



## chapter 12

### MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health problems are a significant cause of ill health and disability. They also are responsible for a substantial portion of the use of health care services. Unfortunately, the data available on mental health problems are poor in quality, with definitions and classifications that often vary and diagnoses that tend to be subjective. As well, much of the data are derived from self-reported surveys. Due to the persistent stigma associated with mental illness, these data are not always reliable.

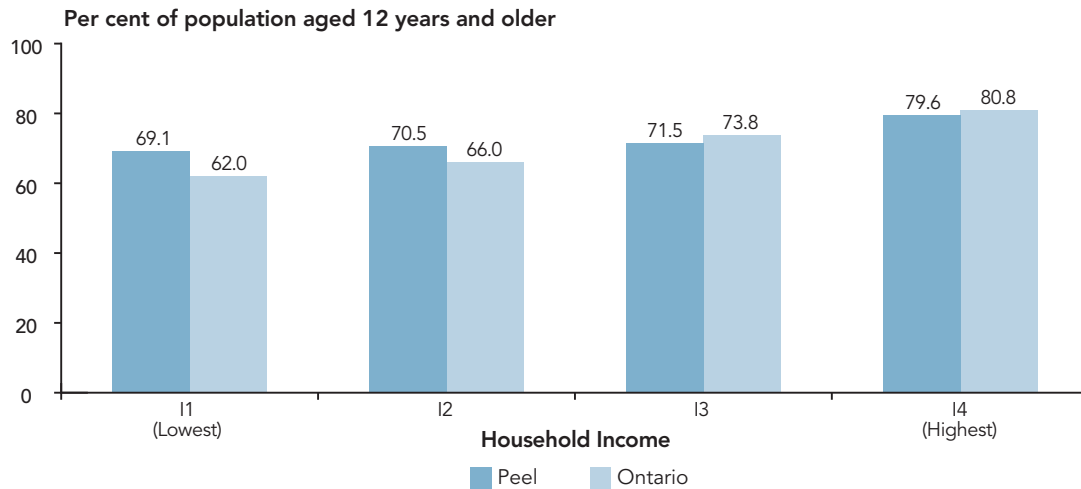
---

*Three quarters of Peel residents report very good or excellent mental health*

---

In 2005, three-quarters of Peel and Ontario residents reported that their mental health was very good or excellent.<sup>c</sup> People with the lowest levels of household income reported poorer mental health than those with higher income levels (Figure 12.1 on next page). Similarly, those with the lowest levels of education reported poorer mental health than those with higher education levels.

**Figure 12.1**  
Self-Reported Mental Health Status<sup>†</sup> by Income,  
Peel and Ontario, 2005



<sup>†</sup> Defined as excellent or very good.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2005, Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Like adults, children and youth can experience mental health issues that interfere with their thinking, mood and behaviour. Mental health issues affecting children and youth range from bullying and stress over school, to psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Mental health distress and illness can limit a young person's present and future ability to be productive in society.<sup>1,2</sup>



**Did You Know**

- Eighteen per cent of adolescents aged 15 to 24 years report having a mental illness<sup>2</sup>
- Among children and youth, 6.5% of individuals report suffering from anxiety, making it the most common mental health problem in this age group<sup>2</sup>
- People under 20 years of age have the highest rate of depression symptoms<sup>2</sup>
- Adolescence and early adulthood are the most common times for the onset of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and eating disorders<sup>3,4</sup>
- About one out of every 165 people suffers from autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In Ontario, about 70,000 people have ASD<sup>5</sup>
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) affects 5% to 12% of school-aged children<sup>6,7</sup>

In Peel, female students in grades 7 to 12 are more likely than their male counterparts to report psychological distress symptoms (Figure 12.2).

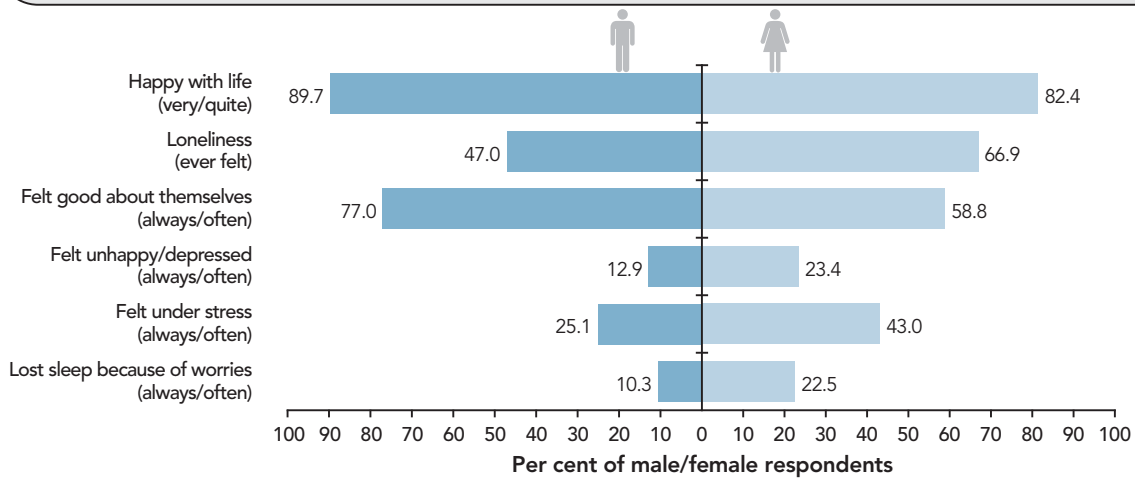
Exact figures are not known, but it is believed that between 0.5% to 1% of teens and young adults have anorexia nervosa, and between 1% to 3% of young people have bulimia nervosa.<sup>7</sup>

*Nearly one in three students in Peel have been bullied*

Almost a third of Peel students (31%) reported they had been bullied at school in the past year. Students in grades 7 and 8 (39% in each grade) were more likely than students in grade 12 (19%) to have reported they had been bullied at least once in the past year. Males and females reported

**Figure 12.2**

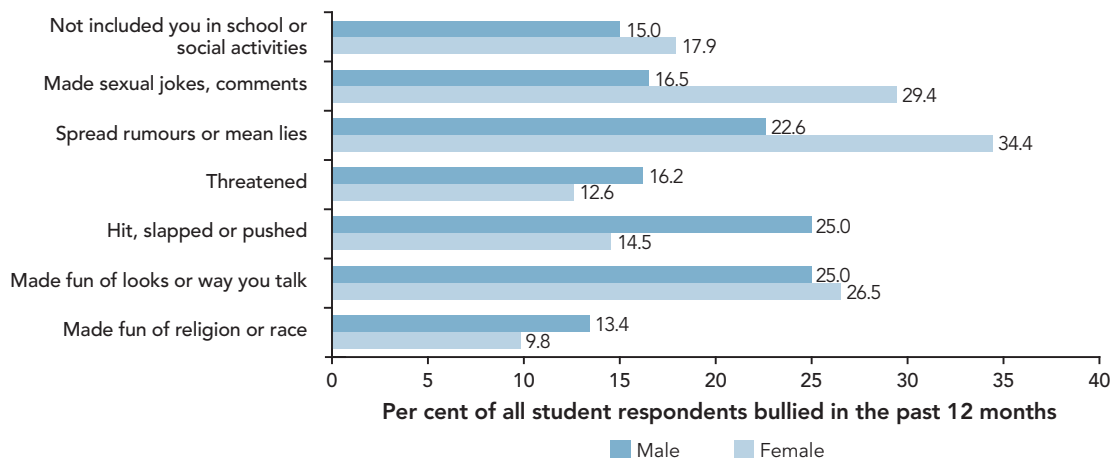
**Proportion of Students from Grades 7 to 12 Reporting Psychological Distress Symptoms Over the Past Few Weeks, by Sex, Peel, 2004**



Source: Student Health Survey 2004, Peel Public Health

**Figure 12.3**

**Type of Bullying in School by Sex, Peel, 2004**



Source: Student Health Survey 2004, Peel Public Health

**Table 12.1**

**Estimated Prevalence of Self-Reported Mental Health Disorders  
Peel, 2006**

Mental health disorder	Canadian prevalence rate per 100	Estimated number of Peel residents aged 15 years and older with disorder <sup>†</sup>
<b>Mood Disorder</b>		
Major depression	4.5	41,100
Bipolar disorder	0.8	7,300
<b>Anxiety</b>		
Panic disorder	1.6	14,600
Agoraphobia	0.7	6,400
Social phobia	3.0	27,400

<sup>†</sup>Estimated number derived by applying Canadian prevalence rate to Peel data from 2006 Census, Statistics Canada  
Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2002, Statistics Canada, Mental Health and Well-being

experiencing different types of bullying in school (Figure 12.3 on previous page).

*Mental health issues in adults are the largest contributor to absenteeism and loss of productivity in the workplace*

In 2007, 72% of short-term disability claims and 82% of long-term disability claims to insurers were related to mental illness.<sup>8</sup>

As mentioned previously, estimating the prevalence of mental illness and disorders in adults is challenging. Determining the number of persons with a mental illness such as in Table 12.1 above is likely an underestimate of the true amount.



## DEPRESSION

*About 11% of Ontario adults will experience a major depression at some time in their lives<sup>c</sup>*

### Definition

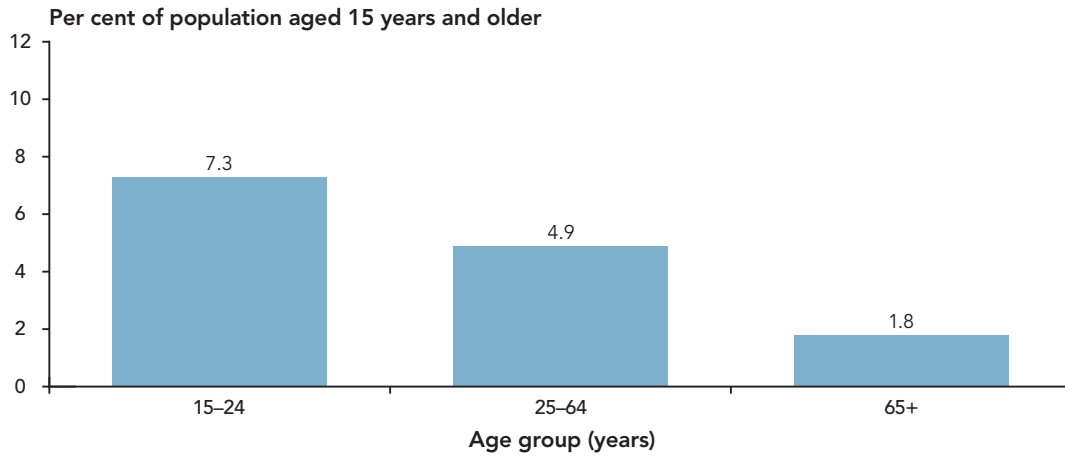
A diagnosis of major depressive disorder is given when a patient has one or more major depressive episodes. A major depressive episode is defined as at least two weeks of depressed mood and/or loss of interest in usual activities, plus at least four additional symptoms of depression.

In 2002 in Ontario, major depression was the most common type of mental disorder reported among adults during a 12-month period. Females were more likely than males to report major depression. Data for Peel were not available due to small sample size.<sup>c</sup>

Adults aged 65 years and older were less likely than other age groups to report major depression (Figure 12.4).<sup>c</sup>

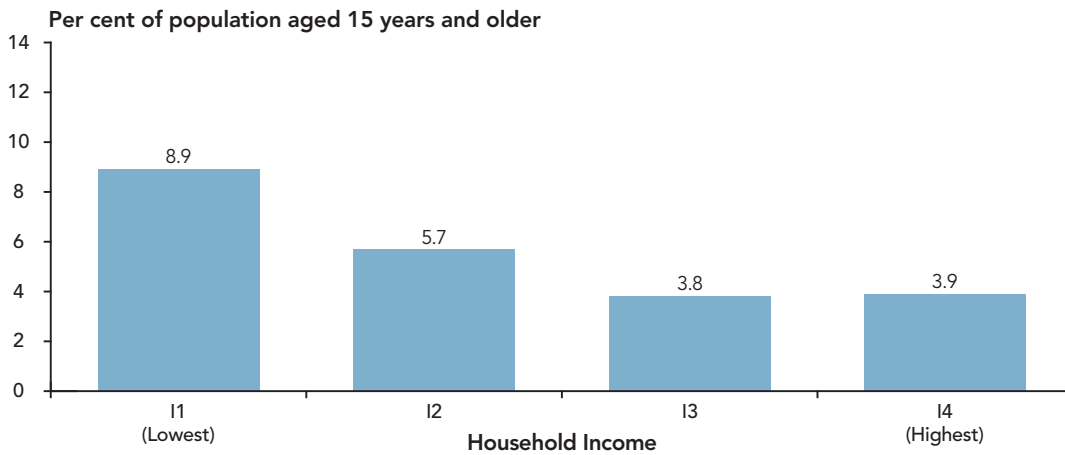
People living in households with lower income were more likely to report major depression (Figure 12.5).

**Figure 12.4**  
Prevalence of Major Depression<sup>†</sup> by Age Group,  
Ontario, 2002



<sup>†</sup> in the last 12 months.  
Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2002, Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Figure 12.5**  
Prevalence of Major Depression<sup>†</sup> by Income,  
Ontario, 2002



<sup>†</sup> In the last 12 months  
Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2002, Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

## BIPOLAR DISORDER

*One per cent of the Canadian population will experience bipolar disorder at some time in their lives*



### Definition

**A diagnosis of bipolar disorder requires at least one manic or mixed episode (mania and depression) with or without a history of major depression.**

In Canada, after accounting for those who do not seek help for bipolar disorder, it is estimated that 1% of the Canadian population will experience bipolar disorder at some point in their lives.<sup>9</sup>

## SCHIZOPHRENIA

*One out of every 12 hospital beds is occupied by a person suffering from schizophrenia*

Schizophrenia is a complex brain disorder characterized by delusions, hallucinations, social withdrawal and thought disorders. These symptoms often develop slowly between the ages of 16 and 30 years. About 1% of the population will have this disease at one point in their lives.<sup>4</sup>

In Peel between 1997 and 2005, the annual hospitalization rate for schizophrenia among males was between 44 to 64 per 100,000, about double the rate for females. The age-specific rate was highest for people aged 20 to 44 years. In Canada, one out of every 12 hospital beds is occupied by a person suffering from schizophrenia.<sup>10</sup> In 2005, schizophrenia accounted for the highest average length of stay in Ontario hospitals (45 days) and one of the highest average lengths of stay in Peel hospitals (23 days).

## DEMENTIA

*The number of people with dementia will increase*

The dementias are a group of diseases characterized by a progressive decline of mental functions. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia.<sup>11</sup>

In 2006 in Peel, the prevalence of dementia by age group increased from 2% among residents aged between 65 and 74 years to 35% among those aged 85 years and older.

Prevalence estimates for Peel indicate that the number of people with dementia will increase from 8,600 in 2006 to 15,000 in 2016, a rise of 74%. By 2031, the number of people with dementia is projected to exceed 29,000. This increase is due to population aging and does not represent a growing risk for individuals.<sup>11</sup>

