6 and 1.2 percent respectively (Figure 6.14).

Figure 6.13: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Age-Specific Prevalence Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Figure 6.14: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Age-Standardized Prevalence Rate, by Gender, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

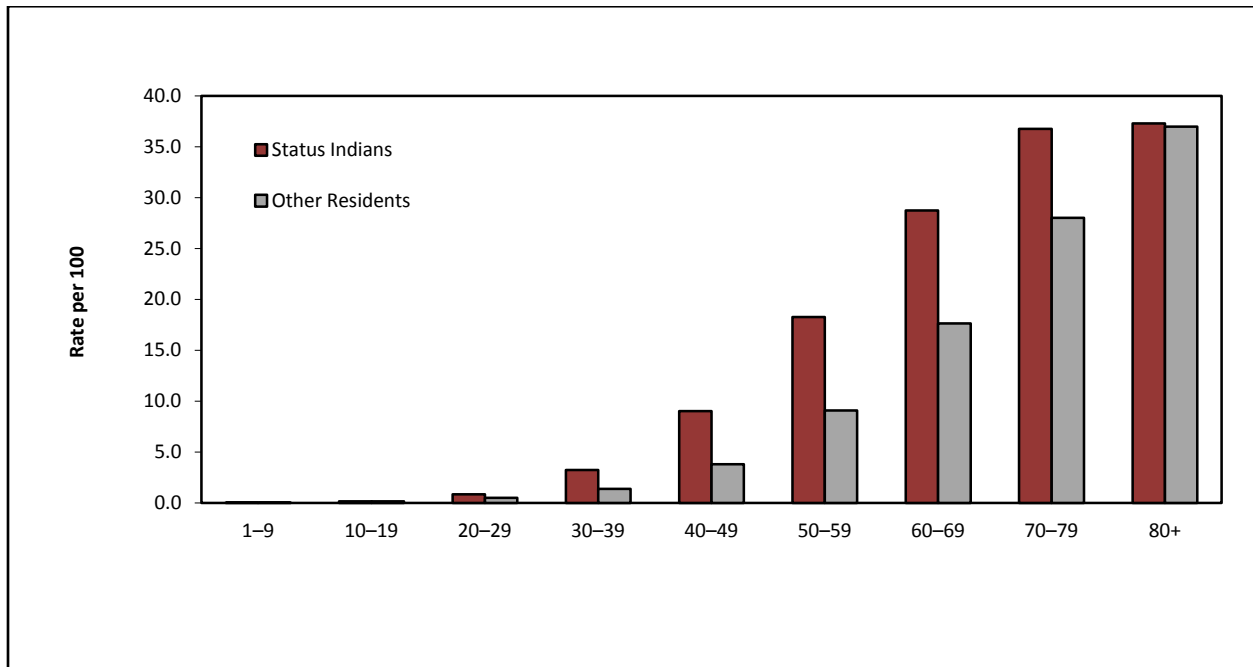
Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis is the condition of degenerative joint pain that is caused by the inflammation of the joints. The result of this inflammation is abnormal wearing of the cartilage or a decrease of the synovial fluid that lubricates the joint. Due to the decrease in the fluid and wearing of the cartilage, the bone surfaces are less protected and joints become more painful (PHO, 2008).

In 2006/2007, the age-specific prevalence rate of osteoarthritis was considerably higher for the Status Indian population compared to other residents, particularly for those aged 40 to 79. For those aged 80+, the rates were nearly equal for both populations (Figure 6.15).

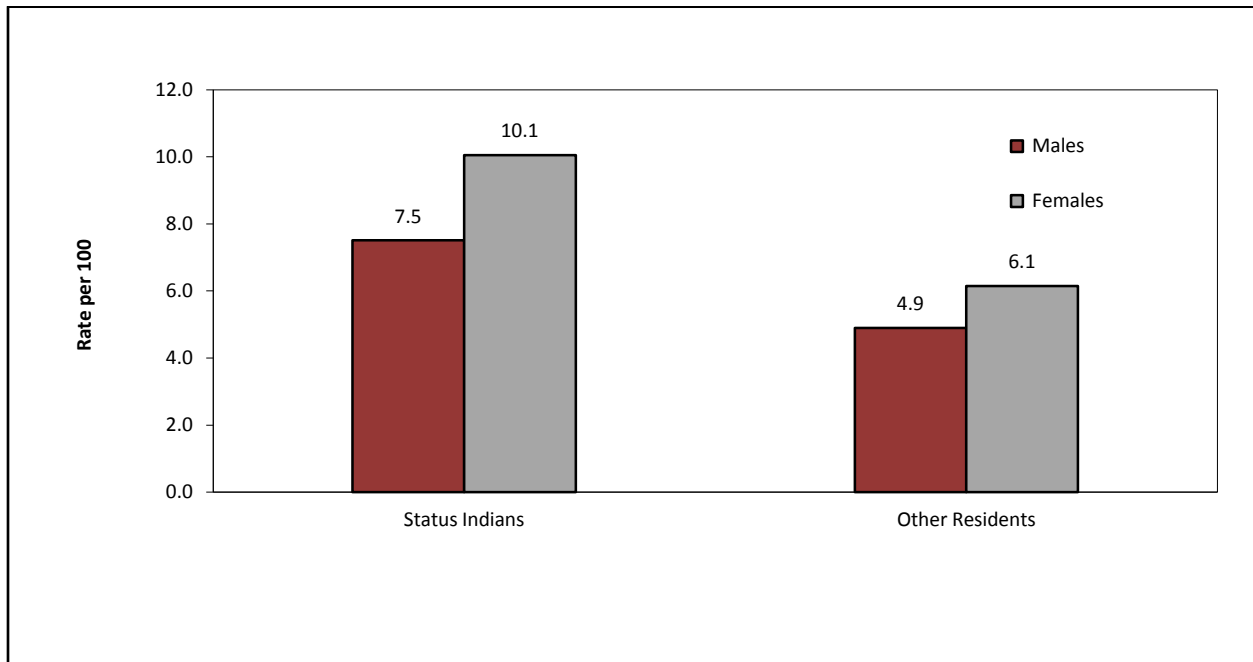
The age-standardized prevalence rates for osteoarthritis were higher for females compared to males in both populations; however, Status Indian females had a much higher rate compared to other resident females, at 10.1 percent and 6.1 percent respectively. The age-standardized prevalence rate for Status Indian males was lower than Status Indian females (7.5 percent compared to 10.1 percent), but was much higher than for other resident males (4.9 percent) (Figure 6.16).

Figure 6.15: Osteoarthritis, Age-Specific Prevalence Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Figure 6.16: Osteoarthritis, Age-Standardized Prevalence Rate, by Gender, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2006/2007

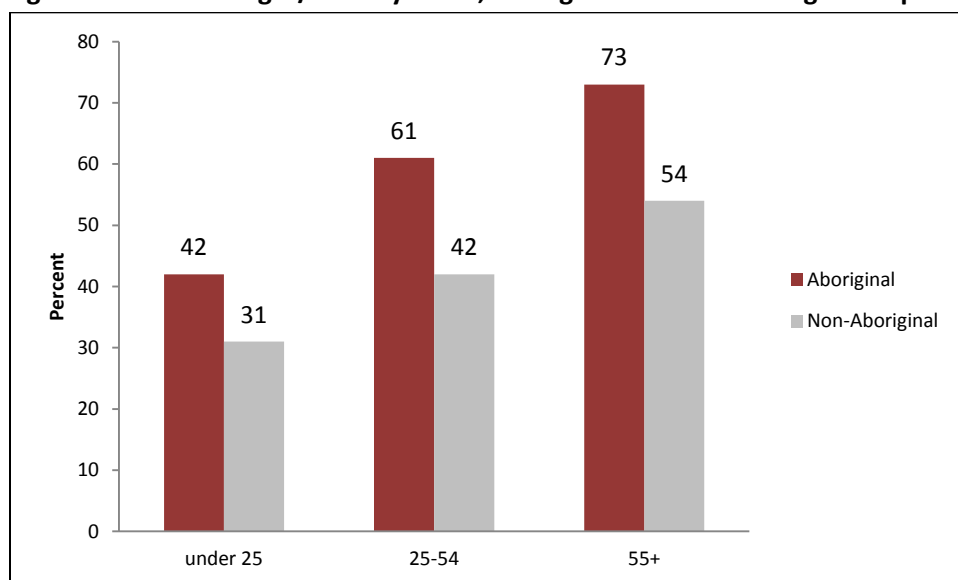


Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Overweight/Obesity

Overweight/obesity is a risk factor for a number of chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. Based on the latest available data from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), the Aboriginal population in all age groups reported a higher rate of overweight/obesity compared to the non-Aboriginal population. The greatest difference was for those aged 55+, where 73 percent of the Aboriginal people who responded considered themselves overweight or obese. The rate for the non-Aboriginal population was 54 percent. The rates for 25-54 age group were 61 percent and 42 percent respectively. The Aboriginal children and youth population (those under age 25) also reported being overweight/obese (42 percent). The rate for the non-Aboriginal population in this age group was 31 percent (Figure 6.17).

Figure 6.17: Overweight/Obesity Rates, Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Population, 2009/2010



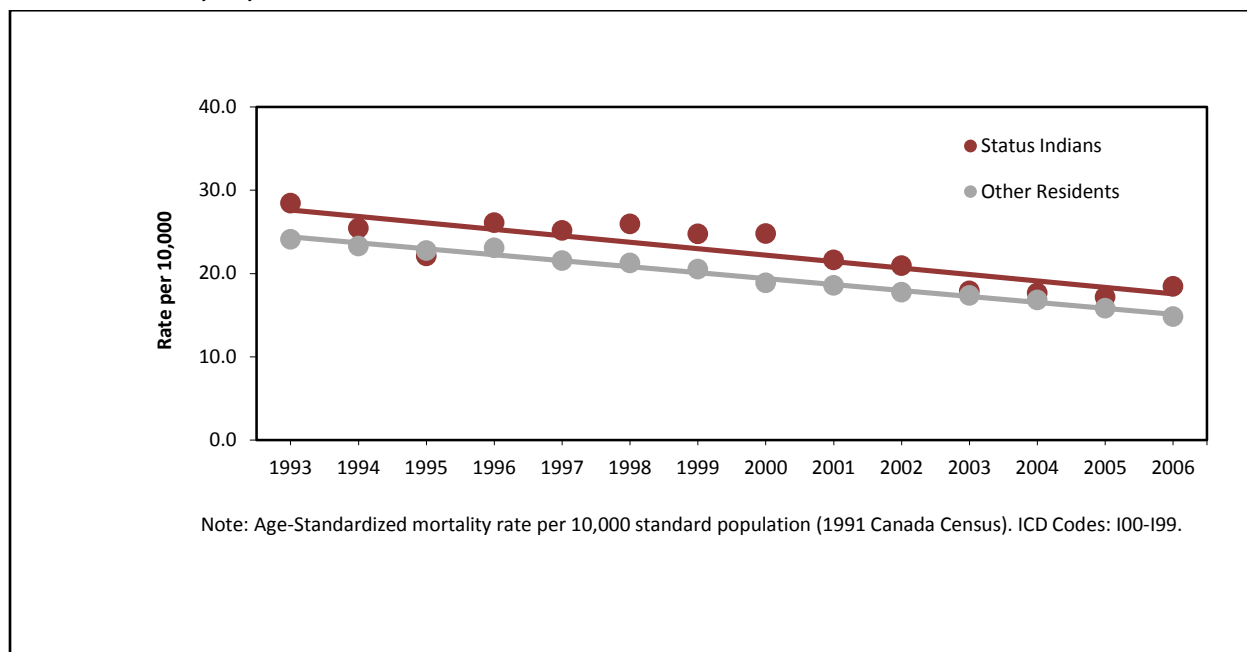
Source: Canadian Community Health Survey Share File, 2009/2010, prepared by BC Stats, 2011

Mortality Rates

Disease of the Circulatory System

The diseases of the circulatory system include all ischemic heart diseases, stroke, high blood pressure and other cardiovascular diseases. (PHO, 2008) The age-standardized mortality rates for diseases of the circulatory system significantly decreased from 1993 to 2006 for both Status Indian and other resident populations (from 28.5 and 24.1 per 10,000 to 18.5 and 14.8 respectively). However, the Status Indian population had a higher rate than other residents in every year (Figure 6.18).

Figure 6.18: Diseases of the Circulatory System, Age-Standardized Mortality Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 1993 to 2006



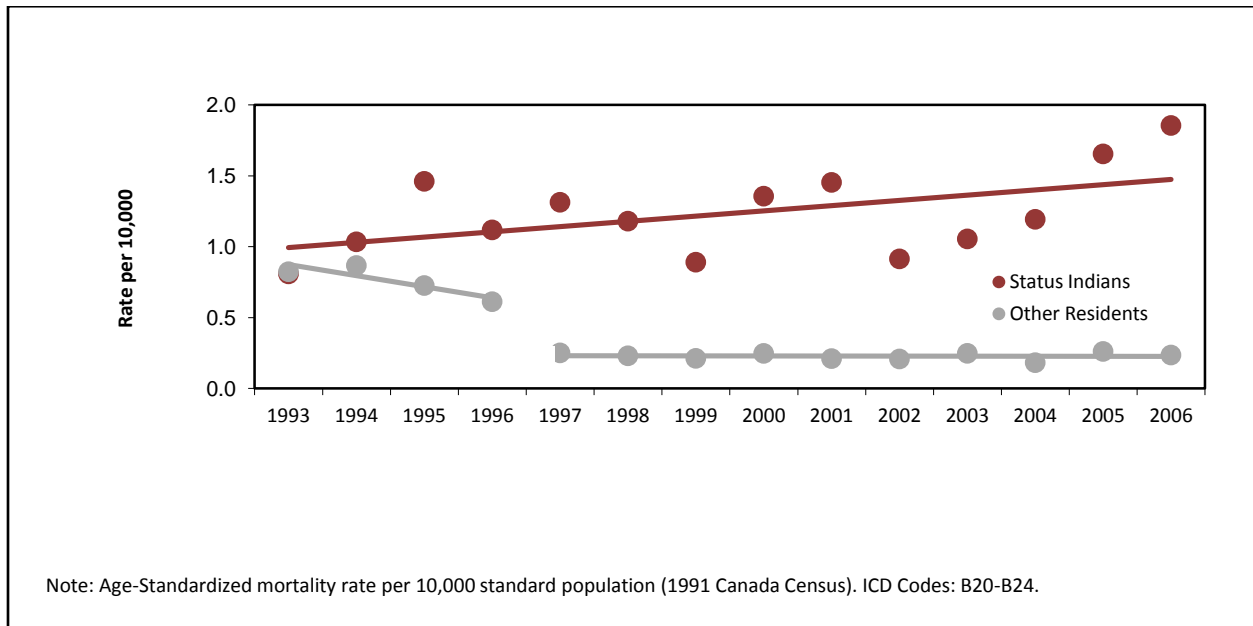
Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

HIV/AIDS

In 2006, there were approximately 55 to 70 new positive HIV tests among the Aboriginal population in BC, which accounted for about 15 to 17 percent of all new positive HIV tests each year. In recent years, more Aboriginal females have been diagnosed comprising around 30 to 40 percent of all HIV positive which is quite alarming knowing that the total proportion of Aboriginal population in BC is around 4 percent (PHO, 2008).

The latest available data on mortality rates for HIV/AIDS show a much higher rate for the Status Indian population compared to other residents (1.9 per 10,000 compared to 0.2 per 10,000)(Figure 6.19). Based on the studies reported in the PHO report, an increase in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS could be related to injection drug use. Another study in Vancouver also found that the majority of those who were HIV positive were Aboriginal, most likely female and daily drug users (PHO, 2008).

Figure 6.19: HIV, Age-Standardized Mortality Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 1993 to 2006



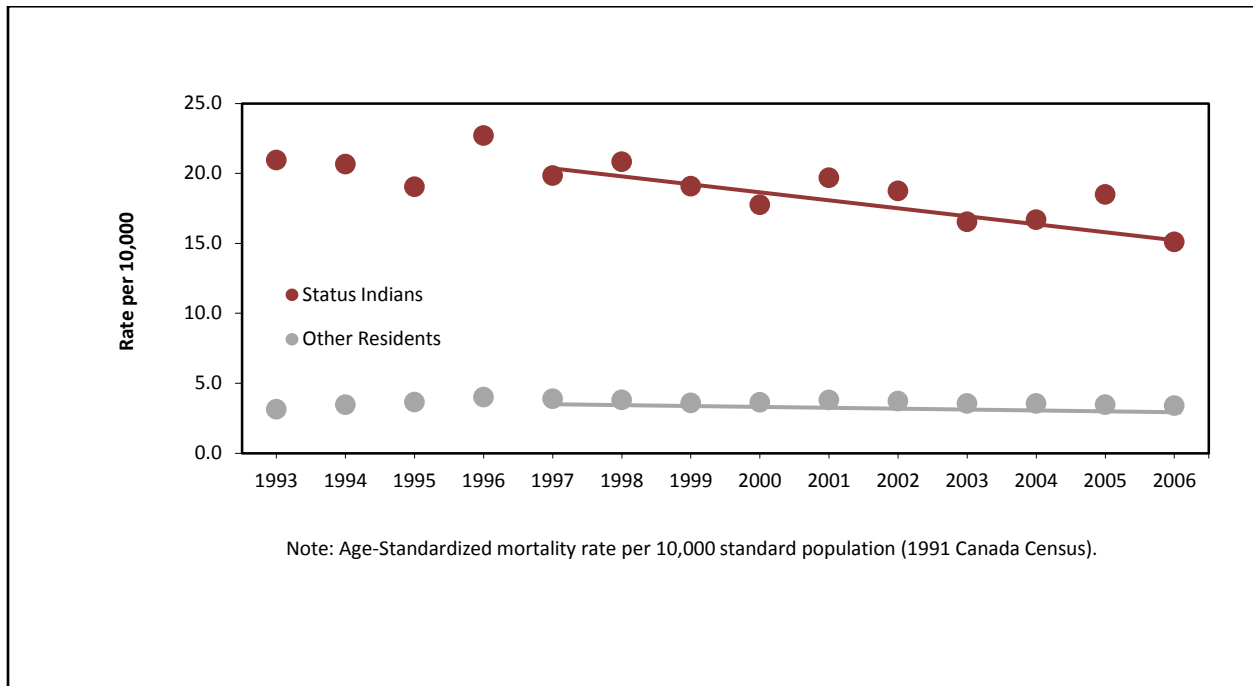
Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Alcohol-related deaths

Alcohol-related deaths are deaths that are directly due to alcohol use or where alcohol was a contributing factor to the death. Since 1993, alcohol-related deaths have proven to be significantly higher for the Status Indian population compared to other residents. In 2006, the rate for alcohol-related deaths for the Status Indian population was 15.1 per 10,000 compared to 3.4 per 10,000 for other residents (Figure 6.20).

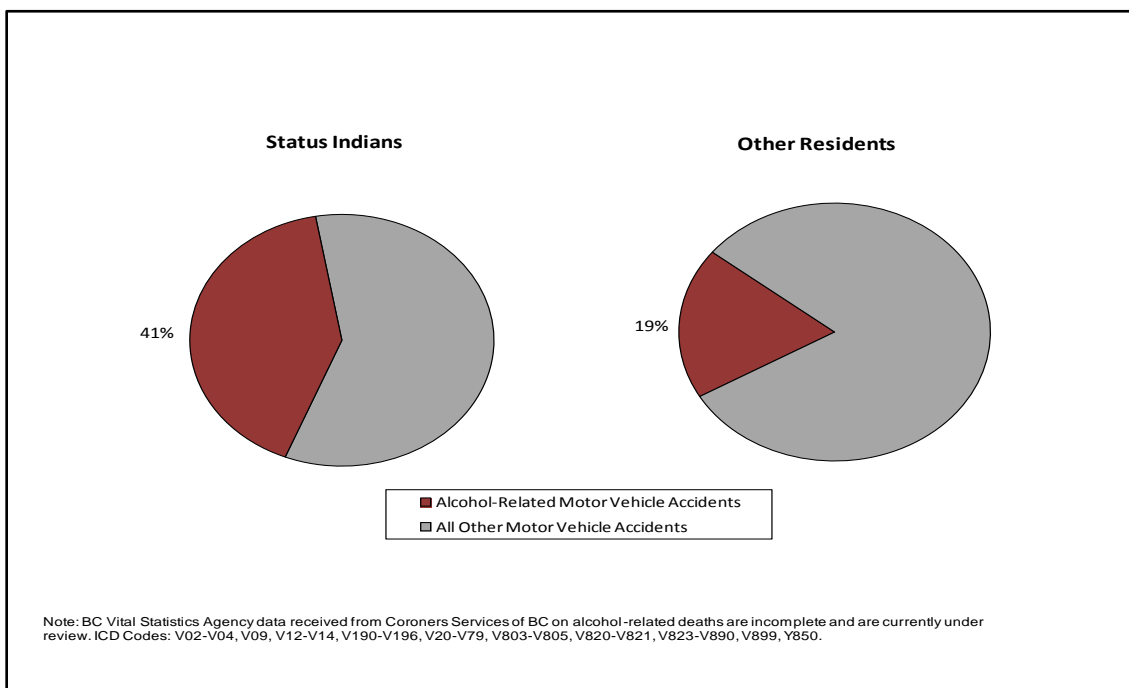
An analysis of alcohol-related motor vehicle accidental deaths shows that, based on a five year average, the Status Indian population were more than twice as likely to die from such a cause compared to other residents. Based on the five-year average (2002-2006), 41 percent of all motor vehicle deaths among Status Indian population were alcohol-related compared to 19 percent for other residents (Figure 6.21).

Figure 6.20: Alcohol-Related Deaths, Age-Standardized Mortality Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 1993 to 2006



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Figure 6.21: Report of Deaths Due to Alcohol-Related Motor Vehicle Accidents, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 2002-2006

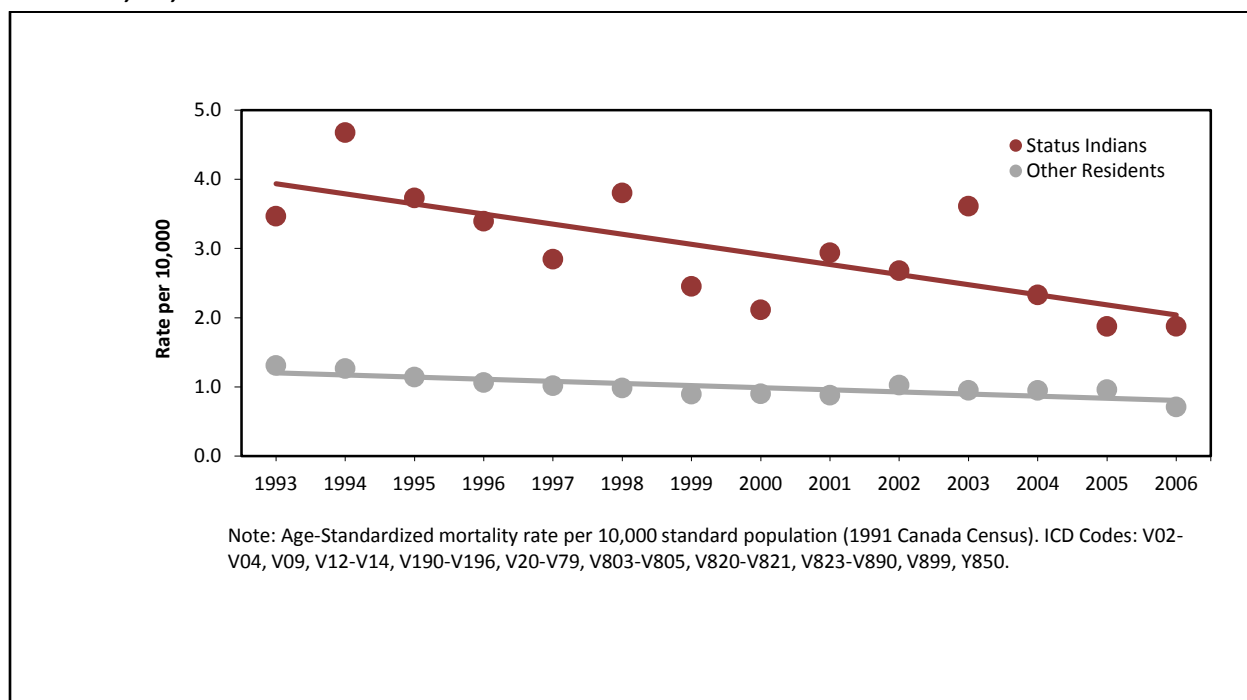


Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Motor Vehicle Accidental deaths

From 1993 to 2006, the rate of motor vehicle accidental deaths for the Status Indian population was reduced from 3.5 per 10,000 to 1.9 per 10,000. However, the rates for the Status Indian population have consistently been 2 to 4 times higher than the other residents. In 2006, motor vehicle accidental deaths were also the third highest cause of death for those who died before reaching age 75 (Figure 6.22) (PHO, 2008).

Figure 6.22: Motor Vehicle Accidents, Age-Standardized Mortality Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 1993 to 2006

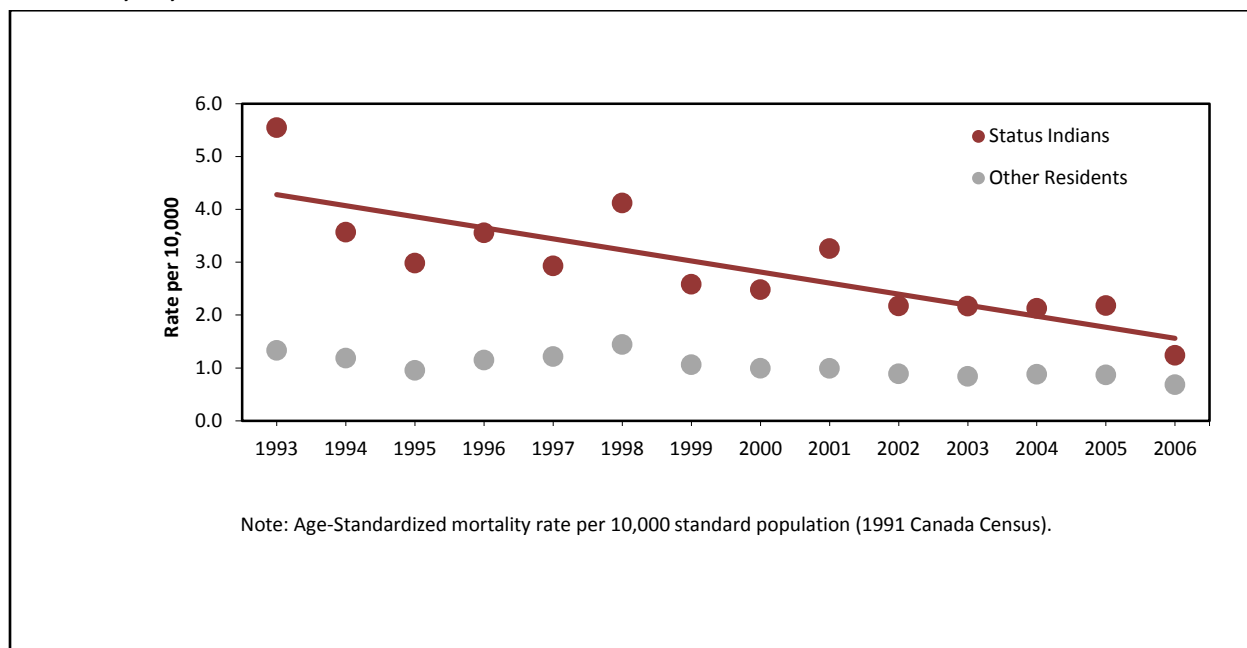


Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Drug-induced Deaths

Drug-induced deaths are deaths that include drug use or accidental poisoning by drugs, suicide by drugs or where drugs are seen as the underlying cause of death. There was a significant decline in drug-induced deaths for the Status Indian population from 1993 to 2006 (5.5 per 10,000 in 1993 to 1.2 per 10,000 in 2006) (Figure 6.23).

Figure 6.23: Drug-Induced Deaths, Age-Standardized Mortality Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 1993 to 2006

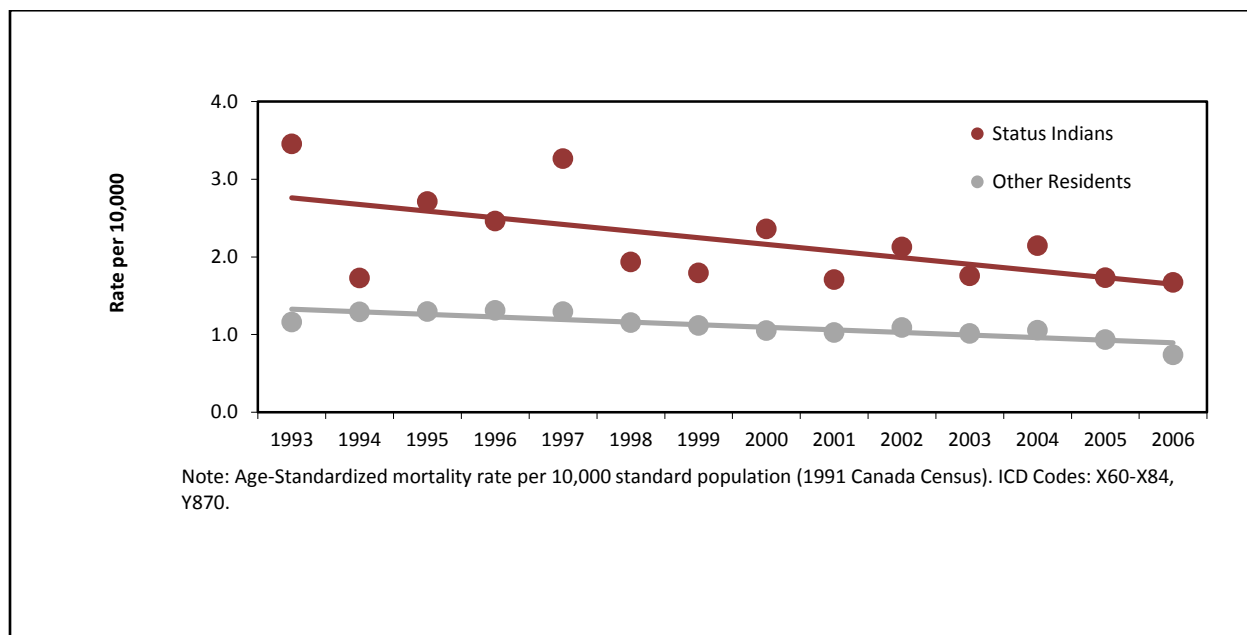


Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Suicides

From 1993 to 2006, a significant decrease was seen in suicide deaths for the Status Indian population (from 3.5 per 10,000 to 1.7 per 10,000 respectively). However, in 2006, suicide death rate for the Status Indian population was still more than twice the rate of the other residents (1.7 per 10,000 compared to 0.7 per 10,000). In the same year, suicide was the fourth highest cause of death for Status Indian population who died before reaching age 75 (Figure 6.24).

Figure 6.24: Suicide, Age-Standardized Mortality Rate, Status Indians and Other Residents, BC, 1993 to 2006



Source: Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2008 for the Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Section 7: Housing and Homelessness

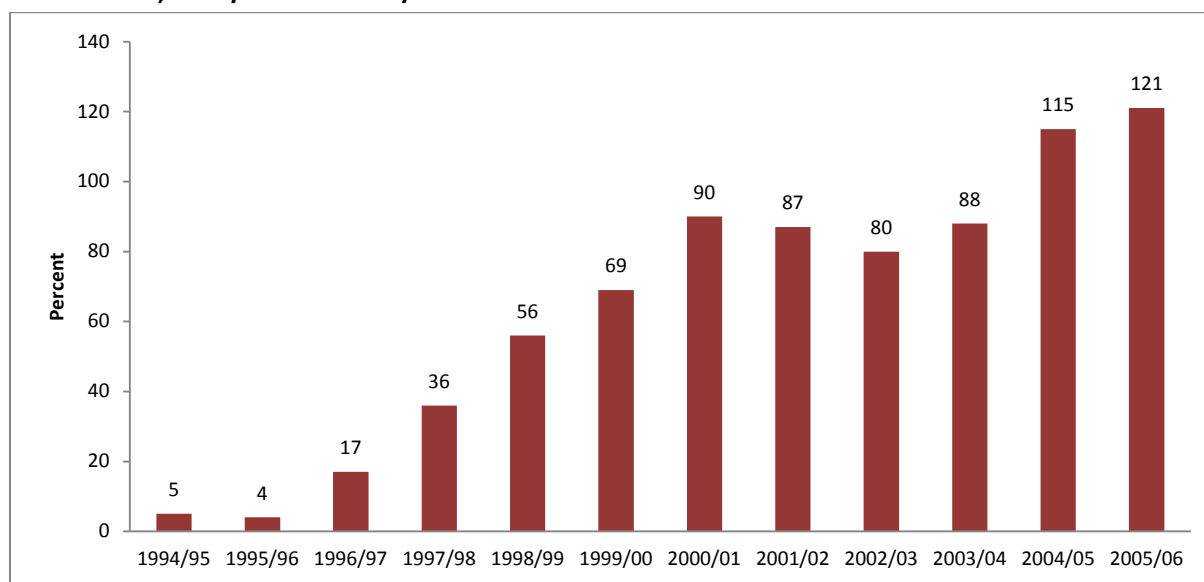
The definition of acceptable housing by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is based on the following:

- Adequate – Housing that does not require major repairs such as defective plumbing, electrical wiring, or structural repairs to walls, floors, and ceiling.
- Suitable – Housing that has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident household according to the National Occupancy Standards requirements.
- Affordable – Housing that costs less than 30 percent of before-tax household income (PHO, 2008).

Aboriginal people are more likely to live in houses that are crowded, in need of repair or consume more than 30 percent of their before-tax income. Data from the PHO report show that from 1994/95 to 2005/06, the percentage increase in the number of Aboriginal housing¹³ in need of major renovations (including structural repairs to the walls, floors, ceilings or roof; and replacement or upgrading of defective plumbing or electrical wiring) increased by 121 percent (Figure 7.1).

¹³ Aboriginal housing is defined by CMHC as one of the following: a non-family household in which at least 50% of household members self-identified as Aboriginal; or a family household that meets at least one of two criteria: 1) at least one spouse, common-law partner, or lone-parent self-identified as an Aboriginal; or 2) at least 50% of household members self-identified as Aboriginal.

Figure 7.1: Percentage Increase in Number of Aboriginal Housing Units in Need of Major Renovations, 1994/1995 to 2005/2006



Source: Pathways to Health and Healing: 2nd Report on Health and well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia, 2008

Additionally, based on the 2006 Census, 21 percent of Aboriginal housing was in need of major repair, compared to only 7 percent of the same for the non-Aboriginal population in BC. Similar patterns were also seen in many urban areas of the province. For example, in Vancouver, 15 percent of the Aboriginal population lived in housing in need of major repairs, compared to 6 percent for the non-Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census).

Crowded dwelling (defined as more than one person per room) is also another housing issue for Aboriginal population in BC. Around 6 percent of Aboriginal people in BC lived in crowded dwellings, compared to 4 percent of the non-Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census).

Homelessness

Gathering data on homelessness is difficult due to the transient nature of the homeless population. However, estimates indicate that Aboriginal people are overrepresented. Aboriginal people represent 2 percent of the Greater Vancouver Regional District population, but constitute 30 percent of the homeless. The rate of homelessness is estimated to be higher among street homeless, who do not tend to access the shelters. The street homeless are generally worse off and tend to have a number of health problems (PHO, 2008).

Conclusion

Based on 2006 Census, nearly 75 percent of all Aboriginal population in BC lived off-reserve. Almost 81 percent of those living off-reserve lived in urban areas of the province. Overall, the urban Aboriginal population had lower levels of education, income, and employment, compared to the non-Aboriginal population.

As noted earlier in the report, the Census provides the most complete picture of the off-reserve Aboriginal population in BC; however, due to limited sample sizes, the health data from Statistics Canada could not be used for this report. Although no health data is available for the urban population in particular, the First Nations health data (Status Indian in particular) is indicative of the higher prevalence rates of chronic disease and higher levels of mortality rates of preventative causes, such as motor vehicle accidents, HIV and suicides among the Aboriginal population compared to other residents in BC.

Over time, more off-reserve/urban specific socio-economic data will help to better understand the cause of the gap that exists between the urban Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations.

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