



Toronto Star cartoon, Nov 2, 2009

# Access and Voice: Health Equity and Income in Canada

**Social Assistance**  
*in the* **New Economy**



# Health Equity and Income in Canada

- Studies view health from a *social determinants* perspective.
- That is, the recognition that elements of the social environment – the social and economic conditions in which people live – have profound effects on health.

**Social Assistance**  
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# Those determinants typically include:

- Income and social status.
- Social support networks
- Education and literacy
- Employment/Working conditions.
- Social environments.
- Physical environments.
- Personal health practices and coping skills.
- Biology and genetic endowment.
- Health services.
- Gender.
- Culture. The exclusion and stigmatization of cultural groups distinct from dominant groups can be associated with greater risks and poorer health outcomes.

# Why do this research?

- Canadian Community Health Survey, 2005
- Current and comprehensive
- 2005 – peak of the economy
- Reinforcement of message

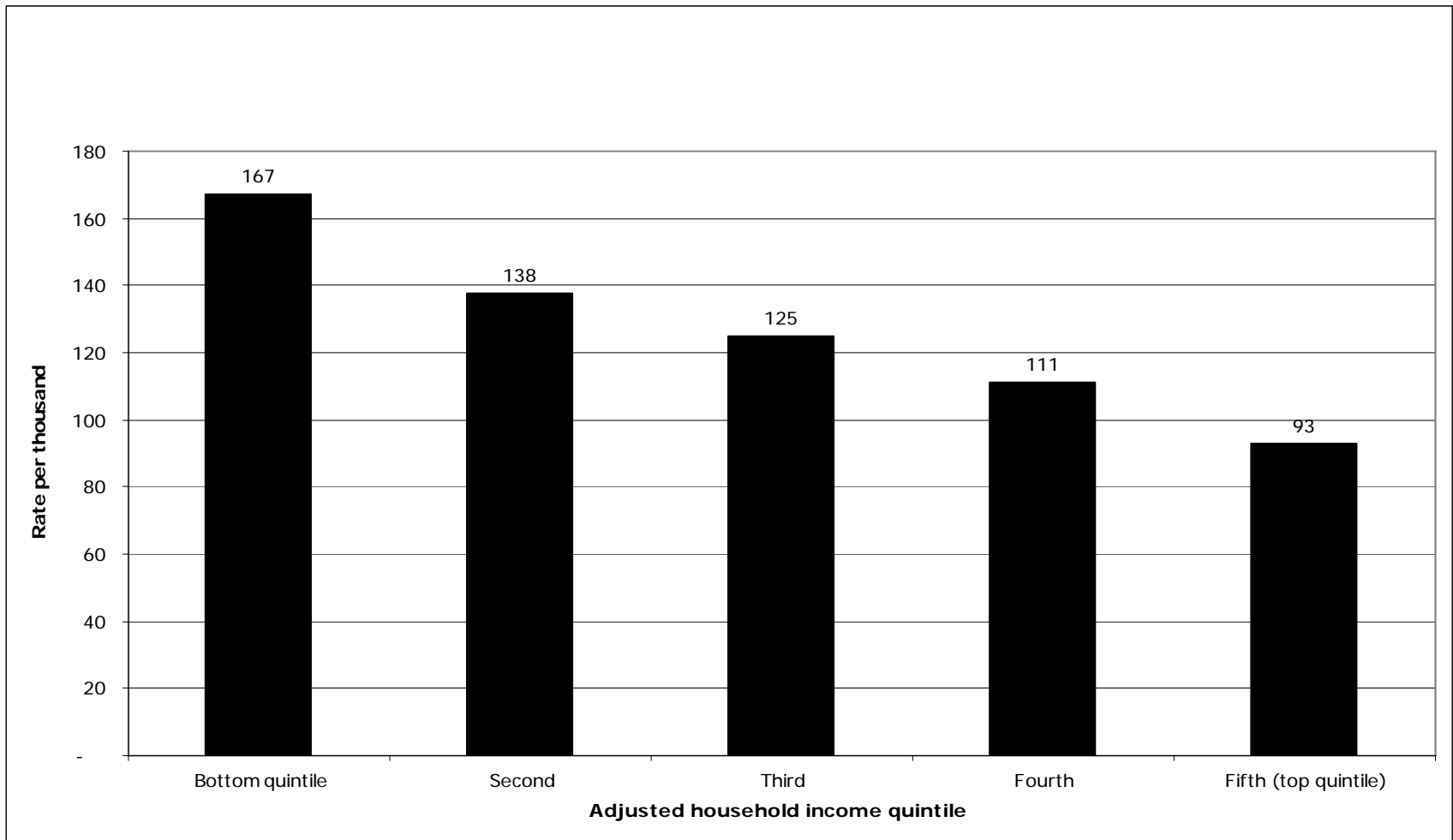
**Overview of health indicators**  
**Adults 18-64, Canada 2005**  
**Age-adjusted, by household income quintile**

	First (bottom) quintile	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth (top quintile)
<b>Self-rated health:</b>					
Self-rated health (poor or fair, versus good, very good or excellent )	178****	95****	78****	58****	42
Self-rated mental health (poor or fair, versus good, very good or excellent )	97****	49**	43****	32***	27
<b>Chronic conditions:</b>					
Has a chronic condition	696****	672	680	678**	665
> 2 chronic conditions	289****	229***	214**	200****	177
Average number of chronic conditions	1,921****	1,582**	1,513*	1,470****	1,356
<b>Disability:</b>					
Disability (Often has a participation or activity limitation)	87****	36****	30**	21	19
Disability days (over previous two weeks)	1,327****	824	819	768	718
<b>Stress and mental health:</b>					
Stress: Most days quite a bit or extremely stressful versus not at all, not very or a bit stressful	270****	238**	252	262****	295
Depression scale	0.67****	0.45	0.42	0.41**	0.34
Weeks depressed	1,739****	973	830	653	579

# Musculoskeletal conditions

	First (bottom) quintile	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth (top quintile)
<b>Musculoskeletal:</b>	329****	285****	277*	265****	240
Back problems (excluding arthritis or rheumatism)	229****	198	192	189****	173
Arthritis or rheumatism	167****	138***	125***	111****	93
Fibromyalgia	23****	16	14**	10*	8
Chronic fatigue syndrome	24****	13*	11***	7	6

# Musculoskeletal conditions: Arthritis or rheumatism, by adjusted household income quintile Canada, population 18 – 64, 2005



# Respiratory conditions

Age-adjusted rates per thousand population  
Canada, population 18-64, 2005

Respiratory diseases	119****	94	93	89	88
Chronic bronchitis	41****	22	22***	16*	13
Asthma	98****	81	78	79	79

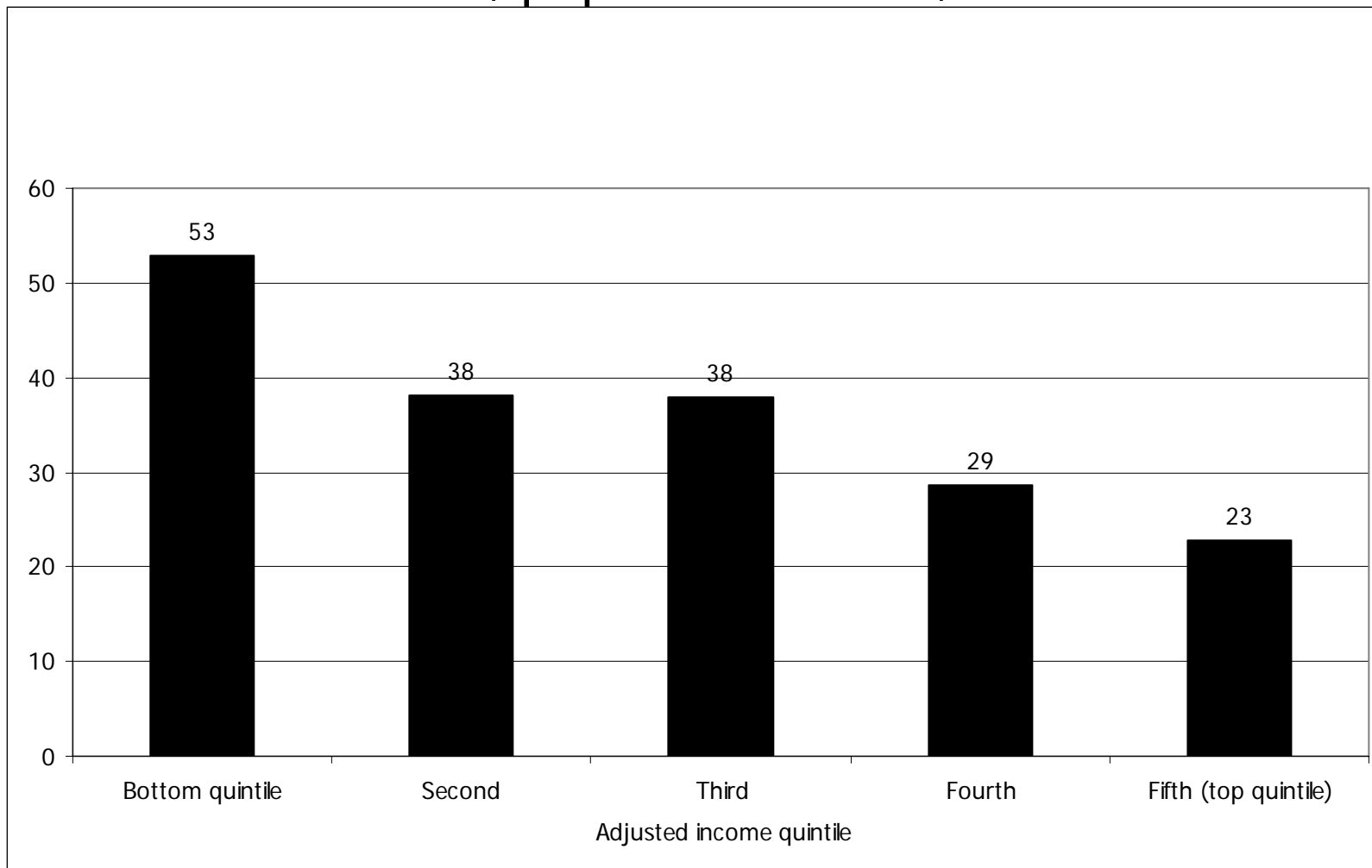
# Endocrine and metabolic conditions

Age-adjusted rates per thousand population

Canada, population 18-64, 2005

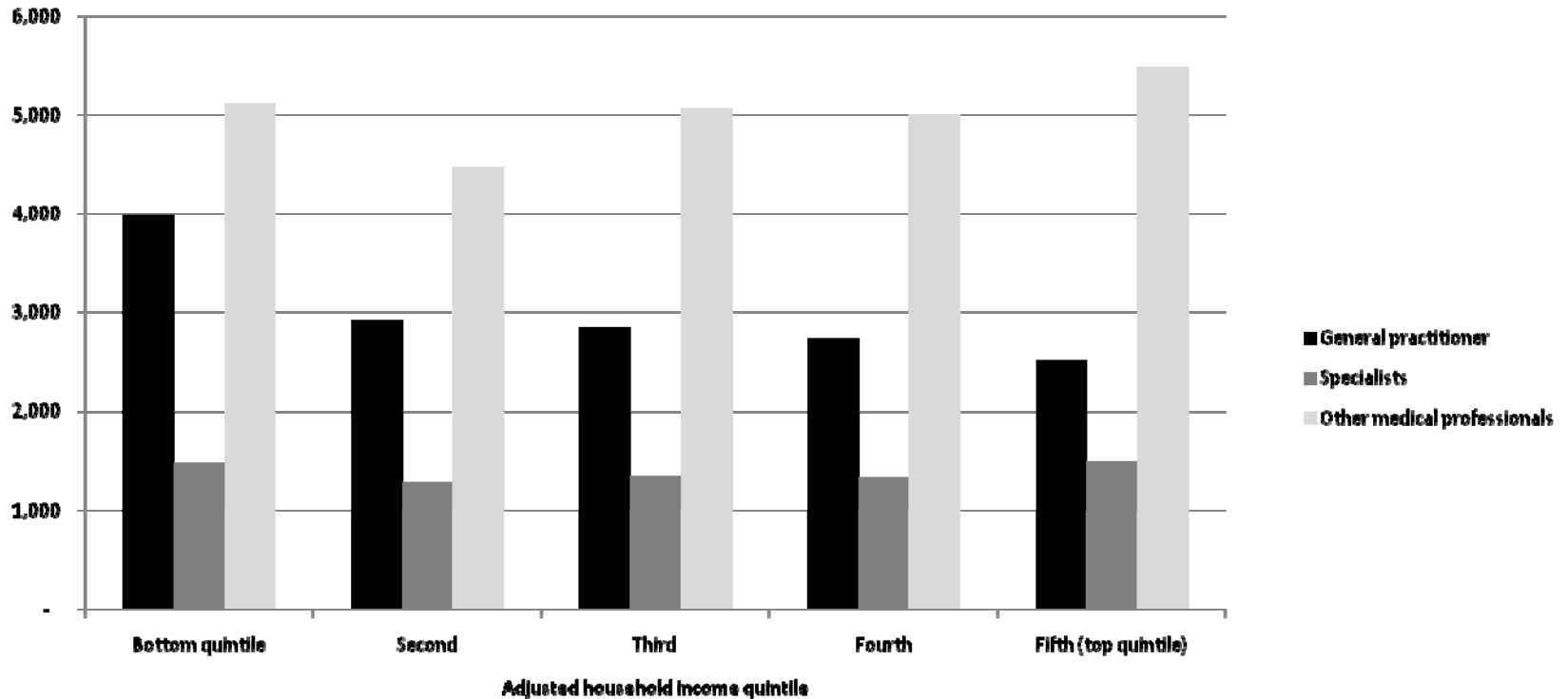
	First (bottom) quintile	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth (top quintile)
<b>Endocrine and metabolic conditions:</b>	372	364	369	377*	365
Thyroid conditions	54	58****	49	45*	39
Diabetes	53****	38	38****	29**	23
Food allergies	78*	70	75	75	78
Multiple chemical sensitivities	32****	24	22	20****	12
Other allergies	266	268	277****	296	293

# Diabetes: Age-adjusted rates per thousand population Canada, population 18-64, 2005



# Access and utilization: visits to medical professionals

Figure 11: Consultations with medical professionals  
Age adjusted rates per thousand  
by adjusted household income quintile, Canada 2005



# Multivariate results for chronic conditions (lowest quintile)

## Multivariate results for individual chronic conditions

Canada, adults 18-64, 2005

Condition	Impact associated with \$1,000 change in income
Self-rated health (Good, very good or excellent)	3,185
Depression (weeks depressed in past 12 months)	-55,838
Diabetes	-889
Migraines	-861
Chronic bronchitis	-629
Arthritis or rheumatism	-1,281
Chronic fatigue syndrome	-381
Mood disorders	-995
Number of chronic conditions	-9,521
Disability days in past two weeks	-6,577

## Multivariate results for health care access and utilization

	Impact of \$1,000 income	Significance <sup>2</sup>
Has self-perceived unmet health care need	(600.9)	*
Consultations with medical professionals:		
All medical consultations	52,316.0	****
Consultations with family doctor	(24,684.4)	****
Consultations with medical specialists	15,923.1	****
Consultations with other medical professionals <sup>3</sup>	46,555.9	***
Nights as a patient in a hospital, nursing home or convalescent home	(5,622.6)	n.s.
Access to health insurance (Ontario only):		
Prescription medications	13,819.0	****
Dental insurance	15,818.6	****
Eye glasses/contact lenses	13,436.6	****
Hospital charges	19,474.5	****

# “Poverty is Making Us Sick”

- <http://wellesleyinstitute.com/files/povertyismakingussick.pdf>
- Toronto, 2009