

Canadian Community Health Survey, 2015

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Perceived mental health is an important indicator of overall well-being and provides a general indication of the population suffering from some form of mental disorder, mental or emotional problems, or distress. In 2015, almost three-quarters (72.4%) of Canadians aged 12 or older reported that their mental health was excellent or very good. An additional 21.7% of Canadians reported their mental health was good, while 5.9% said that their mental health was fair or poor.

New data from the 2015 Canadian Community Health Survey provide insight into how Canadians perceive various aspects of their own well-being including mental health, life satisfaction and daily life stress.

The majority of Canadians are satisfied with their lives

In terms of overall life satisfaction, the vast majority of Canadians (93.2%) reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their life. Young males (97.8%) and females (97.6%) aged 12 to 17 were the most likely to report being satisfied or very satisfied with their life, while those aged 65 and older reported a lower level of life satisfaction at 89.7% for both males and females.

Higher percentage of females report a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder

Overall, 3.7 million or 12.2% of Canadians aged 12 and older reported that they had been diagnosed with either a mood disorder (such as depression, bipolar disorder, mania or dysthymia) or an anxiety disorder (such as phobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder or a panic disorder) by a health professional.

A higher percentage of females (15.3%) than males (9.1%) reported having a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder. Among males, those aged 65 or older were the least likely to have reported a diagnosis of either disorder (6.9%). Among females, those aged 12 to 17 (11.9%) and those aged 65 or older (11.7%) were the least likely to report a mood or anxiety disorder.

Of the 3.7 million Canadians with either condition, almost 1.1 million reported being diagnosed with both a mood and an anxiety disorder.

Those with anxiety disorders are more likely to experience stress

Canadians aged 12 or older with a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder were more than twice as likely to say they experienced daily stress. Among this population, 40.7% reported that most of their days were quite a bit or extremely stressful, compared with 18.7% of those who did not have a mood or anxiety disorder.

One in five Canadians with a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder reported using illicit drugs in the past year (20.1%). Illicit drug use was more than twice as likely among those diagnosed with a mood or anxiety disorder than among those without either disorder (8.8%).

Those with a mood or anxiety disorder less likely to work

Canadians aged 15 to 65 who had either a mood or anxiety disorder were much less likely to work at a job or business in the week prior to the interview. Over half (52.6%) of those who reported having a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder worked at a job or business in the past week, compared with 70.2% of those without a mood or anxiety disorder.

When asked about being able to manage responsibilities in their daily life, 70.3% of Canadians aged 15 to 65 with a mood or anxiety disorder felt that they could manage these responsibilities almost every day. In comparison, among Canadians who did not suffer from one of these conditions, 90.6% felt they could manage responsibilities in their daily life.



Canadians with long-term illness more likely to report stressful days

How Canadians felt about the level of stress in their day to day life differed based on their main activities. Canadians who were retired were among the least likely to feel that their days were extremely or quite a bit stressful. Canadians suffering from a long-term illness (41.3%) or those working at a paid job or business (25.4%) were more likely to report stressful days.

In 2015, 6.5 million or 21.4% of Canadians felt that most of their days were extremely or quite a bit stressful. Canadians aged 35 to 49 were the most likely to have stressful days (28.7%), while youth aged 12 to 17 and adults aged 65 or older were the least likely (approximately 12% for both age groups).

The proportion of residents who reported that most of their days were extremely or quite a bit stressful was higher than national average (21.4%) in Quebec (24.2%). The proportion was lower than the national average in Newfoundland and Labrador (13.5%), Prince Edward Island (14.5%), Nova Scotia (17.5%), Manitoba (18.7%) and Saskatchewan (18.7%).

Over 1 in 10 Canadians contemplated suicide in their lifetime

About 3.4 million or 12.1% of Canadians aged 15 or older reported that they have seriously contemplated suicide in their lifetime, with females (13.6%) slightly more likely than males (10.5%) to have contemplated suicide. Suicidal thoughts were also more prevalent among First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit (25.4%) than in the non-Aboriginal population (11.7%).

In 2015, the likelihood of Canadians having contemplated suicide in the past 12 months varied by level of household income. In households with an income under \$20,000, 5.8% of Canadians aged 15 or older had contemplated suicide in the past 12 months. In contrast, when household income was over \$70,000, 1.7% had suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months.

Of the 3.4 million people who have ever contemplated suicide, 26.5% (or 900,000 people) reported having actually attempted suicide at some point in their life. Among First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit who have ever contemplated suicide, 42.5% have also attempted suicide in their lifetime

Females more likely to seek professional help for emotional or mental health than males

In 2015, 13.9% of Canadians aged 12 and older reported that they had seen or talked to a health professional about their emotional or mental health in the last 12 months. Of those who saw or talked to a health professional, about two-thirds were females and one-third were males.

Among those with a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder, females were more likely than were males to talk to a health professional about their emotional or mental health (59.7% compared with 50.0%).

When consulting a health care professional about their emotional or mental health, most Canadians saw a family doctor or general practitioner (56.8%). Canadians were less likely to see social workers (22.4%), psychologists (22.1%), psychiatrists (17.3%), nurses (5.1%) or other health care professionals (7.1%) about their mental health.

Note to readers

This article features analysis based on data from the 2015 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). The CCHS collects a wide range of self-reported information about the health of Canadians, factors determining their health and their use of health care services.

In 2012, CCHS began work on a major redesign project that was completed and implemented for the 2015 cycle. The objectives of the redesign were to review the sampling methodology, adopt a new sample frame, modernize the content and review the target population. Consultations were held with federal, provincial and territorial share partners, health region authorities and academics.

As a result of the redesign, the 2015 CCHS has a new collection strategy, is drawing the sample from two different frames and has undergone major content revisions. With all these factors taken together, caution should be taken when comparing data from previous cycles to data released for the 2015 cycle onwards.

Residents of Indian reserves are excluded from the survey's coverage, therefore the numbers reflect First Nations people living off reserve, Métis and Inuit. Other exclusions are health care institutions, some remote areas, and full-time members of the Canadian Forces.

The CCHS includes questions on multiple chronic health conditions including arthritis, asthma, high blood pressure and mood disorders. Respondents are asked about conditions that are expected to last or have already lasted six months or more and that have been diagnosed by a health professional.

In this article when two estimates are said to be different, this indicates that the difference was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level (p-value less than 5%).

Perceived mental health

Perceived mental health provides a general indication of the population suffering from some form of mental disorder, mental or emotional problems, or distress, not necessarily reflected in self-reported (physical) health.

Illicit drug use

Illicit drug use among Canadians is assessed in the CCHS by asking respondents if they have ever smoked any illicit drugs, snorted or sniffed them, took them orally, or used a needle to inject or be injected with a drug not prescribed by a doctor. If they had taken illicit drugs in any of these methods, they were asked about having used them in the past 12 months.

Available in CANSIM: tables [105-0508](#), [105-0511](#) and [105-0514](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3226](#).

Additional products featuring the most recent results from the 2015 Canadian Community Health Survey are now available from our website. This includes the *Health Fact Sheets (82-625-X)*: "[Chronic conditions, 2015](#)", "[Diabetes, 2015](#)", "[Fruit and vegetable consumption, 2015](#)", "[Heavy drinking, 2015](#)", "[Life satisfaction, 2015](#)", "[Primary health care, 2015](#)", "[Smoking, 2015](#)", and "[Healthy behaviours, 2015](#)".

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).