

Huron Health Report

CHRONIC DISEASES

May 2010



SUMMARY

- In 2008, nearly 50% of respondents in Huron County reported having one or more chronic diseases. There was no difference between the genders in the prevalence of one or more chronic disease.
- The prevalence of self-reported chronic diseases among Huron County residents are as follows:
 - Over 30% have high blood pressure
 - Nearly 10% have asthma
 - Nearly 10% have diabetes
 - Nearly 20% have other chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, or thyroid disorder.
- A higher proportion of respondents 65 years and older reported having high blood pressure, diabetes or other chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, or thyroid disorder.
- A higher proportion of respondents between 18 and 44 years old reported having asthma.

BACKGROUND

The number of people with chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease is growing at an alarming rate according to the head of the Ontario Medical Association¹. Chronic disease affects the overall health and quality of life of many Canadians, including their ability to work.

Over 50% of Canadians suffer from one or more chronic health conditions² and as the population ages this number will only increase. Diabetes is a leading cause of blindness and limb amputations. Asthma is the leading cause of chronic illness requiring hospitalization in children. High blood cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke, and cardiovascular disease is the greatest single cause of death, disability and illness.

However, many chronic diseases can be prevented or delayed. At least 80% of premature heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes and 40% of cancer could be prevented through a healthy diet, regular physical activity and avoidance of tobacco products³.

This report provides current population-level information on the experience, perception and behaviour of Huron County residents, reported through the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS). The RRFSS is a random-digit-dial telephone survey of adults 18 years and older, conducted by the Institute of Social Research (ISR) at York University on behalf of the Huron County Health Unit⁴.

The specific objective of this report is to determine the prevalence of self-reported chronic diseases of public health importance (high blood pressure, asthma, and diabetes).

This analysis was done using data collected between January and December 2008. A total of 717 interviews were conducted in Huron County during that period, giving an overall response rate of 64%. Estimates are presented with 95% Confidence intervals (CI). CIs are reported in brackets or presented as I in the graphs. The sample was weighted to correct for unequal probabilities of selection within households.

RESULTS

49.2% (42.9, 55.5) of respondents indicated they had been told by a doctor or other health care professional that they have one or more chronic diseases. There was no difference between male and female in the

prevalence of self-reported chronic diseases ($P>0.05$). 79.3% (72.1, 86.5) of adults 45 years and older reported having one or more chronic diseases. This was significantly higher than adults 18-44 years old ($p\text{-value}<0.001$).

Figure 1: Percent of adults who reported being diagnosed with high blood pressure - Huron - 2008 - by gender

32.5% (26.6, 38.4) of respondents who had ever been told by a doctor or other health care professional that they have a chronic disease indicated they have high blood pressure. There was no significant difference between male and female ($p\text{-value}=0.320$).

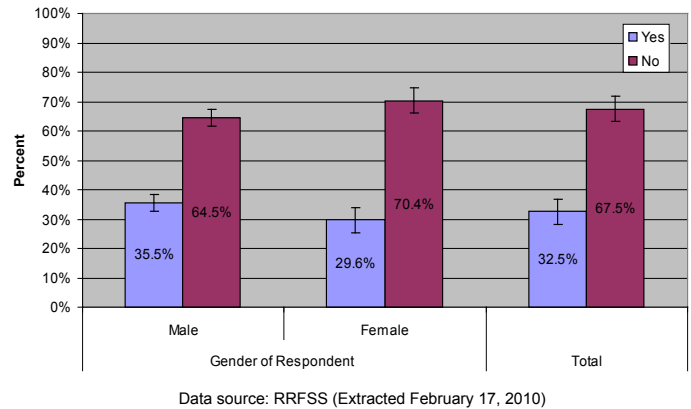


Figure 2: Percent of adults who reported being diagnosed with high blood pressure - Huron - 2008 - by age group

59.0% (47.4, 70.6) of adults age 65 years and older reported being diagnosed with high blood pressure. This was significantly higher than the other age groups ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$).

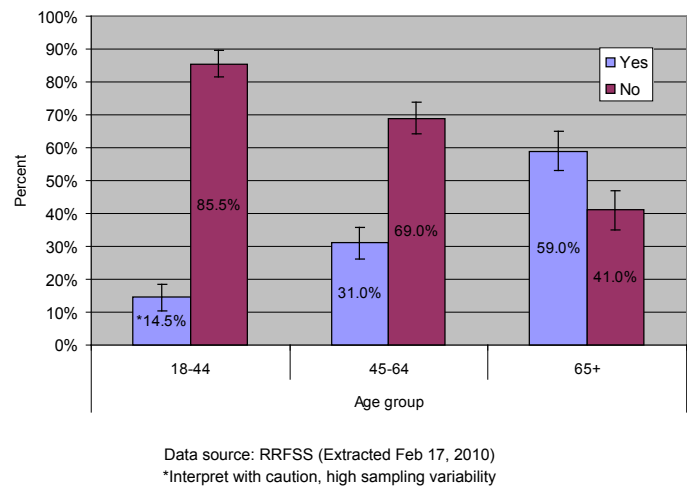


Figure 3: Percent of adults who reported being diagnosed with asthma - Huron - 2008 - by gender

9.8% (6.1, 13.5) of respondents who had ever been told by a doctor or other health care professional that they have a chronic disease indicated that they have asthma. There was no significant difference between male and female ($p\text{-value}=0.390$).

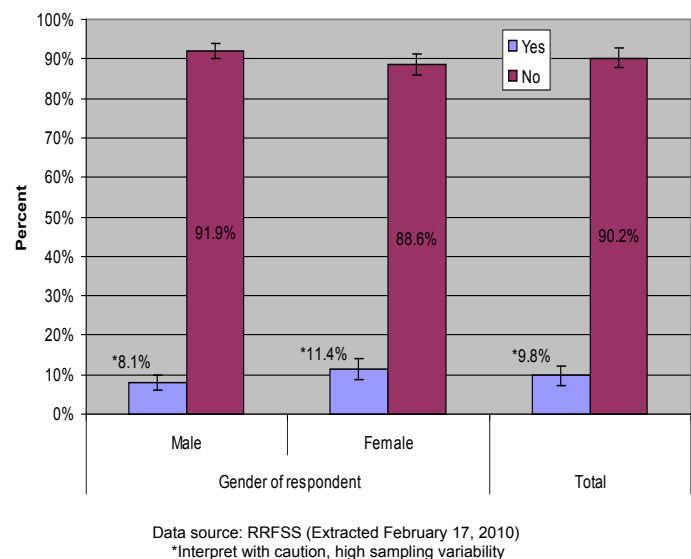


Figure 4: Percent of adults who reported being diagnosed with asthma - Huron - 2008 - by age group

17.1% (8.5, 25.7) of respondents age 18 to 44 years reported being diagnosed with asthma. This was significantly higher than the other age groups (p-value=0.014).

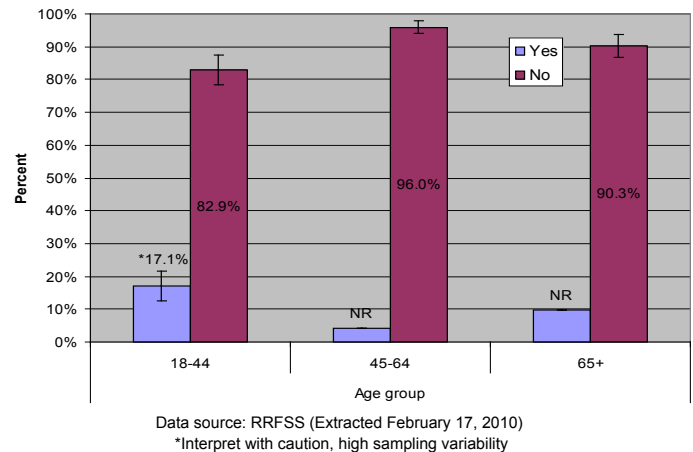


Figure 5: Percent of adults reported being diagnosed with diabetes - Huron - 2008 - by gender

9.7% (6.0, 13.4) of respondents reported being diagnosed with diabetes. There was no significant difference between male and female (p-value=0.652).

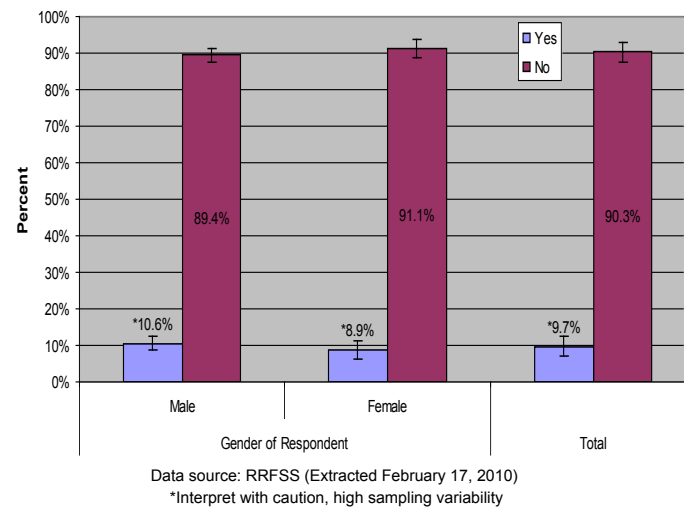


Figure 6: Percent of adults who reported being diagnosed with diabetes - Huron - 2008 - by age group

17.7% (8.8, 26.6) of respondents age 65 years and older reported being diagnosed with diabetes. This was significantly higher than the other age groups (p-value =0.003).

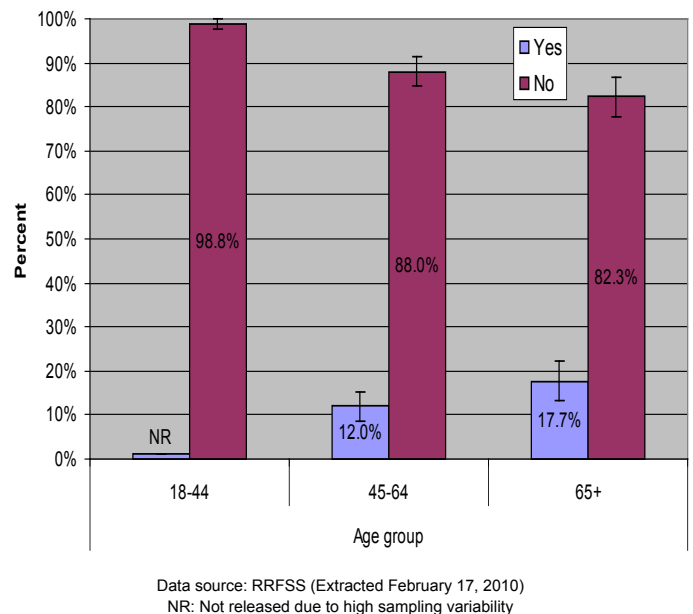
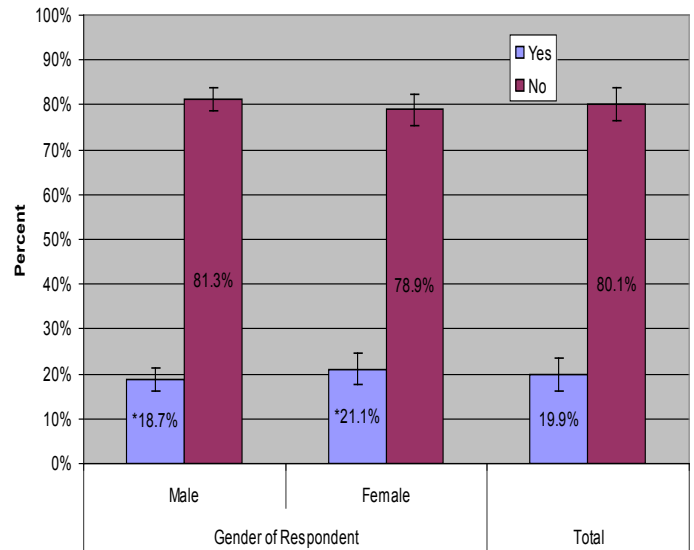


Figure 7: Percent of adults who reported being diagnosed with heart disease, cancer, or thyroid disorder - Huron - 2008 - by gender

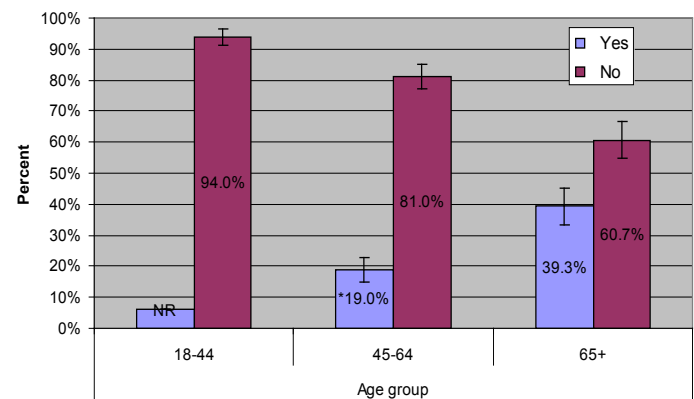
19.9% (14.9, 24.9) of respondents had been told by a doctor or other health care professional that they have 'other' chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, or thyroid disorder. There was no significant difference between male and female (p-value=0.632).



Data source: RRFSS (Extracted February 17, 2010)
*Interpret with caution, high sampling variability

Figure 8: Percent of adults who reported being diagnosed with heart disease, cancer, or thyroid disorder - Huron - 2008 - by age group

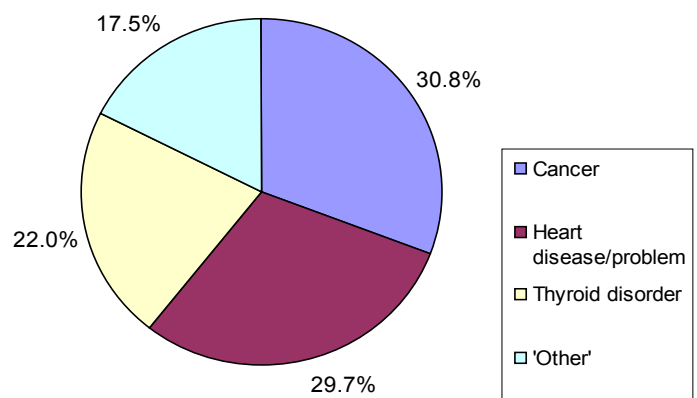
39.3% (27.9, 50.7) of respondents age 65 years and older reported being diagnosed with 'other' chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, or thyroid disorder. This was significantly higher than the other age groups (p-value <0.001).



Data source: RRFSS (Extracted February 3, 2010)
*Interpret with caution, high sampling variability
NR: Not released due to high sampling variability

Figure 9: Percent of adults who reported being diagnosed with other chronic diseases - Huron - 2008

Of the respondents reporting 'other' chronic diseases, 30.8% (18.0, 43.6) reported cancers, 29.7% (17.0, 42.4) reported heart disease or problem, and 22.0% (10.5, 33.5) reported thyroid disorder.



Data source: RRFSS (Extracted February 3, 2010)

LIMITATIONS

RRFSS results are based on respondents self-reporting and they may not necessarily have accurate recall. Households without telephones were excluded from the survey (about 3% of all Ontario households).

Thus the percentages may not represent the true estimates for the general population as respondents may have different characteristics than people that have not been included in the survey.

REFERENCES

- ¹ More Ontarians Living with Chronic Disease: Ontario's Doctors. www.oma.org. Accessed Feb. 17, 2010
- ² Chronic Disease and Nursing. Canadian Nurses Association. www.can-aiic.ca. Accessed Feb. 17, 2010
- ³ Facing the Facts: The Impact of Chronic Disease in Canada. www.who.int/chp/chronic_disease_report/media/CANADA.pdf. Accessed Feb. 17, 2010
- ³ Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System. <http://www.rfss.on.ca>