Study: COVID-19 mortality by racialized groups and income, 2020

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Tuesday, August 30, 2022

Many countries have reported disparities in COVID-19 mortality for racialized populations. A new study released today presents an analysis of the age-standardized COVID-19 mortality rates for different racialized populations in Canada in 2020.

This *StatCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada* article, "COVID-19 mortality among racialized populations in Canada and its association with income," used the Canadian Census Health and Environmental Cohort 2016 linked to Canadian Vital Statistics - Death Database from 2016 to 2020 released today to the Research Data Centres. This study provides deeper insights into the impact of COVID-19 on the interaction between racialized populations and low-income status.

Black people living in low income were disproportionally at higher risk of dying from COVID-19

The COVID-19 mortality rate was significantly higher for racialized populations (31 deaths per 100,000 population) compared with the non-racialized and non-Indigenous population (22 deaths per 100,000 population). The analysis of COVID-19 mortality rates among specific racialized populations revealed that Black people had the highest COVID-19 mortality rate (49 deaths per 100,000 population), followed by South Asians (31 deaths per 100,000 population) and Chinese people (22 deaths per 100,000 population).

The study further analyzed the intersection between racialized groups and low-income status on the risk of dying due to COVID-19, while accounting for other factors known to be associated with COVID-19 (e.g., age, sex, type of dwelling and housing suitability). Results showed that living in low income did not significantly change the risk of dying due to COVID-19 for any of the racialized populations except for the Black population. Black people had the highest difference of COVID-19 mortality risk between those not living in low income and those living in low income.

The study findings align with other international research evidence on the relationship between ethnicity, socioeconomic disparities and health outcomes of COVID-19. These findings will be useful for policy makers and decision makers to better understand and combat the virus's indirect effects on racialized populations in Canada.

Note to readers

This article uses the Canadian Census Health and Environmental Cohort 2016 which links the long-form 2016 Census with the Canadian Vital Statistics - Death Database from 2016 to 2020. More information on access, the linkage process and the resulting de-identified death-linked analytical file is available upon request (infostats@statcan.gc.ca).

The term 'racialized population' is used to label the 'visible minority' concept from the census. 'Visible minority' refers to whether or not a person belongs to one of the visible minority groups defined by the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." 'Visible minority' is derived from the 'population group' variable available on the 2016 Census. 'Population group' refers to the population group or groups to which the person belongs, for example, White, South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean or Japanese.

In this article, only the three largest groups from the visible minority variable are analyzed (i.e., South Asian, Chinese, Black) due to sample size restrictions. People belonging to Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, Japanese, "Visible minority not included elsewhere," and "Multiple visible minorities" were combined into the category "Racialized population not included elsewhere." The 'non-racialized and non-Indigenous population' includes persons who were not considered to be members of a visible minority group but excludes persons who reported 'Yes' to the Aboriginal group question (Question 18 on the 2016 Census).

All the mortality rates presented in this analysis are age-standardized to the 2011 Census of Population for comparability reasons.

Further details about the data and other concepts used can be found in the article.

Statistics Canada · Statistique Canada

Canada

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers 3233 and 3901.

The full article "COVID-19 mortality among racialized populations in Canada and its association with income" 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; **infostats@statcan.gc.ca**) or Media Relations (**statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca**).