

UNVEILING OF THE RESULTS OF THE 2016-2017 QUÉBEC HEALTH SURVEY OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Baie-Comeau, December 10th, 2018 – The second edition of the Québec Health Survey of High School Students (QSHSS), conducted in 2016-2017, notably reveals that 7 young people out of 10 on the North Shore perceive their health status as excellent or very good, a proportion comparable to the one observed in the first edition of the survey in 2010-2011.

The topics of the QSHSS notably concern physical and mental health, lifestyle habits, social skills, the social environment of youth, violence, and social adjustment. On the North Shore, over 3,000 students completed this survey conducted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ) for the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. At the provincial level, over 60,000 students were surveyed between November 2016 and May 2017.

Despite improvements concerning certain lifestyle habits, the situation remains worrying

The data collected show an important decrease in the proportion of high school students of the region having used cannabis at least once in the past 12 months. In fact, it went from 32% to 25% in all students. The proportion went from 33% to 27% in boys, and from 31% to 24% in girls.

The use of drugs of all types also decreased significantly, as just over one-quarter (27%) of student on the North Shore say they have used one of the drugs mentioned in the survey within the past 12 months, compared to about one-third (33%) in 2010-2011.

There is also a decrease in the consumption of alcohol, as 67% of student on the North Shore mention they have drunk alcohol at least once in the past 12 months, compared to 72% in the last survey.

Use of cigarette

The use of cigarette is also a less present habit in 2016-2017. On the North Shore, the proportion of daily or occasional smokers went from 9% to 5% in all high school students. The decrease is statistically significant in girls (from 10% to 4%), but not in boys (from 9% to 7%).

Despite these improvements, the situation remains worrying according to the Public Health Director of the North Shore, Dr. Stéphane Trépanier. In fact, concerning cannabis use, drug use in general as well as consumption of alcohol, the data of the 2016-2017 QSHSS show that these behaviours are significantly more common in students of the North Shore than in those of the rest of Québec.

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Mental health

In 2016-2017, there is also a deterioration regarding certain mental health indicators addressed in the survey. Like the phenomenon noticed in all of Québec, compared to 2010-2011, there is a significant increase in the proportion of students on the North Shore at the high level of psychological distress (from 18% to 29%). In girls, this proportion went from 23% to 39%. In boys, in 2016-2017, 19% are at the high level of the index compared to 13% in 2010-2011.

The data show a significant increase in the proportion of students who report having already received at least one of the following diagnoses: anxiety, depression or eating disorder diagnosis confirmed by a physician or a health professional (North Shore: from 11% to 22%; all of Québec: from 12% to 20%). On the North Shore, 29% of girls mention they had such a diagnosis compared to 12% in 2010-2011. The increase is less pronounced in boys (from 9% to 14%).

In 2016-2017, one-third (33%) of boys in high schools of the North Shore mention they have received an ADHD diagnosis compared to 16% in 2010-2011. In girls, 21% would be affected compared to 10% in 2010-2011. There are also more students who say they have taken prescribed medication to calm down or to better concentrate (19%) than in 2010-2011 (9%). Both in girls and in boys, the ADHD diagnosis and the prescribed medication intake are significantly more common on the North Shore than in the rest of Québec.

Social adjustment and violence

Less high school students on the north Shore mention they have been victim of violence in school or on their way to school, or victim of cyberbullying during the year compared to the previous survey (33% compared to 37%). In return, there is a significant increase of the violence experienced by students in a love relationship over the same period of time. In fact, 40% of them say they experienced at least one episode of physical, psychological or sexual violence from their partner compared to 33% in 2010-2011. This increase is observed in girls (from 39% to 48%) as well as in boys (from 27% to 32%).

“This survey contains a wealth of relevant information on the health status and lifestyle habits of high school students on the North Shore. The data collected will be useful to elaborate, improve and follow up the programs intended for youth”, concludes Dr. Trépanier. For further details about the QHSHSS, visit www.qhshss.stat.gouv.qc.ca.

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