



# The Mental Health of Canadians during COVID-19

Health Analysis Division, Centre for Population Health Data

Statistics Canada



Delivering insight through data for a better Canada

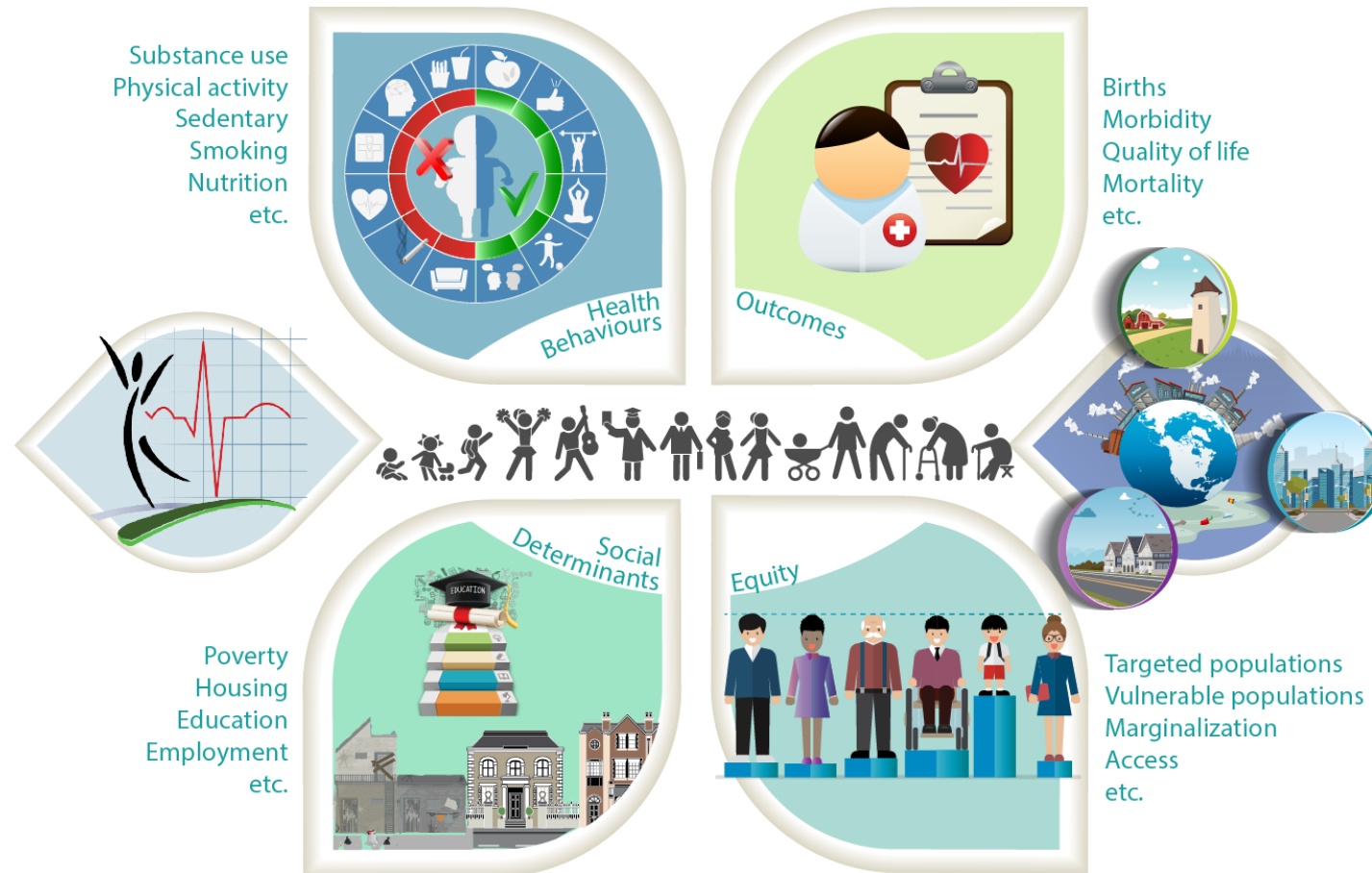


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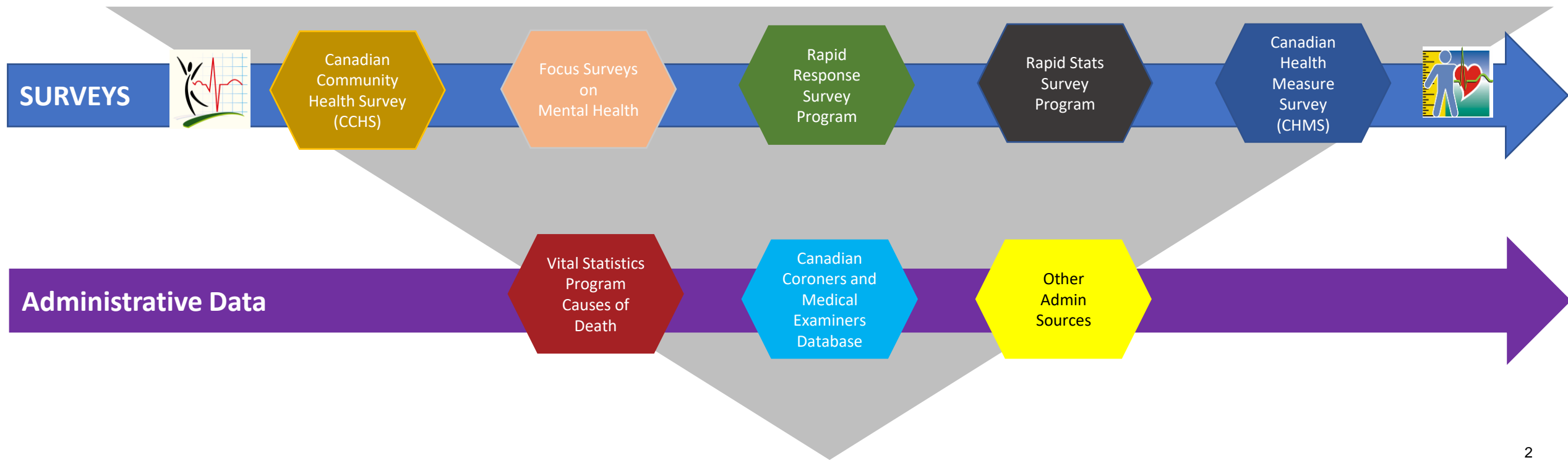
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# A Modern Centre for Population Health Data



# Supporting Information Needs on Mental Health Through a Solid Foundation Relying on Survey and Administrative Data Sources





# Adapting the Health Statistics Program to Provide Timely Response to Support Information Needs on COVID-19

## Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians (*Crowdsourcing*)

- Iteration 1
  - Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians, including health and social concerns
  - Released April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020
- Iteration 2
  - Mental health impacts, including anxiety and stress
  - Released May 27<sup>th</sup> 2020

## Canadian Perspective Survey Series (*Web Panel*)

- Wave 1
  - Health impacts, including self-rated mental health and changes in substance use
  - Released April 8<sup>th</sup> 2020
- Wave 2
  - Mental health impacts, including self-rated mental health and anxiety
  - Released June 4<sup>th</sup> 2020

## Vital Statistics Death Information

- Provisional Excess Death Counts
  - May 13, 2020
  - Monthly Releases
- Provisional Information on Causes of Deaths

# Committed to Moving Forward

## To Provide Relevant and Timely Information on Mental Health

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### **Responsive to user needs for information**

Outreach, Partner Engagement, Prioritization

### **Integrated data = Integrated Information**

Leveraging on new collection approaches to enhance information

Exploring how to resume base survey program collection

Exploring more reliance on administrative and alternative health data

Data linkage across the social domain: maximize use of existing data

### **Invested in leading edge methods**

Greater focus on microsimulation, modelling, geospatial

Innovative sampling, data collection techniques

Research connecting to outcomes

### **User-friendly and audience specific outputs**

Data visualization, infographics, decks, storylines, focused research

### **Expanded access to data**

Towards a virtual lab

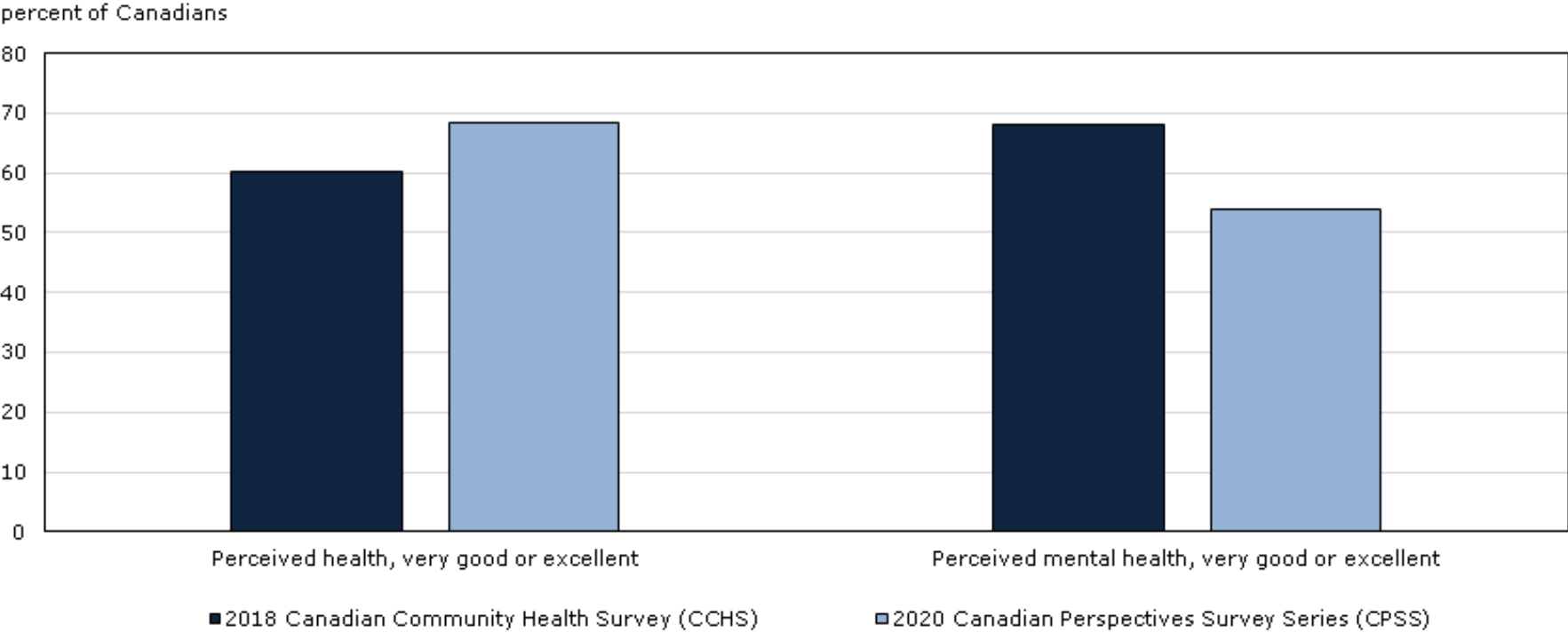
### ***Better Understanding of Population Health***

- **Surveillance/Monitoring**
- **Research**
  - **Outcomes**
  - **Social determinants**
  - **Behaviours**
  - **Health care utilization**
  - **Equity**



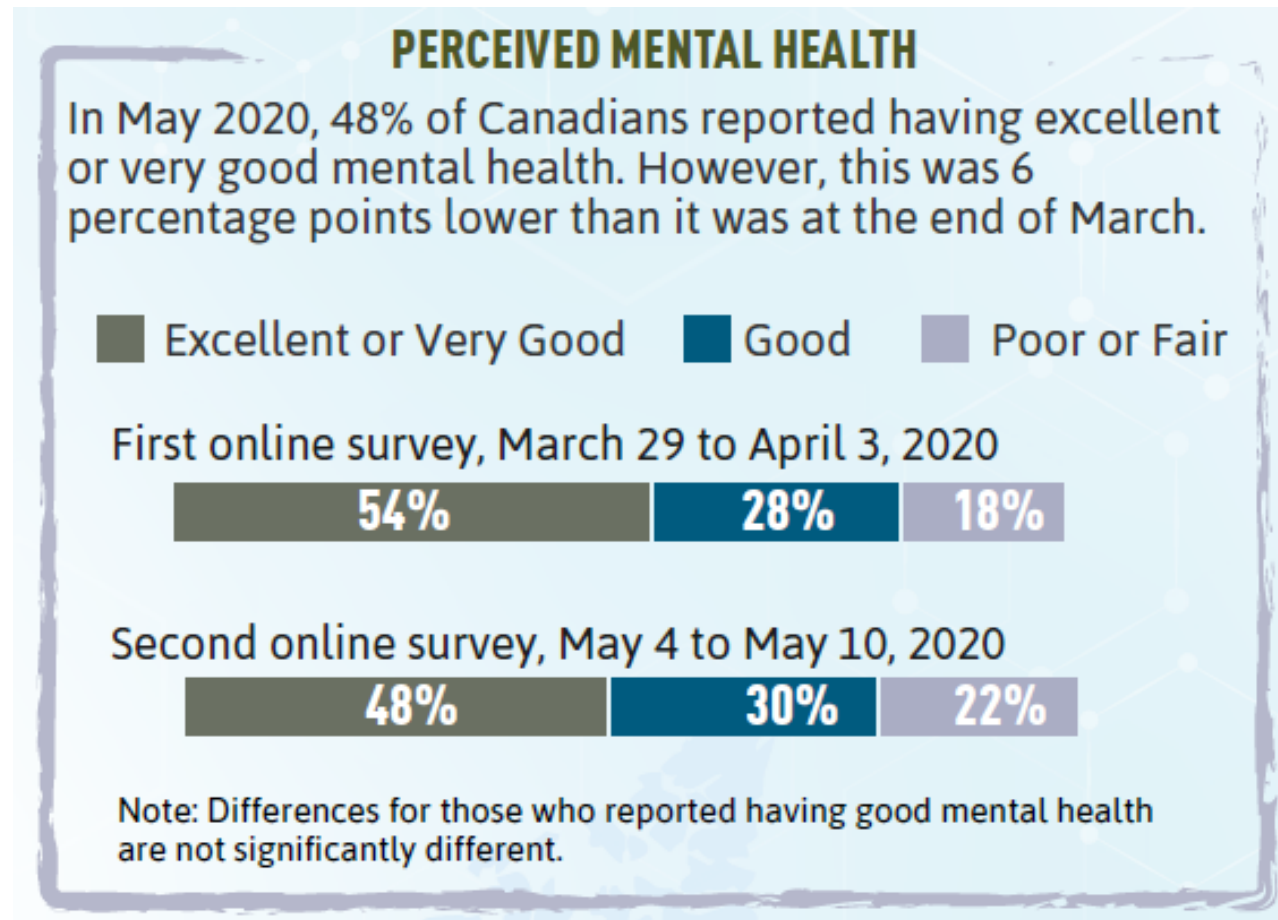
# Fewer Canadians report that they have excellent or very good mental health, particularly women, during the COVID-19 pandemic

**Chart 1**  
Self-perceived excellent or very good mental or physical health



**Sources:** Statistics Canada, 2018 Canadian Community Health Survey and 2020 Canadian Perspectives Survey Series.

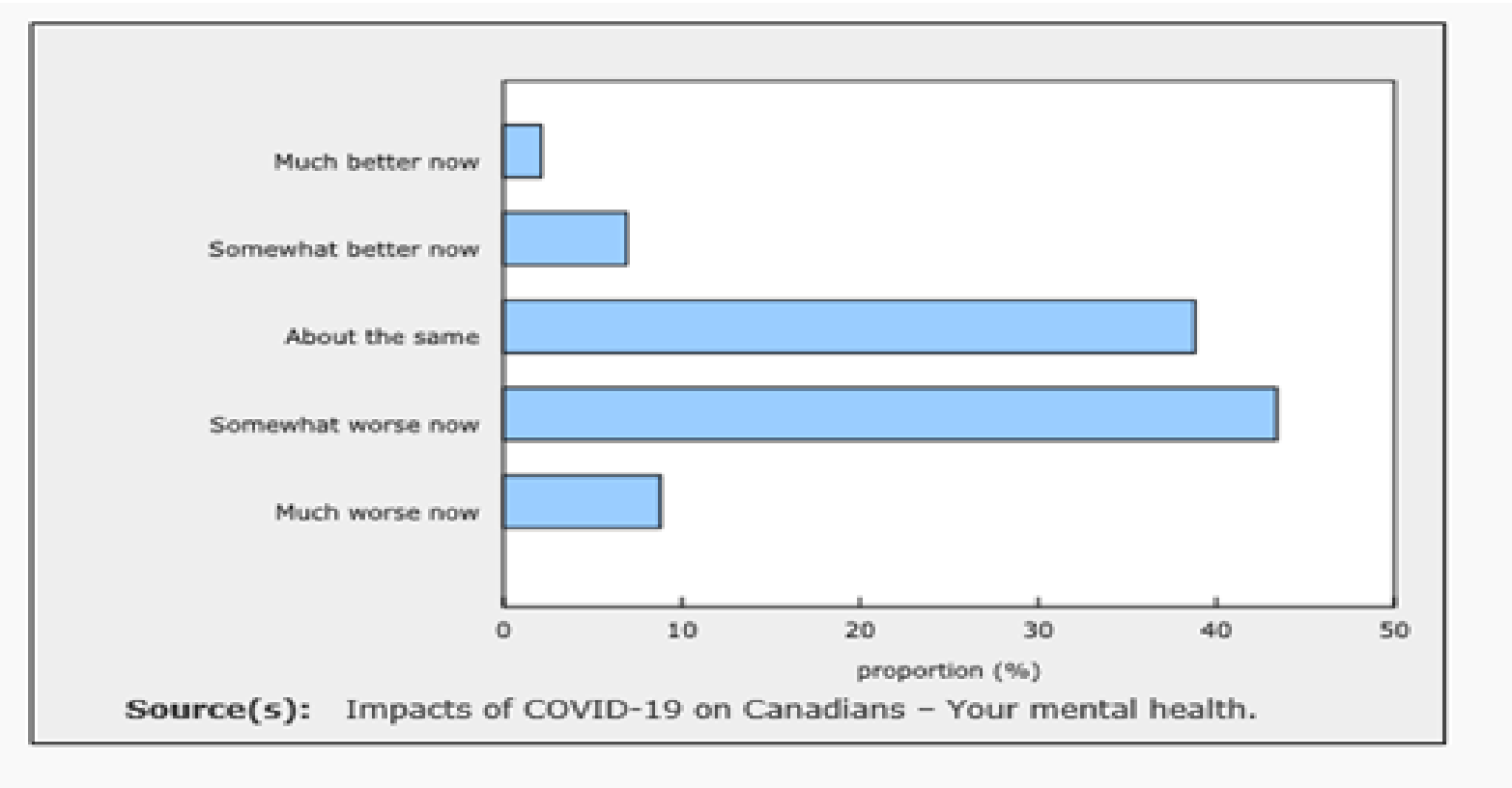
There has been a decrease in self-rated mental health between waves of the web panel



Source: Canadian Perspectives Survey Series, May 2020 and March and April 2020.

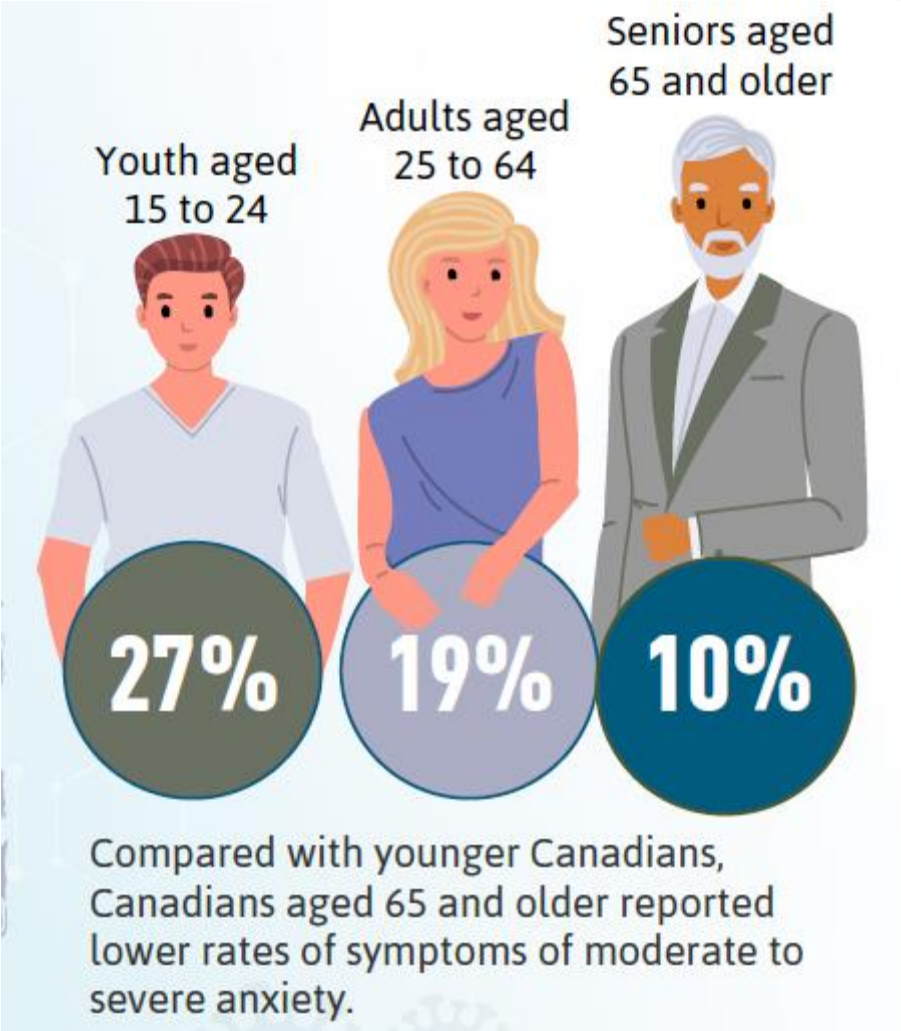
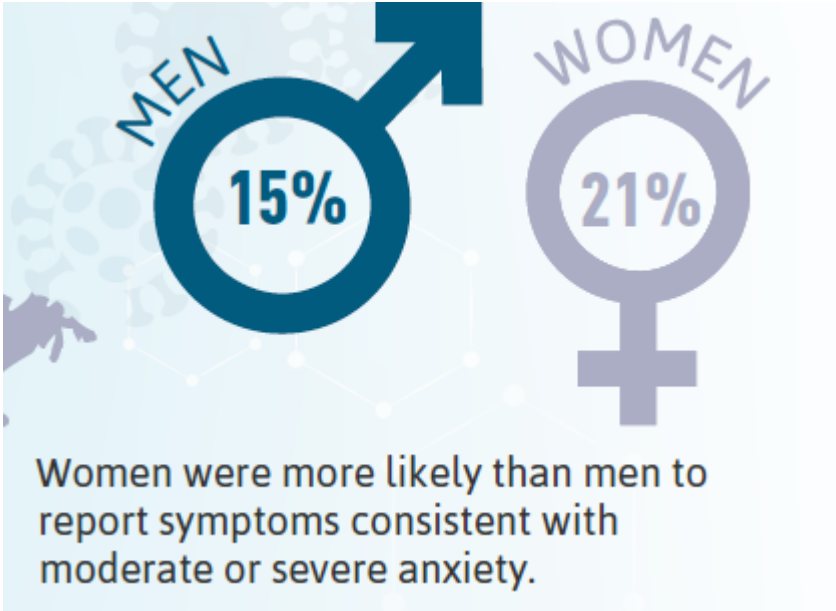
# Over half of participants of the crowdsourcing report that their mental health has worsened since the onset of physical distancing

Change in self-perceived mental health since the onset of physical distancing, April 24 to May 11, 2020



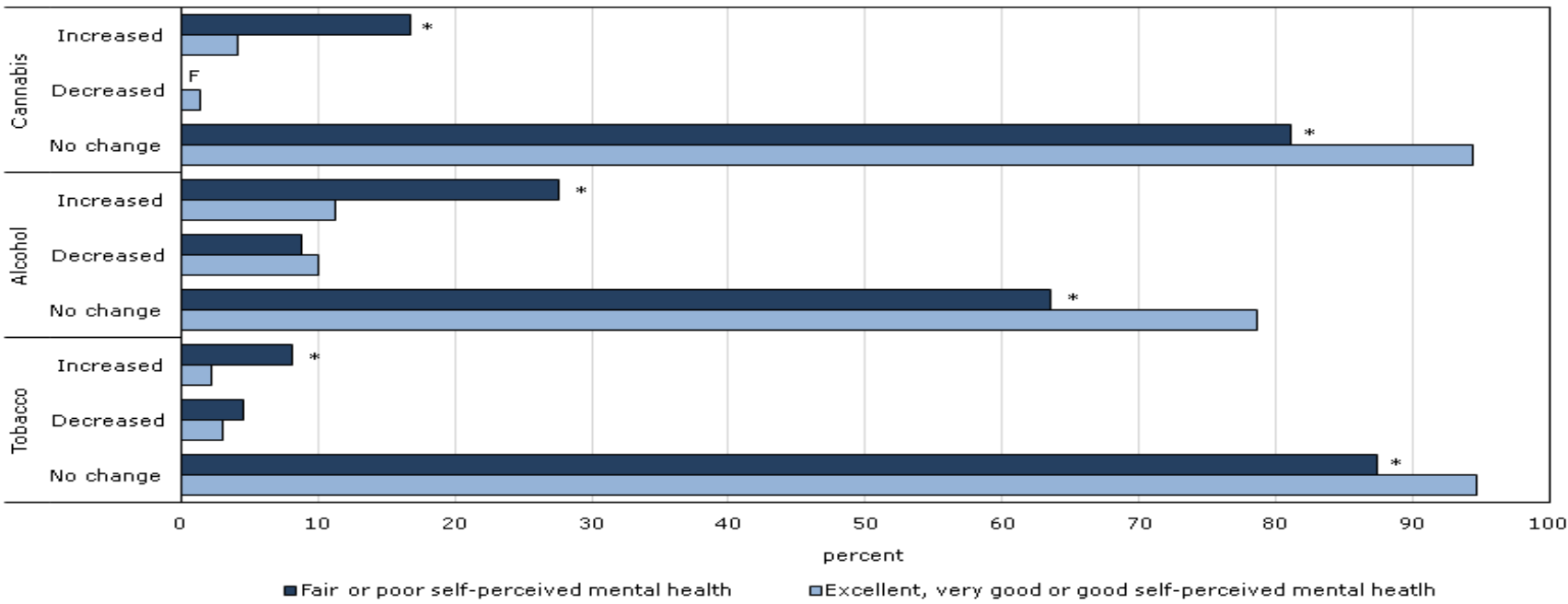


**18% of Canadians reported symptoms consistent with moderate to severe anxiety in the previous two weeks.**



# Canadians with worse mental health are more likely to have increased their use of cannabis, alcohol and tobacco

**Chart 1**  
 Canadians with fair or poor self-perceived mental health more likely to report increased use of cannabis, alcohol and tobacco products



F too unreliable to be published  
 \* significantly different from the corresponding estimate for those in excellent, very good or good self-perceived mental health (p < 0.05)  
**Notes:** "Have your weekly habits changed for any of the following activities?" Consuming cannabis; consuming alcohol; using tobacco products.  
**Source:** Canadian Perspectives Survey Series (CPSS), Wave 1 2020.

# Both men and women with better mental health were more likely to have exercised outdoors during the pandemic

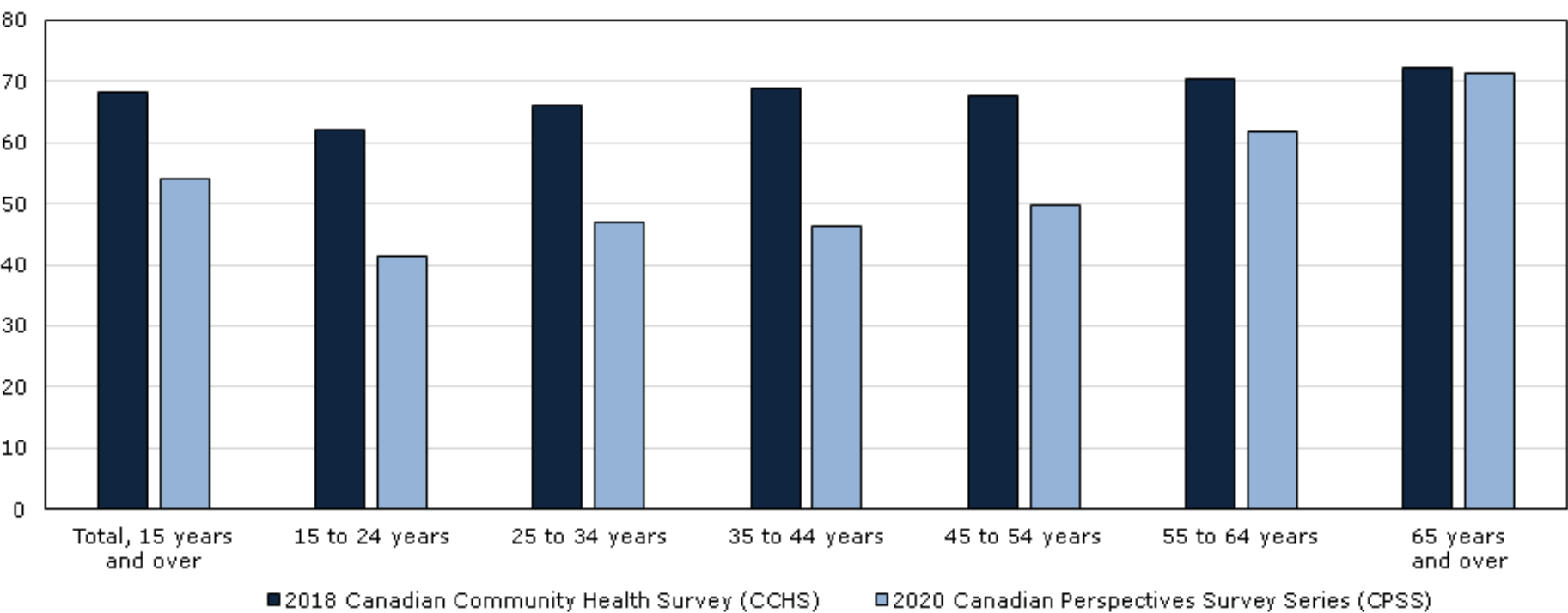
Sex	Activity	Self-perceived mental health (%)			
		Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair/poor
Men	Exercise outdoors	65.1*	66.2*	60.6	50.5
	Exercise indoors	56.6	55.6*	62.0*	44.1
	Changing food choices	29.7*	36.6	42.9	44.7
	Meditation	20.6*	21.0*	27.4	32.4
Women	Exercise outdoors	69.8*	70.7*	64.5*	50.8
	Exercise indoors	65.6	68.5*	64.2	58.2
	Changing food choices	39.5	33.4	40.7	35.3
	Meditation	30.8	30.0	27.2	26.7

\*Significantly different from the estimate for those in fair or poor mental health (p < 0.05).

Source: Canadian Perspective Survey Series 1: Impacts of COVID-19 (5311).

# Youth were less likely to report excellent or very good mental health than in 2018 or than older Canadians

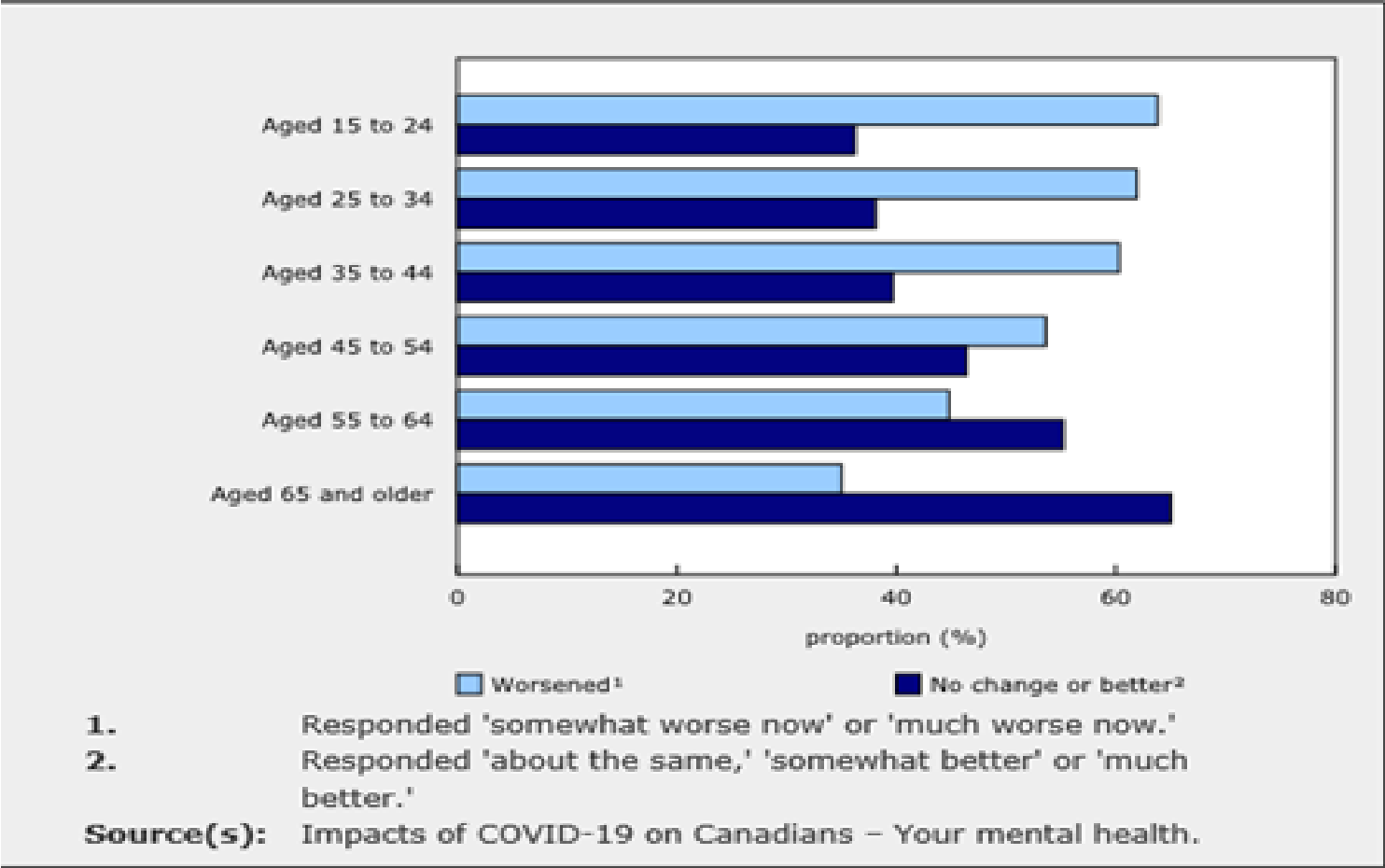
Chart 2  
Self-perceived mental health, by age group  
percent of Canadians



Sources: 2018 Canadian Community Health Survey and 2020 Canadian Perspectives Survey Series.

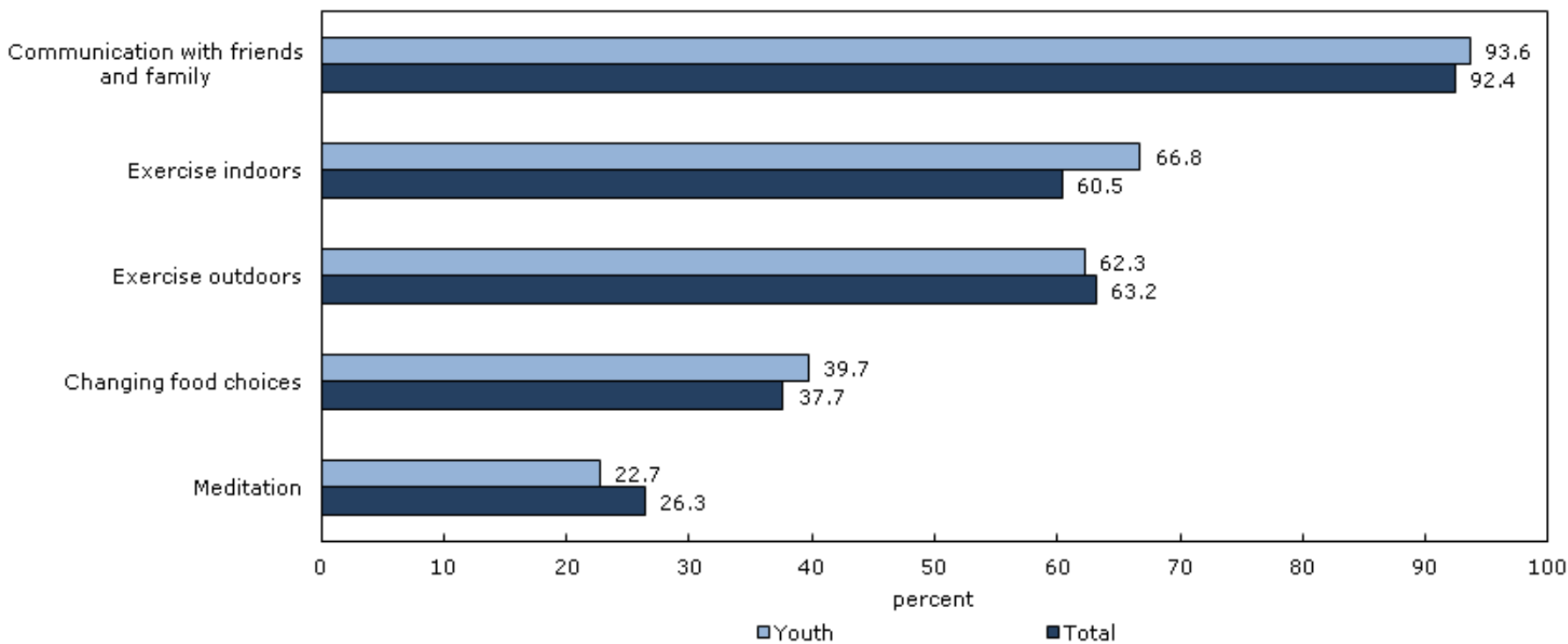
# Youth are more likely to report worsening mental health

Change in self-perceived mental health since the onset of physical distancing, by age group, April 24 to May 11, 2020



# The majority of youth are engaging in positive health behaviours such as communicating with friends and family and exercise during the pandemic

Chart 2  
Activities engaged in by Canadians and youth for their mental or physical health



Source: Canadian Perspectives Survey Series (2020).



## More Crowdsource results: Mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Participants who report that their mental health has worsened also reported higher stress levels
- Most participants had experienced at least one symptom of anxiety
- Higher anxiety among those who have been financially affected by COVID-19

## What gaps in information still exist around mental health and COVID-19?

- Mental health of health care and other frontline workers
- Mental health for vulnerable populations, e.g., immigrants, Indigenous people, those who are financially vulnerable
- Changes in mental health over time as we settle into a new “normal”
- Mental health of families and how they are coping