

Population Characteristics:

Compared with Ottawa, the population of Eastern Counties is older and more rural. It has proportionately more Francophones and Aboriginal people, but fewer visible minorities:

- About 1 in 6 Eastern Counties' residents (14.9%) are 65 years or older compared with 1 in 8 (12.4%) in Ottawa (2006)[^]
- Eastern Counties' residents are six times more likely to live in a rural¹ setting (48.5% vs. 8.3% in Ottawa, 2006)^{**}
- Eastern Counties' residents are more than twice as likely to have French as a mother tongue (42.0% vs. 16.1% in Ottawa, 2006)[^]
- Including Akwesasne, the proportion of Eastern Counties' residents who are Aboriginal is 6.5% compared with 1.5% in Ottawa (2006)[^]
- Only 2.5% of Eastern Counties' residents are visible minorities compared with 20.2% in Ottawa.^{**}

Aging:

Over the next 20 years, the number of seniors (65+) in Eastern Counties is projected to approximately double.^{^^} The population under 65, meanwhile, is actually projected to decline by about 4%. There is now 1 senior for every 5 people under 65; whereas in 20 years, the ratio will be 1 to 3.

Socio-economic status:

Eastern Counties' residents have, on average, less education but are less likely to be classified as 'low income' than people in Ottawa. Unemployment rates overall are comparable. Among youth (aged 15-24), though, the rates are higher in Eastern Counties.

¹ Minimum population concentration of 1,000 persons and a population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre (2006 Census).

- Around half (53.1%) of Eastern Counties' residents, aged 25-54 have completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree compared with nearly 3/4 (73.4%, 2006) of Ottawa residents.^{**}
- Compared with Ottawa, proportionately fewer Eastern Counties' residents are classified as 'low income'² (11.4% vs. 15.2% in 2006).^{**}
- The overall unemployment rate in Eastern Counties (5.0%) in 2008 was comparable to Ottawa's (4.9%). Among youth, however, the rate was higher in Eastern Counties (16.5% vs. 9.1% in Ottawa).^{**}

Risk factors:

Smoking, second hand smoke exposure and obesity are more prevalent in Eastern Counties than in Ottawa. Leisure physical activity rates are comparable, however, and the levels of life stress reported are lower in the Eastern Counties.

- Eastern Counties' residents, aged 12 and up, are more than twice as likely to smoke daily, compared with residents of Ottawa (26.6% vs. 11.9%, 2008). They are also nearly 4 times more likely to be exposed to second-hand smoke at home (13.7% vs. 3.8, 2008%)*
- Compared with Ottawa, a larger proportion of Eastern Counties' adults are obese (25.3% vs. 15.2%, 18+, 2008).*
- Considering everyone who is overweight as well as those who are obese, the proportion rises to nearly 6 in 10 (58.5%) in Eastern Counties compared with less than half in Ottawa (47.7%, 18+, 2008).*

² Low-income cut-offs (LICO) represent levels of income where people spend disproportionate amounts of money for food, shelter and clothing. They are based on family and community size and are updated to account for changes in the consumer price index.

- Based on a set of questions about their daily activities, the proportion classified as 'physically inactive' during leisure time is 41.4% in Eastern Counties (12+, 2008). The figure for Ottawa (42.3%) is not different when the margin of error is taken into account. *
- Eastern Counties' residents, however, seem to have it better in terms of perceived life stress. Fewer than one in five (18.7%) report that most days in their lives were 'quite a bit' or 'extremely' stressful compared with more than one in four in Ottawa (28.7%, 12+, 2008)*

Mortality:

Life expectancy is lower in Eastern Counties than Ottawa. Some of the difference is explained by higher rates of mortality from circulator disease, respiratory disease and lung cancer.

- Compared with Ottawa, life expectancy in Eastern Counties is 3 years lower for males (75.8 vs. 78.8.) and 1.5 years lower for females (81.5 vs. 83.0).^
- The mortality from circulatory diseases (including coronary artery disease and stroke) about one-third higher among Eastern Counties' residents compared with Ottawa (247.6 vs. 186.5 per 100,000, 2000 to 2002).**
- For respiratory disease mortality, the rate is 20% higher and for lung cancer, it is 30% higher.**
- All three causes are strongly associated with smoking. Circulatory diseases are also strongly associated with excess weight.

Health Impacts:

Compared with Ottawa, Eastern Counties' residents rate their health worse, are more likely to report pain or discomfort, and may have more activity limitations due to health conditions.

- More than one-third (35.0%) of Eastern Counties' residents, aged 12 and older, report that limitations in activities because of a chronic physical or mental health condition or problem. The figure for Ottawa is lower (29.0%), although the difference is not statistically significant.
- Eastern Counties' residents are twice as likely to report that they usually experience moderate or severe pain (20.3% vs. 10.4% in Ottawa, 12+, 2008)
- Eastern Counties' residents are more likely to rate their health as 'poor' or 'fair' than those living in Ottawa (16.9% vs. 9.5%, 12+, 2008).

** Source: Statistics Canada Health Profile (www12.statcan.gc.ca/health-sante/82-228/2009/06/index.cfm?Lang=E)

^ Source: Profile of the Champlain Communities of Care: Focus on Eastern Counties (www.champlainhln.ca/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=3034)

^^ Ministry of Finance Estimates (1986-2006) & Projections (2007-2030). Source: Provincial Health Planning Database, May 2008.

*Source: 2008 Canadian Community Health Survey, CANSIM Table 105-0501