

Q & A

1. What is SAVY?

SAVY is an abbreviation for the Survey Assessment of Vietnamese Youth. The survey is the result of extensive investment and partnership building between the Vietnamese Government (Ministry of Health and the General Statistics Office) and United Nations Agencies - the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Further technical support has been provided by the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. SAVY is the first ever national survey on Vietnamese youth aged between 14 and 25 years.

2. Why conduct a survey like SAVY?

The survey was designed to assess education, employment, health and reproductive behaviour and other development issues of adolescent and young people including HIV/AIDS, substance use, injuries and violence. SAVY also explored young people's perceptions and attitudes as well as future expectations. This information will then be supplied to the government and other relevant organizations for use in future programmes to promote the healthy development of Vietnamese youth.

3. Who participated in the survey?

7,584 young people aged between 14 and 25 years, married and unmarried from ethnic, rural and urban areas of 42 provinces across the country participated in SAVY.

4. Who was not included in SAVY?

The SAVY sample did not include Vietnamese youth not living with their families nor those living in military barracks, social protection centers, dormitories, re-education centers and drug treatment centers. These groups will be included in future surveys.

5. How did SAVY gather information?

The SAVY survey was conducted between October 2003 and January 2004. The survey method used a questionnaire including a face-to-face interview and a self-administered anonymous section. The latter included sensitive questions that young people preferred to answer in private. The interview took place in public and communal place without the presence of parents.

6. What are the most important issues for young people?

Employment opportunities and having a job are most important, followed by access to education and family support.

7. What is the average educational level of young people?

Nearly half of young people in the survey (49.7%) had completed lower secondary level. 23.7% young

people complete upper secondary and one in 20 have a bachelor degree.

8. What are the major reasons for not attending school?

The main reason young people did not attend school or dropped out of school early were: *"can't afford school fees or expenses"*; *"have to work for my family"*, poor academic progress and *"don't want to go to school"*.

9. Do young people in rural and ethnic areas have the same opportunities to attend school?

Average education levels of rural young people are lower than their friends in the cities. 19% of ethnic minority young females did not go to school compared with 2% of their Kinh counterparts.

10. Is the current school curriculum too heavy?

While there is an extremely high percentage of private tutoring outside of school hours (70%) reported, three quarters of participants did not think that the current school curriculum is too heavy, which is a surprising finding of SAVY.

11. How common is vocational training?

Around 19% of young people reported some form of job training; most of them from urban areas.

12. When do young people start working?

For those young people who had worked for pay, most were 16.5 years old when they started their first paid job.

13. What is the average age for the first sexual experience?

In Viet Nam the average age for one's first sexual experience is 19.6 years. Nearly 80% young people marry before their first sex.

14. What do young people think about pre-marital sex?

A very small percentage of participants (7.6%) reported premarital sex, and amongst these, many more young men (11.1%) than young women (4%). Around 1 in 3 urban single men aged 22-25 and 1 in 4 similar aged rural single men reported to be sexually active. 22.2% of married people reported premarital sex. It is more common among ethnic minority groups with 39.8% of males and 26.1% of females reporting premarital sex. The majority of respondents are not accepting of the practice of premarital sex and three-quarters said that they would wait until they were married before having sex. 25-30% of young people are accepting of premarital sex if both partners are willing, if the two partners are about to get married and if pregnancy can be prevented.

15. Use of commercial sex workers?

Of the male respondents 5.3% reported having sex with a sex worker. This is 21.5% of sexually active

single males and 1% of the married men.

16. Condom use with sex workers?

Young men having sex with sex workers reported very high condom use (93.2%).

17. What do young people think about commercial sex?

Not all sex work is perceived in the same way. While many young people view sex work negatively, their responses indicate an increasing degree of tolerance depending upon the circumstance and nature of the sex work. For example, 43.4% agreed with the perception that commercial sex is bad but some people must do it due to their circumstances. 38.7% of respondents agree that whether commercial sex is bad or not depends on individual perceptions.

18. What are young people's views on homosexuality?

The majority (60%) of young people are aware of homosexuality but a very high and significant percentage said that they would not accept a homosexual as a friend.

19. How many people participating in the SAVY survey were married?

A small proportion (15.8%) of young people in the survey were married with twice as many young women than men and more rural than urban.

20. Where do young people get their information about reproductive and sexual health?

Mass media was reported to be the most common information source for young people on reproductive health, with television heading the list. Professionals were the next highest category of information sources, while younger respondents in school were most likely to receive information from their teachers.

21. How good is awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS?

97% of young people have heard about HIV/AIDS. However, still 1/4 of those who never went to school know nothing about HIV/AIDS. Despite very high awareness, level of knowledge is not as high. About 15% of young people still wrongly believe that a person who looks healthy cannot have HIV. This incorrect belief is as high as 35% among ethnic minority young people.

22. How common is smoking among young people?

A small 1.2% of females compared with 43.6% of males reported having smoked at some time. Smoking increases with age with about 20% of males aged 14-17, 60% of the 18-21 year old males and 75% of the 22-25 male age group ever having smoked. The average age to start smoking is 17 years.

23. What is the major reason for smoking?

Most young people who smoke report to have friends that smoke. All young people reported that

cigarettes are extremely easy to obtain. The majority of boys that smoke also had fathers that smoked.

24. Is drinking alcohol widely accepted in Vietnam?

Drinking seems to have become more acceptable within the community including for young people. 69% of young males and 28% of young females reported having had at least one glass of beer or other alcohol. The majority of young people report that alcohol is very easy to obtain in the community.

25. How many have ever been drunk?

39.7% of males and 8.5% of females reported to have been drunk at least once. Overall, though, the results of the survey suggest that young people are using alcohol in moderation or responsibly. A small number of young men reported more risky drinking behaviour like getting drunk regularly. An interesting finding is that 16.7% of the respondents reported that their fathers have alcohol use problems.

26. How many young people have ridden a motorbike?

More than half of the young people in the SAVY sample had ridden a motorbike. This is higher in males than females, and higher in urban than rural areas.

27. How many wear a helmet?

Only 26.2% of young people wear helmets when driving or as a passenger on a motorbike.

28. What are the major reasons for not wearing a helmet?

Major reasons for not wearing a helmet are discomfort, inconvenience of storage and impairment to vision.

29. What are young people's expectations for the future?

SAVY indicates that young Vietnamese people have a positive outlook toward the future, have high expectations, value themselves and feel valued by family.

30. Do young people expect a better life than their parents?

87.5 % of young people expect a better life than their parents.

31. What do young people think the government should do for them?

Most young people look to the government to provide increased employment opportunities (40.5%), followed by more educational opportunities and further improvement in health services.