

A Comprehensive Study of The Frum Community of Greater Montreal (Summary of Highlights)

- About 83% of the total Frum households in Greater Montreal were included in this analysis. Such a level of representation easily qualifies this study as a comprehensive Census of the Frum community.
- This study estimates that there are currently 11,025 Frum individuals in Montreal comprising about 12% of the total Jewish population (92,970) in this city.
- There are 2,193 Frum households in Montreal. This represents 5.3% of the 41,125 Jewish households in this city.
- The average household size in the Frum community is 5.03 individuals. About 40% of Frum households have at least 6 persons. If you exclude childless households, the average size is 6.22 people.
- The mean fertility rate among Frum women is 4.85 children. However, when the fertility rate is corrected for age, the figure is 7.01 children.
- Almost half (47.5%) of the Frum community is less than 15 years of age. This is a remarkable percentage when compared with the overall Jewish population, in which only 19.6% are less than 15 years.
- The community with the highest rate of retention is the Tosh community. The Belz and Skver communities are losing about as many married children as those who stay in the city. The most significant losses of population are evident for the Yeshiva and Lubavitch communities.
- 21.6% of Frum households with children under 5 years of age said they need some type of childcare assistance.
- There are approximately 480 Holocaust Survivors in the Frum community. This comprises 61% of those 60+ years of age. Moreover, 82% of those 75+ are Holocaust Survivors.

**A Comprehensive Study of
The Frum Community of Greater Montreal
(Summary of Highlights)**

- **About 83% of the total Frum households in Greater Montreal were included in this analysis. Such a level of representation easily qualifies this study as a comprehensive Census of the Frum community.**

Basically, we did a large-scale study of the Frum community. It was important to do because we had very little empirical information on this community. We managed to interview 1,819 households of a total of 2,193 Frum households. That is 83% of the total Frum households in Montreal. That is a Census. When you consider that the Federal Census uses projections based on a 20% sample, then we really managed to survey a good chunk of the Frum population. This is all the more amazing given the reticence of this population to participate in surveys generally. The households represented came from the Bais Yakov directory and community lists.

A person was considered Frum if they were strictly Shomer Torah. Most of the time it was easy to identify such individuals because they were affiliated with the mainstream Chassidic or Ultra-Orthodox groups, such as Belz, Satmar, Tosch, Skver, Lubavitch, and Yeshivah. We also included individuals affiliated with more obscure communities, such as Munkatch, Viznitz, and Bobov. We also included individuals who were associated with the mainstream groups (that is, davened in their shuls or sent their children to their schools) but would more likely be labeled as Modern Orthodox.

Finally, we included Sephardim who lived within the geographic parameters of the study. We might have missed out certain Sephardim living in Ville St Laurent or Cote St. Luc. But it was a difficult call to know exactly how they would fit in as far as level of observance was concerned.

- **This study estimates that there are currently 11,025 Frum individuals in Montreal comprising about 12% of the total Jewish population (92,970) in this city.**

Because we know how many Frum households there are and their average household size, by multiplying the two figures we can arrive at a fairly accurate estimate of the number of Frum individuals in the community. We can therefore safely say there are about 11,000 Frum people in Montreal. That figure of 12% will increase if the Jewish community continues to shrink, and the Frum community continues to grow. This figure is remarkably close to projections I arrived at using the 1991 Census and various community lists. I came up with 10,900 for the period the survey was done. That is good validation.

- **There are 2,193 Frum households in Montreal. This represents 5.3% of the 41,125 Jewish households in this city.**

The reason there are proportionally fewer households than individuals is because Frum households are less numerous but there are more people inside them. Also, in the overall Jewish households there are intermarried households included in the total, as well as many more single person households. That is why you get a lower percentage of Frum households.

In terms of household arrangements, 71% of Frum households are couples with children, compared to 32% in the overall Jewish community. Only 10% of Frum households are single person, compared to 32% in the overall Jewish community.

- **The average household size in the Frum community is 5.03 individuals. About 40% of Frum households have at least 6 persons. If you exclude childless households, the average size is 6.22 people.**

Actually, you have to look by community to get a sense of average household size. For childless households, it is about 7 for the Lubavich and Skver communities.

- **The mean fertility rate among Frum women is 4.85 children. However, when the fertility rate is corrected for age, the figure is 7.01 children.**

By corrected for age I mean it is the fertility rate for women at the end of their childbearing years, that is after 45 years of age, when we know they can't have more children. In comparison, the fertility rate of non-Frum Ashkenazim is well below replacement levels, below 2, probably closer to 1.5. It is about 2.5 children for Sephardim.

- **Almost half (47.5%) of the Frum community is less than 15 years of age. This is a remarkable percentage when compared with the overall Jewish population, in which only 19.6% are less than 15 years.**

This is the most dramatic finding of the entire study. Of 11,025 Frum individuals, 5,237 are children. Only 28% are between 25-64 compared to 46% in the overall Jewish community. 6% are elderly in the Frum community compared to 21.6% in the overall Jewish community. There are a total of 650 Frum elderly.

- **The community with the highest rate of retention is the Tosh community. The Belz and Skver communities are losing about as many married children as those who stay in the city. The most significant losses of population are evident for the Yeshiva and Lubavitch communities.**

Usually if the community is losing people it is because children are moving out of the city to marry individuals within the same group. But let me tell you that the Tosh community in Boisbriand, is by far the fastest growing Jewish community in Canada. Both through immigration and births.

- **21.6% of Frum households with children under 5 years of age said they need some type of childcare assistance.**

Given all the children, this is not surprising. 75% send their children to the Montreal Children's Hospital. But a significant proportion of the Lubavitch and Sephardic Frum send their children to St. Justin when they require hospitalization. Only 22 households said they had a physically disabled child, and 28 said an intellectually handicapped child. We think this is an underestimate due to the stigma associated with making such an admission.

- **There are approximately 480 Holocaust Survivors in the Frum community. This comprises 61% of those 60+ years of age. Moreover, 82% of those 75+ are Holocaust Survivors.**

So there is a very high percentage of Holocaust Survivors among the elderly. In terms of actual numbers, there are about 480 Holocaust Survivors in the Frum community. 27% of Frum seniors live alone, or 173 people.

But what is interesting is that in terms of services required by Frum seniors, they indicate a very low level of need. Only 3 % of elderly said they needed financial assistance, 15% needed housekeeping assistance, 3% needed meals on wheels, 13% needed transportation assistance, and 4% asked for socialization programs.

What accounts for the low level of need among the elderly? Traditionally, it is the children who must take care of their parents, and many said their children were in fact helping them. They may have also been suspicious of formal organizations and services. In fact, a closer look at the data reveals that 22% of elderly need at least one of these services.

Finally, in terms of service needs for the general Frum community, 13% of respondents said they needed budget counseling, 12% were interested in family counseling, 39% of those with children were interested in a parenting group, and 24% of non-elderly adults were interested in employment or career counseling. 46% of the sample have contacted a CLSC in the last 5 yrs.