

MORALITY

Canadians open-minded on relationships and sexual behaviour, but not drugs

Most see abortion, euthanasia and stem-cell research as morally acceptable.

[VANCOUVER – Dec. 20, 2007] – People in Canada have generally liberal views on a wide range of social practices, a new Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In terms of relationships, the online survey of a representative national sample found that a vast majority of Canadians (81%) sees pre-marital sex as being morally acceptable, while 77 per cent feel the same way about having a baby outside marriage, and 83 per cent present no moral objection to divorce.

Fifty-nine per cent of respondents also believe sexual relations between people of the same sex should not be considered immoral.

However, Canadians are less tolerant about cheating. Three-in-four respondents (76%) believe it is immoral for married men or women to have an affair. An overwhelming 84 per cent think polygamy—whereby one husband has more than one wife at the same time—is also morally wrong.

In topics that deal with science and health, the poll found that at least 61 per cent of respondents think abortion and doctor-assisted suicide are morally acceptable practices. Almost two-thirds (64%) feel the same way about medical research with stem cells obtained from human embryos. Almost all respondents (93%) have no moral qualm with contraception methods.

Cloning, however, is a whole different story. More than half of respondents (56%) think cloning animals is morally wrong, and the number is much higher (78%) when it comes to cloning human beings.

KEY FINDINGS

- » **Abortion and euthanasia morally acceptable for at least 61%**
- » **93% accept contraception methods**
- » **77% see no moral wrongdoing in having a baby outside marriage**
- » **Pre-marital sex OK for 81%**
- » **76% think married women or men having an affair is morally wrong**
- » **59% believe same-sex relations are morally acceptable**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From October 11 to 12, 2007, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,004 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 %, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

On animal rights, Canadians are clearly divided. While 47 per cent of respondents think medical testing on animals is morally acceptable, 47 per cent disagree. As for buying and wearing clothing made of animal fur, a majority (51%) takes no issue with it, but 36 per cent do.

The survey also found that most Canadians (61%) regard gambling as morally acceptable. On the contrary, the use of illegal drugs is condemned by the majority (68%) along with suicide (62%), prostitution (55%) and pornography (54%). Pedophilia is seen as morally acceptable by only one per cent of respondents.

The opinions of men and women differ significantly. Most notably, more men (64%) than women (58%) think abortion is morally acceptable. Conversely, more women (88%) than men (78%) express no moral objections to divorce. A wider gender gap is found in the acceptance of medical testing on animals (men: 57%, women: 27%); pornography (men: 51%, women: 25%), and prostitution (men: 48%, women: 25%).

As for regional differences, more people in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (73%), and Quebec (69%), think euthanasia is morally acceptable than anywhere else in Canada. Alberta holds the lowest number of people (69%) who have no issue with divorce—and also the highest number of respondents who think pornography is morally acceptable (43%). In British Columbia, almost two-in-five respondents (38%) decry euthanasia.

Conservative and Conservative-leaning voters are evidently the most comfortable with wearing and buying fur clothing (64%), imposing the death penalty (61%), and performing medical tests on animals (55%). They also hold the highest number of opponents to divorce (18%), euthanasia (33%), having a baby outside marriage (27%), same-sex relations (43%), suicide (71%), and the use of illegal drugs (75%).

Liberal and Liberal-leaning voters are more inclined to see animal cloning (34%) and human cloning (16%) as morally acceptable; and to consider spouses cheating on each other as morally wrong (81%). Liberals also condemn the use of illegal drugs (71%).

What is morally acceptable?

Q. Regardless of whether or not you think each of the following issues should be legal, please indicate whether you personally believe they are morally acceptable or morally wrong.

(Morally acceptable responses listed in this table).

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Abortion	61%	61%	60%	59%	57%	65%	67%	64%	58%
Buying and wearing clothing made of animal fur	51%	45%	53%	66%	48%	51%	58%	61%	41%
Cloning animals	29%	26%	31%	41%	30%	24%	28%	42%	17%
Cloning humans	11%	9%	18%	16%	12%	7%	17%	16%	7%
Contraception	93%	94%	97%	88%	91%	94%	98%	93%	94%
The death penalty	47%	48%	47%	51%	45%	48%	46%	49%	45%
Divorce	83%	79%	69%	89%	82%	89%	86%	78%	88%
Doctor-assisted suicide	62%	54%	64%	73%	57%	69%	65%	64%	61%
Gambling	61%	69%	51%	73%	65%	50%	69%	66%	57%
Having a baby outside of marriage	77%	65%	79%	72%	73%	89%	77%	74%	80%

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What is morally acceptable?

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(Morally acceptable responses listed in this table).

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Married men and/or women having an affair	17%	10%	10%	14%	10%	35%	10%	21%	14%
Medical research using stem cells obtained from human embryos	64%	67%	67%	66%	63%	59%	70%	69%	59%
Medical testing on animals	40%	42%	42%	47%	37%	41%	44%	55%	27%
Pedophilia	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Polygamy, when one husband has more than one wife at the same time	10%	5%	11%	14%	9%	9%	16%	14%	5%
Pornography	38%	39%	43%	32%	38%	35%	41%	51%	25%
Prostitution	36%	26%	36%	33%	34%	42%	40%	48%	25%
Sexual relations between an unmarried man and woman	81%	73%	74%	82%	77%	90%	90%	82%	80%
Sexual relations between two people of the same sex	59%	59%	61%	61%	51%	69%	60%	57%	61%
Suicide	25%	16%	29%	34%	23%	26%	27%	26%	23%
Using illegal drugs	20%	11%	18%	25%	20%	24%	21%	24%	17%

What is morally wrong?

Q. Regardless of whether or not you think each of the following issues should be legal, please indicate whether you personally believe they are morally acceptable or morally wrong.

(Morally wrong responses listed in this table).

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Abortion	27%	28%	28%	26%	31%	25%	20%	28%	27%
Buying and wearing clothing made of animal fur	36%	45%	25%	23%	37%	40%	31%	29%	43%
Cloning animals	56%	60%	52%	40%	51%	66%	58%	44%	68%
Cloning humans	78%	79%	65%	69%	78%	87%	74%	74%	82%
Contraception	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%	5%	0%	3%	3%
The death penalty	41%	39%	38%	36%	40%	44%	42%	44%	38%
Divorce	12%	16%	21%	7%	13%	8%	11%	17%	8%
Doctor-assisted suicide	25%	38%	27%	14%	28%	19%	21%	25%	26%
Gambling	28%	25%	31%	25%	22%	39%	21%	28%	28%
Having a baby outside of marriage	17%	30%	17%	15%	18%	8%	20%	20%	14%

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What is morally wrong?

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(Morally wrong responses listed in this table).

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Married men and/or women having an affair	76%	85%	89%	79%	79%	58%	84%	74%	78%
Medical research using stem cells obtained from human embryos	21%	17%	17%	11%	22%	29%	12%	19%	23%
Medical testing on animals	47%	48%	41%	36%	48%	49%	52%	35%	59%
Pedophilia	91%	90%	88%	83%	88%	99%	88%	90%	91%
Polygamy, when one husband has more than one wife at the same time	84%	88%	79%	79%	83%	86%	82%	79%	88%
Pornography	54%	56%	40%	60%	53%	57%	54%	40%	66%
Prostitution	55%	67%	51%	59%	55%	49%	51%	44%	65%
Sexual relations between an unmarried man and woman	15%	26%	14%	16%	18%	8%	8%	16%	14%
Sexual relations between two people of the same sex	33%	33%	29%	30%	38%	28%	29%	36%	29%
Suicide	62%	72%	58%	46%	62%	65%	54%	60%	64%
Using illegal drugs	68%	85%	60%	52%	70%	67%	62%	66%	70%

What is morally acceptable?

Q. Regardless of whether or not you think each of the following issues should be legal, please indicate whether you personally believe they are morally acceptable or morally wrong.

(Morally acceptable responses listed in this table).

	Will Vote in Next Federal Election				
	CON	LIB	NDP	BQ	GRN
Abortion	61%	61%	69%	60%	75%
Buying and wearing clothing made of animal fur	64%	53%	46%	38%	34%
Cloning animals	26%	34%	29%	23%	29%
Cloning humans	7%	16%	10%	0%	15%
Contraception	94%	91%	96%	99%	98%
The death penalty	61%	41%	39%	25%	22%
Divorce	77%	88%	91%	90%	94%
Doctor-assisted suicide	52%	66%	66%	78%	77%
Gambling	63%	66%	55%	47%	68%
Having a baby outside of marriage	65%	84%	84%	91%	91%

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(Morally acceptable responses listed in this table).

	Will Vote in Next Federal Election				
	CON	LIB	NDP	BQ	GRN
Married men and/or women having an affair	15%	14%	15%	29%	14%
Medical research using stem cells obtained from human embryos	60%	71%	67%	56%	77%
Medical testing on animals	55%	39%	41%	42%	18%
Pedophilia	1%	0%	1%	4%	0%
Polygamy, when one husband has more than one wife at the same time	9%	10%	13%	6%	13%
Pornography	37%	37%	33%	32%	59%
Prostitution	36%	39%	42%	40%	34%
Sexual relations between an unmarried man and woman	71%	87%	82%	89%	93%
Sexual relations between two people of the same sex	49%	63%	67%	75%	81%
Suicide	15%	28%	31%	34%	32%
Using illegal drugs	16%	22%	23%	22%	24%

What is morally wrong?					
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Buying and wearing clothing made of animal fur	23%	37%	38%	55%	54%
Cloning animals	59%	53%	55%	72%	51%
Cloning humans	83%	77%	79%	89%	70%
Contraception	2%	4%	0%	1%	2%
The death penalty	23%	48%	54%	66%	68%
Divorce	18%	7%	8%	3%	5%
Doctor-assisted suicide	33%	19%	23%	10%	20%
Gambling	29%	24%	35%	42%	15%
Having a baby outside of marriage	27%	11%	10%	5%	7%

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(Morally wrong responses listed in this table).					
	Will Vote in Next Federal Election				
	CON	LIB	NDP	BQ	GRN
Married men and/or women having an affair	76%	81%	76%	61%	79%
Medical research using stem cells obtained from human embryos	25%	17%	17%	30%	16%
Medical testing on animals	33%	46%	53%	49%	70%
Pedophilia	93%	93%	89%	96%	95%
Polygamy, when one husband has more than one wife at the same time	86%	83%	83%	88%	74%
Pornography	57%	57%	58%	53%	33%
Prostitution	58%	51%	50%	51%	50%
Sexual relations between an unmarried man and woman	25%	10%	12%	7%	5%
Sexual relations between two people of the same sex	43%	29%	22%	22%	14%
Suicide	71%	59%	58%	60%	51%
Using illegal drugs	75%	71%	66%	65%	54%

Angus Reid Strategies is a North American full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995. Located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal, our team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

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Ontario: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=129>

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More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
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