



Gender Inequalities in Access to Health Care among Adults in BC

Background

Under the *Canada Health Act*, health care should be granted to all Canadians, independent of their ability to pay, their socioeconomic status, or where they live. However, research has shown that many Canadians face barriers in access to health care.

The Question

Is gender associated with perceived unmet health needs among adults in BC?

The Study

Using data from the 2011/2012 Canadian Community Health Survey, an ongoing, annual, cross-sectional survey that collects information regarding health status, health care utilization, and health determinants of the Canadian population. The CCHS is representative of approximately 98% of the Canadian population at the level of age and sex groups within provincial health regions. All questionnaires are administered using in-person or telephone computer-assisted interviewing. The study sample was restricted to adults over the age of 18 living in British Columbia and after exclusions, included 12, 252 participants.

The Results

Of 12,252 BC adults who participated:

12%, or 1 in 8 adults, felt their health care needs were not being met.

13.7% of women, versus just 10.1% of men, felt their health care needs were not being met.

Factors that might contribute to this difference include:

- Women are responsible for the majority of household labour, including caregiving;
- Women are more likely to have precarious, part-time or temporary work;
- Women are less likely to have extended health insurance, and often have less job flexibility.

In this study, adult women in BC were more likely to feel their health care needs were not being met than men.

The Policy Implications

- There is a need for policies and programs within the health care system that take into account the different health needs of men and women, at all levels of care.
- Beyond health care, affordable and high quality childcare and increased opportunities for women to engage in full time employment might improve their health outcomes.

Socias ME, Koehoorn M, Shoveller J. Gender Inequalities in Access to Health Care among Adults Living in British Columbia, Canada. *Women's Health Issues*. 26-1 (2006) 74-79.