

2011 NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY BRIEF

FERTILITY RATES OF MONTREAL'S JEWISH COMMUNITY



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This brief examines the fertility rate of Montreal's Jewish population using data derived from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). Unfortunately, no comprehensive vital statistics regarding Jewish fertility are available for this metropolitan area. Hospital and municipal records do not necessarily indicate the religion of the family, and neither set of records is readily accessible to researchers.

However, an approximate measure of fertility can be derived from the NHS using two cohorts: children 0-4 years and adult females of child-bearing age (15-49 years). This measure is called the Total Fertility Rate (TFR), and is recognized by demographers as a viable alternative in situations where vital statistics related to birthrates are not available.

There are two statistical issues related to this method of fertility calculation. Firstly, it is possible that some of the children 0-4 years are adopted or otherwise not living with a mother who has since died, or has moved to another city. It is likely that there are very

few such children included in this calculation. Secondly, there may be women (15-49 years) whose young children are not living in this metropolitan area. Again, there are likely very few such cases involved in this calculation.

It should be noted that the replacement fertility rate for an industrialized country such as Canada is considered to be 2.1 children. This means that a population would have to have an average of 2.1 births per woman in order to sustain itself. At such a rate it would simply remain at the same level rather than grow. Other factors such as in- and out-migration, as well as mortality, influence the general growth or decline of a population.

Calculations reveal that the fertility rate for the Montreal Jewish population is 2.27 children (Table 1). This rate is slightly above replacement levels. The Jewish fertility rate is higher than the non-Jewish fertility rate (2.27 and 1.60 respectively). The fertility rate for the total Montreal population is 1.61.

Table 1
Fertility Rates for Montreal CMA
Jewish, Non-Jewish & Total Populations

	Fertility Rate
Total Population	1.61
Jewish Population	2.27
Non-Jewish Population	1.60

Table 2
Fertility Rates for Canadian Metropolitan Areas
Jewish, Non-Jewish & Total Populations

Census Metropolitan Area	Total Population	Jewish Population	Non-Jewish Population
Halifax, NS	1.41	1.61	1.41
Montreal, QC	1.61	2.27	1.60
Toronto, ON	1.49	1.93	1.48
Ottawa (Ontario part)	1.51	1.53	1.51
Hamilton, ON	1.55	2.39	1.55
Kingston, ON	1.41	2.50	1.40
Kitchener - Waterloo, ON	1.58	1.85	1.58
London, ON	1.50	1.53	1.50
Windsor, ON	1.48	1.06	1.48
Winnipeg, MB	1.54	1.63	1.54
Regina, SA	1.78	2.72	1.78
Calgary, AL	1.63	1.82	1.63
Edmonton, AL	1.64	1.74	1.64
Vancouver, BC	1.33	1.86	1.32
Victoria, BC	1.27	1.40	1.27

It is important to clarify that the fertility rate for the Ultra-Orthodox population likely inflates the birthrate for the overall Jewish population in this metropolitan area. A study by Shahar (2003) found that the overall birthrate for Ultra-Orthodox communities was 4.85 children.¹ Moreover, using the NHS, it is possible to analyze birthrates for the Tosh community of Boisbriand (there are likely no other Jews living in that area). Calculations reveal that the Tosh birthrate is 5.03, significantly higher than the figure derived for the overall Jewish community.

The fertility rate for the Montreal Jewish population is higher than that of any other major Jewish community in Canada (Table 2). For instance, the Toronto Jewish community has a fertility rate of 1.93 children. It is 1.53 for the Ottawa community, 1.63 for the Winnipeg community, 1.82 for the Calgary community, and 1.86 for the Vancouver community. Again, it may be the large representation of Ultra Orthodox in the Jewish population which accounts for the high level of fertility among Montreal's Jews.

¹ Shahar, C. A Comprehensive Study of The Frum Community of Greater Montreal. Federation CJA & Ahavas Chesed. Montreal, 2003.

As a point of comparison, the birthrate for the Jewish population of Canada is 1.99 children. It is 1.69 for the total population of Quebec, and 1.61 for the overall population of Canada.

Table 3 examines the fertility rates of selected ethnic groups in the Montreal CMA. The Pakistani community has the highest birthrate (3.31 children), followed by the Arab community (3.00). Other ethnic groups with relatively high birthrates include the African (2.99) and Japanese (2.57) communities. The Jewish population's fertility rate (2.27) is ranked 5th among ethnic groups. The Caribbean community is the only other group to register a birthrate above replacement levels (2.14).

The lowest fertility rate is registered by those of British extraction (0.91 children). The American (1.09), Spanish (1.23) and French (1.28) communities also show very low fertility rates.

Table 3
Fertility Rates for Selected Ethnic Groups
Montreal CMA

Ethnic Group	Fertility Rate
Pakistani	3.31
Arab	3.00
African	2.99
Japanese	2.57
(Jewish: full definition)	(2.27)
Caribbean	2.14
East Indian	1.95
Latin American	1.89
Vietnamese	1.85
Aboriginal	1.84
Greek	1.70
Italian	1.62
Chinese	1.49
Portuguese	1.48
Korean	1.44
Canadian	1.42
Filipino	1.41
Polish	1.39
German	1.36
Russian	1.36
Ukrainian	1.35
French	1.28
Spanish	1.23
American	1.09
British	0.91
All other ethnic categories	1.39
Total Montreal CMA	1.61