

Health Fact Sheets

Access to a regular medical doctor, 2014



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Canada

How to obtain more information

For information about this product or the wide range of services and data available from Statistics Canada, visit our website, www.statcan.gc.ca.

You can also contact us by

email at STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca

telephone, from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the following numbers:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| • Statistical Information Service | 1-800-263-1136 |
| • National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired | 1-800-363-7629 |
| • Fax line | 1-514-283-9350 |

Depository Services Program

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| • Inquiries line | 1-800-635-7943 |
| • Fax line | 1-800-565-7757 |

Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, Statistics Canada has developed standards of service that its employees observe. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on www.statcan.gc.ca under “Contact us” > “Standards of service to the public.”

Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued co-operation and goodwill.

Standard table symbols

The following symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^P preliminary
- ^r revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 2015

All rights reserved. Use of this publication is governed by the Statistics Canada [Open Licence Agreement](#).

An HTML version is also available.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

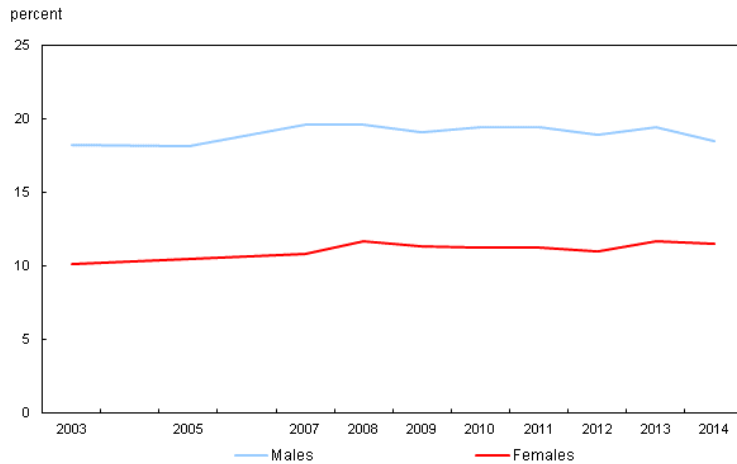


Access to a regular medical doctor, 2014

For many Canadians, the first point of contact for medical care is their doctor. Being without a regular medical doctor is associated with fewer visits to general practitioners or specialists, who can play a role in the early screening and treatment of medical conditions.

In 2014, 14.9% of Canadians aged 12 and older, roughly 4.5 million people, reported that they did not have a regular medical doctor. The percentage of females who do not have a regular medical doctor increased from 10.1% in 2003 to 11.7% in 2008, and has not changed significantly since then. The rate for males has remained around 19% since 2003 (Chart 1).

Chart 1
Percentage without a regular medical doctor, by sex, household population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2003 to 2014

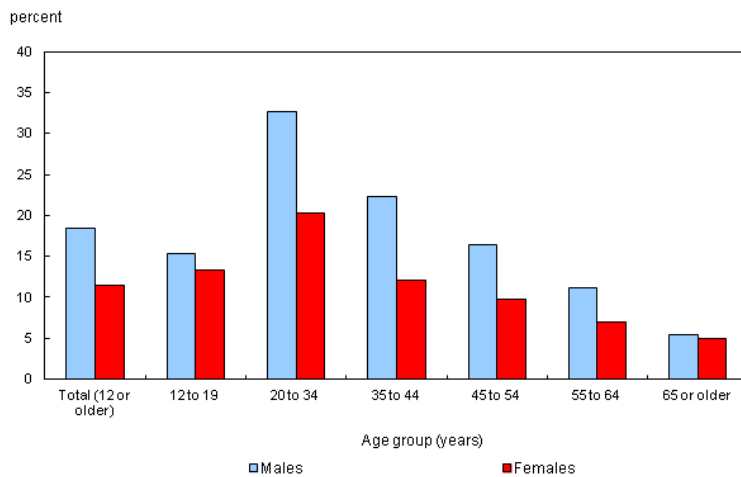


Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2003, 2005, 2007 to 2014.

Males and females aged 20 to 34 were the least likely to have a regular medical doctor, while those aged 65 and over were the most likely. Only 5.5% of males and 5.0% of females 65 or older were without a regular doctor, compared to 32.6% of males and 20.3% of females aged 20 to 34 (Chart 2).

In 2014, males were more likely than females to report being without a regular doctor in all age groups from 20 to 64 years of age (Chart 2). There was no significant difference between males and females in the 12 to 19 and 65 or older age groups.

Chart 2
Percentage without a regular medical doctor, by age group and sex, household population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2014



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2014.

The proportion of residents who were without a regular doctor was **lower** than the national average (14.9%) in:

- Newfoundland and Labrador (10.1%)
- Prince Edward Island (9.5%)
- Nova Scotia (10.6%)
- New Brunswick (6.1%)
- Ontario (7.5%)

The proportion of residents who were without a regular doctor was **higher** than the national average in:

- Quebec (25.2%)
- Saskatchewan (20.1%)
- Alberta (19.9%)
- Yukon¹ (26.1%)
- Northwest Territories¹ (57.7%)
- Nunavut¹ (82.5%)

Residents of Manitoba and British Columbia reported rates that were about the same as the national average.

In 2014, of the 4.5 million people without a regular doctor, the most common reason for not having a regular doctor was that they had not looked for one (45.9%). Other reasons people had for not having a doctor were that doctors in their area were not taking new patients (21.5%), their doctor had retired or left the area (20.2%), or that no doctors were available in their area (14.4%). Another 13.1% did not give a specific reason for not having a doctor. (Note that these add up to more than 100% because respondents could choose more than one reason for not having found a regular medical doctor.)

Of those 4.5 million Canadians without a regular doctor in 2014, 81.5% reported that they had a usual place to go when they were sick or in need of health advice. If they needed medical care, 59.1% of these respondents reported they would use a walk-in clinic, 14.2% would use a hospital emergency room, and 8.6% would visit a community health centre (known in Quebec as a *centre local de services communautaires*). The remaining 18.1% reported they would use other facilities such as appointment clinics, doctors' offices, hospital out-patient clinics and telephone health lines.

Note

¹ In the territories, a nurse practitioner is often used as the first point of medical contact, rather than a medical doctor.

References

- Nabalamba, Alice and Wayne Millar. 2007. *Going to the doctor*. *Health Reports*. Vol. (Volume) 18, no. (number) 1. Statistics Canada no. (number) 82-003. p. (page(s)) 23–35. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2006002/article/doctor-medecin/9569-eng.pdf>
- Carrière, Gisèle. 2005. *Consultations with doctors and nurses*. *Health Reports*. Vol. (Volume) 16, no. (number) 4. Statistics Canada no. (number) 82-003. p. (page(s)) 45–48. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/studies-etudes/82-003/archive/2005/8043-eng.pdf>
- Tjepkema, Michael. 2008. *Health care use among gay, lesbian and bisexual Canadians*. *Health Reports*. Vol. (Volume) 19, no. (number) 1. Statistics Canada no. (number) 82-003. p. (page(s)) 53–64. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2008001/article/10532-eng.pdf>

Data

Additional data from the Canadian Community Health Survey are available from CANSIM table [105-0501](#).