



Quebec's Social and Health Survey Information: Baseline Data Report 2008 (Section 2.14)

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2.14 Mental Health

- When all survey respondents are considered the highest levels of psychological distress are reported by the 15-24 years of age group. Women 15-24 years of age were the most likely to perceive their mental health as average or poor.
- There is a strong correlation between perception of mental health and level of satisfaction with social life. Those who perceive their mental health as excellent tend to be very satisfied with their social life, while those who perceive their mental health as average or poor tend to report dissatisfaction with their social life.
- When 1987, 1992-1993 and 1998 are compared; we find that women have consistently reported higher levels of distress than men across the three time periods.
- Anglophone respondents were more than twice as likely as Francophones to perceive their mental health as poor.

Table 2.14.1 – Perception of mental health according to sex and age, population 15 years and older, Quebec, 1998

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average or poor
	%			
Men				
15-24 years	38.0	34.9	19.0	8.1
25-44 years	38.7	33.6	20.2	7.5
45-64 years	38.7	36.0	18.4	6.9
65+	34.9	33.6	26.4	5.0
Total	38.2	34.5	20.2	7.2
Women				
15-24 years	28.9	35.0	23.4	12.7
25-44 years	31.4	37.5	21.5	9.8
45-64 years	34.5	36.5	22.0	7.0
65+	33.2	36.1	24.0	6.8
Total	32.2	36.6	22.3	9.0
Both sexes				
15-24 years	33.5	35.0	21.2	10.4
25-44 years	35.1	35.5	20.8	8.6
45-64 years	36.6	36.2	20.2	7.0
65+	33.9	35.0	25.0	6.0
Total	35.1	35.6	21.3	8.1
Pop '000	2 045	2 071	1 240	470

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé 1998*.

- Among both male and female survey respondents, women 15-24 years of age were the most likely to perceive their mental health as average or poor.

- Women generally gave their mental health a lower rating than did men.

Table 2.14.2 – Perception of mental health according to satisfaction with social life, population 15 years and older, Quebec, 1998

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average or poor
	%			
Very satisfied	55.8	31.9	10.2	2.0
More or less satisfied	28.8	39.9	24.7	6.7
Not satisfied	13.7	26.6	31.3	28.4

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé 1998*.

- There is a strong correlation between perception of mental health and level of satisfaction with social life. Those who perceive their mental health as excellent tend to be very satisfied with their social life, while those who perceive their mental health as average or poor tend to report dissatisfaction with their social life.

Table 2.14.3 – High level of psychological distress (indicator) according to sex and age, population 15 years and older, Quebec, 1998

	1987	1992-1993	1998	Pop '000
	%			
Men				
15-24 years	17.4	29.7	23.1	115
25-44 years	14.9	22.8	17.7	207
45-64 years	13.7	20.8	16.7	141
65+	11.6	9.3	8.0	28
Total	14.8	22.1	17.3	491
Women				
15-24 years	29.6	40.8	33.5	159
25-44 years	22.9	32.2	22.8	262
45-64 years	22.1	26.4	21.5	187
65+	21.1	20.0	12.8	60
Total	23.8	30.4	22.8	668
Both sexes				
15-24 years	23.4	35.2	28.2	274
25-44 years	19.0	27.5	20.2	469
45-64 years	18.0	23.7	19.2	328
65+	17.0	15.4	10.7	88
Total	19.4	26.3	20.1	1 159

Source: Santé Québec, *Enquête Santé Québec 1987* et *Enquête sociale et de santé 1992-1993*.
Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé 1998*.

- When both sexes are combined the highest levels of psychological distress are reported by respondents in the 15-24 years of age group.
- Levels of stress declined for all age groups when 1992-1993 and 1998 are compared.
- Women consistently reported higher levels of distress than men across all three time periods.

Table 2.14.4 – High level of psychological distress (indicator) according to sex, age and marital status, population 15 years and older, Quebec, 1998

	%
Men	
Married	12.4
Common law	19.2
Widowed, separated or divorced	19.7
Single	23.1
Women	
Married	18.3
Common law	23.4
Widowed, separated or divorced	22.9
Single	30.0
Both sexes	
15-24 Married	24.9*
Common law	27.5
Widowed, separated or divorced	-
Single	28.5
25-44 Married	16.2
Common law	20.7
Widowed, separated or divorced	30.3
Single	24.7
45-64 Married	16.5
Common law	21.2
Widowed, separated or divorced	24.6
Single	24.5
65+ Married	9.0
Common law	7.7**
Widowed, separated or divorced	13.8
Single	8.6**
Total both sexes	
Married	15.3
Common law	21.3
Widowed, separated or divorced	21.8
Single	26.3

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé 1998*.

* Interpret with caution

** Imprecise estimate, indication only

- When both sexes are combined, the highest level of psychological distress is reported among those who are 15-24 years of age and single. Female respondents of this age and marital status were more likely to report high levels of distress than males.

Table 2.14.5 – High level of psychological distress¹ according to sex, age, and activity status during a period of two weeks, population 15 years and older, Quebec, 1998

	%
Men	
Employed	16.0
Student	21.8
Homemaker	22.5*
Retired	10.6
Unemployed	28.0
Women	
Employed	22.8
Student	35.3
Homemaker	18.5
Retired	15.2
Unemployed	33.3
Both sexes	
15-24	
Employed	26.0
Student	28.7
Homemaker	39.3*
Retired	-
Unemployed	27.3
25-44	
Employed	19.0
Student	27.2
Homemaker	20.5
Retired	35.6**
Unemployed	27.2
45-64	
Employed	17.2
Student	26.2**
Homemaker	19.8
Retired	14.3
Unemployed	37.4
65+	
Employed	3.7**
Student	-
Homemaker	10.5*

Retired	11.3
Unemployed	6.8**
Total both sexes	
Employed	19.0
Student	28.5
Homemaker	18.9
Retired	12.6
Unemployed	30.0

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé 1998*.

1- Psychological distress indicator, Santé Québec.

* Interpret with caution

** Imprecise estimate, indication only

- The highest levels of psychological distress during a two week period were reported by respondents who were unemployed and/or students.
- These levels were higher for women when compared men.
- A very high level of psychological stress was reported among homemakers in the 15-24 age group but these numbers are small so must be interpreted with caution.

Table 2.14.6 – Level of psychological distress (indicator) by mother tongue, Quebec, 1998

	N=	18211	1029	1045	445
		French	English	Other	n/a
Low to average		76.98%	76.87%	73.30%	59.55%
High		19.04%	18.56%	20.67%	15.28%
Unknown		3.98%	4.57%	6.03%	25.17%
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé 1998*.

- Anglophone and Francophone respondents report relatively similar levels of psychological distress.

Table 2.14.7 – High level of psychological distress¹ according to relative scolarity and level of income, population 15 years and older, Quebec, 1998

	%	Pop '000
Relative scolarity		
Very low	23.4	250
Low	20.7	237
Average	20.5	243
High	19.0	221
Very High	17.3	208
Income level		
Very poor	27.0	105
Poor	24.0	150
Lower middle income	20.6	384
Upper middle income	18.6	410
High income	16.2	111

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé* 1998.

1- Psychological distress indicator, Santé Québec.

- Low scolarity and low income levels are associated with elevated levels of stress

Table 2.14.8 – High level of psychological distress¹ according to long-term health problems, long-term activity limitations and perception of mental health, population 15 years and older, Quebec, 1998

Long-term health problems			Long-term activity limitations		Perception of mental health			
None	One problem	Two problems or more	Not limited	Limited	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average or poor
					%			
16.6	18.9	25.0	18.6	33.3	6.6	15.7	33.2	66.7

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé* 1998.

1- Psychological distress indicator, Santé Québec.

- Long-term health problems and long-term activity limitations are strongly associated with elevated levels of stress.

Table 2.14.9 – High level of psychological distress¹ according to certain characteristics linked to social environment, population 15 years and older, Quebec, 1998

	%	Pop '000
Traumatizing events during childhood or adolescence		
None	13.1	380
1 event	20.9	284
2 events	28.8	202
3 events or more	37.1	202
Satisfaction with social life		
Very satisfied	7.7	138
More or less satisfied	19.3	622
Not satisfied	52.6	399
Indicator of social support		
Weak	37.6	429
High	15.8	730

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé* 1998.

1- Psychological distress indicator, Santé Québec.

- High levels of psychological stress are strongly associated with certain social environment characteristics: 3 or more traumatizing events from childhood or adolescence, quality of social life and level of social support
- Respondents with high levels of psychological distress were highly likely to report not being satisfied with their social life (52.6%), having weak social support (37.6%) and 3 or more traumatizing events (37.1%)

Table 2.14.10 – Perception of mental health by mother tongue, Quebec, 1998

	N=	18211	1029	1045	445
		French	English	Other	n/a
Excellent		33.97%	33.14%	31.29%	25.17%
Very good		34.28%	36.64%	36.17%	27.42%
Good		21.39%	19.34%	22.49%	19.33%
Average		6.54%	6.51%	5.55%	5.62%
Poor		1.41%	2.92%	0.96%	0.00%
Unknown		2.41%	1.46%	3.54%	21.57%
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, *Enquête social et de santé* 1998.

- Anglophone respondents were more than twice as likely as Francophones to perceive their mental health as poor.