

# Executive Summary: CDIS 2009 Annual Update

The 2010 Maamuu Nakaahehtau (“Together, let’s prevent it”) campaign in Eeyou Istchee seeks to bring everyone together to prevent diabetes and obesity, and to make our communities safer and healthier. It emphasizes that all groups—political leaders, teachers, restaurant owners, religious leaders, parents, healers, health care workers—should work towards these goals. This update shows the numbers that inspired the campaign.

## High diabetes rates, especially in women

As of the end of 2009, a total of 1,910 Cree, 1,898 of them adults (age 20 and over), had been diagnosed with diabetes in Eeyou Istchee. More than one Cree adult in five now has diabetes (21.4%). This is almost four times the diabetes rate in the general population of Québec.

Diabetes continues to affect more Cree women than men (25.2% of adult women vs. 17.5% of adult men). The higher rates in women may be due to one or a combination of several factors. As a group, Cree women are more likely than men to:

- ◆ be obese;
- ◆ become overweight at a younger age;
- ◆ be less physically active.

Cree women tend to gain excessive weight during pregnancy and have high rates of gestational diabetes, which puts them at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes in later years. This high rate of diabetes in Cree women—especially those who are still in their childbearing years—is alarming. Babies born to women who have diabetes during pregnancy (either gestational diabetes or Type 2 diabetes) are at much higher risk of becoming obese during childhood and developing diabetes at a young age.

**The high diabetes rate in women is alarming.**

Copies of this broadsheet may be found at:  
<http://www.creehealth.org>

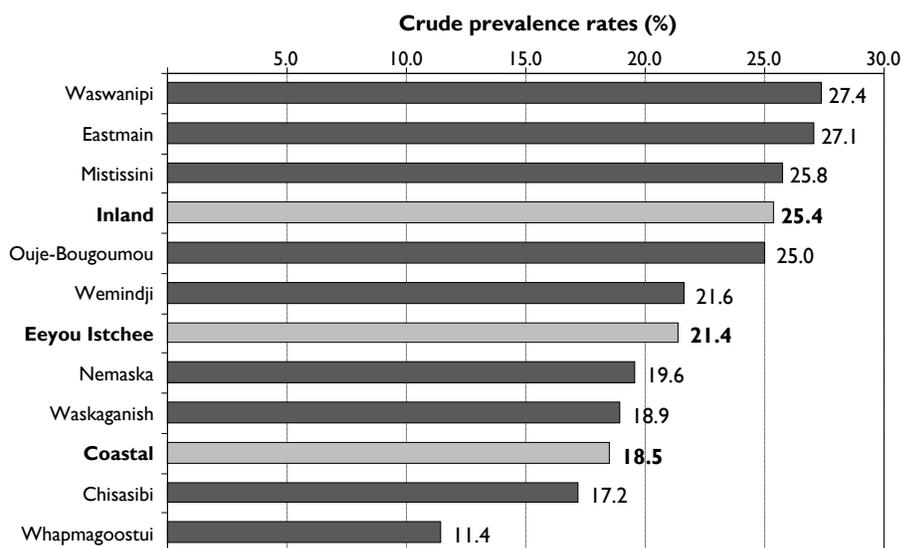


## Variations in diabetes rates across Eeyou Istchee

Diabetes rates vary between the communities (Figure 1 and Table 1). As in previous years, the figures for 2009 generally show higher rates for the inland communities than for the coastal ones: 25.4% vs. 18.5%.

FIGURE 1: DIABETES PREVALENCE (%) BY REGION AND COMMUNITY

Cree population 20 years old and older, Eeyou Istchee, December 31, 2009



Sources: - CDIS, September 28, 2010 extraction  
- MHSS, James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement Cree beneficiary list, December 31, 2009

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF EYEOUCH WITH DIABETES, BY COMMUNITY AND GENDER  
Adults 20 and over, December 31, 2009,

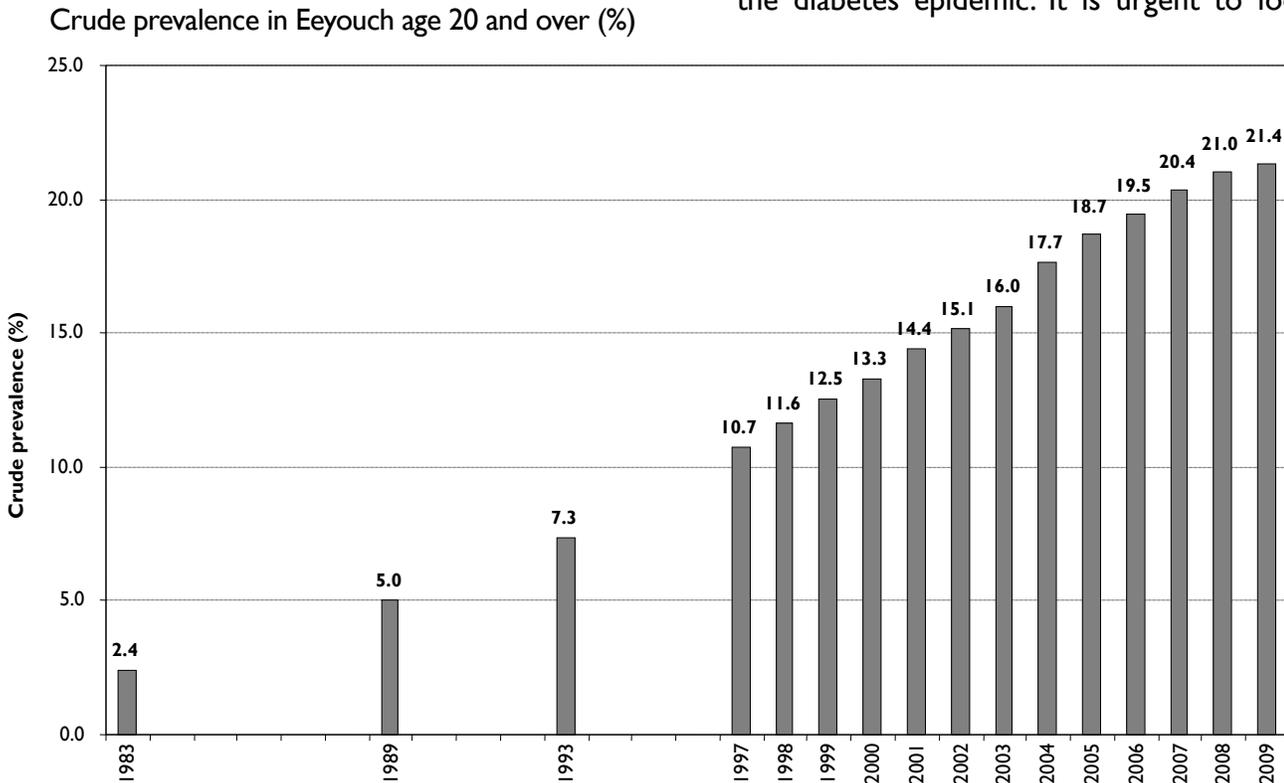
Community	Females	Males	Total
Chisasibi	246	159	405
Eastmain	62	44	106
Mistissini	287	211	498
Nemaska	45	36	81
Oujé-Bougoumou	60	40	100
Waskaganish	142	81	223
Waswanipi	143	110	253
Wemindji	108	71	179
Whapmagoostui	34	19	53
<b>Eeyou Istchee</b>	<b>1,127</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>1,898</b>

Sources: - CDIS, September 28, 2010 extraction  
- MHSS, James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement Cree beneficiary list, December 31, 2009 population

## Rising diabetes rates over time

The number of people with diabetes in Eeyou Istchee continues to rise. In 1983, 2.4% of Eeyouch had diabetes. This has increased to 21.4% in 2009 (Figure 2). In the past 3 years (2007-2009), 339 Cree adults were newly diagnosed with diabetes.

FIGURE 2: DIABETES RATES 1983 TO 2009



## Younger ages at diagnosis

Cree people are being diagnosed with diabetes at a younger age. In 1989, the average age at diagnosis was 48 years; in 2009, it was 41 years. This is approximately 20 years younger than the age people get diagnosed with diabetes in the rest of Quebec. Almost half the Eeyouch who are now living with diabetes (46.8%) were diagnosed before they reached age 40. In the rest of Quebec it is very rare for people to be diagnosed with diabetes before the age of 40. Since diabetes is a lifelong condition, those who have it need to take care of their health to prevent complications and live a long, healthy life. If young people do not control their diabetes, they are likely to develop complications at an early age. This poses a serious threat to health in Eeyou Istchee.

Lastly, diabetes is a relatively new disease in the region. More than half the Eeyouch with diabetes (61.0%) have been diagnosed in the past 10 years and many of them are relatively young. Since the risk of complications increases with age, many of these people will be at a

higher risk as they continue living with their diabetes. This has important implications for health services in the region.

## A call to action

Taken together, these statistics show the importance of mobilizing the communities to halt or slow down the diabetes epidemic. It is urgent to focus on the

things that can be changed, including obesity and lack of physical activity. It is especially important to reach children, youth, and women of childbearing age.

*It is urgent to focus on obesity and physical activity.*

## Mobilizing the region through the Maamuu Nakaahettaau campaign

On August 11, 2010 the General Assembly of the Grand Council/CRA passed Resolution 13, endorsing the Maamuu Nakaahettaau approach. When communities are ready and request support, the Public Health Department of the Cree Health Board will help to organize health summits in every community to kick-start the implementation of healthy public policies. These will be positive, action-oriented meetings that will identify things that are working well and build on them. With the leadership of Chief and Council, this campaign began in Eastmain in November 2010. It will continue in other communities throughout next year.