

STRESS TAKES ITS TOLL

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Themselves and Their Family More Often Now Than Before
September 11th*

*More Than Half (55%) More Pessimistic About the Future Than
They Were A Month Ago*

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Toronto, ON – It's clear that the war on terrorism has added a new dimension of stress in the lives of Canadians – just how much it has, when combined with stress levels of jobs, family and finances is revealed today in a poll released that checks the pulse of Canadians and their overall stress barometer.

Taking a page from the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation Canada Stress Report conducted in December, 1999, the poll replicated measures of stress among Canadians caused by their jobs, families and finances and added another category dealing with "world events". As a result, the "combined stress figure" is not directly comparable to the previous year's work but it does give a solid benchmark based on "the new realities".



The results indicate that while 43 percent of Canadians report some occasional or no stress in the four categories, 30 percent report that the demands in their life with respect to at least one dimension are “stressful and overwhelming” often or almost all of the time, and 27 percent who report this overwhelming amount of stress in at least two or more categories.

Further, the results show that 66 percent of Canadians are thinking more about the personal safety of themselves and their family more often now than before September 11th, and over half (55%) are more pessimistic about the future than they were a month ago.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll conducted between October 16th and 18th 2001. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data. For the purposes of identifying “adult population” of those 18+, recent statistics indicate that 23 million Canadians are counted within this grouping.

Simply put, the results show that 43 percent of Canadians are experiencing some stress, another 30 percent are experiencing significant stress while 27 percent are experiencing severe stress.



At the outset, 29 percent indicate that they almost all of the time or often find the demands of their “finances” as “stressful and overwhelming”. When it comes to “world events” 25 percent admitted this to be the case, followed by “their job” at 21 percent and their “family” at 20 percent.

The analysis shows that not everyone finds the stress in the same category – whereas others are finding stress in multiple categories.

For example, when a combined stress analysis is undertaken it found that 30 percent of the Canadian public identify one item only – comprised of “world events” 10 percent, “finances” 9 percent, “job” 6 percent and “family” 5 percent.

The next level of the stress involves a combination of two or more stress items – the most severe level where 18 percent of Canadians find stress in two categories (4% family and finance, 4% world events and finance, 4% job and finance, 3% family and world events, 2% job and world events, and 1% job and family); 7 percent find overwhelming stress in three categories (3% job, family, finance; 2% family, finance, world events; 2% job, finance, world events; 1% job, family, world events); and 2 percent of the Canadian population who find stress related to all four categories overwhelming.

The data suggests that approximately 6, 210,000 adult Canadians (representing 27% of the adult population) are suffering from severe stress with at least 460,000 adult Canadians suffering from the most critical level (representing 2% of all adult Canadians overwhelming by all four categories).



In terms of those who are most severely stressed (27% of the population) they are most likely to be found in Ontario (10%), followed by Quebec (7%), BC (4%), Alberta (3%), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (2%) and Atlantic Canada (1%).

Women (15%) are more likely than men (12%) to be experiencing severe stress in handling all four of the categories. In terms of age demographics, 10 percent of 18 to 34 year olds are experiencing severe stress versus those 35 to 54 (14%), versus those 55+ (3%).

On a straight comparison with the three categories surveyed in December 1999, 30 percent of the total population were experiencing overwhelming stress in their jobs compared with 21 percent now – a net drop of 9 points. In 1999, 26 percent indicated that they were experiencing overwhelming stress in their family compared with 20 percent today – a net drop of 6 points. For those indicating overwhelming stress with respect to their finances, 1999 survey results indicated this was the case for 21 percent of the population whereas now this has risen to 29 percent -- a net increase of 8 points. Those likely to be the most stressed over finances (37%) and family (26%) are those earning less than \$30,000, whereas those most likely to be stressed as a result of world events (27%), are earning between \$30,000 and \$60,000. Those earning over \$60,000 are most likely to indicate overwhelming stress from their jobs (27%).

When it comes to thinking about their personal safety and that of their family more often now than before September 11th (nationally, 66%), Canadians in Alberta (73%) and Atlantic Canada (68%) lead the way with those in Quebec (61%) being less concerned than all other regions. Women (72%) are more likely than men (60%) to feel this way, and younger Canadians aged 18 to 34 (70%) as well as middle aged Canadians aged 35 to 54 (68%) are more likely to think about their personal safety than those over 55 years old (59%).

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As for being more pessimistic about the future than a month ago (nationally, 55%), those with the bleakest outlook are from Atlantic Canada (59%) followed by those from Ontario (56%) and BC (56%) with Saskatchewan/Manitoba (53%) Quebec (52%) and Alberta (52%) not far behind. Women (58%) are more likely to be pessimistic than men (51%), and younger (56%) and middle aged (55%) are more likely to be pessimistic about the future compared to a month ago than older Canadians (52%).

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