
Inventory of National Rural Health Research Related Databases

Database name: **Vital Statistics**

Thematic Coverage: This administrative survey collects information annually from all provincial and territorial vital statistics registries on all live births in Canada, including births, stillbirths, marriage and deaths in Canada

Maintained by: Health Statistics, Statistics Canada

Availability: There is no public release file. Access to the data files are not generally provided beyond the organization with the exception of Health Canada, which receives non-identifiable data for analytical purposes. This database is not linked with external databases. Requests for internal linkage are assessed by a linkage committee made up of Statistics Canada's senior management.

Start Date: 1921
Release Date: Approximately 12 months after the collection period
Frequency of collection: Annual

Data Collection: Taken from provincial and territorial sources, Statistics Canada compiles data on all (100% coverage) those individuals, who were born, stillborn, married, divorced or who died in a calendar year.

Sample size: Since vital statistics reporting is required by law coverage is thought to be very close to 100% complete. Data is analysis from the case residence not where the event occurred.

Records received after the cut-off date and births of Canadians in countries other than Canada or the United States are missing.

Geographic coverage: All provinces and territories

Lowest geographic level collected: Postal Code, however not complete for many provinces, other less precise geographic variables used.

Lowest geographic level of release: Data released at the Census Division (CD) level without suppression. At the Census Subdivision (CSD) cells with less than 3 observations are suppressed. At the CSD if no suppression is required permission for data release must be obtained from all provinces.

Existing rural variable: Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) / Non-CMA are coded. Prince Edward Island has no CMA and the CMAs of Montreal and Toronto were each separate strata.

Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) / Census Agglomeration (CA) and Non-CMA/CA can be used as an urban / rural variable. CMA/CA and Non-CMA/CA can be used to construct a 5-level rural/urban variable. Urban core, urban fringe and rural fringe distinguish between central and peripheral urban and rural areas within a census metropolitan area (CMA) or census agglomeration (CA). **Urban core** is a large urban area around which a CMA or a CA is delineated. The urban core must have a population (based on the previous census) of at least 100,000 persons in the case of a CMA, or between 10,000 and 99,999 persons in the case of a CA. The urban core of a CA that has been merged with an adjacent CMA or larger CA is called the **secondary urban core**. **Urban fringe** is the urban area within a CMA or CA that is not contiguous to the urban core. It has a minimum population of 1,000 and a population density of at least 400 per square kilometre, based on the previous census counts. **Rural fringe** is all territory within a CMA or CA not classified as an urban core or an urban fringe. The other levels of geography in this classification are **urban area (small towns) that lie outside of CMA** and **rural area lying outside of CMA**.

Rural definitions that can be constructed from this database include (building block)[†]:

- ✓ Rural and Small Town definition (Census Subdivision)
- ✓ Metropolitan area and census agglomeration Influenced Zones (Census Subdivision)
- ✓ OECD “rural communities” definition (Census Consolidated Subdivision)
- ✓ OECD “predominantly rural regions” definition (Census Division)
- ✓ Ehrensaft’s “Beale codes” (Census Division)

[†] It should be noted that although it is possible to use the Vital Statistics Database with the Statistics Canada definition of rural, there may be some problems with disaggregating Census metropolitan Areas (CMA’s) and Census Agglomerations (CA’s) needed to derive the five urban rural definitions.

Data Elements:

- Death and death rates by cause, ICD code categories
- Births and stillbirths, and birth rate,
- Marriages and divorces
- Age-specific fertility rates

Notes:

Birth data for Ontario are underestimated for data years 1990-1997 due to incomplete files.