
SECOND PHASE OF THE POPULATION HEALTH SURVEY

The Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie announced that a second study on the health of adult residents in the sociosanitary region served by the CIUSSS de l'Estrie – CHUS entitled *2018 Estrie Population Health Survey* (ESPE) will be held. The research aims to gather information by mid-September from 10,650 respondents aged 18 years and older, who will be contacted randomly by telephone or online, in French or in English. Thanks to improvements in our knowledge, it will help decision-makers in the health sector to make enlightened and informed decisions. Ten topics will be explored:

- Lyme disease (risky activities, protective measures, etc.)
- Alcohol and cannabis use
- Access to health services (visits to the emergency department, difficulties obtaining care)
- Children's education and global development (e.g.: homework assistance, perceived importance of the diploma, reading activities, and fine motor skills)
- Screen time
- Lifestyle habits and preventive activities (tobacco cessation, nutrition, vaccination, etc.)
- Chronic health problems (hypertension, mood disorders, etc.)
- Reactions to daily life (e.g.: stress, psychological distress)
- Sleep and stress management
- Sense of belonging to the community
- Labour force participation (social support, social involvement)
- Occupational well-being (e.g.: health and well-being program)
- Recovery following the Lac-Mégantic railroad tragedy

Thanks to the work of some 30 researchers and co-investigators in the region, it will be possible to describe the magnitude of several health-related phenomena both locally and regionally. Some data may even be compared to that gathered in the first edition in 2014-2015. The first results should be disseminated at the beginning of 2019.

Public Health reminds the public of the importance of participating in this confidential health study so that its conclusions are as valid as possible. The services of the firm Advanis Jolicoeur have been retained to conduct the survey.

FAQ

What are the objectives of the survey?

The 2018 survey has two main objectives:

1. To estimate the magnitude of certain aspects which define the health of Estrie residents, of the MRCs, and of the boroughs of the city of Sherbrooke;
2. To identify the characteristics particular to vulnerable groups (e.g.: by education level or income) compared to those who are more privileged in the region.

Tangibly, the idea is to know the magnitude of a variety of public health topics within the population and among subcategories (young adults, seniors, males/females, etc.). These include chronic diseases (hypertension, diabetes), protective behaviours (e.g.: vaccination), or the verification of an issue regarding access to health services (e.g.: family physician) by personal income, and so on.

Is it obligatory to consent to participate in the survey?

No. Your consent is free and voluntary.

Do you face risks by participating in this survey?

There is no risk of tracking your profile and it will be impossible to contact you by phone or by email using the survey data. Only Dr. Mélissa Généreux, the lead principal investigator, Mr. Michel Des Roches, the survey coordinator, and a few other professionals employed by the Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie will have access to the data; however, they will not have information which might be used to identify you.

If you agree (consent) to provide your coordinates so that we can contact you again in the future for further information, please note that your coordinates will be kept in a separate databank which will be used to combine your survey data with the new data requested. Rest assured that any future requests will be accompanied by information explaining to you the specific objectives of the new research and to what extent it commits you.

Will my answers to the survey remain confidential?

Yes, at all times. Access to your data will be restricted solely to the researchers and their immediate collaborators who have received prior authorization to access the information contained in this databank. The researchers must uphold data confidentiality at all times. In no event shall the survey data of a single individual used in this study be disseminated in scientific publications, either for professionals or for the public.

Can you be contacted again by phone or email?

Your participation in this survey is anonymous. The Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie has mandated Montreal-based firm **Advanis Jolicoeur** to gather data by following a call for bids. The firm will transmit solely the responses to the survey and in no event may transmit your coordinates where you can be reached. Only an authorization on your behalf will make it possible to obtain your coordinates if you wish to participate subsequently in another study.

What does your participation entail?

We are not in a position to track you given the anonymous nature of the initial participation in the survey. Rest assured that your answers will be used solely by researchers for the advancement of knowledge or for planning health services within the public network. It goes without saying that this excludes any company which might use the data for commercial purposes in the pursuit of profit.

At the very end of the survey, we will ask you whether you are interested in participating in another study with the Faculté de médecine et des sciences de la santé de l'Université de Sherbrooke. Within the framework of this other study, medical students will contact you once each year for a 20-minute interview. You will also be asked whether you agree (consent) to combine your data regarding the use of health services with those of the 2018 ESPE. It is possible that medical and administrative data might be useful to verify the utilization of services by respondents. Via a survey, it would be extremely onerous to monitor thousands of individuals to learn about their overall health characteristics and utilization of health services. The idea is to enable the integration of medical data obtained for administrative follow-ups in order to complete the information regarding service utilization because some specific information may be difficult to remember (e.g.: date), or unknown to the person (reason for the medical consultation from the perspective of the health care professional). Québec does not yet have an electronic patient record system which could be used to obtain information globally for a detailed profile of each individual. Such a profile is not complete given that it will not store individual perceptions about topics such as vaccination, sense of belonging to the community, as well as neighbourhood or municipal-based issues.

Researchers may investigate various types of health services whose data will likely come from one of the following databanks:

- Medical and hospital data through the CIRESS databank, property of the Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke (CHUS), which contains data about hospitalizations and care provided within a hospital.
- Lots of medical and administrative data are the property of the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec. Some data are entrusted to a mandatary body, specifically the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec. Researchers may be interested in examining the utilization of services according to medical consultation, prescription drug data from the public prescription drug insurance plan, or even the services provided by health care professionals at a specific institution.

Can a researcher publish information concerning a single individual?

No. Researchers will publish aggregate results, meaning that any single individual's answers will never be presented as such. Only information about groups or categories can be published, which guarantees that any single participant cannot be identified or recognized through his response profile.

Where will the data be stored?

Once created, the survey databank shall be kept in the offices of the Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie. It will be stored in a secure server and be protected by a password known only to Dr. Mélissa Généreux, the lead principal investigator, and to Mr. Michel Des Roches, the survey coordinator, as well a few other professionals employed by the Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie. The regulations governing the protection and conservation of information will also be enforced for this databank.

How long will the databank be kept?

The databank will be kept for 10 years following its creation. At the end of this period, the databank will be destroyed unless it is demonstrated that it would be beneficial to prolong the useful life of this databank for research purposes.

Will participants be paid for their contributions to other research?

No, because the applicant body, the Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie, is a public organization which does not have an official policy of rewarding participants through monetary compensation, loyalty programs or gifts.

Will it be possible for me to remove my answers from the questionnaire once I have completed it or if I change my mind and no longer want my answers to be used in future research projects?

No data which can be used to identify you (e.g.: name, coordinates) will be gathered during the survey. Consequently, it will be impossible to subsequently identify you in the databank. Once the survey is completed, the polling firm mandated by the Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie, specifically Montreal-based **Advanis Jolicoeur**, will not transfer your telephone number to persons at the Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie, regardless of whether it is in a list or in a file.

However, if you choose to participate in the research project which demands a follow-up in the future and which involves the Faculté de médecine et des sciences de la santé de l'Université de Sherbrooke, you must provide your coordinates so that we can eventually contact you. You will be able to withdraw from his project at any time and ask that the information which concerns you be removed from the research databank.

Who is responsible for managing access to the databank?

Two people at the Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie will oversee access management and control: Dr. Mélissa Généreux, the lead principal investigator and director of public health, and Mr. Michel Des Roches, the survey coordinator. A databank management policy will be enforced by an internal management committee at the DSP de l'Estrie. This process will make it possible to supervise access requests to data and certain results obtained in the 2018 ESPE within a university research framework.

Which organization is funding the 2018 ESPE?

The Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie, through the *Programme de subvention en santé publique* (PSSP) of the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, is funding the 2018 ESPE. This program is intended to promote public health research according to the needs of each region.

Will researchers be able to earn money with the data gathered for this survey?

None of the data or study results may be sold. In fact, the databank was created solely for research purposes.

Will researchers be in conflict of interest if they use this databank for other research?

Any researcher working with databank information must disclose his financial interests in a company or whether his work is being funded by a company. The research ethics committee will determine whether there is in effect a conflict of interest or not based on the direction of the research. If there is a conflict of interest, the ethic committee may deny the research access to the databank.

What can I do if I have additional questions?

You can email your questions to the following address: michel.desroches.ciussse-chus@ssss.gouv.qc.ca mentioning "ESPE 2018" in the subject line. Mr. Michel Des Roches will answer you as soon as possible. You can also dial 819-829-3400, extension 42564, and then ask your question(s) and leave us your phone number so that we can return your call.

Which ethics committee examined this research project?

The Comité d'éthique de la recherche du CIUSSS de l'Estrie - CHUS has studied this project, issued recommendations, and approved this survey to date, both as a research project and as a research databank.

If I wish to file a complaint regarding the 2018 ESPE project, whom can I address?

Research participants who wish to file a complaint may contact the service quality and complaints commissioner of the CIUSSS de l'Estrie - CHUS at 1-866-917-7903.