

Health Status Report

Self-perceived Life and Work Stress in Perth County

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- Examine how Perth County residents perceive their levels of life and work stress compared to Ontarians.
- Compare differences between males and females, various age groups, and education and income levels.
- Identify trends that can be used for planning and implementing local programming and services.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- The results in this report are based on responses to the 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 Canadian Community Health Survey questions:
 - ◇ "Thinking about the amount of stress in your life, would you say that most days are: not at all stressful, not very stressful, a bit stressful, quite a bit stressful, or extremely stressful?"
 - ◇ "About your main job or business in the past 12 months, would you say that most days at work were: not at all stressful, not very stressful, a bit stressful, quite a bit stressful, or extremely stressful?"
- For the Summary of Results, the answers "quite a bit" and "extremely stressful" have been grouped and described as "highly stressful."

Life Stress Results

- A lower percentage of Perth County residents perceived their life as highly stressful compared to their Ontario peers (Fig 1).
- The percentage of Perth County residents who reported their life as highly stressful did not change significantly from 2003 to 2010 (Fig 3).
- Perth County residents aged 25-64 years were more likely to perceive their life as highly stressful compared to Perth County residents aged 15-24 and 65 years and over (Fig 5).
- A lower percentage of Perth County residents who did not finish high school and those who did finish high school perceived their life as highly stressful compared to their Ontario peers at the same education levels (Fig 7).
- As with Ontarians, Perth County residents reported higher levels of life stress as their level of education increased (Fig 7).
- The percentage of Perth County residents who perceived their life as highly stressful was similar for those in high, middle or low income (Fig 9).

Work Stress Results

- Similar to Ontarians, a higher percentage of Perth County male residents perceived their work as highly stressful compared to Perth County female residents (Fig 2).
- A lower percentage of Perth County females perceived their work as highly stressful compared to Ontario females (Fig 2).
- The percentage of Perth County residents who perceived their work as highly stressful showed a trend of a slight decrease from 2003 to 2010 (Fig 4).
- A lower percentage of Perth County residents aged 20-44 years perceived their work as highly stressful compared to Ontarians aged 20-44 years (Fig 6).
- Similar to Ontarians, a higher percentage of Perth County residents with a post-secondary education perceived their work as highly stressful compared to Perth County residents with lower education levels (Fig 8).
- A lower percentage of Perth County residents who finished high school perceived their work as highly stressful compared to their Ontario peers (Fig 8).
- Similar to Ontarians, a lower percentage of Perth County residents living in low income perceived their work as highly stressful compared to Perth County residents living in middle income and those living in high income (Fig 10).
- A lower percentage of Perth County residents living in low income perceived their work as highly stressful compared to Ontarians living in low income (Fig 10).
- A lower percentage of Perth County residents living in high income perceived their work as highly stressful compared to Ontarians living in high income (Fig 10).

BACKGROUND

- Sources of stress (stressors) can be acute or chronic. Acute stressors, such as major life events, are changes that require a major adjustment in a short period of time. Chronic stressors often do not have an obvious beginning, develop subtly and persist over time. They are one of the most common forms of stress.¹ It is not clear whether self-perceived life stress measures chronic or acute life stress or both.
- Common sources of stress are financial worries, work/employment/unemployment, parenting, health problems, aging and caregiving/elder care.
- The emotions produced by stress can modify immune response and influence the onset and progression of physical illness. In addition, stress may prompt changes in health behaviour as individuals try to cope.
- Whether or not a stressor impacts a person's health depends on a complex set of factors, which includes genetics, how the stress is perceived, and available resources. External resources (money and education), personal resources (sense of control over one's life) and emotional support can mediate the impact of stress or can prevent individuals from even experiencing stress in the first place.¹
- Males and females report different levels and sources of stress, making it important to conduct separate analyses for each gender.¹

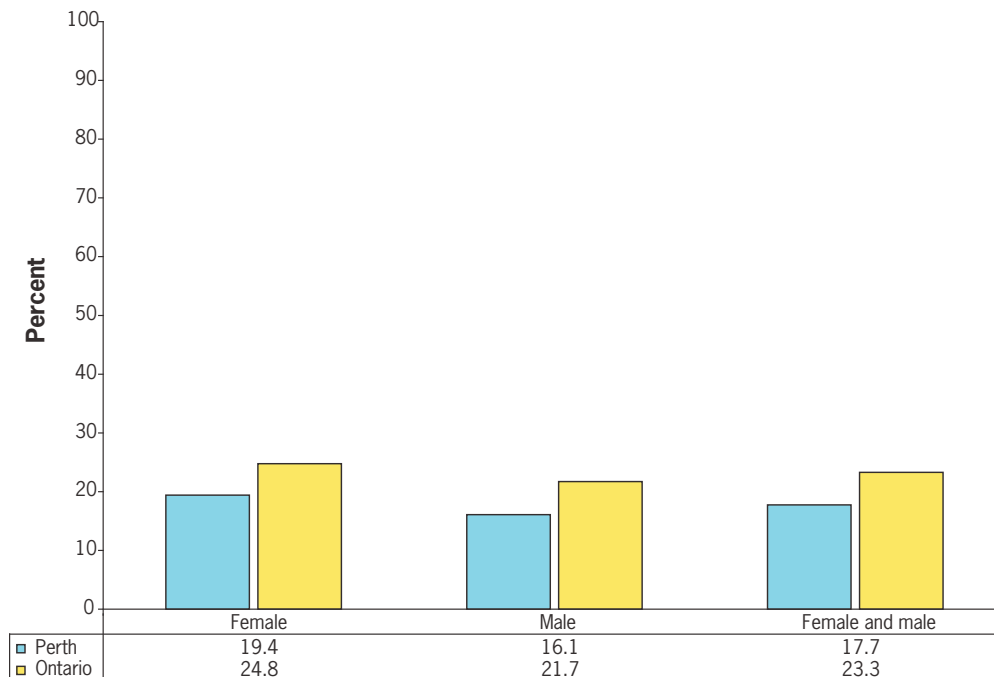
RESULTS

In this report, data from the Canadian Community Health Survey conducted in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 were combined and analyzed. The results are highlighted in the following figures.

The graphs show results from Perth County compared to Ontario. The descriptions note statistically significant differences. Trends of interest have also been noted for some figures.

SELF-PERCEIVED LIFE AND WORK STRESS BY FEMALES AND MALES

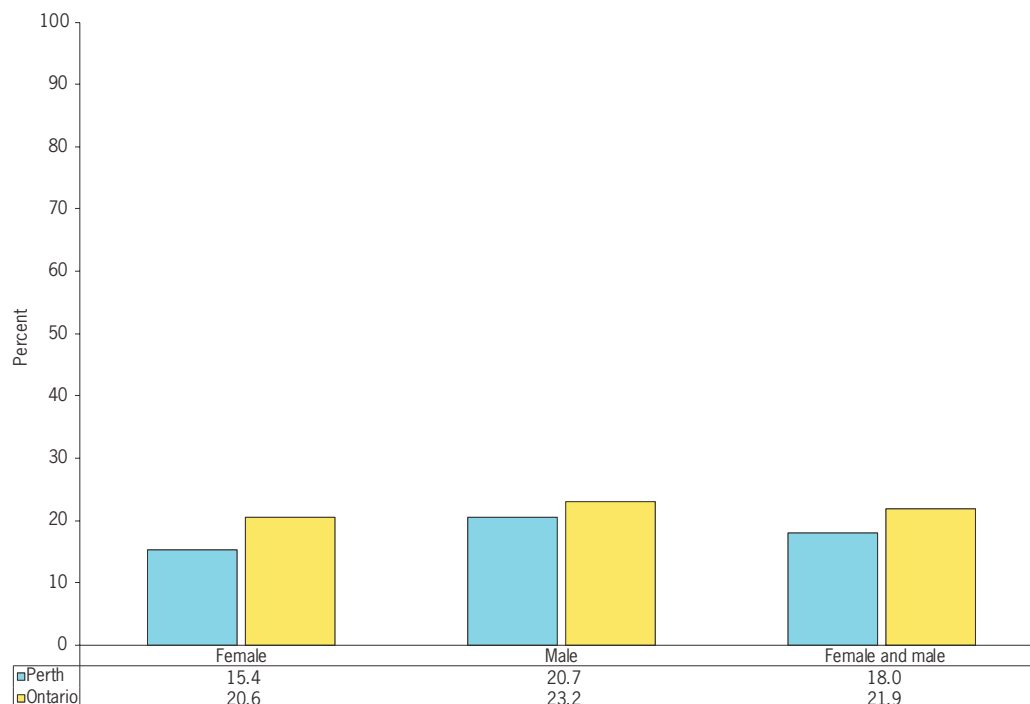
Figure 1. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario females and males who reported their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful, 2003-2010



A lower percentage of Perth County females and males perceived their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to their Ontario peers.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

Figure 2. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario females and males who reported their main job or business as quite a bit or extremely stressful

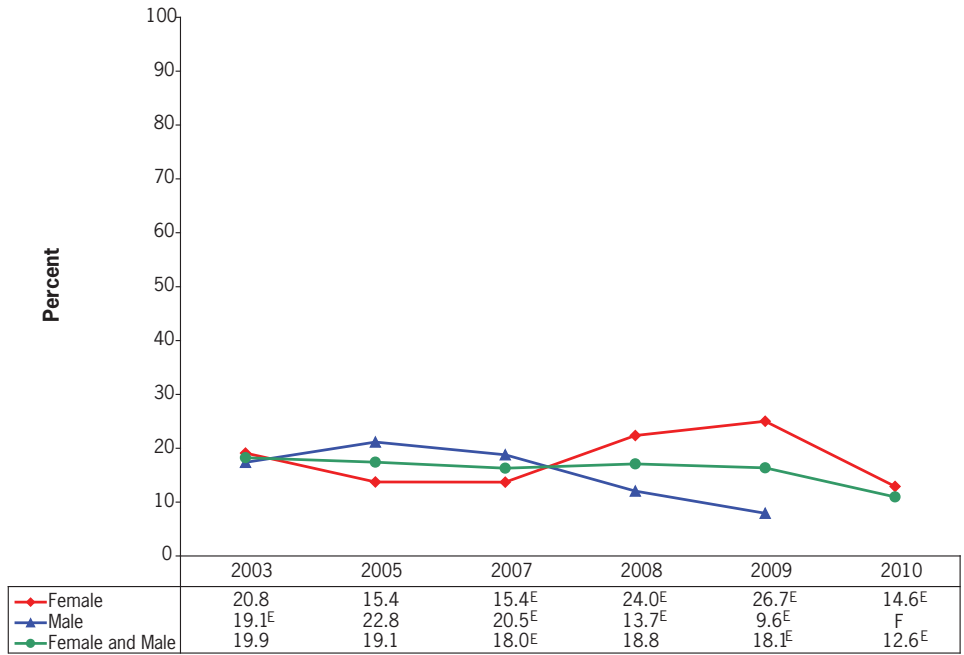


A higher percentage of Perth County males (21%) perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Perth County females (15%). A similar pattern was evident with Ontarians.

A lower percentage of Perth County females (15%) perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Ontario females (21%).

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

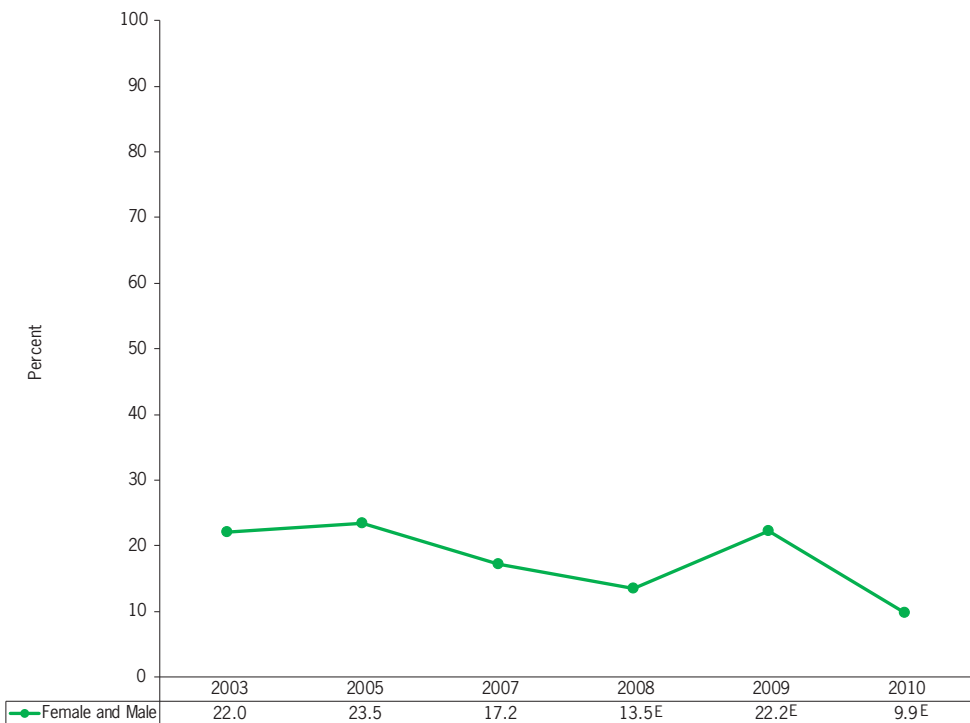
Figure 3. Percentage of Perth County females and males who reported their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful by year, 2003-2010



The percentage of Perth County residents who reported their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful did not change significantly from 2003 to 2010

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

Figure 4. Percentage of Perth County females and males who reported their main job or business as quite a bit or extremely stressful by year

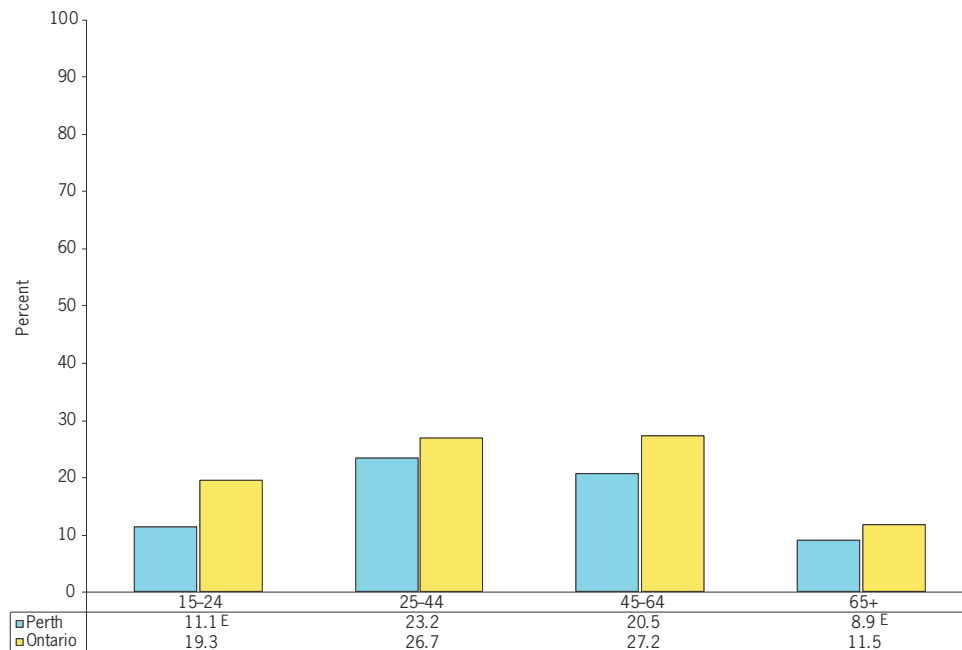


The percentage of Perth County residents who perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful showed a non-significant decrease from 2003 to 2010.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

SELF-PERCEIVED LIFE AND WORK STRESS BY AGE

Figure 5. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario residents who reported their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful by age group

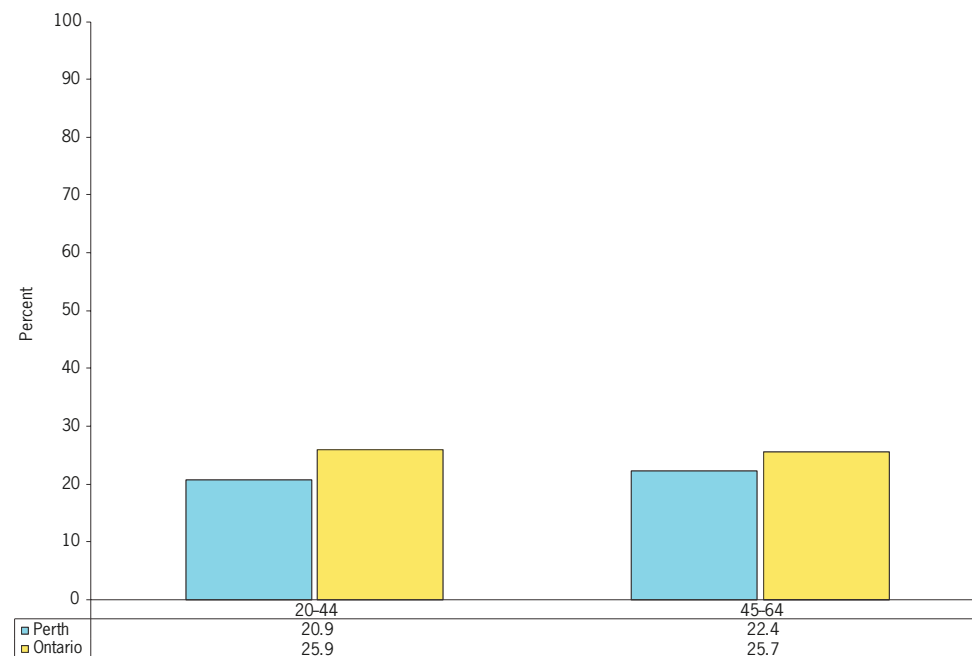


A lower percentage of Perth County residents aged 15-24 years (11%) and 65 years and over (9%) perceived their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Perth County residents aged 25-44 (23%) and 45-64 years (21%), respectively.

A lower percentage of Perth County residents aged 15-24 years (11%) and 45-64 years (21%) perceived their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to their Ontario peers aged 15-24 years (19%) and 45-64 (27%), respectively.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

Figure 6. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario residents who reported their main job or business as quite a bit stressful or extremely stressful by age group

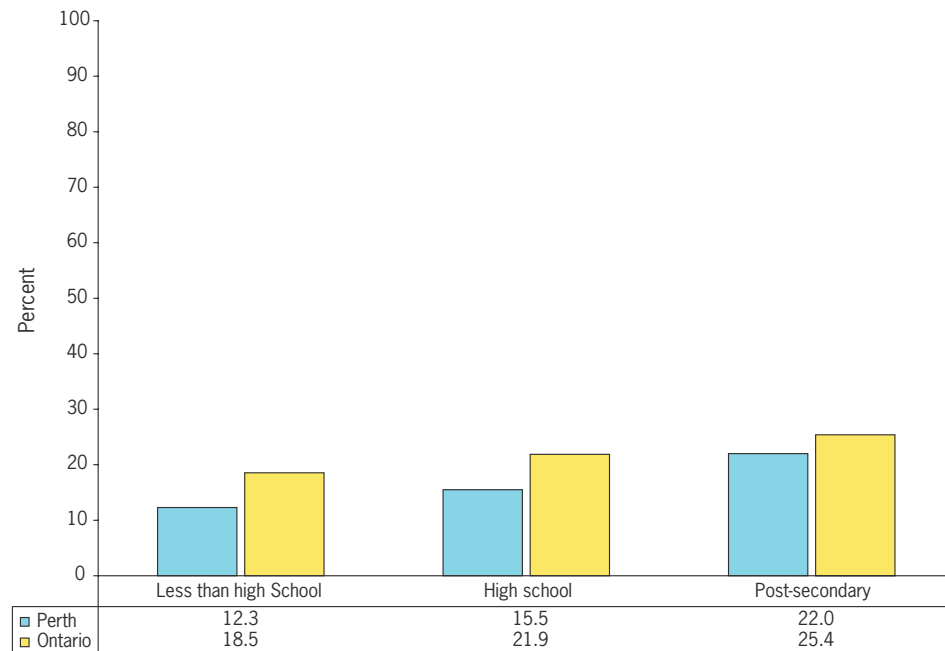


Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

A lower percentage of Perth County residents aged 20-44 years (21%) perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Ontarians aged 20-44 years (26%).

SELF-PERCEIVED LIFE AND WORK STRESS BY EDUCATION

Figure 7. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario residents who reported their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful by education

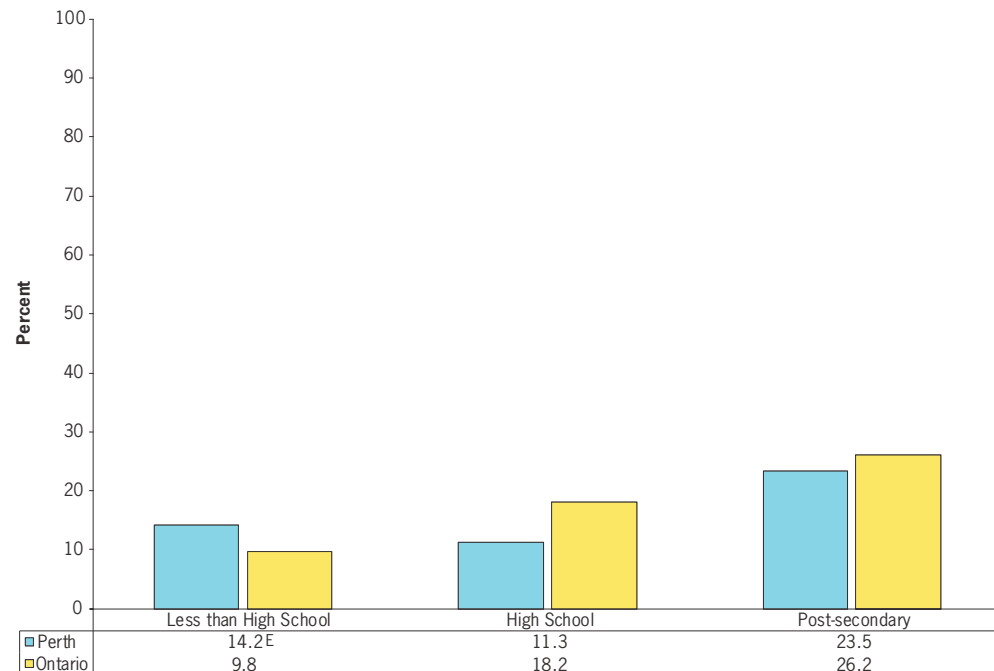


A lower percentage of Perth County residents who did not finish high school (12%) and those who did finish high school (16%) perceived their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to their Ontario peers with less than high school (18%) and those with a high school education (22%).

Similar to Ontarians, a higher percentage of Perth County residents with a post-secondary education (22%) perceived their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Perth County residents with less than high school (12%) and those with a high school education (16%).

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

Figure 8. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario residents who reported their main job or business as quite a bit or extremely stressful by education



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

A higher percentage of Ontarians with a post-secondary education (26%) perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to:

- Ontarians who did not graduate from high school (10%)
- Ontarians who graduated from high school (18%).

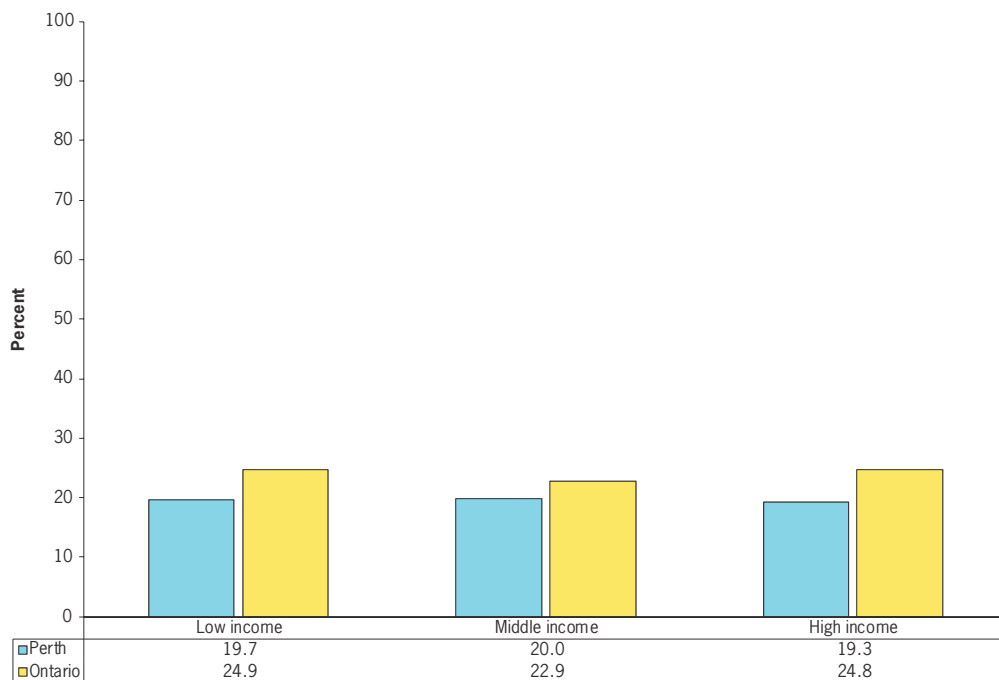
Similarly, a higher percentage of Perth County residents with a post-secondary education (24%) perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to:

- Perth County residents who did not graduate from high school (14%)
- Perth County residents who graduated from high school (11%).

A lower percentage of Perth County residents who finished high school (11%) perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Ontarians who finished high school (18%).

SELF-PERCEIVED LIFE AND WORK STRESS BY INCOME

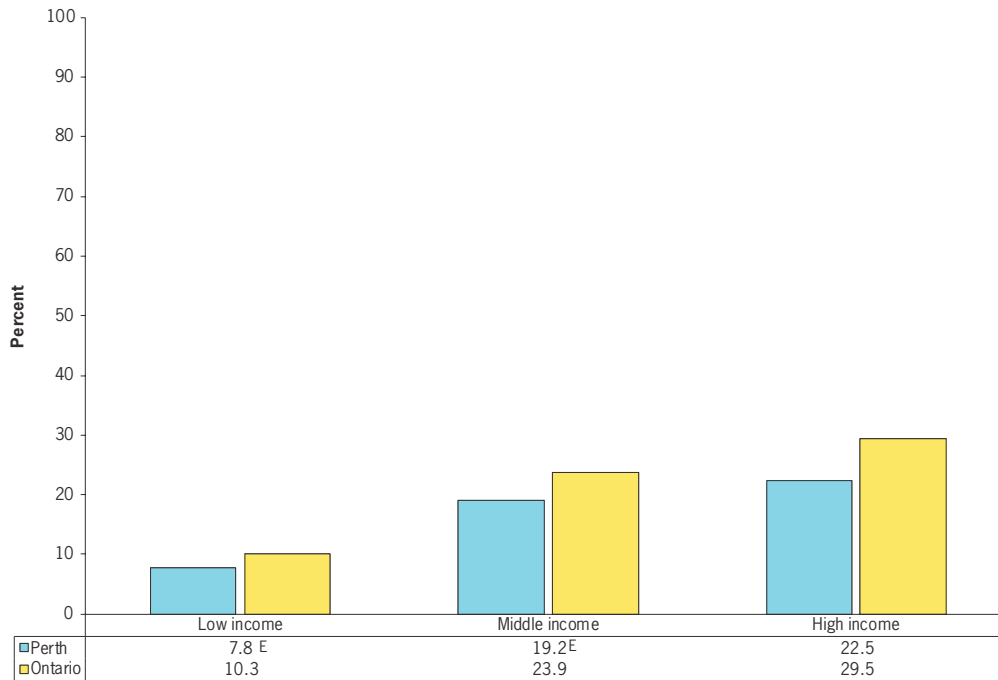
Figure 9. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario residents who reported their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful by household income



A lower percentage of Perth County residents living in high income (19%) perceived their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Ontarians living in high income (25%) who perceived their life as quite a bit or extremely stressful.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

Figure 10. Percentage of Perth County and Ontario residents who reported their main job or business as quite a bit or extremely stressful by household income



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010

A lower percentage of Ontarians living in low income (10%) perceived their work as quite a bit or highly stressful compared to Ontarians living in middle income (24%) and high income (30%).

Similarly, a lower percentage of Perth County residents living in low income (8%) perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Perth County residents living in middle income (19%) and high income (23%).

A lower percentage of Perth County residents living in:

- Low income (8%) perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Ontarians living in low income (10%)
- High income (23%) perceived their work as quite a bit or extremely stressful compared to Ontarians living in high income (30%).

DATA SOURCE AND LIMITATIONS

The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) is a general, cross-sectional health survey that covers the household population aged 12 years or older. Coverage in the provinces is in the range of 98%. The main limitation is that CCHS uses self-reported data, which can be subject to response bias. For more information on the CCHS visit www.statcan.gc.ca.

REFERENCES

1. Association of Public Health Epidemiologists in Ontario. (2005) Self Perceived Life Stress. Retrieved August 21, 2012, from: <http://www.apheo.ca/index.php?pid=165>