



# The Daily

Statistics Canada

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## Study: Lower income and declines in self-rated health

1994/1995 to 1996/1997

Individuals living in households with combined incomes of less than \$20,000 are almost three times more likely to experience a decline in self-rated health than people with the highest incomes, according to a new study.

This study, published recently in the *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, investigated whether income was associated with a decline in self-rated health, from good or better health to fair or poor, over a two-year period. It also examined whether stressors, such as job strain and financial problems, helped explain the relationship.

Using data from Statistic Canada's National Population Health Survey (NPHS), the study showed that only 4% of Canadians who were initially healthy in 1994/1995 experienced a decline to fair or poor health in 1996/1997.

An equal proportion of those in fair or poor health in 1994/1995 experienced an improvement in their health to good or better.

Individuals in the lowest and second lowest income groups had significantly higher odds of experiencing a decline in health, compared with those in the highest income group.

The study found that stressors such as job strain, financial problems and marital problems were more common among lower income individuals. In turn, stressors in 1994/1995 were related to a higher likelihood of experiencing a decline in health in 1996/1997.

The study showed that a small but important portion of the relationship between lower income and a decline in self-rated health was associated with stressors.

These results suggest that a negative psychosocial environment may be one mechanism linking lower income and poorer health.

**Note:** The study population comprised individuals aged 20 and older in the 1994/1995 NPHS. Household income was used to measure income.

### Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3225.

The study "Do stressors explain the association between income and declines in self-rated health? A longitudinal analysis of the National Population Health

Survey" was published in the April 2007 edition of the *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. It was prepared by researchers from the School of Psychology at the University of Ottawa and analysts of the Health Analysis and Measurement Group at Statistics Canada. An abstract of the article is available online for free (<http://www.leaonline.com/toc/ijbm/14/1>) in English only. The full article is available as well.

For more information, to request a copy of the article, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Heather Orpana (613-951-1650; [heather.orpana@statcan.ca](mailto:heather.orpana@statcan.ca)), Statistics Canada.

NPHS microdata are available at Statistics Canada's Research Data Centres. For more information, visit *The Research Data Centres Program* page of our website.

For more information on the National Population Health Survey, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this survey, contact Mario Bédard (613-951-8933; [mario.bedard@statcan.ca](mailto:mario.bedard@statcan.ca)) or France Bilocq (613-951-6956; [france.bilocq@statcan.ca](mailto:france.bilocq@statcan.ca)), Health Statistics Division. ■

## Teacher's Guide to Data Discovery

A new guide, available today, supports elementary and secondary teachers in helping students develop basic statistical skills. The *Teacher's Guide to Data Discovery* describes how to find interesting and grade-appropriate Canadian datasets online, to use appropriate graphs for displaying different kinds of data and to calculate basic statistical measures, with or without computers.

Today's students need to know how to communicate with a high degree of numerical literacy. Basic statistical skills, such as reading and creating tables, constructing graphs and calculating measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) are now required in many curricula. Students practise these skills not only in the traditionally number-based subjects like mathematics and economics, but also in history, geography and other subjects.

The *Teacher's Guide to Data Discovery* (12-593-XWE, free) is now available on our website. From the *Learning resources* page, choose *Teachers*, and then *Resources for you*.

For more information, contact Client Services (toll-free 1-800-307-3382 or 613-951-7608; fax: 613-951-4441; [educationstats@statcan.ca](mailto:educationstats@statcan.ca)), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. ■

## New products

**Teacher's Guide to Data Discovery**  
**Catalogue number 12-593-XWE**  
 (free).

**All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.**

**Canadian Foreign Post Indexes, June 2007**  
**Catalogue number 62-013-XIE**  
 (free).

Catalogue numbers with an -XWE, -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB or -XDE are electronic versions on diskette; -XCB or -XCE are electronic versions on compact disc; -XVB or -XVE are electronic versions on DVD and -XBB or -XBE a database.

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