

Health Reports: Disparities in exposure to residential greenness within urban Canada

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Living in a home surrounded by trees, gardens and natural vegetation, also called greenness, may be good for your health. Previous research has found that increased greenness near homes is associated with lower risk of premature death and lower levels of psychological distress.

Canadians do not all have equal exposure to greenness, particularly in urban areas. A new study, "[Ethnocultural and socioeconomic disparities in exposure to residential greenness within urban Canada](#)," released today in *Health Reports*, is the first to determine differences in urban residential exposure to greenness on a national scale.

Using satellite imagery, the study found lower residential greenness for those in lower-income households, recent immigrants, young adults, tenants and people belonging to groups designated as visible minorities.

However, an analysis of disaggregated data showed that ethnicity was a key factor in levels of exposure to greenness. While there was a tendency for greenness to increase along with household income, such as for South Asian, Black and Arab groups, ethnicity was sometimes more important than income. For example, people of Filipino ancestry in the highest income decile had lower exposure to greenness than the lowest-income White respondents.

The described inequalities in this study can be attributed to various historical, sociocultural, economic and demographic factors. For example, people of Filipino ancestry having less exposure to greenness may be explained, in part, by waves of migration to larger cities. Among immigrants, greenness generally increased over time since arrival in Canada, except among Chinese immigrants, for whom it remained consistently low.

Given the increasing evidence of an association between greenness and various positive health outcomes, these inequalities in residential greenness in urban Canada may represent an indirect mechanism by which health inequities are further perpetuated.

Note to readers

Estimates were based on the 2016 Census long-form questionnaire, using census weights. Postal codes reported on the census were used to attach neighbourhood deprivation and greenness estimates within a 500 m buffer.

The Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation is available from [Statistics Canada](#).

The article, "[Ethnocultural and socioeconomic disparities in exposure to residential greenness within urban Canada](#)," is now available in the May 2021 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 32, no. 5 ([82-003-X](#)).

This issue of *Health Reports* also contains the article, "[Gentrification, Urban Interventions and Equity \(GENUINE\): A map-based gentrification tool for Canadian metropolitan areas](#)."

To enquire about the article, "Ethnocultural and socioeconomic disparities in exposure to residential greenness within urban Canada," contact Lauren Pinault (lauren.pinault@canada.ca), Health Analysis Division.



To enquire about the article, "Gentrification, Urban Interventions and Equity (GENUINE): A map-based gentrification tool for Canadian metropolitan areas," contact Faislin Firth, (cfirth@sfu.ca), Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University.

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).