

Analytical Paper

General Social Survey: An Overview, 2009



Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division
Jean Talon Building, 7th Floor, 170 Tunney's Pasture Driveway
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6

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Symbols

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- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^P preliminary
- ^r revised
- x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published

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1. Introduction

The two primary objectives of the General Social Survey (GSS) are:

- a) to gather data on social trends in order to monitor changes in the living conditions and well-being of Canadians over time; and
- b) to provide immediate information on specific social policy issues of current or emerging interest.

2. Background

The General Social Survey program, established in 1985, conducts telephone surveys from a sample selected across the 10 provinces. The General Social Survey is recognized for its regular collection of cross-sectional data that allows for trend analysis, and its capacity to test and develop new concepts that address emerging issues. The history and plans for future collection of GSS data are outlined below.

Table 2.1
Topics according to series, year and cycle

Topic	1 st series	2 nd series	3 rd series	4 th series	5 th series	6 th series
	year (cycle)					
Health	1985 (1)	1991 (6)	..	..	..	..
Time use	1986 (2)	1992 (7)	1998 (12)	2005 (19)	2010 (24)	..
Victimization	1988 (3)	1993 (8)	1999 (13)	2004 (18)	2009 (23)	..
Education, work and retirement	1989 (4)	1994 (9)	2002 (16)	2007 (21)	..	..
Family	1990 (5)	1995 (10)	2001 (15)	2006 (20)	2007 (21)	2011 (25)
Social support and aging	1985 (1)	1990 (5)	1996 (11)	2002 (16)	2007 (21)	..
Access to and use of ICT	2000 (14)	..	..	..	..	..
Social engagement	2003 (17)	2008 (22)	..	..	..	..

Source(s): Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1985 to 2011.

The average length of an interview is 40 to 45 minutes. Each survey contains a core topic, focus or exploratory questions and a standard set of socio-demographic questions used for classification. More recent cycles have also included some qualitative questions which explore perceptions.

3. Target Population

The survey collects data over a twelve month period from the population living in private households in the 10 provinces. For all cycles except Cycles 16 and 21, the population aged 15 and older has been sampled. Cycles 16 and 21 only sampled persons aged 45 and older.

Until 1998, the sample size was approximately 10,000 persons. This was increased in 1999 to 25,000. With a sample of 25,000, basic estimates are available at both the national and provincial levels. Depending on the survey topic, the increased sample size may also be sufficient to produce estimates for small population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities and seniors.

Table 3.1
General Social Survey sample size

Cycle	Data collection	Sample size	Main core content	Focus issue / New content
1	1985	11,200	Health	Social support
2	1986	16,390	Time use, social mobility	Language
3	1988	9,870	Personal risk	Victim services
4	1989	9,338	Education and work	No focus issue
5	1990	13,495	Family and friends	No focus issue
6	1991	11,924	Health	Various health topics
7	1992	9,815	Time use	Culture, sport and unpaid work activities
8	1993	10,385	Personal risk	Alcohol and drug use
9	1994	11,876	Education, work and retirement	Transition into retirement
10	1995	10,749	Family	Effects of tobacco smoke
11	1996	12,756	Social support	Tobacco use
12	1998	10,749	Time use	Sports participation/culture
13	1999	25,876	Victimization	Spousal, senior abuse/perceptions
14	2000	25,090	Technology – computer and internet	No focus issue
15	2001	24,310	Family history	No focus issue
16	2002	24,870	Social support and aging	Retirement planning and experience
17	2003	24,951	Social engagement	No focus issue
18	2004	23,766	Victimization	No focus issue
19	2005	19,597	Time use	Social networks/trust/transportation
20	2006	23,608	Family history	Family transitions
21	2007	23,404	Family, social support, retirement	Caregiving, retirement transitions
22	2008	20,401	Social networks	Coping with change
23	2009	25,000 ¹	Victimization	Internet victimization
24	2010	25,000 ¹	Time-stress and well-being	Work-life balance
25	2011	25,000 ¹	Family	...

Note(s): 1. Estimated

Source(s): Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1985 to 2011.

4. Collection Methodology

Computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) is used to collect data for the GSS. This collection method is attractive because of lower collection costs, as well as considerable flexibility with respect to sample design. Coverage is good but has been declining in recent years with the increase in cell-phone only households. Response rates for the GSS are between 57% and 83%, depending on the year and survey topic.

Telephone interviewing does have some drawbacks: non-coverage of households is concentrated in certain population groups – those who tend to have only cell phones (e.g. young, single, urban Canadians) or those without a telephone (e.g. those with lower incomes and education levels); response rates tend to be lower than for face-to-face interviews, and there are limitations on the amount and type of data which can be collected.

Table 4.1
General Social Survey refusal and response rates

Cycle	Survey year	Household refusal	Respondent refusal	Response rate
1	1985	6.5	1.3	83.4
2	1986	6.2	2.8	78.9
3	1988	6.0	1.2	82.4
4	1989	7.2	1.7	80.7
5	1990	10.3	2.4	75.8
6	1991	5.6	1.5	80.2
7	1992	7.3	4.0	76.8
8	1993	5.6	3.6	81.6
9	1994	5.9	4.5	81.2
10	1995	6.0	4.3	81.4
11	1996	5.0	2.4	85.3
12	1998	8.7	3.7	77.6
13	1999	6.6	2.8	81.3
14	2000	8.4	8.6	80.8
15	2001	6.9	3.1	80.9
16 ¹	2002	..	..	74.5
17	2003	7.4	2.7	78.0
18	2004	9.4	2.7	74.5
19	2005	14.6	4.0	58.6
20	2006	12.7	3.8	67.4
21 ²	2007	..	..	57.7
22	2008	15.2	5.3	57.3

Note(s):

1. Response rate takes CCHS 1.1 into account, as Cycle 16 was a follow-up of CCHS respondents aged 45 and above.
2. Response rate is based on two components for Cycle 21: random digit dialling (RDD) and targeted respondents (TR) from Cycle 20 aged 45 and above.

Source(s): Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1985 to 2008.

5. Content and Product Description

Health – cycle 1 (1985) and cycle 6 (1991)

In cycle 1, the core content on health covered short and long term disability, well-being, height and weight, health problems, smoking, alcohol use, physical activity, sleep and use of health care services. Focus content concentrated on the elderly, including potential support networks, support received and given and social activities.

Cycle 1 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Health and Social Support	12M0001XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	
Health and Social Support, 1985 (GSS Analysis Series)	11-612-MPE, no. 1
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE
Lifestyle Risks: Smoking and Drinking in Canada	Spring 1987
Religious Affiliation in Canada	Autumn 1987
Help Around the House: Support for Older Canadians	Autumn 1989

Cycle 6 marked the first repeat of the GSS core subject areas. Most of the core content of cycle 6 repeated that of cycle 1 (1985). As well, much of the core content from the Canada Health Survey (1978-1979) was included. The three surveys can be used to measure changes in health status over time. Focus content was diffuse: flu vaccinations and emotional health measures sponsored by various divisions of Health and Welfare Canada and a health state classification system sponsored internally by the Analytical Studies Branch of Statistics Canada.

Cycle 6 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Health	12M0006XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	
Health Status of Canadians (GSS Analysis Series)	11-612-MPE, no. 8
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE
Sleep Problems: Who do They Affect?	Winter 1992
Health and Socio-Economic Inequalities	Summer 1995
Youth Smoking in Canada	Winter 1996

Time Use – cycle 2 (1986), cycle 7 (1992), cycle 12 (1998), cycle 19 (2005) and Time-Stress and Well-Being – cycle 24 (2010)

In cycle 2, the core content on time use and social mobility covered the topics of daily activities done on one's own and with others, inter – and intra-generational mobility, and personal well-being.

Cycle 2 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Time Use, Social Mobility and Language Use	12M0002XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	
Where Does Time Go? (GSS Analysis Series)	11-612-MPE, no. 4
Ups and Downs on the Ladder of Success: Social Mobility in Canada (GSS Analysis Series)	11-612-MPE, no. 5
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE
How Canadians Spend their Day	Winter 1989
Household Chores	Spring 1990
Time Use of the Elderly	Summer 1990
Sleep Patterns	Winter 1990
Commuting Time	Winter 1990

Core content for cycle 7 was again time use. The diary approach used in cycle 2 was repeated. Coding of activities was expanded. A main objective of the cycle was the measurement of unpaid work including domestic work, childcare, volunteer work. Also included were questions to measure participation in sport and cultural activities. These questions were sponsored by Sports Canada, and various government departments and cultural organizations.

Cycle 7 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Time Use	12M0007XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	
As Time Goes By... Time Use of Canadians	89-544-XPE
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE
Time Use of the Elderly	Summer 1990
Time Use of Canadians in 1992	Autumn 1993
Tempus Fugit... Are You Time Crunched?	Winter 1993
Sport Participation in Canada	Spring 1995
Measuring and Valuing Households' Unpaid Work	Autumn 1996
Working Arrangements and Time Stress	Winter 1996
Canadian Television in Transition	Spring 1997
The Leisurely Pursuit of Reading	Autumn 1997

In cycle 12, content on time use was again repeated, with additional questions on activities related to helping others. For the first time, the diary instrument was implemented using a computer assisted telephone interview application. Activities were coded on-line by interviewers as data were being collected. The data enabled analysts to measure unpaid work, such as time spent looking after children or elderly persons, volunteer work, time crunch and quality of life. With funding from Sports Canada and other cultural agencies and departments, participation in sports and cultural activities was also included in this cycle. For the first time, respondents were asked questions about satisfaction and life cycles.

Cycle 12 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Time Use	12M0012XCB
Public Use Microdata File – User’s Guide	12M0012GPE
Overview of the Time Use of Canadians in 1998	12F0080XIE
Days of Our Lives: Time Use and Transitions Over the Life Course	
Work, Parenthood and the Experience of Time Scarcity	89-584-XIE no. 1
Transitions to Union Formation	89-584-XIE no. 2
School, Work and the School-Work Combination by Young People	89-584-XIE no. 3
The Time of Our Lives: Juggling Work and Leisure Over the Life Cycle	89-584-XIE no. 4
The Transition to Retirement: When Every Day is Saturday	89-584-XIE no. 5
Living Longer, Living Better	89-584-XIE no. 6
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE/11-008-XIE
Traffic Report: Weekday Commuting Patterns	Spring 2000
Being There: The Time Dual-earner Couples Spend With Their Children	Summer 2000
A Family Affair: Children’s Participation in Sports	Autumn 2000
Learning on Your Own	Spring 2001
You Snooze, You Lose	Spring 2001
Enjoying Work; An Effective Strategy in the Struggle to Juggle	Summer 2001
Time of Our Lives	Winter 2001
Drive to Excel: A Portrait of Canada’s Workaholics	Spring 2002
No Time to Relax? How Full-time Workers Spend the Weekends	Summer 2002
Time or Money? How High and Low Income Canadians Spend their Time	Summer 2002
Time Alone	Autumn 2002
Traumatic Life Events	Spring 2003
Studying and Working: The Busy Lives of Students with Paid Employment	Spring 2003
Unpaid Informal Caregiving	Autumn 2003

In cycle 19, the time use survey repeated content from earlier cycles, and again used the diary instrument which was implemented in cycle 12 survey. In addition, respondents were asked new questions about transportation, sense of belonging, trust and workplace health. Data from GSS cycle 19 were collected from January to December 2005. The first data were published starting July 2006.

Cycle 19 products	Catalogue number
Are Women Spending More Time on Unpaid Domestic Work Than Men in Canada?	89-630-X200800110705
How do Teenagers Spend Their Days?	89-630-X200800110673
Canadians Attend Weekly Religious Services Less Than 20 Years Ago	89-630-X200800110650
Understanding Culture Consumption in Canada	81-595-MIE2008066
Sport Participation in Canada, 2005	81-595-MIE2008060
How Canadians' Use of the Internet Affects Social Life and Civic Participation	56F0004MWE2008016
Aging Well: Time Use Patterns of Older Canadians	89-622-XWE2006002
The Time it Takes to Get to Work and Back	89-622-XWE2006001
Public Use Microdata File – Time Use	12M0019XCB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	12M0019GPE
As Time Goes By... Time Use of Canadians, 2005	12F0080XWE
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE/11-008-XIE
Who Participates in Active Leisure?	Summer 2009
Dependence on Cars in Urban Neighbourhoods	Summer 2008
Kids' Sports	Summer 2008
Who Gets Any Sleep These Days? Sleep Patterns of Canadians	Summer 2008
Work-life Balance of Shift Workers	August 2008
Time Escapes Me: Workaholics and Time Perception	Spring 2007
Time Spent With Family During A Typical Workday, 1986 to 2005	Spring 2007
The Busy Lives of Teens	May 2007
Converging Gender Roles	July 2006
The Time it Takes to Get to Work and Back	July 2006
The Internet: Is it Changing the Way Canadians Spend their Time?	56F0004MIE2006013
Like Commuting? Workers' Perceptions of Their Daily Commute	Winter 2006
Seniors' Access to Transportation	11-008-X

The theme for cycle 24 is Time Stress and Well-being. The purpose of this survey is to better understand how Canadians balance their work and home responsibilities and how sports and culture contribute to their well-being. The main objective of this survey is to collect detailed data on daily activities by means of a time use diary. For the first time, the survey will collect data on simultaneous activities, thus allowing a new look at child care related activities (active and passive), on multitasking, as well as on the impact of new communication technologies on time use. The collection of the survey is planned to start in January 2010.

Personal Risk – cycle 3 (1988), cycle 8 (1993), Victimization – cycle 13 (1999), cycle 18 (2004) and cycle 23 (2009)

Core content for Cycle 3 was on personal risk, with primary emphasis on exposure to accidents and crime. Focus content, sponsored by the Department of Justice, was on services to victims of crime. The 1993 GSS again covered personal risk including both accidents and criminal victimization.

Cycle 3 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Personal Risk	12M0003XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	
Patterns of Criminal Victimization in Canada (GSS Analysis Series)	11-612-MPE, no. 2
Accidents in Canada (GSS Analysis Series)	11-612-MPE, no. 3
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE
Household Property Crime	Spring 1990
Perceptions of the Justice System	Winter 1990
Violent Victimization	Summer 1990

Focus content for cycle 8 was alcohol and drug use, which was sponsored by the Health Promotion Directorate of Health Canada. Cycle 8 marked the first time that GSS collected data using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The interviewer asked the respondent the questions, then entered the responses directly into a computer. Built-in edits were programmed into CATI, thereby reducing the amount of editing required after collection.

Cycle 8 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Personal Risk	12M0008XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	
Tables in Victimization	12F0042XPE
Trends in Criminal Victimization: 1988-1993 (Juristat)	85-002-XPB, vol. 14, no. 13
Urban/Rural Criminal Victimization in Canada (Juristat)	85-002-XPB, vol. 14, no. 17
Public Perceptions of Crime (Juristat)	85-002-XPB, vol. 15, no. 1
Risk of Personal and Household Victimization: Canada, 1993 (Juristat)	85-002-XPB, vol. 15, no. 2
Victims' Use of Police and Social Services (Juristat)	85-002-XPB, vol. 15, no. 6
Fear and Personal Safety (Juristat)	85-002-XPB, vol. 15, no. 9
Accidents in Canada 1988 and 1993 (Health Reports)	82-003-XPB, vol. 7, no. 2
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE
School Leavers	Autumn 1993
Seniors 75 plus: Living Arrangements and Lifestyles	Autumn 1993
Alcohol Use and Its Consequences	Autumn 1995

The 1999 – cycle 13 of the GSS was the third cycle that collected information on the nature and extent of criminal victimization in Canada. This cycle did not include questions on accidents as this topic is now covered by the National Population Health Survey. Focus content for cycle 13 addressed two areas of emerging interest. First, the Solicitor General of Canada sponsored eight scenario questions aimed at measuring public perception toward alternatives to imprisonment. One scenario was randomly assigned to each respondent. Second, the Interdepartmental Working Group on Family Violence sponsored modules on spousal violence and senior abuse. Respondents who disclosed spousal violence or senior abuse were asked to complete an abuse report, which provided details about the nature of the abuse.

Cycle 13 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Victimization	12M0013XCB
Public Use Microdata File – User’s Guide	12M0013GPE
Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2000	85-224-XIE
Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2001	85-224-XIE
Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2002	85-224-XIE
Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2003	85-224-XIE
Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2004	85-224-XIE
Criminal Victimization in Canada, 1999 (Juristat)	85-002-XPE, vol. 20, no.10 85-002-XIE, vol. 20, no.10
Public Attitudes Toward the Criminal Justice System (Juristat)	85-002-XPE, vol. 20, no.12 85-002-XIE, vol. 20, no.12
Break and Enter, 1999 (Juristat)	85-002-XPE, vol. 20, no.13 85-002-XIE, vol. 20, no.13
Children Witnessing Family Violence (Juristat)	85-002-XPE, vol. 21, no.6 85-002-XIE, vol. 21, no.6
Spousal Violence After Marital Separation (Juristat)	85-002-XPE, vol. 21, no.7 85-002-XIE, vol. 21, no.7
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series	85F0033MIE
A Profile of Criminal Victimization: Results of the 1999 GSS	85-553-XIE
Overview: Personal Safety and Perceptions of Policing	85-554-XIE

Cycle 18 of the GSS is the fourth cycle that collected information on the nature and extent of criminal victimization in Canada. The data were collected in 2004 and were released in July 2005. The representative sample was 23,766 respondents. Questions on senior abuse were dropped for Cycle 18, as well as the questions on public perception of alternatives to imprisonment. The new questions for this cycle covered topics such as use of restraining orders, stalking and social disorder.

Cycle 18 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Victimization	12M0018XCB (Nov. 2005)
Public Use Microdata File – User’s Guide	12M0018GPE (Nov. 2005)
Overview of Findings	85-565-XIE
Overview: Personal Safety and Perceptions of the Criminal Justice System	85-566-XIE
Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2005	85-224-XIE
Criminal Victimization in Canada, 2004	85-002-X20050078803
Victimization and Offending Among the Aboriginal Population in Canada.	85-002-X20060039199
Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends	85-570-X
Canadians' Use of Crime Prevention Measures	85F0033M2006012
Victimization and Offending in Canada's Territories	85F0033M2006011
Impacts and Consequences of Victimization, GSS 2004	85-002-X20070019575
Seniors As Victims of Crime	85F0033M2007014
Sexual Orientation and Victimization	85F0033M2008016
Visible Minorities and Victimization	85F0033M2008015
Criminal Victimization in the Workplace	85F0033M2007013
Hate Crime in Canada	85F0033M2008017
Household Income and Victimization in Canada, 2004	85F0033M2009020
Immigrants and Victimization, 2004	85F0033M2008018
Sexual Assault in Canada	85F0033M2008019
Fear of Crime and the Neighbourhood Context in Canadian Cities	85-561-M2008013
A Comparison of Large Urban, Small Urban and Rural Crime Rates, 2005	85-002-X20070039643
Criminal Justice Indicators	85-227-XIE
A Profile of Perceptions of Incivility in the Metropolitan Landscape	11-008-X200800210621
Criminal Victimization and Health: A Profile of Victimization Among Persons with Activity Limitations or Other Health Problems	85F0033M2009021
Violent Victimization in Canada	89-630-X200800110643
What are the Trends in Self-reported Spousal Violence in Canada?	89-630-X200800110661
How Satisfied are Immigrants with Their Personal Safety?	89-630-X200800110672

Cycle 23 of the GSS is the fifth cycle to collect information on the nature and extent of criminal victimization in Canada. The data are being collected in 2009 and will be released in the summer of 2010. The representative sample will be approximately 25,000 respondents. The section on stalking has been replaced with a single question. The new questions for this cycle cover crime prevention and internet victimization.

Education, Work and Retirement – cycle 4 (1989) and cycle 9 (1994)

Three main themes underlie cycle 4 content: work and education in the service economy, new technologies and human resources, and emerging trends in education and work. A small module on knowledge and attitudes to science and technology was also included.

Cycle 4 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Education and Work	12M0004XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User’s Guide	
Quality of Work in the Service Sector (GSS Analysis Series)	11-612-MPE, no.6
Human Resource Challenges of Education, Computers and Retirement (GSS analysis aeries)	11-612-MPE, no.7
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE
Computer Literacy	Winter 1990
Canadians and Retirement	Autumn 1992

Core content for cycle 9 was education, work and retirement. These were first covered in the 1989 GSS. Focus content for cycle 9 covered transition into retirement and post-retirement activities, as well as some questions on computer use. Also included were questions to measure social mobility, a topic covered in cycle 2.

Cycle 9 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Education, Work and Retirement	12M0009XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User’s Guide	
Canada’s Changing Retirement Patterns: Findings from the General Social Survey	89-546-XPE
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE
Preparing for the Information Highway: Information Technology in Canadian Households	Autumn 1995
Retirement in the 90s: Retired Men in Canada	Autumn 1996
Retirement in the 90s: Going Back to Work	Autumn 1996
Everyday Technology: Are Canadians Using It?	Autumn 1997
“I Feel Overqualified for My Job...”	Winter 1997
The Impact of Family Structure on High School Completion	Spring 1998

Note(s):

Some additional data on work-related issues can be found in cycle 14 – Access to and use of Information Communication Technology and retirement-related issues in cycle 16 – Social Support and Aging. Details on these cycles follow below.

Family and Friends – cycle 5 (1990), cycle 10 (1995), Family History – cycle 15 (2001) and Family Transitions – cycle 20 (2006)

Core content for Cycle 5 concentrated on the respondent's family and friends, as well as the relationships and interactions with them. The content drew heavily on the 1984 Family History Survey for birth and marriage/cohabitation history questions and on the social support sections of GSS Cycle 1 (1985 Survey). Some comparisons are possible with both of these earlier surveys.

Cycle 5 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Family and Friends	12M0005XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	
Family and Friends (GSS Analysis Series)	11-612-MPE, no. 9
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE
Leaving the Fold: Declining Church Attendance	Autumn 1991
Common Law: A Growing Alternative	Winter 1991
Food Banks	Spring 1992
Canadians on the Move	Summer 1992
Well-being of Older Canadians	Summer 1992
Today's Extended Families	Winter 1992
Emotional Support and Family Contacts of Older Canadians	Spring 1993
Dual Earners: Who's Responsible for Housework?	Winter 1993
Leaving the Nest? The Impact of Family Structure	Autumn 1995

Cycle 10 focused on Canadian families. This theme, in conjunction with the theme relating to social support and social networks, was also covered in cycle 5. More specifically, cycle 10 collected data on family and marital history (marriage and common-law relationships), joint custody arrangements, child leaving, family origins, fertility intentions, values and attitudes towards certain areas of family life, and work interruptions. In addition to the core content, cycle 10 included two focus themes: the effects of environmental tobacco smoke, and wartime service, which targeted persons aged 55 and over.

Cycle 10 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – The Family	12M0010XDB
Public Use Microdata File – User’s Guide	12M0010GPE
Canadian Families : Diversity and Change (PDF), (fact sheet)	
Dynamics of Formation and Dissolution of First Common-law Unions in Canada (PDF)	89F0113XIE
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE/11-008-XIE
Youth Smoking in Canada	Winter 1996
Changes in Women’s Work Continuity	Autumn 1997
Attitudes Toward Women, Work and Family	Autumn 1997
Moving in Together: The Formation of First Common-law Unions	Winter 1997
Older Canadians on the Move	Spring 1998
What Influences People’s Plans to Have Children?	Spring 1998
Exposure to Second-Hand Smoke	Summer 1998
Religious Observance, Marriage and Family	Autumn 1998
Trends in Contraceptive Sterilization	Autumn 1998
Under One Roof: Three Generations Living Together	Summerr 1999
Who Has a Third Child?	Summer 1999
The Changing Face of Conjugal Relationships	Spring 2000
Staying in Touch: Contact between Adults and Their Parents	Spring 2002
Marital Satisfaction During the Retirement Years	Spring 2005

Data collection for cycle 15 began in February 2001 and continued through December 2001. Cycle 15 covers much the same content as cycle 10 with some sections revised and expanded. Information is gathered on family and marital history, children, family origins, fertility intentions, values and attitudes. Questions on custody and financial arrangements between the separated/divorced parents have been modified for cycle 15. An Education History section was developed for this cycle and questions on education from cycle 10 were included. The Work section was remodelled based on periods of work. Also, a set of questions on mobility was added to the Other characteristics section.

Cycle 15 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – The Family	12M0015XCB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	12M0015GPE
Family History (additional tables)	89-575-XIE
Changing Conjugal Life in Canada	89-576-XIE
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE/11-008-XIE
Pockets of Belief: Religious Attendance Patterns in Canada	Spring 2003
Couples Living Apart	Summer 2003
Childfree by Choice	Summer 2003
Would you Live Common-law?	Autumn 2003
Across the Generations: Grandparents and Grandchildren	Winter 2003
Marital Satisfaction During the Retirement Years	Spring 2005
Always the Bridesmaid: People who Don't Expect to Marry	Summer 2005
When is Junior Moving Out? Transitions from the Parental Home to Independence	Summer 2006
Till Death Do Us Part? The Risk of First and Second Marriage Dissolution	
Junior Comes Back Home: Trends and Predictors of Returning to the Parental Home	Fall 2006

Collection of cycle 20 began in June 2006 and continued until October 2006. This is the fourth time that a cycle of the General Social Survey collected information on Canadian families. This cycle focuses on young families and early life course transitions. Along with data from previous family surveys that allows us to monitor the evolving structures of Canadian families, new content looks at the challenges and transitions faced by young families such as leaving the parental home, union formation/dissolution, family formation related to the birth or adoption of a child, work/life balance, child care and buying a first home, as well as different resources needed by families or used by them in times of significant family transitions. The data were released in June 2007.

Cycle 20 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Family Transitions	12M0020G
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	12M0020GPE
Family Structure by Region – Revised (tables)	89-625-XIE
Navigating Family Transitions: Evidence from the General Social Survey	89-625-XIE
I Do...Take Two? Changes in Intentions to Remarry Among Divorced Canadians During the Past 20 Years	89-630-X200800110659
Do Older Canadians Have More Friends Now Than in 1990?	89-630-X200800110652
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPf/11-008-XIE
Staying at Home Longer to Become Homeowners?	Winter 2007
Young People's Access to Homeownership	Winter 2007

Social Support – cycle 11 (1996), Social Support and Aging – cycle 16 (2002) and Family, Social Support and Retirement – cycle 21 (2007)

The first (1985) and sixth cycles (1991) of the GSS had health as their core content. With the introduction of the National Population Health Survey in 1994, there was no longer a need to collect data in the health core subject area. This allowed for a new core to be introduced and social support was proposed. Social support was not a new topic for the GSS; however this cycle expanded the concept extensively.

The objectives and scope of cycle 11 were to understand the dynamic between an individual's social network and help received and provided, and to determine the nature of the help received and provided. A “social network” is comprised of the individual's spouse, family, close friends, neighbours, co-worker or any organizations (composed of either volunteers or paid employees) that revolve around an individual. The 1996 GSS focused on help given or received during either temporarily difficult times or out of necessity due to long-term health or physical limitations in daily activities either inside or outside the household.

Cycle 11 used the following approach to collect this information: a screening section established a “help roster” which was comprised of the help provided to the respondent due to the respondent's long-term health or physical limitations, and the receivers of help from the respondent due to the receiver's long-term health or physical limitations. Four major groups of instrumental activities of daily living were asked about to establish the help roster. They were: 1) child care; 2) meal preparation and cleanup; house cleaning, laundry and sewing; house maintenance and outside work; 3) shopping for groceries or other necessities; transportation; banking and bill paying; and 4) personal care. Also, persons/organizations receiving/giving care such as checking up or providing emotional support were added to the roster, however, there was no detailed follow-up. Detailed information on episodic help due to temporary difficult times was also collected in the screening section though no rostering of help receivers/providers was done.

Cycle 11 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Social and Community Support	12M0011XDB and XCB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	12M0011GPE
Who Cares? Caregiving in the 1990s – Initial Data Release Tables, Canada or by Individual Province	
Tobacco Use, Initial Data Release Tables, Canada and Provinces	
Eldercare in Canada: Context, Content and Consequences	89-570-XPE
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE/11-008-XIE
Canada's Caregivers	Winter 1997
Religious Observance, Marriage and Family	Autumn 1998
Who Needs Short-Term Help?	Autumn 1998
Exposure to Second-Hand Smoke	Summer 1998
At Work Despite a Chronic Health Problem	Spring 1999
Under One Roof: Three Generations Living Together	Summer 1999
Eldercare in Canada: Who Does How Much?	Autumn 1999
Help Close at Hand: Relocating to Give or Receive Care	Winter 1999

The 2002 General Social Survey – cycle 16 Social Support and Aging covered the theme of social support for the senior population. This is the second time that the GSS has collected information on social support. While data from the 1996 GSS on “Social and Community Support” focused on caregiving and receiving for the entire population, cycle 16, unlike all other cycles of the GSS sampled only respondents aged 45 and over. The samples were drawn from the much larger sample of respondents to the Canadian Community Health Survey. This cycle collected data on help provided to and received by people. As well, the survey collected information on transitions to retirement, retirement planning as well as other topics targeted at an older population.

Data were collected over an 11 month period from February to December 2002. The representative sample had 24,951 respondents and the response rate was greater than 86%.

While the main objective of the 2002 General Social Survey was to provide data on the aging population, the survey will allow detailed analysis of characteristics of family and friends who provide care to seniors; characteristics of seniors receiving formal and informal care; links to broader determinants of health (such as income, education and social networks); and people’s retirement plans and experiences.

Cycle 16 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Social Support and Aging	12M0016XCB (Nov. 2005)
Public Use Microdata File – User’s Guide	12M0016GPE (Nov. 2005)
Caring for an Aging Society	89-582-XIE
Aging and Social Support – Tables	89-583-XIE
Perspectives on Labour and Income	
Balancing Career and Care	November 2006, Vol.7 no. 11
Post-Retirement Employment	September 2005, vol. 6 no. 9
Canadian Social Trends articles	
	11-008-XPE/11-008-XIE
Looking After Seniors: Who Does What for Whom?	Autumn 2004
You Can’t Always Get What You Want: Retirement Preferences and Experiences	Winter 2004
The Sandwich Generation	Summer 2005
Elder Care and the Complexities of Social Networks	Summer 2005
What Do Seniors Spend on Housing	Autumn 2005
Preparing for Retirement	Autumn 2005
What Makes Retirement Enjoyable	Autumn 2005

The 2007 General Social Survey – cycle 21 Family, Social Support and Retirement covered the themes of social support for the senior population and preparation for and the experience of retirement. This was the third time that the GSS collected information on social support and the fourth time on retirement. Cycle 21, like cycle 16, sampled only respondents aged 45 and over. The sample was drawn partly from a random digit dialing frame, the other part of the sample comprised respondents to the 2006 GSS who were aged 45 and older in 2007. Where the 2002 GSS focused on care provided to persons aged 65 and over, the 2007 GSS asked about care provided to anyone for a long-term health condition or physical limitation.

Cycle 21 products	Catalogue number
General Social Survey, Cycle 21: Family, Social Support and Retirement (2007): Public Use Microdata File, Documentation and User's Guide	12M0021XVB
2007 General Social Survey: Care Tables	89-633-XWE/XWE
2007 General Social Survey: Tables on Retirement	89-632-XWE/XWE
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE/11-008-XIE
2007 General Social Survey report: The Retirement Plans and Expectations of Older Workers	Autumn 2008
2007 General Social Survey Report: The Retirement Puzzle: Sorting the Pieces	Winter 2008
Eldercare: What we Know Today	Winter 2008
Online Activities of Canadian Boomers and Seniors	Winter 2009

Access to and Use of Information Communication Technology – cycle 14 (2000)

The main theme for cycle 14 of the General Social Survey was access to and use of technology, specifically computers and the Internet. This was the first cycle of the GSS to collect detailed information on individual access to and use of technology. Two previous cycles (cycle 4 and cycle 9) included questions on computer use as part of the work and education focus. Since much of the work and education component was being covered by other surveys (particularly the Workplace and Employee Survey) and there was considerable interest in the social impact of technology, cycle 14 has a detailed focus on computer and Internet use. Cycle 14 asked Canadians about their use of computers and the Internet, the impact of technology on privacy and access to information as well as the social cohesion of families and communities.

Selected results from the 2000 survey were published in March 2001 in the articles entitled *Changing our Ways; Why and How Canadians Use the Internet* and *Overview: Access to and Use of Information Communication Technology*. The public use microdata file is available since June 2001.

Cycle 14 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Access to and Use of Information Communication Technology	12M0014XCB
Public Use Microdata File – User's Guide	12M0014GPE
Changing Our Ways: Why and How Canadians Use the Internet	56F0006XIE
Overview: Access to and Use of Information Communication Technology	56-505-XIE
Working With Computers (Perspectives on Labour and Income) Single article	75-001-XPE vol. 13, no. 2 75-001-XIE vol. 2, no. 5
Evolution of the Canadian Workplace: Work From Home (Perspectives on Labour and Income) Single article	75-001-XIE vol. 2, no. 9
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE/11-008-XIE
Kids and Teens on the Net	Autumn 2001
Connected to the Internet, Still Connected to Life	Winter 2001
Older Surfers	Winter 2001
Wired Young Canadians	Winter 2001
Learning Computer Skills	Spring 2002
Better Things to Do or Dealt out of the Game	Summer 2002
Vox Populi: Canadians Who Speak Up	Autumn 2002
Health Information on the Net	Autumn 2002
I Still Feel Overqualified for my Job	Winter 2002
Stress at Work	Autumn 2003

Social Engagement – cycle 17 (2003)

Cycle 17 was the first cycle of the GSS to survey the topic of social engagement in Canada. Topics included well-being, social participation, civic participation, trust and values. Although this was the first GSS cycle dedicated to this topic, questions on several sub-themes of social engagement have appeared in earlier cycles, including questions about contact with friends and relatives (cycles 16, 15, 14, 11 and 10), giving and receiving informal help (cycles 16 and 11), volunteering (cycles 16, 14, 12 and 9), voting and other political activity (cycle 14).

Data were collected in 2003 and released in July 2004. The representative sample had 24,951 respondents.

Cycle 17 products	Catalogue number
Public Use Microdata File – Social Engagement	12M0017XCB
Public Use Microdata File – User’s Guide	12M0017GPE
Overview of Findings	89-598-XIE
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XPE/11-008-XIE
Perceptions of Canadians: A Sense of Belonging, Confidence and Trust	Winter 2004
Willing to Participate: Political Engagement of Young Adults	Winter 2005
Young Adults who Give and Receive Help	Spring 2006
Taking Charge: Perceptions of Control Over Life Chances	Summer 2006
Canadians and their Non-Voting Political Activity	Summer 2007
Keeping Up with the Times: Canadians and Their News Diet	Summer 2007
Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin articles	21-006-XIE
Social Engagement and Civic Participation: Are Rural and Small Town Populations Really at an Advantage?	June 2005
The Influence of Education on Civic Engagement: Differences Across Canada’s Rural-Urban Spectrum	July 2006
Connectedness Series articles	
How Canadians’ Use of the Internet Affects Social Life and Civic Participation	56F0004MWE

Social Networks – cycle 22 (2008)

The main purpose of the 2008 GSS was to better understand how Canadians mobilize their social networks to access resources at important periods of change in their lives. These changes include finances, employment, health, care of a sick person, death of a family member, etc. The survey collected information on topics such as changes experienced by respondents in the past 12 months, the resources they used during these events and unmet needs for help. Other topics included contact with family and friends, participation in organizations, voting, sense of belonging to Canada; and unpaid care of children and seniors.

Data were collected in 2008 and released in June 2009. The representative sample had 20,401 respondents.

Cycle 22 products	Catalogue number
Selected Tables on Social Engagement	89-640-XWE
Canadian Social Trends articles	11-008-XIE
2008 General Social Survey Report: Social Networks Help Canadians Deal with Major Change	11-008-X

Notes

1. User's Guide documentation is included with the Public Use Microdata File.
2. Microdata License Agreement is required before delivery of a file.
3. CD-ROMs are available in SAS, SPSS or ASCII format.
4. The General Social Survey Program has made all of its Public Use Microdata files available to the Data Liberation Initiative (DLI). The DLI provides Canadian academic institutions with affordable access to Statistics Canada data files and databases for teaching and research.
5. Canadian Social Trends, Catalogue no. 11-008-XPE. As of the Winter 1998 issue, this product is also available on the Internet (Catalogue no. 11-008-XIE).

The General Social Survey data and information are available to all Canadians. Dissemination activities begin for each survey with a data availability announcement in *The Daily*. A public use microdata file is produced for each survey and the Statistics Canada flagship publication Canadian Social Trends features many interesting findings from the analysis. Special publications have also been produced for specific topics. Moreover, clients may request special tabulations that fit their specific needs by contacting Client Services and Dissemination at (613) 951-5979, by fax at (613) 951-0387 or by e-mail at sasd-dssea@statcan.gc.ca.

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