

Census in Brief

Centenarians in Canada

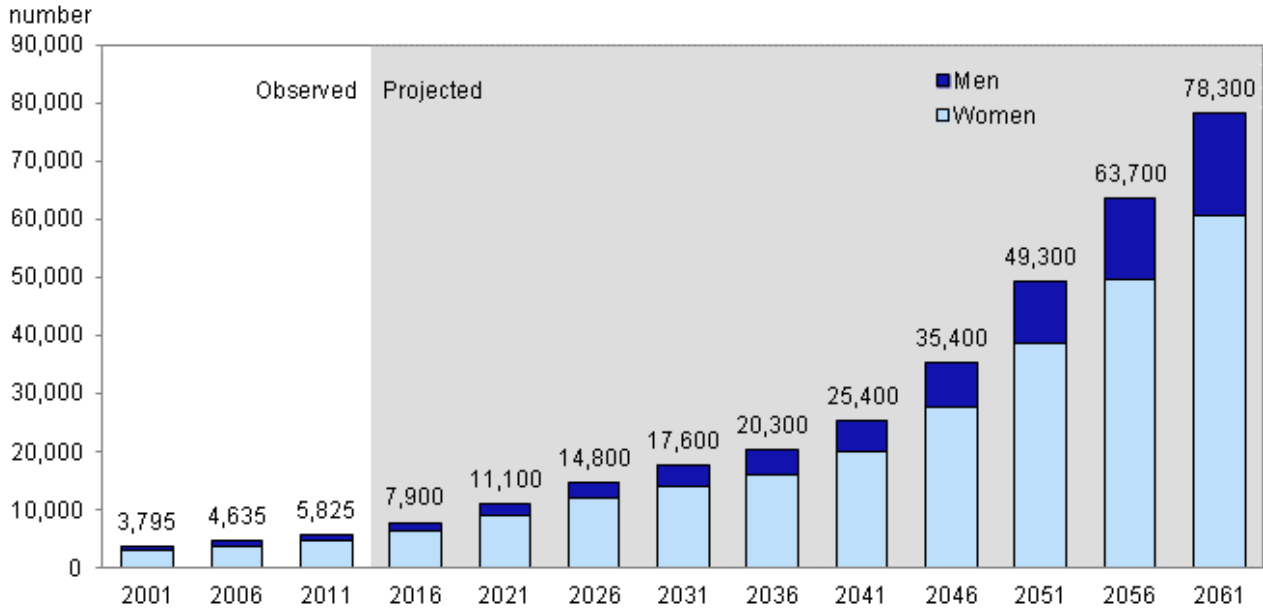


Age and sex, 2011 Census

Centenarians in Canada

As a result of gains in life expectancy, an increasing number of Canadians are reaching the age of 100. The 2011 Census enumerated 5,825 people aged 100 years and older, compared to 4,635 in 2006 and 3,795 in 2001 (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Number of centenarians by sex, Canada, 2001 to 2061



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001, 2006 and 2011, and Statistics Canada, 2010, *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2009 to 2036*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-520 (medium growth scenario), projection scenarios for Canada are available up to 2061.

Between 2006 and 2011, the rate of population growth for this age group was 25.7%, the second highest of all age groups among the Canadian population, after the 60 to 64 age group (+29.1%). The growth rate of the centenarian population has often been one of the highest of all age groups in the last 40 years.

Centenarians counted in the 2011 Census were born in 1911 or earlier, at a time when the Canadian population was close to five times smaller (7.2 million) than in 2011 (33.5 million). These people were young children at the time of the First World War. They likely entered the labour force and started a family during the Great Depression of the 1930s. They became older adults during the baby boom period (1946 to 1965), and most of them retired in the 1970s.

Among these cohorts, the average number of children per woman was more than 2.7; in comparison, for cohorts born after 1949, the average number of children is below 2.0.

In 2011, about 40% of all centenarians in Canada were exactly 100, while 6% were 105 or over. Mortality rates above age 100 are quite high; therefore, among those aged exactly 100, about 60% will reach the age of 101.

Recent Statistics Canada's population projections show that the number of centenarians will likely continue to rise. By 2031, it could reach more than 17,000 and by 2061, close to 80,000.¹ By that time, most cohorts of baby boomers will have reached 100.

In addition, life expectancy is likely to continue to rise in Canada over the next decades, increasing the chance for individuals to reach 100 years.

More women than men reach the age of 100

The 2011 Census counted 4,870 women and 955 men aged 100 and over. The corresponding sex ratio was about 500 women for every 100 men, the highest of all age groups. Among the Canadian population, there were slightly more men than women up to age 26, after which there were more women than men. By age 65, there were about 125 women for 100 men and by age 80, 170 women per 100 men.

More women than men reach the age of 100 because women experience lower probabilities of dying at all ages than men. In 2008,² life expectancy at birth was 78.5 years for men and 83.1 years for women.

International comparisons

The number of centenarians depends on the life expectancy and the size of the total population. The United States, for example, had a population about 10 times larger than Canada's; the number of centenarians was also higher, with 53,000 people in 2010.

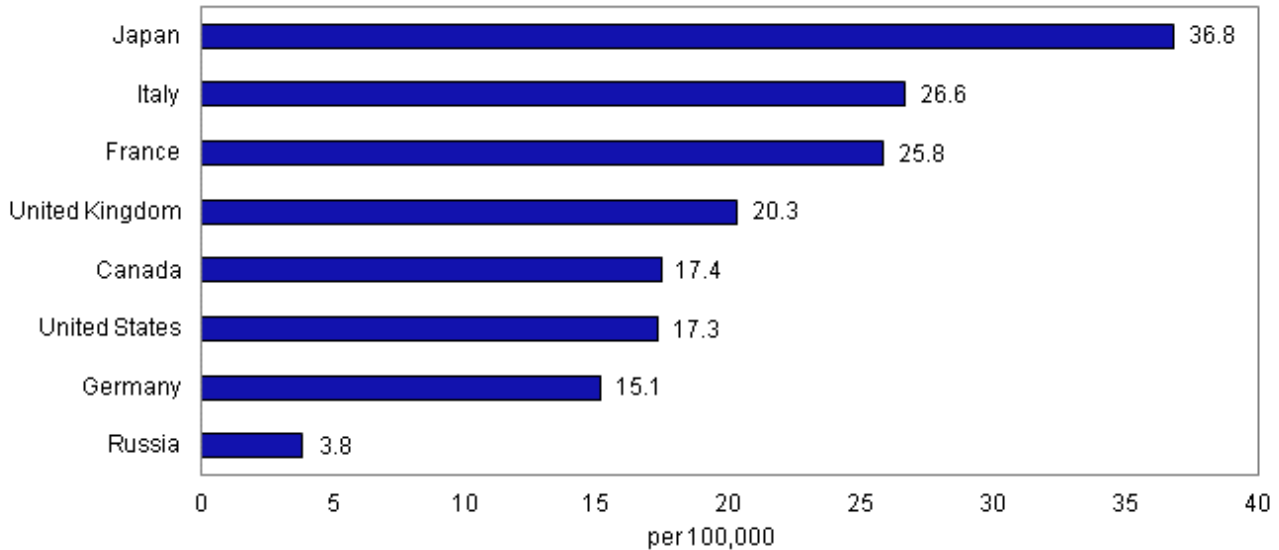
The rate of centenarians per 100,000 persons is useful in comparing countries of significantly different population sizes, such as G8 countries.

In 2011, Canada's rate of 17.4 centenarians per 100,000 persons was slightly below the average of 19.7 among G8 countries (Figure 2).

1. According to the medium growth scenario included in *Population projections for Canada, provinces and territories, 2009 to 2036*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-520.

2. The last year for which vital statistics on deaths were available is 2008.

Figure 2 Rate of centenarians (per 100,000 persons), G8 countries, 2011



Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; National Institute of Statistics (Italy), 2010; National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (France), 2010; United Kingdom Office for National Statistics, 2010; Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2010; and Human Mortality Database for Germany, 2010, and for Russia, 2010.

In the United States, the rate of centenarians was slightly lower than in Canada. Life expectancy in the United States, at 75.6 years for men and 80.8 years for women in 2007, was also slightly lower than in Canada.

Japan had the highest centenarian rate, at nearly 37 centenarians per 100,000 persons, more than twice Canada's rate. Life expectancy was the highest in Japan, at 79.6 years for men and 86.4 years for women in 2009.³

France, Italy and the United Kingdom also had higher centenarian rates than Canada. The population of these three countries is, on average, older than Canada's. In France, for example, women had a life expectancy of 84.5 in 2008, compared to 83.1 in Canada.

In Russia, there were only four centenarians per 100,000 persons. Life expectancy in Russia over the last 25 years has been well below that of other G8 countries (around 68 years for men and 74 years for women).

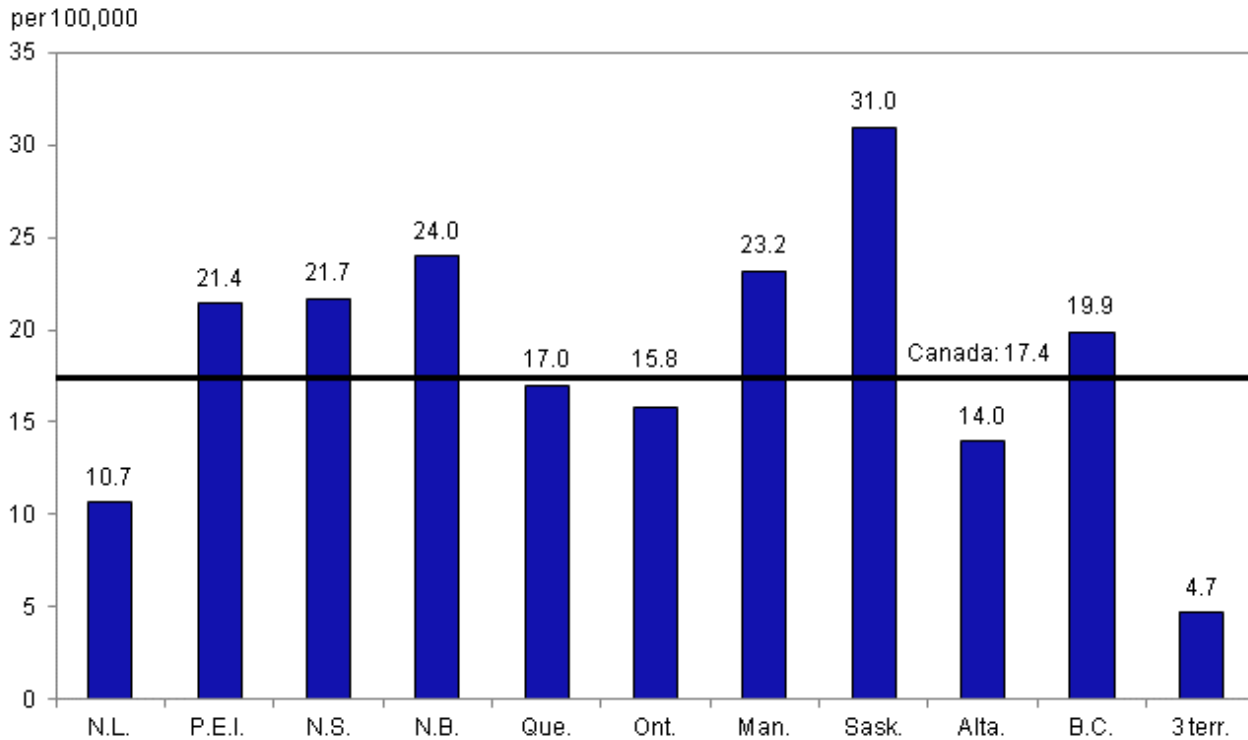
Centenarians in provinces and territories

In 2011, most centenarians in Canada lived in the three most populous provinces: Ontario (2,030), Quebec (1,345), and British Columbia (875).

3. According to the Human Mortality Database (<http://www.mortality.org>).

In terms of rates, Saskatchewan had 31.0 centenarians per 100,000 persons in 2011, the highest of any province or territory (Figure 3). This rate was twice the national average of 17.4 and close to Japan's rate.

Figure 3 Rate of centenarians (per 100,000 persons), provinces and territories, Canada, 2011



Note: "3 terr." indicates Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011.

The high rate of centenarians in Saskatchewan is related to the fact that for many years during the 20th Century, it had the highest life expectancy at birth of all provinces and territories.

Among all Canadian provinces, Newfoundland and Labrador had the lowest centenarian rate, at 10.7 per 100,000 persons. Although Newfoundland and Labrador's population was one of the oldest in Canada in 2011, its life expectancy at birth had probably been one of the lowest among all provinces for the first half of the 20th Century.⁴

For territories as a group, the centenarian rate was very low (4.7). The proportion of seniors aged 65 years and over was also much lower than the national average. In addition, life expectancy was lower (at 72.5 years for men and 78.5 years for women) than in other regions of Canada.

4. According to *Selected Mortality Statistics, Canada, 1921-1990*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-548, the infant mortality rate of this province was often the highest among provinces between 1921 and 1951.

Women have a higher chance of reaching the age of 100

Men born in 1911 had a 0.3% chance to reach the age of 100, according to their cohort life table.⁵ For women born in 1911, the chances were higher, at 4.3%, owing to a longer life expectancy.

If mortality rates continue to decline in the next decades, the number of people belonging to the 2011 birth cohort and reaching the age of 100 (in 2111) is likely to be much higher than the number observed among birth cohorts of current centenarians.

Note to readers

Random rounding and percentage distributions: To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2011 Census, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values, since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Due to random rounding, counts and percentages may vary slightly between different census products, such as the analytical document, highlight tables, and topic-based tabulations.

Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by Laurent Martel and France-Pascale Ménard, of Statistics Canada's Demography Division, with the assistance of staff members of Statistics Canada's Census Subject Matter Secretariat, Geography Division, Census Operations Division, Dissemination Division and Communications Division.

5. *New Birth Cohort Life Tables for Canada and Quebec, 1801-1991*, Demographic document no. 3, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91F0015MPE.

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May 2012

Catalogue no. 98-311-X2011003

Frequency: Occasional

Ottawa

Cette publication est également offerte en français.

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