



Canadian  
Collaborative  
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Initiative

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## OVERVIEW

# Prevalence of Mental Illnesses and Related Service Utilization in Canada: An Analysis of the Canadian Community Health Survey

## Where are Canadians seeking help for their mental health care? Are they satisfied with the help they get?

As part of its analysis of the current state of collaborative mental health care in Canada, the Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Initiative undertook a review of mental health prevalence and service utilization patterns, using data from the Canadian Community Health Survey Cycle 1.2: Mental Health and Well-Being (2002) and other sources. The purpose of this Canadian Community Health Survey is to obtain timely and reliable cross-sectional estimates of mental health determinants, mental health status and mental health system utilization across Canada and to determine prevalence rates of selected mental disorders.

### Key Findings

- In a one-year period, 10% of Canadians used services for their mental health.
- The most widely consulted human resources in descending order are: general practitioners (GP), social workers/counselors/psychotherapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and self-help groups.
- This trend was different in Quebec, where psychologists were the second group of professionals most often consulted.
- When grouping providers by sector, people most often sought professionals in the general health system, then “other professionals” (e.g., nurses, social workers, religious advisors, acupuncturists, chiropractors, dietitians and others), followed by mental health specialists (i.e. psychiatrists and psychologists) and finally the voluntary sector (i.e., self-help groups, telephone help lines, Internet).
- Half of the time, when a GP was consulted, another professional or mental health specialist was also involved. This is an indicator of potential collaborative mental health care.
- When looking at the prevalence of various mental disorders and substance dependence across the country, there were minor variances but no significant differences.
- Nearly 40% of Canadians with a self-reported mental health disorder reported using health services for their mental health. There was no statistical difference in the number of Canadians who reported seeking health services for their mental health across provinces.

The paper provides information on prevalence, by province, of selected mental health and addictions issues. It also describes service utilization by profession.

This document provides an overview of the paper: *Prevalence of Mental Illnesses and Related Service Utilization in Canada: An Analysis of the Canadian Community Health Survey*.

The paper is available in English and French. Visit our Web site: [www.ccmhi.ca](http://www.ccmhi.ca), or contact:

The CCMHI Secretariat  
Tel: (905) 629-0900  
E-mail: [info@ccmhi.ca](mailto:info@ccmhi.ca)

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the CCMHI secretariat and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the CCMHI's member organizations or Health Canada.

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