

Top reasons for Emergency Department visits for First Nations in Alberta

Age-standardized emergency department visit rates by First Nations status and reason for visit, 2010-2014

Emergency department (ED) visits are an important indicator of health status and healthcare utilization.¹ In this edition of *First Nations – Health Trends Alberta*,² we report the age-rural standardized ED visit rates and the most common reasons for ED visits among First Nations (FN) and non-FNs in Alberta for the five-year period from 2010 to 2014.

All reported rates are adjusted for age and rurality. Adjustments are made for rurality of residence (i.e. urban vs. rural) because residents living in rural areas typically utilize EDs differently than those living in urban settings, and since the proportion of First Nations living in rural areas is significantly higher than non-First Nations Albertans (in 2015, 51 per cent of First Nations Albertans resided in rural areas, compared to 20 per cent of non-First Nations Albertans).

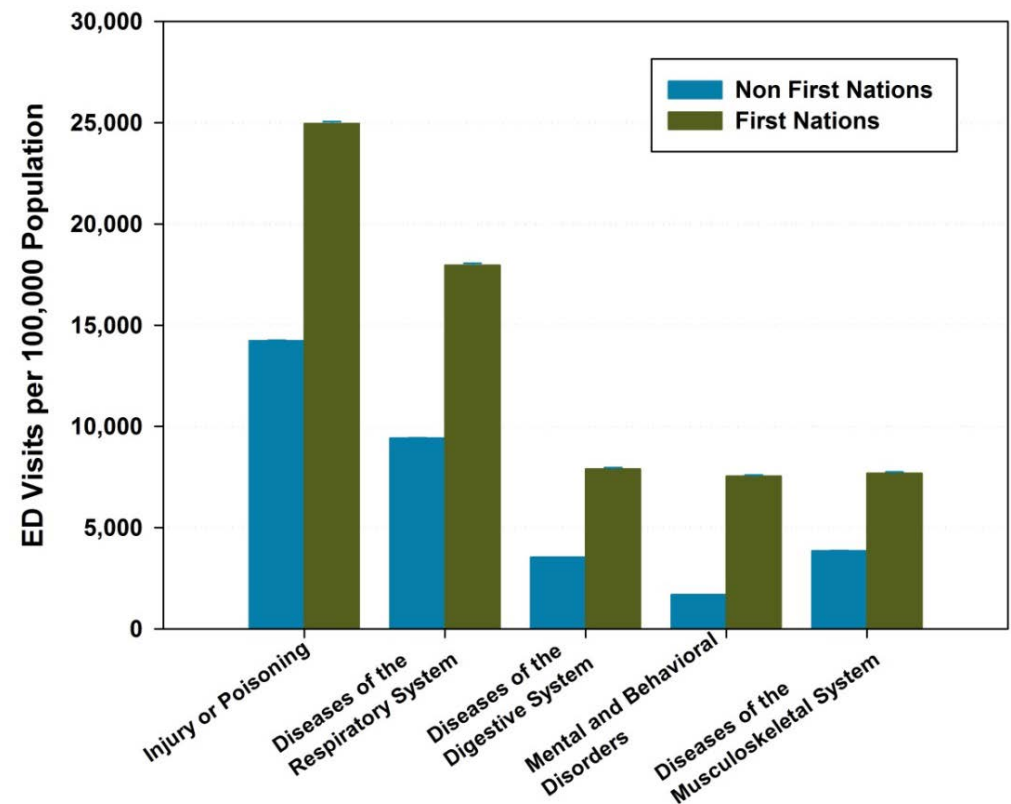
ED visit rates among First Nations are nearly double those seen in non-First Nations

Overall, ED visit rates for First Nations were almost double those seen among non-First Nations; 137,852 and 70,702 per 100,000 population, respectively.

The most common reasons for ED visits in both FNs and non-FNs in Alberta were those categorized as ‘injury or poisoning’, followed by ‘diseases of the respiratory system’. For FNs, the most commonly reported reason for visits within each of these categories were open wound of the head and acute upper respiratory infections, respectively.

The remaining top reasons for visits to the ED by FNs included those categorized as diseases of the digestive system, mental and behavioral disorders, and disease of the musculoskeletal system.

In all categories, rates were higher for FNs compared to their non-FNs counterparts: rates in all categories were close to two times higher in FNs compared to non-FNs, with the exception of mental or behavioural disorders, where rates were 4.5 times higher for FNs.



¹ CIHI(2016), Emergency Department Visits in 2014–2015

² This is the 7th in a series of First Nations-specific Health Trends compiled in collaboration by Alberta Health and the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC). To suggest future topics, please contact the AFNIGC (communications@afnigc.ca; 403-539-5775).