

Life expectancy hits 80.4 years: Statistics Canada

CBC News

The life expectancy of Canadians continues to rise, and has now reached 80.4 years, according to new numbers released Monday by Statistics Canada.

The federal agency's numbers are based on data from 2005, with a baby born that year expected to live to 80.4. In 1991, babies were only expected to live to 77.8. In 2004, life expectancy was 80.2.

"There's a trend where we see an increase in life expectancy," Statistics Canada analyst Brigitte Chavez told CBCNews.ca. "There's a constant increase."

Chavez said Statistics Canada has not studied why people are living longer, but said factors like access to health care, advances in medicine, better diets and access to clean water all play a role.

"With our numbers, we want to give a portrait of Canada," Chavez said.

Gap between men and women shrinks

She noted that women are still expected to live longer than men, although the gap between the sexes is shrinking.

Girls born in 2005 can expect to live 4.7 years longer than boys, with female life expectancy at 82.7 and male expectancy at 78.

In 1991, the gap between the sexes was 6.3 years, with girls expected to live to 80.9 and boys to 74.6.

Life expectancy does vary from province to province. British Columbia residents are

expected to live to 81.2, while people in Canada's three northern territories only have a life expectancy of 76.3.

Life expectancy in other provinces are:

- Ontario: 80.7
- Quebec: 80.4
- Alberta: 80.3
- New Brunswick: 79.8
- Prince Edward Island: 79.8
- Saskatchewan: 79.3
- Nova Scotia: 79.3
- Manitoba: 79.0
- Newfoundland and Labrador: 78.2

Average age of death hits 74.2 in 2005

While Statistics Canada calculated life expectancy, it also studied trends in the deaths reported in 2005.

Canadians lived to a mean age of 74.2, compared to 70.9 in 1991.

The mean age of death varied from province to province in 2005, with people in P.E.I. dying at 75.6 years old, while those in Nunavut died at 47.8.

In the other provinces and territories, the mean age of death was:

- Nova Scotia: 75.3
- Saskatchewan: 75.3
- New Brunswick: 75.1
- Manitoba: 74.6
- British Columbia: 74.6
- Ontario: 74.5
- Quebec: 74.0
- Newfoundland and Labrador: 73.7
- Alberta: 71.6
- Yukon: 66.2
- Northwest Territories: 61.1

Chavez said the reasons for the variations were not studied in Statistics Canada's study, but she noted many factors could have played a role.

Populations in the territories and Alberta are much younger than places like Prince Edward Island, so the proportion of young people dying would be higher. In addition, the quality of workplace safety, suicide rates, infant mortality, access to health care also played roles in the ages of death from province to province.

Meanwhile, women who died in 2005 were older, on average, than men. The mean age of women who died was 77.4, while for men it was 71.1.

But the gap between the sexes shrunk. In 1990, 6.6 years was the difference between the two sexes in the average age of death, with women at 74.2 years and men at 67.6.

Aging population means more deaths

Statistics Canada said a total of 230,132 people died in 2005, up by 1.6 per cent from the year before. This is the largest increase since 2002, when the number of deaths jumped by 1.9 per cent.

The federal agency attributed the increase to "a long-term upward trend in the wake of a growing and aging population," according to a news release.

It also noted the national infant mortality rate rose slightly in 2005, to 5.4 deaths for every 1,000 live births, from 5.3 in 2004. But despite the slight increase, Statistics Canada said the infant mortality rate has been relatively stable since 1998.

Before 1998, the rate was on a steady decline.

Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/life-expectancy-hits-80-4-years-statistics-canada-1.739030>