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Survey highlights differences in inner-city, suburban life

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A survey into quality of life in Winnipeg has found deep differences between the city's inner-city and suburban neighbourhoods — and some of the differences surprised even the researchers.

The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy released the survey results Thursday afternoon at Central Park in downtown Winnipeg.

Researchers contacted more than 1,100 randomly selected Winnipeggers across the city by telephone to ask 69 questions related to health and quality of life issues in 2002 and 2003.

People surveyed in the inner-city neighbourhoods said they didn't feel as safe from crime as their suburban counterparts.

Inner-city residents also said they were less healthy than those in other areas of the city; fewer people in the inner city rated their health as excellent or very good.

But study co-ordinator Shirley Forsyth was surprised to learn the rate of premature mortality — defined as deaths before age 75 — was much higher for inner-city residents than for suburban residents.

The rate of premature mortality for people in downtown and West Broadway areas was 7.25 per 1,000 — more than three times the rate of 2.22 per 1,000 found in newer suburban residential areas.

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"Five more will die in a year [per 1,000] in the inner city than will in the outer edge," Forsyth said Thursday.

"I suppose one should know that intuitively, but I was still surprised to hear that, because I often think of Winnipeg as being equal."

Other key findings in the study:

- Inner city residents also said schools, child care and adult recreation services were less available than people in suburban areas.
- While 62 per cent of people living in outer suburbs rated their parks as being in excellent or very good condition, only 16 per cent of core-area residents said the same about their parks.
- About half of core-area respondents said there were adults in their neighbourhood to watch for the safety of local children, compared with 90 per cent of suburban respondents.

More than 20 community and government groups were involved in the survey project. The surveys are available to the public at the city's public libraries and on the [SEED Winnipeg website](#) .

The study will be used to examine ways governments and community groups can tailor programs to meet the needs of specific neighbourhoods.

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