

# Health Reports, February 2023

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The February 2023 issue of *Health Reports* contains three articles.

## Mortality inequalities of Black adults in Canada

Mortality patterns of Black adults are different than those of White adults, according to a new study titled "[Mortality inequalities of Black adults in Canada](#)." This is the first study to estimate differences in mortality of Black adults on a national scale for a variety of causes of death.

From 2006 to 2019, the risk of dying from all causes combined was 25% lower for Black males and 22% lower for Black females compared with White males and females, respectively, after accounting for many social determinants of health, including region of birth, income and educational attainment.

In contrast, Black males and females had an increased risk of dying for some causes of death, compared with White males and females, after accounting for these same social determinants of health. For Black males, the risk of dying was elevated for HIV/AIDS (2.37 times higher), pancreatic cancer (1.42 times higher) and prostate cancer (1.19 times higher), compared with White males. Among Black females, the risk of dying was elevated for HIV/AIDS (6.05 times higher), mouth and oropharynx cancer (1.98 times higher), stomach cancer (1.56 times higher), endocrine disorders (1.48 times higher), and hypertensive heart disease (1.42 times higher), compared with White females.

By identifying different health outcomes by population group, the findings of this study are a step towards reducing inequities in health outcomes. Because the data are from before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not known how the pandemic affects these results. Recent research has found that the Black population was at increased risk of dying from COVID-19 in 2020.

## Links between different types of online digital media use and adolescent mental health

Among Canadian adolescents aged 12 to 17 in 2019, more frequent use of social media and video and instant messaging was associated with poorer general mental health, eating disorder symptoms, suicidal ideation and suicide attempt. The article "[Online digital media use and adolescent mental health](#)" reported that cybervictimization and sleep inadequacy may explain these associations: being online more often may put adolescents at risk for cybervictimization and inadequate sleep, which may in turn contribute to poorer mental health. After these factors were adjusted for, use of social media and video and instant messaging was still significantly associated with eating disorder symptoms, but not general mental health, suicidal ideation or suicide attempt.

Different associations emerged for online gaming. For boys, no significant associations were noted between online gaming and mental health. For girls, however, never engaging in online gaming was associated with lower odds of experiencing poorer general mental health and suicidality, a reduction in odds of about 40%. These associations were not explained by sleep adequacy or cybervictimization.

These data, collected as part of the Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth, predate the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research should examine how the associations between online digital media use and mental health may have changed, as adolescents are using online media at different frequencies, and for different purposes, in a post-COVID-19 world.

## Adolescents are less likely than children to self-report good or excellent health

The study "[Health Utilities Index Mark 3 scores for children and youth: Population norms for Canada based on cycles 5 \(2016 and 2017\) and 6 \(2018 and 2019\) of the Canadian Health Measures Survey](#)" is the first to provide utility score estimates based on a nationally representative sample of children and adolescents. Utility scores are an important tool for evaluating health-related quality of life. While more than half of Canadian children have a Health Utilities Index Mark 3 score indicating "perfect health," one-third of adolescents reported this perfect score.



The articles "[Mortality inequalities of Black adults in Canada](#)," "[Online digital media use and adolescent mental health](#)," and "[Health Utilities Index Mark 3 scores for children and youth: Population norms for Canada based on cycles 5 \(2016 and 2017\) and 6 \(2018 and 2019\) of the Canadian Health Measures Survey](#)" are now available in the February 2023 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (**82-003-X**).

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](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations ([statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca)).