

# People in Metro Vancouver less happy than most Canadians, survey finds

BY DAPHNE BRAMHAM, VANCOUVER SUN APRIL 20, 2015

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A sailboat passes downtown towers while traveling on the harbour in Vancouver, on Wednesday April 8, 2015. Is it the rain? The high price of real estate? Whatever the reason, people living in Metro Vancouver seem to be less happy with their lives than most Canadians.

**Photograph by:** Darryl Dyck, THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver may look like a great place to live. But it's not.

It is the unhappiest city in Canada, according to Statistics Canada's How's Life in the City? Report released today. It is the first StatsCan report to rank life satisfaction in Canada's 33 cities and 58 economic regions.

And British Columbia as a whole is one of the unhappiest parts of Canada. Not a single city in beautiful British Columbia cracks the top 10. Kelowna rates the highest, but it's in the middle of the pack -- #12 of 33.

Abbotsford comes in at #24 after Winnipeg - yes, Winterpeg! -- but ahead of Kitchener. As for Victoria, the capital and perennial tourist attraction, it's at 27 sandwiched between Peterborough and Barrie.

The only salve to smug Vancouverites' feelings may be the knowledge that Toronto is second worst and only marginally better.

If you want to be happy, move to Quebec -- anywhere in Quebec. Not only are Saguenay and Trois Rivières Canada's two happiest cities, Quebec City, Sherbrooke and Ottawa-Hull are in the top 10 and northern Quebec is the country's happiest region.

The rankings are based on data from StatsCan's General Social Survey as well as the Canadian Community Health Survey from 2009 to 2013. Using a scale from zero to 10 with 0 being 'very dissatisfied,' almost 340,000 people were asked how they felt about their life as a whole.

While the rankings may stoke inter-city and inter-regional competition, the variance between cities and regions is relatively small.

Consider, for example, that even as Canada's unhappiest city, Vancouverites rated their life satisfaction at 7.8 out of 10.

To put that in context, Denmark was ranked the happiest place on Earth in the last World Happiness Report, which uses the same survey questions as StatsCan, and Denmark's average rating of 7.693. Canada, which had a rating of 7.477 was in sixth place. But those rankings may change when the 2015

World Happiness Report is released later this week.

Although the variance between Canadian cities and regions is small, the report's authors say it's still statistically significant enough to merit further study to determine what can be done to narrow that small gap.

The report's authors – StatsCan researchers Chaohui Lu, Feng Hou, Grant Schellenberg and UBC economics professor John Helliwell - point out the differences in life satisfaction across the country are far smaller than between countries.

Aside from ranking the regional differences, the report also looked at the socio-economic factors behind happiness.

Aboriginal Canadians, for example, rate their life satisfaction slightly higher than all other Canadians. But when that answer is correlated with their responses to questions about their health, employment status and household income, they fall below the Canadian average for life satisfaction.

Health is a key predictor of happiness. In the surveys, people who described their health as 'excellent' rated their happiness at a full percentage point higher than those whose health is poor.

The study also found that women are happier than men. Married people are happier than those who are single.

Canadian-born respondents are happier than immigrants.

People in their 40s and early 50s are less happy than both younger and older age groups.

Better-educated people are happier than those who didn't graduate from high school.

And it's no surprise that people with higher incomes are happier than those whose household income is less than \$30,000 a year.

**Happy Cities:**

1. Saguenay
2. Trois-Rivieres
3. St. John's
4. Greater Sudbury
5. Quebec City
6. Saint John
7. Sherbrooke
8. Thunder Bay
9. Moncton
10. Ottawa-Hull
11. Saskatoon
12. Kelowna
13. Montreal
14. Halifax
15. Oshawa
16. Calgary
17. London

18. Regina
19. Kingston
20. St. Catharines-Niagara
21. Hamilton
22. Brantford
23. Winnipeg
24. Abbotsford
25. Kitchener
26. Peterborough
27. Victoria
28. Barrie
29. Edmonton
30. Guelph
31. Windsor
32. Toronto
33. Vancouver

To read Statistics Canada's report on well-being, [click here](#)

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