

COVID-19 mortality rates were higher for people living in apartments and larger households

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In Canada, physical distancing measures were implemented in public spaces starting mid-March 2020 given the risk of COVID-19 transmission when an infected person comes in close contact with others. However, physical distancing can be a challenge for individuals sharing the same living space, especially if the space is small or there are many people living in the same building.

A new study released today explores differences in the rate of mortality attributed to COVID-19 by the type of private dwelling where a person lived and the size of their household: "[People living in apartments and larger households were at higher risk of dying from COVID-19 during the first wave of the pandemic.](#)"

According to the study, age-standardized COVID-19 mortality rates were lower for people living in single detached homes compared with those living in apartments in Quebec and Ontario—the two provinces that were the most affected by COVID-19 during the first wave of the pandemic. For example, people living in Quebec in high-rise apartments had 2.3 times higher COVID-19 mortality rates than those living in single detached houses. Similarly, in Ontario the COVID-19 mortality rates were 1.9 times higher for those living in high-rise apartments.

People living in larger households were found to be more at risk of dying from COVID-19. In Quebec, the mortality rate was 1.4 times higher for those living in a household with five or more people compared with those living in a one-person household. In Ontario, a household of five people or more had 1.7 times higher COVID-19 mortality rates than one-person households.

Note to readers

This article is the first to use the integrated provisional COVID-19 death information of the Canadian Vital Statistics Death Database linked to the 2016 Census of Population (short form). More information on the linkage process and on the resulting death-linked analytic file is available upon request.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3233](#) and [3901](#).

The full article "[People living in apartments and larger households were at higher risk of dying from COVID-19 during the first wave of the pandemic](#)" is now available as part of the publication *StatCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada* ([45280001](#)).

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).

