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INFECTIOUS HEPATITIS, 1961

In recent years infectious hepatitis has been rising to a top position in the list of community health problems. Probably this disease is becoming more prevalent and is on the upward swing of its cycle but there is better recognition and better reporting which sharpen our focus on this problem.

Prior to the last war this disease was called catarrhal or yellow jaundice. At that time it was considered a mild illness which received little attention and less concern. The fact that it could produce serious liver damage and be fatal was not recognized; when such complications developed they were thought to represent an entirely different clinical entity.

During the last war, infectious hepatitis was recognized as a serious military health problem. In certain areas, outbreaks produced 30% to 40% attack rates in relatively short intervals of three to four months.

Today, we believe infectious hepatitis to be an acute infection caused by a specific virus or viruses. The virus is extremely hardy. It can withstand the pasteurization process. It can survive chlorine residuals of 2 p.p.m. up to thirty minutes. It can probably live in boiling water up to five minutes. It can survive 60° centigrade for ten hours.

Man is the main animal host, in whose gastrointestinal tract the virus thrives and multiplies. The spread of this infection is usually by the faecal-oral route, from person to person. The virus exists in the gastrointestinal tract throughout the acute phase of illness and probably for some weeks thereafter. In the case of children, the passage through the gastrointestinal tract is thought to be much longer and may persist from six to eight weeks in some cases. Sometimes outbreaks of infection follow infected water and food. Recently, infected oysters and clams were believed responsible for spreading infectious hepatitis and a large epidemic was described at Raritan Bay, situated between New York and New Jersey, due to eating raw clams.

A fifteen- to forty-day interval usually follows infection before clinical onset. The clinical onset may be mild or stormy. Jaundice may or may not occur. Usually, the individual experiences malaise, headache, abdominal discomfort, loss of appetite, and muscle pains, vomiting is fairly common.(1)

(1) From "Some Public Health Aspects of Infectious Hepatitis", by D.G. McCurdy, M.D., as printed in the Canadian Journal of Public Health, Vol. 53, No. 2. By kind permission of the author and Dr. R.D. Defries, Editor, Canadian Journal of Public Health.

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9005-544

Prepared in Public Health Section
Health and Welfare Division

With 12,237 cases reported on a preliminary basis by health authorities, the incidence in Canada of infectious hepatitis during 1961 reached a provisional rate of 67.1 cases per 100,000 population, nearly four times the rate at the beginning of the past decade and 89.5 per cent higher than in 1960. The increase in number of cases over previous years was not limited to a particular season or to certain provinces; increases were recorded for every four-week period throughout the year, and all provinces were affected, with increases ranging from 20.6 per cent (Saskatchewan) to 311.9 per cent (Quebec). A peak period early in the year occurred in the four-week period ending February 25; another, towards the end of the year, in the four-week period ending December 30. Nova Scotia was hardest hit initially, and sustained, next to the thinly-populated Yukon, the highest incidence rate during the year (247.1). Among cities of over 10,000 population, four reported 200 or more cases during 1961:

	<u>Cases</u>	<u>Percentage increase</u>
		<u>over 1960</u>
		<u>%</u>
St. John's, Nfld.	232	58.9
Toronto	576	372.1
Winnipeg	348	28.9
Calgary	226	438.1

In the years 1959-1961, persons under 20 accounted for an average of 58.4 per cent of all cases, and in 1961 children 5-9 years of age had the highest incidence rate (185.2). Although morbidity from the disease is generally highest among young people, fatalities among children (other than infants) and teenagers are infrequent. Consequently, the higher incidence of the disease in 1960 and 1961 over previous years was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in the rate of deaths due to infectious hepatitis. The 1952 and 1960 death rates were identical (0.6). The highest death rate in 1960 was Prince Edward Island's (1.9); the lowest, Quebec's (0.4). In 1960, age-specific death rates were highest among the older persons who were infected-- in particular those over 60, and among infants in the first year of life.

A comparison of Canadian experience in 1961 with that of other countries cannot be made at this time. However, it may be of some interest to note the relative positions of several countries in 1959 with respect to infectious hepatitis, as shown in the following table:

	<u>Infectious hepatitis -</u>
	<u>rate per 100,000 population(1)</u>
Canada	27.1
Australia	63.4(a)
Czechoslovakia	252.0
German Democratic Republic (including East Berlin) ...	246.2
Hungary	193.9
Peru	22.9(b)
Poland	256.6
U.S.A.	13.3

(1) Sources: Epidemiological and Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 14, No. 7, 1961.
WHO, Geneva.

Demographic Yearbook, 1960. United Nations.

(a) case figure preliminary; population figure excludes full-blooded aborigines.

(b) population estimate not considered reliable.

NOTES:

1. Cases and rates for 1961 are preliminary and subject to revision.
2. For 1952-1958 cases refer to ISC code 092 (infectious hepatitis); for 1959-1961, cases refer to ISC codes 092 and N998.5 (serum jaundice) combined.
3. Mortality data from Vital Statistics Section, D.B.S., refer to ISC code 092 only; 1961 mortality data not available.
4. Age and sex breakdowns for 1961 population not available.

- No cases reported.
- .. Figures not available.
- . Cases not notifiable in given year.

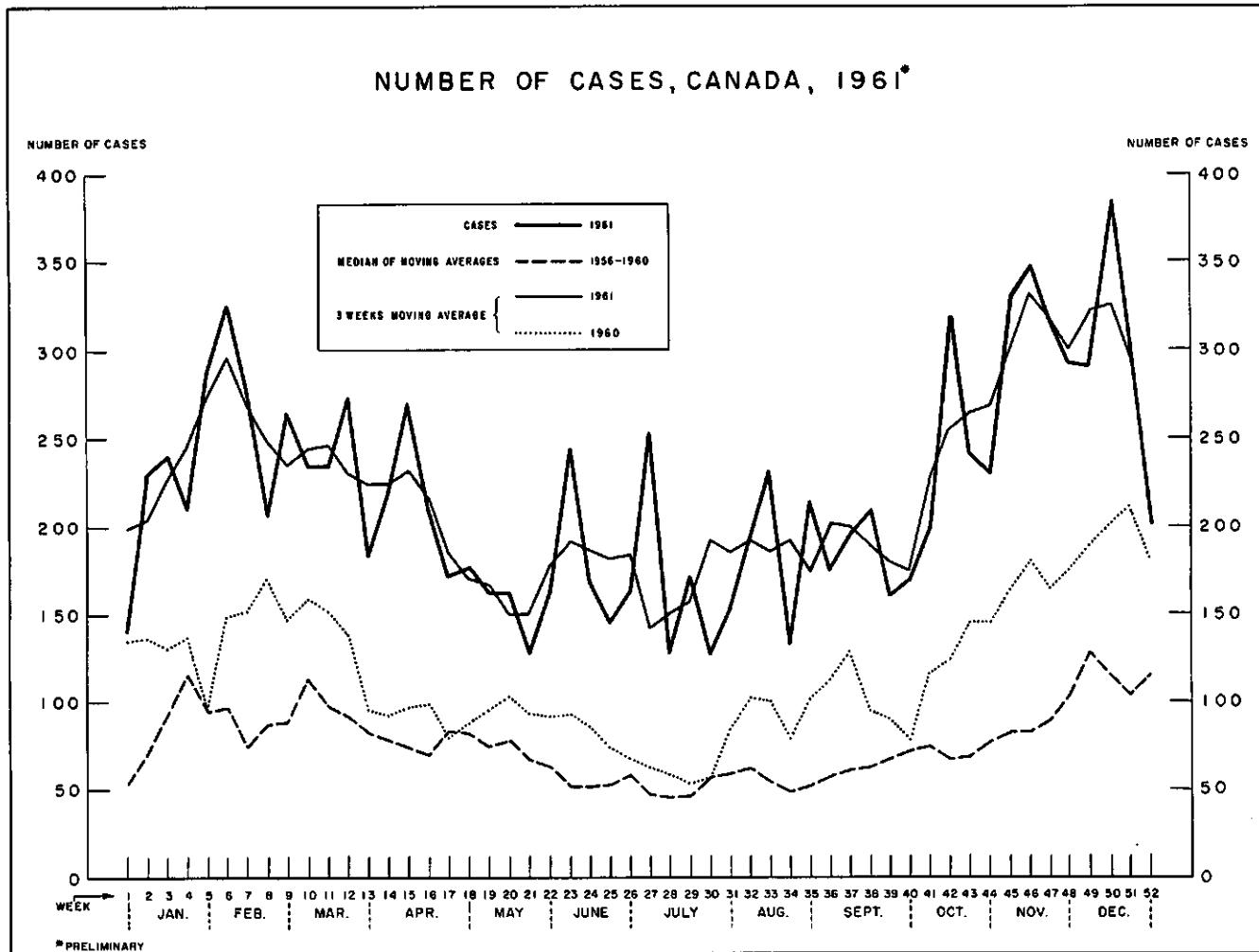


TABLE 1. Cases, by Four-week Periods, Canada, 1952-61

Four-week period	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Totals, 52 weeks	2,392	3,268	4,567	3,885	2,937	3,006	4,515	4,723	6,314	12,237
1st	117	327	451	428	315	219	164	722	565	818
2nd	159	419	544	493	361	307	290	616	612	1,088
3rd	174	273	501	354	302	416	291	561	616	1,002
4th	128	273	396	220	235	227	307	338	373	876
5th	142	197	390	237	253	294	351	319	362	685
6th	88	218	379	181	145	228	344	207	355	706
7th	46	162	214	168	144	171	258	207	262	692
8th	27	134	183	158	132	203	245	209	290	653
9th	53	171	163	207	123	208	269	192	413	778
10th	129	250	285	240	142	191	390	277	371	852
11th	794	230	337	334	233	116	468	269	504	1,041
12th	250	305	376	374	316	154	535	375	682	1,348
13th	285	309	348	491	236	272	603	436	823	1,495
Period not reported	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	86	201

TABLE 2. Cases and Rates, by Provinces, 1952-61

Year	Canada	Nfld.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Yukon	N.W.T.
Cases reported													
1952	2,392	60	-	1,414	-	9	15	499	66	92	27	219	
1953	3,268	44	-	599	-	50	50	924	332	343	182	785	
1954	4,567	58	21	581	11	205	1,296	382	693	107	1,213		
1955	3,885	126	221	167	58	131	766	382	1,010	154	841	24	
1956	2,937	74	115	192	171	85	475	398	1,020	25	343	39	
1957	3,006	97	25	134	124	107	577	616	929	-	393	4	
1958	4,515	238	29	521	133	53	1,042	793	943	156	558	49	
1959	4,728	231	51	389	101	102	1,051	681	672	527	919	3	1
1960	6,314	466	113	1,224	79	343	1,244	555	704	690	912	4	
1961	12,237	618	141	1,821	181	1,413	3,009	1,458	849	1,005	1,677	65	
Rates per 100,000 population													
1952	17.3	16.0	-	216.5	-	0.4	10.4	8.3	10.9	2.8	18.2		
1953	22.2	11.5	-	90.3	1.7	1.2	18.7	41.0	39.8	18.0	62.9		
1954	29.9	14.7	20.8	86.3	2.0	4.7	25.3	46.4	79.4	10.1	93.7		
1955	24.8	31.0	221.0	24.5	10.6	2.9	14.5	46.1	115.0	14.1	62.7	218.2	
1956	18.3	17.8	115.8	27.6	30.8	1.8	8.8	46.8	115.8	2.2	24.5		
1957	19.5	22.8	25.3	19.1	21.9	2.2	10.3	71.6	105.7	-	26.4	33.3	
1958	26.5	54.3	29.0	73.4	23.1	1.1	18.0	91.1	106.2	13.0	36.1	376.9	
1959	27.1	51.4	50.0	54.3	17.1	2.0	17.7	76.9	74.5	43.4	58.5	23.1	4.8
1960	35.4	97.2	109.7	169.3	13.2	6.7	20.4	61.7	77.4	53.8	56.8		
1961	67.1	135.0	134.8	247.1	30.3	26.9	48.3	158.2	91.8	75.5	102.9	444.4	

TABLE 3. Cases for Certain Cities of over 10,000 Population, 1952-61

	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Newfoundland										
St. John's	1	3	7	28	37	23	35	19	146	232
Prince Edward Island										
Charlottetown	-	-	-	57	21	47	10	18	26	25
Nova Scotia										
Halifax	2	-	27	33	21	23	98	100	46	4
Sydney	25	131	90	20	40	2	36	17	317	173
New Brunswick										
Edmundston	-	-	-	14	51	5	2	-	-	-
Fredericton	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	3	4
Lancaster	-	-	-	1	2	11	4	4	6	5
Moncton	-	2	1	1	8	4	2	6	4	28
Saint John	-	-	-	7	36	76	69	42	25	27
Ontario										
Barrie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-
Belleville	15	18	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brantford	4	24	5	9	5	6	-	1	25	100
Chatham	-	-	1	-	7	2	2	-	-	16
Cornwall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	158
Fort William	-	1	30	67	9	1	24	14	2	2
Galt	-	4	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guelph	-	-	17	10	1	-	-	-	-	-
Hamilton	3	70	90	12	3	9	22	39	26	47
Kingston	-	2	3	3	3	-	-	9	2	18
Kitchener	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
London	-	11	72	11	-	6	1	6	67	180
Niagara Falls	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
North Bay	-	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oshawa	4	14	27	18	8	2	1	18	11	43
Ottawa	-	-	82	114	81	35	61	90	74	92
Owen Sound	-	1	1	67	48	4	8	-	-	-
Peterborough	11	71	79	50	2	11	14	7	3	28
Port Arthur	-	-	26	16	6	7	30	11	2	3
St. Catharines	-	-	1	1	6	9	-	1	-	12
St. Thomas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39
Sarnia	19	10	4	3	3	21	18	14	6	10
Sault Ste. Marie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stratford	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Sudbury	-	-	-	4	-	2	15	36	43	41
Toronto	43	52	101	53	94	119	168	75	122	576
Waterloo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Welland	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Windsor	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Woodstock	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manitoba										
Brandon	-	4	5	6	-	9	47	15	50	95
East Kildonan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	10	27
Portage la Prairie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	142
St. Boniface	11	48	23	1	14	42	42	26	13	23
St. James	-	-	-	-	4	18	32	16	11	11
Winnipeg	24	48	54	59	93	83	170	242	270	348
Saskatchewan										
Moose Jaw	14	15	44	446	251	110	55	17	19	33
Prince Albert	-	-	9	22	28	8	10	38	12	25
Regina	66	123	10	39	152	193	35	37	75	111
Saskatoon	-	-	32	203	71	27	18	13	46	44
Alberta										
Calgary	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	40	42	226
Edmonton	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
Lethbridge	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	17	15
Medicine Hat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	7
Red Deer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	1
British Columbia										
New Westminster	-	26	59	10	8	17	3	319	234	96
Vancouver	73	319	177	92	39	75	87	88	100	189
Victoria	4	2	-	6	2	-	1	8	9	23

TABLE 4. Cases, Percentage of Cases, and Age-Specific Case Rates, by Age Groups, 1959-61

Year	Total(1)	Age group						
		Under 1 year	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-39	40-59
<u>Cases</u>								
1959	3,130	10	119	517	493	293	821	192
1960	3,390	16	135	687	541	274	861	231
1961	5,853	14	279	1,230	925	438	1,530	383
<u>Percentage of cases</u>								
1959	100.0	0.4	4.7	20.6	19.7	11.7	32.7	7.7
1960	100.0	0.6	4.8	24.5	19.3	9.8	30.7	8.2
1961	100.0	0.3	5.7	25.2	18.9	9.0	31.3	7.8
<u>Age-specific case rates per 100,000 population</u>								
1959	44.2	6.7	20.7	79.9	91.1	68.6	53.9	16.7
1960	48.6	10.6	23.1	103.9	96.3	61.7	56.4	19.7
1961	82.9	9.3	48.0	185.2	161.4	96.8	96.4	32.1

(1) Excluding the provinces of P.E.I., N.S., Que., and Ont., which did not report age and sex.

TABLE 5. Deaths and Rates, by Provinces, 1952-61

Year	Canada	Nfld.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Yukon	N.W.T.	Deaths	
														Deaths	Death rates per 100,000 population
1952	91	1	1	2	1	29	28	10	5	5	5	9	-	-	-
1953	94	1	1	4	2	27	37	7	2	1	12	-	-	-	-
1954	104	-	-	5	-	30	46	3	2	4	14	-	-	-	-
1955	117	2	1	5	2	42	42	5	4	5	9	-	-	-	-
1956	102	2	-	5	3	34	24	4	11	12	7	-	-	-	-
1957	92	2	-	2	2	33	29	5	1	9	9	-	-	-	-
1958	104	1	1	4	4	28	40	6	5	5	10	-	-	-	-
1959	82	1	-	4	3	20	29	8	3	5	8	-	-	-	-
1960	99	4	2	4	4	18	30	5	9	9	14	-	-	-	-

TABLE 6. Deaths by Age Groups, Canada, 1952-60

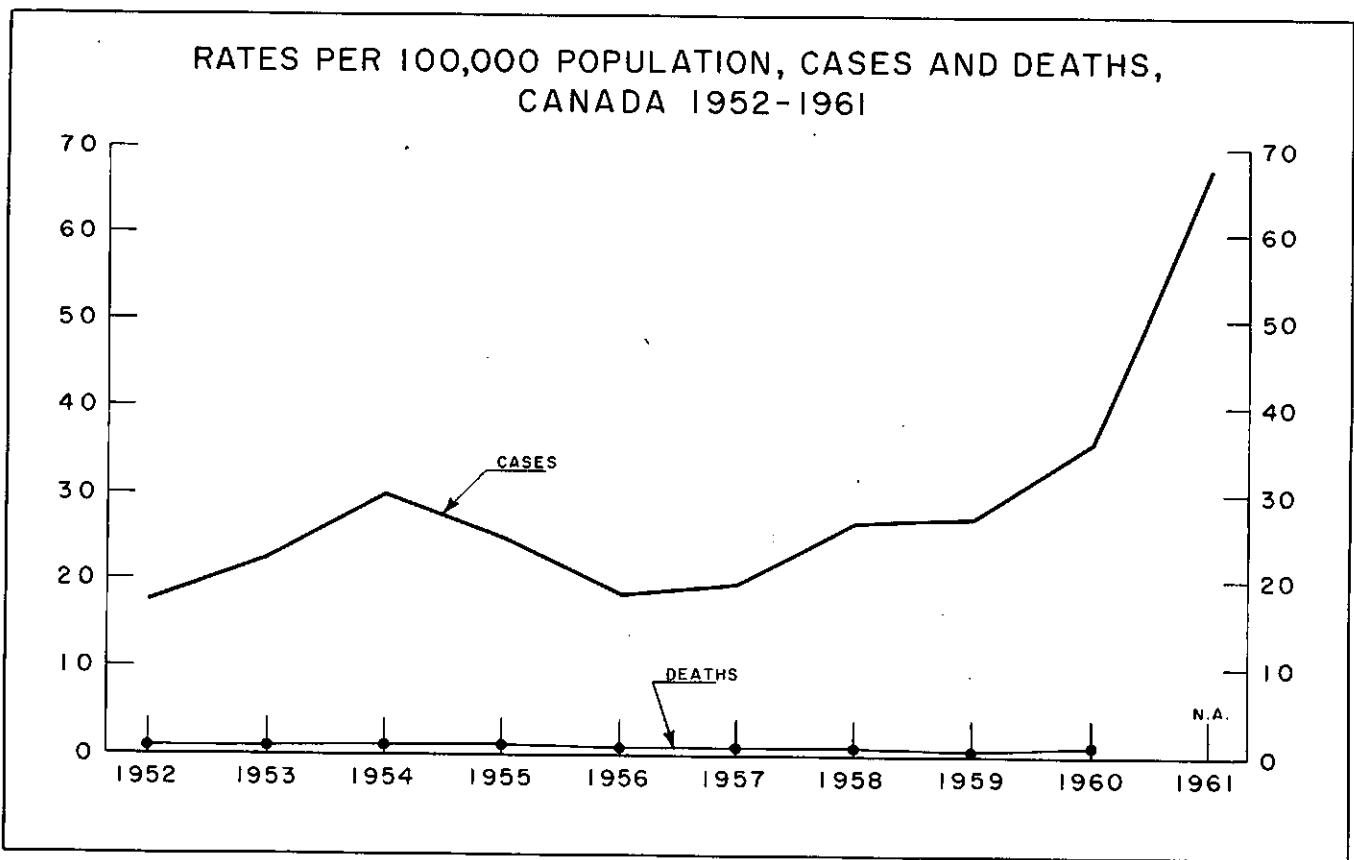
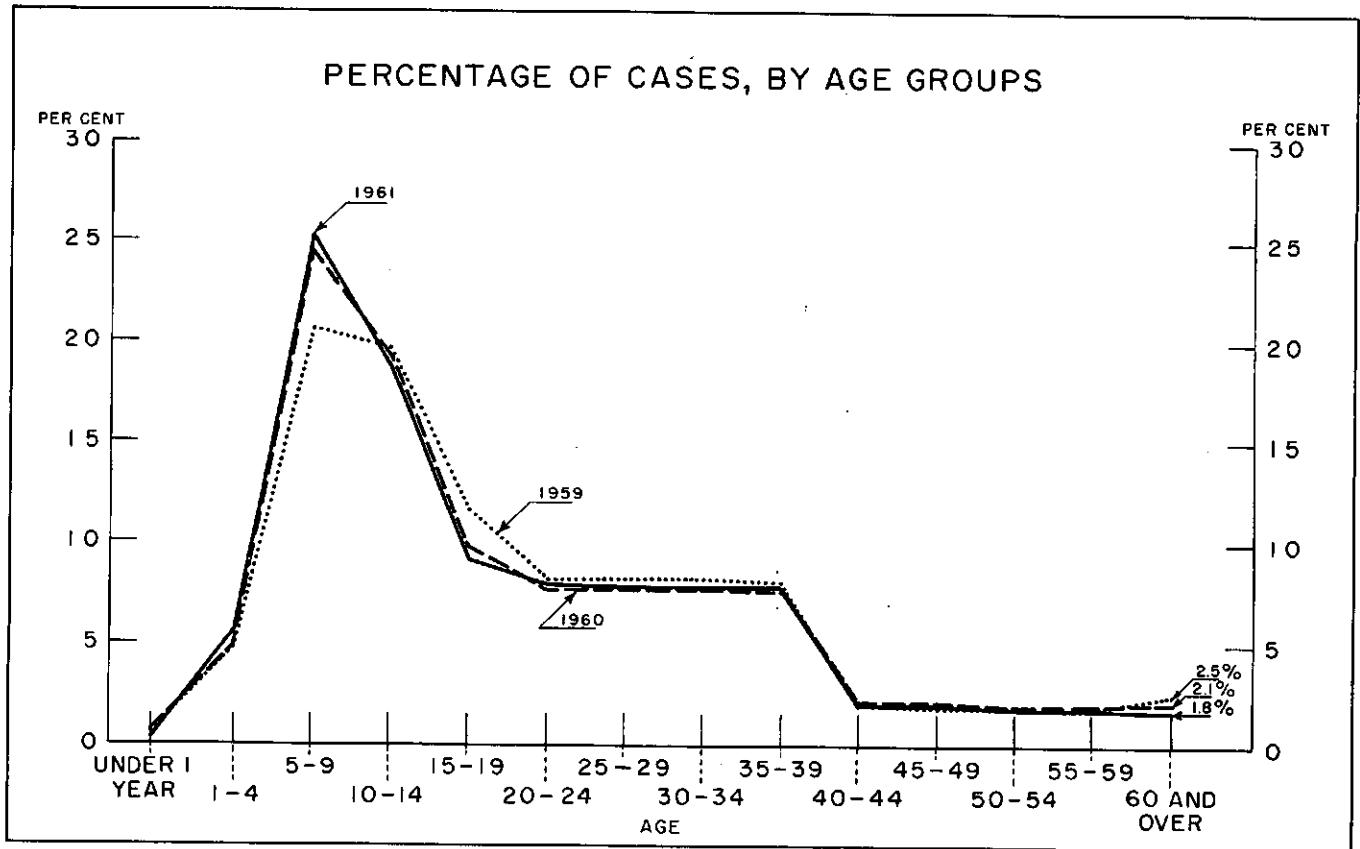
Year	Total	Age group						
		Under 1 year	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-39	40-59
<u>Deaths</u>								
1952	91	13	7	3	1	1	20	15
1953	94	7	5	5	7	-	16	24
1954	104	11	9	4	-	2	21	30
1955	117	17	7	4	3	6	19	35
1956	102	16	2	1	1	2	20	40
1957	92	6	7	3	-	1	23	32
1958	104	11	6	2	5	5	15	33
1959	82	10	4	5	3	5	17	25
1960	99	7	3	3	5	5	20	33

TABLE 7. Percentage of Deaths, by Age Groups, Canada, 1952-60

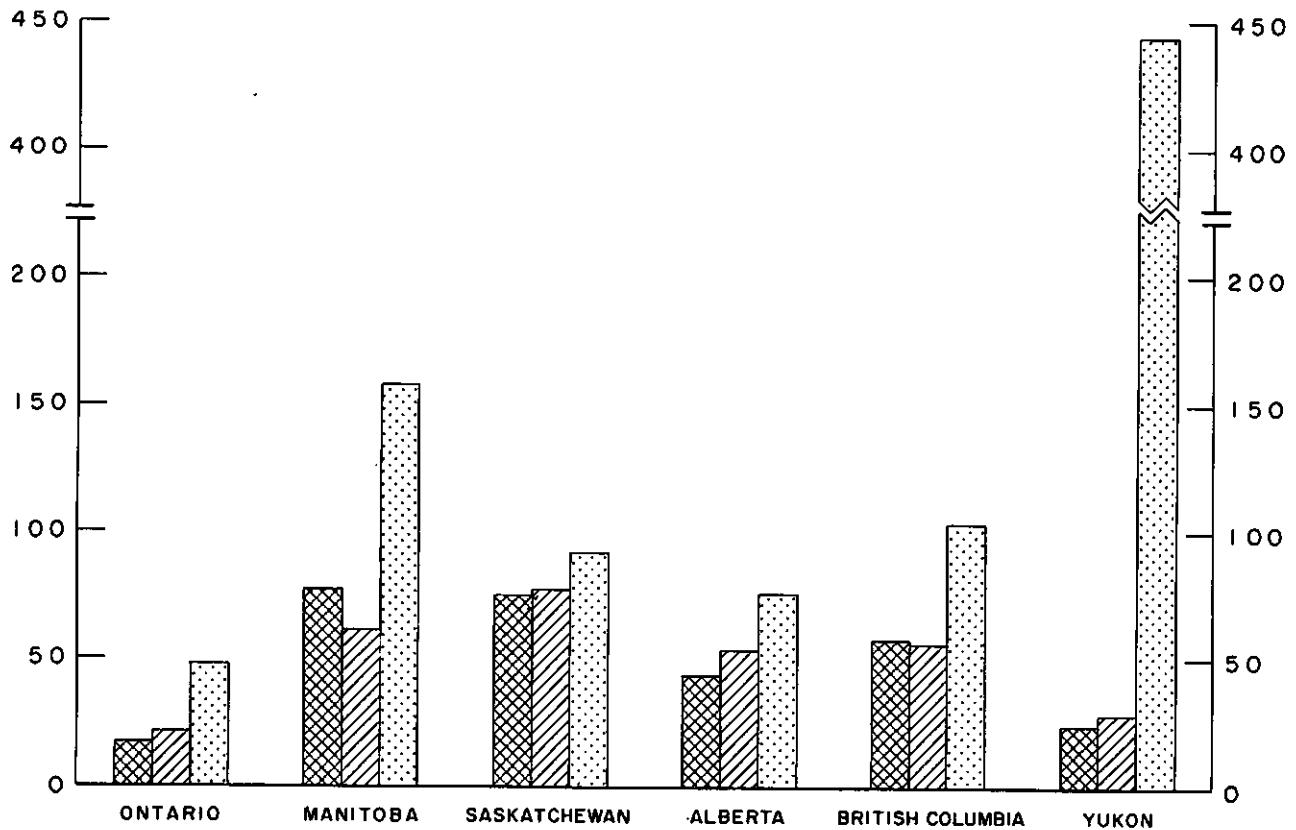
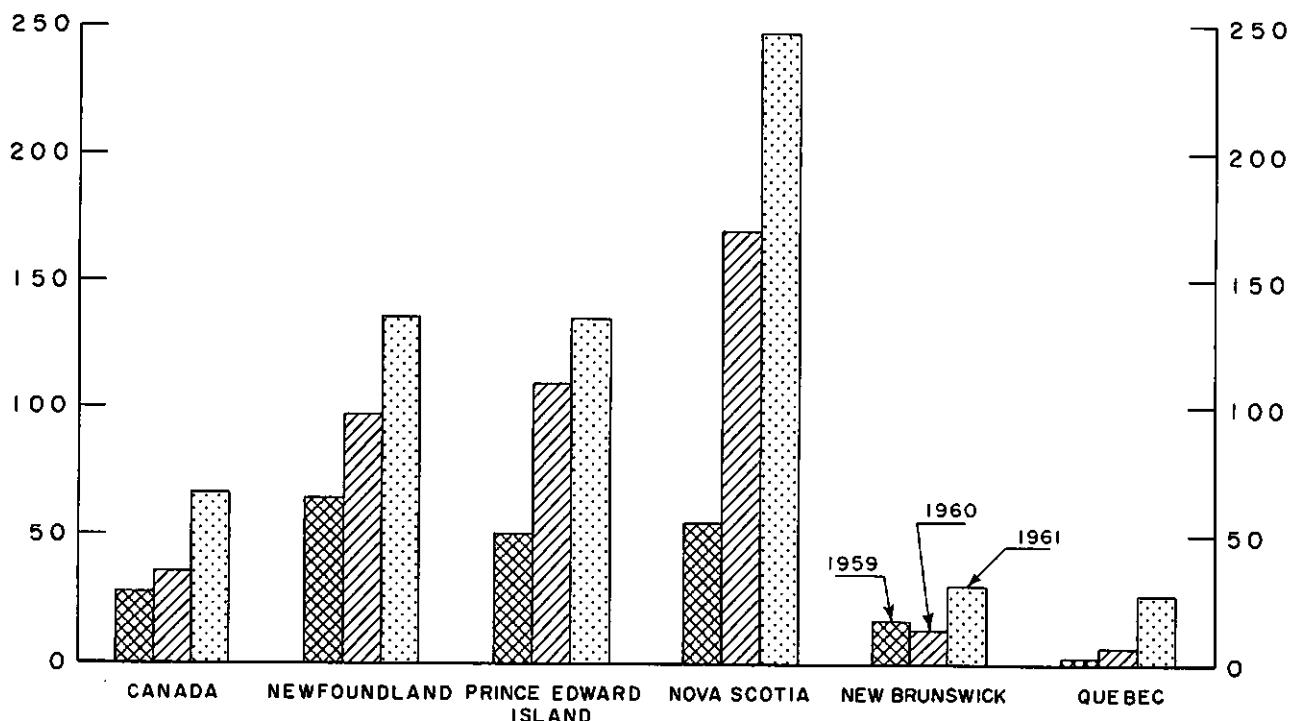
Year	Total	Age group						
		Under 1 year	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-39	40-59
<u>Percentage of deaths</u>								
1952	100.0	14.3	7.7	3.3	1.1	1.1	22.0	16.5
1953	100.0	7.4	5.3	7.4	-	-	17.0	25.5
1954	100.0	10.6	8.7	3.8	-	1.9	20.2	31.9
1955	100.0	14.5	6.0	3.4	2.6	5.1	16.2	33.7
1956	100.0	15.7	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	19.6	34.2
1957	100.0	6.5	7.6	3.3	-	1.1	25.0	27.5
1958	100.0	10.6	5.8	1.9	4.8	4.8	14.4	35.9
1959	100.0	12.2	4.9	6.1	3.7	6.1	20.7	34.6
1960	100.0	7.1	3.0	3.0	5.1	5.1	20.2	30.5

TABLE 8. Age-Specific Death Rates per 100,000 Population, Canada, 1952-60

Year	Total	Age group						
		Under 1 year	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-39	40-59
<u>Death rates per 100,000 population</u>								
1952	0.6	3.5	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.5
1953	0.6	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.6	-	0.4	0.8
1954	0.7	2.7	0.6	0.2	-	0.2	0.5	1.8
1955	0.7	4.1	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.7
1956	0.6	3.8	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.1
1957	0.6	1.4	0.4	0.2	-	0.1	0.5	1.8
1958	0.6	2.5	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.7	2.0
1959	0.5	2.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	1.3
1960	0.6	1.6	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.6	1.7



CASE RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION, CANADA AND PROVINCES



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