

2011

NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY BRIEF

FERTILITY RATES OF TORONTO'S JEWISH COMMUNITY



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This brief examines the fertility rate of Greater Toronto'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 Toronto Jewish population is 1.93 children (Table 1). This rate is slightly below replacement levels. The Jewish fertility rate is higher than the non-Jewish fertility rate (1.93 and 1.48 respectively).

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

	Fertility Rate
Total Population	1.49
Jewish Population	1.93
Non-Jewish Population	1.48

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

The fertility rate for the total Toronto population is 1.49.

Shahar & Rosenbaum conducted an attitudinal survey of the Toronto Jewish Community in 2005, and found that the fertility rate was 2.17 children.¹ This latter figure is slightly higher than the current one.

On the other hand, the fertility rate for the Ultra-Orthodox population likely inflates the birthrate for the overall Jewish population in this metropolitan area. Unfortunately, there are no local studies which specifically address this issue. The only reliable metropolitan-wide study of a Canadian Ultra-Orthodox population was done by Shahar (2003). He found that the birthrate for Ultra-Orthodox communities in Montreal was 4.85 children.² The overall birthrate for the Ultra-Orthodox population in Toronto is likely comparable to this figure.

The fertility rate for the Toronto Jewish population is on the high end when compared to the rates of other major Jewish communities in Canada (Table 2). For

instance, the Montreal Jewish community has a fertility rate of 2.27 children. However, all the other major communities have lower birth rates: 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.

As a point of comparison, the birthrate for the Jewish population of Canada is 1.99 children. It is 1.52 for the total population of Ontario, and 1.61 for the overall population of Canada.

Table 3 examines the fertility rates of selected ethnic groups in the Toronto CMA. The Pakistani community has the highest birthrate (2.75 children), followed by the Arab community (2.14). The Caribbean community is the only other group to register a birthrate above replacement levels (2.10). The Jewish population's fertility rate (1.93) is ranked 4th among ethnic groups.

The lowest fertility rate is registered by those of British extraction (0.87 children). The French (1.07), German (1.08) and Korean (1.10) communities also show very low fertility rates.

¹ Shahar, C. & Rosenbaum, T. Jewish Life in Greater Toronto: A Survey of the Attitudes & Behaviors of Greater Toronto's Jewish Community. UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. September 2005.

² Shahar, C. A Comprehensive Study of The Frum Community of Greater Montreal. Federation CJA & Ahavas Chesed. Montreal, 2003.

Table 3
Fertility Rates for Selected Ethnic Groups
Toronto CMA

Ethnic Group	Birth Rate
Pakistani	2.75
Arab	2.14
African	2.10
(Jewish: full definition)	(1.93)
Greek	1.92
Japanese	1.87
Aboriginal	1.85
Latin American	1.77
East Indian	1.74
Caribbean	1.70
Italian	1.60
American	1.51
Vietnamese	1.39
Russian	1.33
Filipino	1.32
Ukrainian	1.30
Chinese	1.30
Portuguese	1.28
Polish	1.24
Spanish	1.15
Korean	1.10
German	1.08
French	1.07
British	0.87
All other ethnic categories	1.32
Total Toronto CMA	1.49