



Public summary

November 2015

CIHI undertook the Trends in Income-Related Health Inequalities in Canada project — resulting in a suite of products, including a technical report and an interactive tool — to examine how income-related health inequalities have changed in the past decade. This work is a major contribution to reporting on health inequalities and reflects Canada's international commitment to reducing inequalities.

Additional resources

The following companion products are available on [CIHI's website](#):

- Technical report
- Interactive tool
- Summary report
- Provincial highlights
- Infographic
- Media release

Talk to us

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Richer Canadians are generally healthier than poorer Canadians

Trends in Income-Related Health Inequalities in Canada

To compare the health of richer and poorer Canadians, the population was divided into 5 equal groups based on their income, and indicator rates were measured over time. The project looked at factors well-known to influence health, like housing and food security, as well as at health outcomes, such as rates of injury, chronic diseases and mortality.

Key findings

The gap by income did not change over time for 11 of 16 indicators.

- These inequalities are associated with significant costs, both to individuals and to society, through direct health care costs and indirect costs, such as lost productivity.

The gap widened over time for 3 indicators.

- **Smoking:** Adults in the highest income level smoked less over time, while the smoking rate in the lowest income level remained high.
- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Hospitalization for Canadians Younger Than Age 75:** Rates decreased for Canadians in the highest income level but increased for lower-income Canadians.
- **Self-Rated Mental Health:** The percentage of adults who rated their mental health as “fair” or “poor” increased over time in all income levels except the highest.

Future work will require filling data gaps and building the evidence base to inform policy action.

- There is a need for more comprehensive data to facilitate analysis of inequalities in Canada. In 2016, a baseline inequalities report will be published by the Public Health Agency of Canada, in collaboration with Statistics Canada and CIHI, which will provide a comprehensive portrait of health inequalities in Canada for a number of indicators at a single point in time.