

A Comparison of Health-Adjusted Life Expectancy, Self-Assessed Health and Access to a Regular Health Care Provider by Sex/Gender in Newfoundland and Labrador

Objective

To examine the impact of sex/gender on health-adjusted life expectancy, self-assessed health and access to a regular health care provider in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and Canada.

Practice Points

1. Health-adjusted life expectancy is the number of years in good health that an individual can expect to live given the current morbidity and mortality conditions. Health-adjusted life expectancy is not only a measure of quantity of life but also a measure of quality of life.
2. Self-rated health reflects an individual's overall perception of his or her health. Despite its subjective nature, self-rated health is a major indicator of well-being.
3. Access to health care is fundamental to health and staying well. Having reasonable and equitable access to universal health services facilitates earlier diagnosis, lowers mortality and comorbidity rates, and leads to improved physical, mental, emotional and social outcomes. However, when barriers such as provider availability, inadequate health insurance coverage, cost of non-insured health services (e.g. dental care, prescription drugs and mental health counselling), socio-cultural issues and health literacy prevent people from getting these services, health suffers.
4. Quality of Care NL acknowledges that gender expression exists on a spectrum and not as a binary. Due to limited data availability on gender as well as privacy concerns, this sex/gender-based analysis is limited to male/female or men/women. Please note, the use of the terms sex, gender, male/female and men/women in this analysis correspond with the original data sources.

Methods

1. Data on health-adjusted life expectancy, self-assessed health, self-assessed mental health and regular health care provider was obtained from Statistics Canada.

2. Self-rated health and self-rated mental health were measured using the following questions, "In general, how is your health?" and "In general, how is your mental health?" The possible response categories included: excellent, very good, good, fair or poor.
3. Indicators were compared over time for NL and Canada by sex/gender and between provinces by sex/gender.

Results

Health-Adjusted Life Expectancy

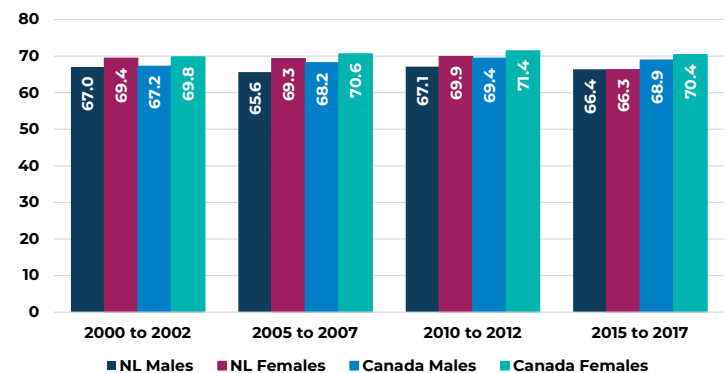


Figure 1. Health-adjusted Life Expectancy (from Birth) in NL and Canada by Sex (years), 2000/2002 to 2015/2017

- From 2000/2002 to 2015/2017, health-adjusted life expectancy was lower in NL compared to Canada for both males and females and this gap has grown.
- In 2000/2002, health-adjusted life expectancy was 0.2 years lower for males in NL compared to males in Canada and 0.4 years lower for females in NL compared to Canada. In 2015/2017, it was 2.5 years lower for males and 4.1 years lower for females in NL compared to Canada.

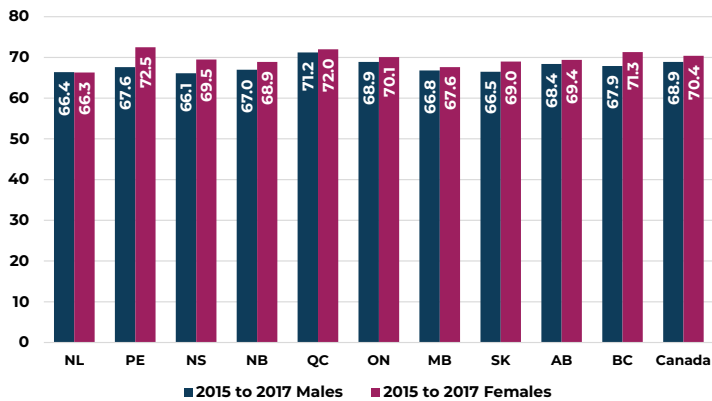
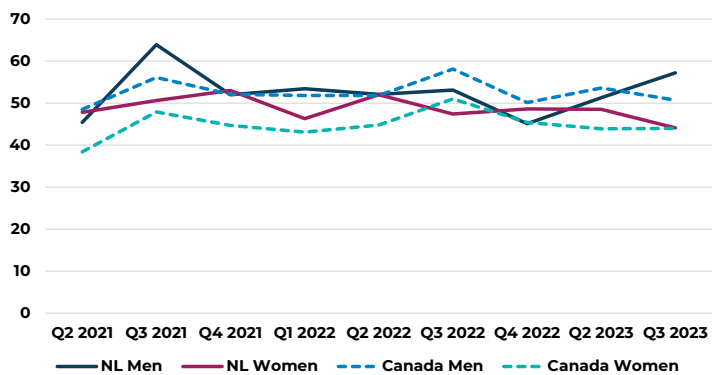


Figure 2. Health-adjusted Life Expectancy (from Birth) by Province and Sex (years), 2015/2017

- In 2015/2017, NL males ranked ninth for health-adjusted life expectancy among the Canadian provinces and NL females ranked tenth (1=best and 10=worst).

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0370-01 Health-adjusted life expectancy, by sex; Canadian Vital Statistics Death Database (CVSD), 2000/2002 to 2015/2017.

Self-Rated Mental Health



*Data not available for Q1 2023

Figure 3. Self-rated Mental Health (Excellent or Very Good) for those Aged 15 Years and Older in NL and Canada by Gender (%), Q2 2021 to Q3 2023

- Across Canada, excellent or very good self-rated mental health rates were higher for men compared to women from Q2 2021 to Q3 2023. In NL, there was no consistent trend by gender over time.
- In Q3 2023, excellent or very good self-rated mental health rates were 13% higher for men in NL compared to men in Canada but similar for women in NL and Canada.

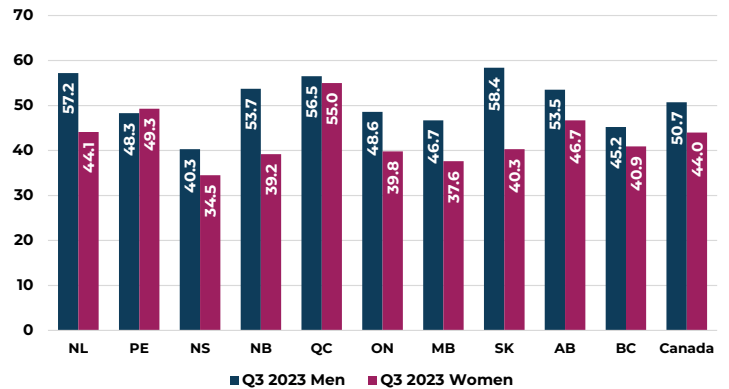
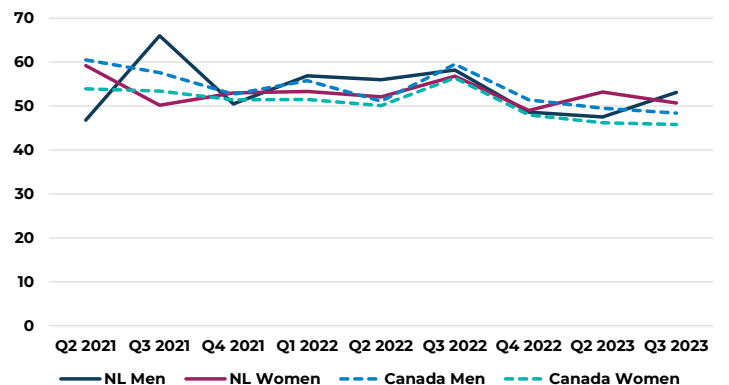


Figure 4. Self-rated Mental Health (Excellent or Very Good) for those Aged 15 Years and Older by Province and Gender (%), Q3 2023

- In Q3 2023, NL men ranked second among the Canadian provinces for the proportion of those reporting excellent or very good mental health and NL women ranked fourth (1=best and 10=worst).

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 45-10-0079-01 Perceived mental health by gender and province; Canadian Social Survey (CSS), Q2 2021 to Q3 2023.

Self-Rated Health



*Data not available for Q1 2023

Figure 5. Self-rated Health (Excellent or Very Good) for those Aged 15 Years Older in NL and Canada by Gender (%), Q2 2021 to Q3 2021

- Across Canada, excellent or very good self-rated health rates were slightly higher for men compared to women from Q2 2021 to Q3 2023. In NL, there was no consistent trend by gender over time.
- In Q3 2023, excellent or very good self-rated health rates were approximately 10% higher for both men and women in NL compared to men and women in Canada.

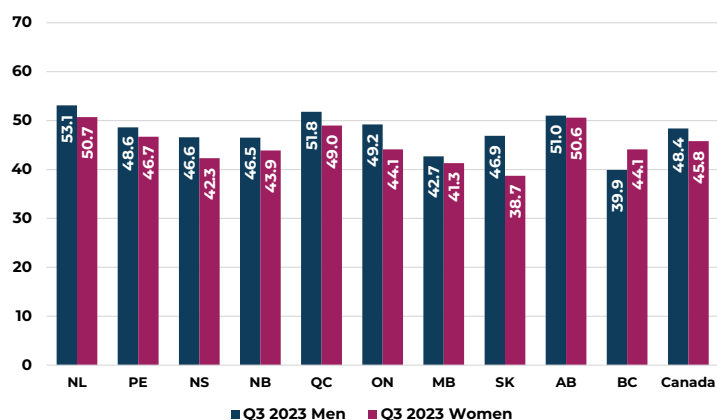


Figure 6. Self-rated Health (Excellent or Very Good) for those Aged 15 Years and Older by Province and Gender (%), Q3 2023

- In Q3 2023, both men and women in NL ranked first among the Canadian provinces for the proportion of those reporting excellent or very good health (1=best and 10=worst).

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 45-10-0081-01 Perceived health by gender and province; Canadian Social Survey (CSS), Q2 2021 to Q3 2023.

Regular Health Care Provider

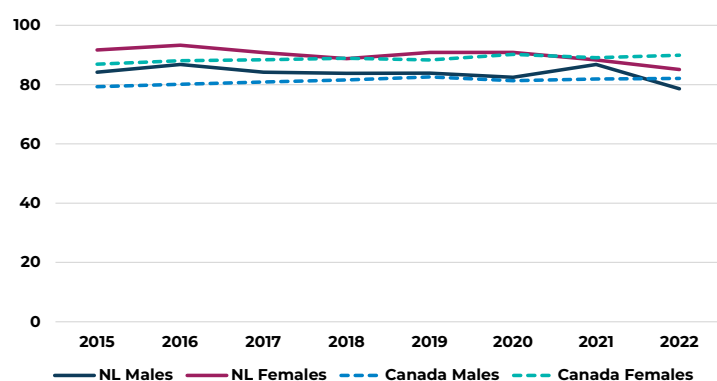


Figure 7. Percentage of Individuals who have a Regular Health Care Provider* in NL and Canada by Sex (aged ≥ 12 years) (%), 2015 to 2022

*Regular health care provider refers to: family doctor or general practitioner, medical specialist, nurse practitioner, or other health professional.

- From 2015 to 2022, the proportion of individuals reporting they had a regular health care provider remained fairly stable for both males and females across Canada. In NL, rates remained fairly stable for both males and females up until 2020 but decreased for both groups by 2022.

- Females in NL and across Canada were more likely to report having a regular health care provider compared to males.



Figure 8. Percentage of Individuals who have a Regular Health Care Provider by Province and Sex (aged ≥ 12 years) (%), 2022

- In 2022, both males and females in NL ranked eighth among the Canadian provinces for having a regular health care provider (1=best and 10=worst).

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0096-01 Health characteristics, annual estimates; Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2015 to 2022.

Conclusions

- Males and females in NL experience some of the worst health-adjusted life expectancy rates in the country.
- Over a 15-year period, health-adjusted life expectancy in NL decreased by 0.6 years for males and 3.1 years for females.
- Among the Canadian provinces, men and women in NL have the highest rates for self-assessed health status and some of the highest rates for self-assessed mental health status.
- In both NL and Canada, females are more likely to have a regular health care provider than males.
- Overall, the proportion of males and females reporting they have a regular health care provider has remained fairly stable in Canada but decreased for males and females in NL.