



Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS)

Statistical Data Documentation System
Reference Number 3250



Data Quality Statements



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Canada

Aboriginal Peoples Survey - 1991

Data Limitations

All statistics obtained from the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) database are estimates based on a probability survey carried out with a sample of Canada's Aboriginal population. Consequently, these statistics can be subject to two different types of errors: sampling errors and non-sampling errors.

Sampling errors can be defined as errors caused by the analysis of a sample rather than a census of the entire population carried out under the same conditions. In the context of a survey such as the APS, we can estimate this error using the survey data. The measure of error used is called the coefficient of variation (CV) of the estimate, which is the standard error of the estimate divided by the estimate itself.

For the purpose of the survey, when the coefficient of variation (CV) of an estimate is higher than 33.3%, this is considered too unreliable to be published and the symbol "--" is printed in the corresponding cell of the data table.¹ This symbol is also used to indicate that publication of the data in that cell would violate confidentiality rules. When the CV of the estimate is between 16.7% and 33.3%, the corresponding estimate is accompanied by the symbol "*" in the table. These estimates should be used with caution to support a conclusion. All estimates where the CV is lower than 16.7% can be used unconditionally.

All other types of errors (i.e. coverage, response, processing and non-processing errors) are categorized as **non-sampling errors**. It is generally difficult to identify and evaluate the effect of some of these errors.

Coverage errors occur when there are differences between the target population and the population sampled. In the case of the APS, integration of the survey with the structure of the 1991 Census greatly reduced this type of error. However, because the APS sample is selected from those who participated in the census, the APS information is unavailable for those communities that were incompletely enumerated in the census. According to the 1991 Census data, 78 Indian reserves and settlements were incompletely enumerated in the census, and 181 Indian reserves and settlements were incompletely enumerated in the APS even though they had participated in the census. Other persons not covered by the APS include Aboriginal people living in collective dwellings, institutions, military camps, and overseas.

¹ Users should note that for all APS data publications released prior to July 1993, the symbol "." was used to indicate that the CV of the estimate was higher than 33.3%.

A response error occurs when the respondent misunderstands a question and the interviewer records an incorrect answer. Several procedures were taken to minimize this type of error, including interviewer training, respondent follow-up, and extensive response edits.

Processing errors may occur at various stages including coding, data capture, and imputation. Quality control measures are applied to every stage of the data processing in order to minimize this type of error.

Any statistical survey is affected by a certain percentage of **non-response** among the selected sample. Non-response is said to be total when, for any reason, a selected person could not be interviewed for the survey. Non-response is partial when only part of the questionnaire is completed. Non-response errors depend on the type and degree of differences that may exist between the characteristics of the sample of respondents and those of the sample of non-respondents. In principle, the greater the differences, the greater are the effects on the accuracy of the estimates.

The rates of response of the APS (79% for Domain 1 and 78% for Domain 2) were acceptable. Although these rates may vary significantly from one settlement or reserve to another, or from one area to another, various measures were taken to lessen the bias caused by the number of non-responses. For example, in Domain 1 a correction for non-response was made by community, age group, and sex. In the data tables, non-responses to specific questions are identified under the heading 'unspecified.'