

Sociodemographic profile of women living in communities at varying levels of remoteness

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Today, a new study looks at the sociodemographic profile of women and girls by the relative remoteness of the communities in which they live. The results show that there are large sociodemographic variations, such as with median age and family structure, as well as with characteristics, from one remoteness area category to another, including between remote and very remote areas.

Using data from the 2016 Census of Population and the updated Remoteness Index Classification, the report released today is the first of a series of four on the socioeconomic and sociodemographic profile of women living in communities at varying levels of remoteness. The Remoteness Index assigns a relative remoteness value to each census subdivision, based on proximity to census agglomerations as a proxy for service accessibility. This tool groups census subdivisions into five categories of relative remoteness: easily accessible; accessible; less accessible; remote; and very remote. These refined categories of remoteness have the potential to provide better differentiation, description and understanding of the very different realities of diverse communities across Canada.

This first report focuses specifically on the distribution and profile (such as age, family type and other characteristics such as Indigenous identity, immigration background and ethnocultural characteristics) of women and girls by the relative remoteness of their communities.

The results of the report show, for example, that while Canada's female population was aging, very remote areas had the youngest female population. The median age of the female population in the very remote areas was 30.9 years in 2016, compared with 41.3 years for Canada as a whole. Furthermore, these very remote areas also had the largest proportion of the female population aged 0 to 9 years: 18.8% of the female population in these communities were aged 0 to 9 years, compared with 10.9% at the national level. In fact, communities in very remote areas were the only ones with a positive labour force replacement ratio, i.e., the proportion of potential women and girl entrants in the labour market (those aged 15 to 24 years) was higher than the proportion of potential retirees (those aged 55 to 64 years).

Very remote areas also had the highest proportion of couples with three children or more (34.1% vs. 18.3% at the national level) and, at the same time, the highest percentage of lone-parent families of all areas (27.7% compared with 16.4% for the national average).

Representation of Indigenous women and girls increased with the remoteness of the communities and, in contrast, representation of immigrant women and girls, as well as women and girls designated as visible minorities, decreased with the remoteness of the communities.

Given these large differences in the sociodemographic characteristics of women and girls in communities with various levels of remoteness, further disaggregation of data by remoteness becomes essential to better understand the specific and very different realities of these diverse communities. As such, the disaggregation of data by remoteness is key to effective planning and to developing programs and policies directed at women and girls.



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

The report "[Portrait of Women by the Relative Remoteness of their Communities, Series 1: Sociodemographic Profile](#)," part of *Studies on Gender and Intersecting Identities* ([45200002](#)), is now available.

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).