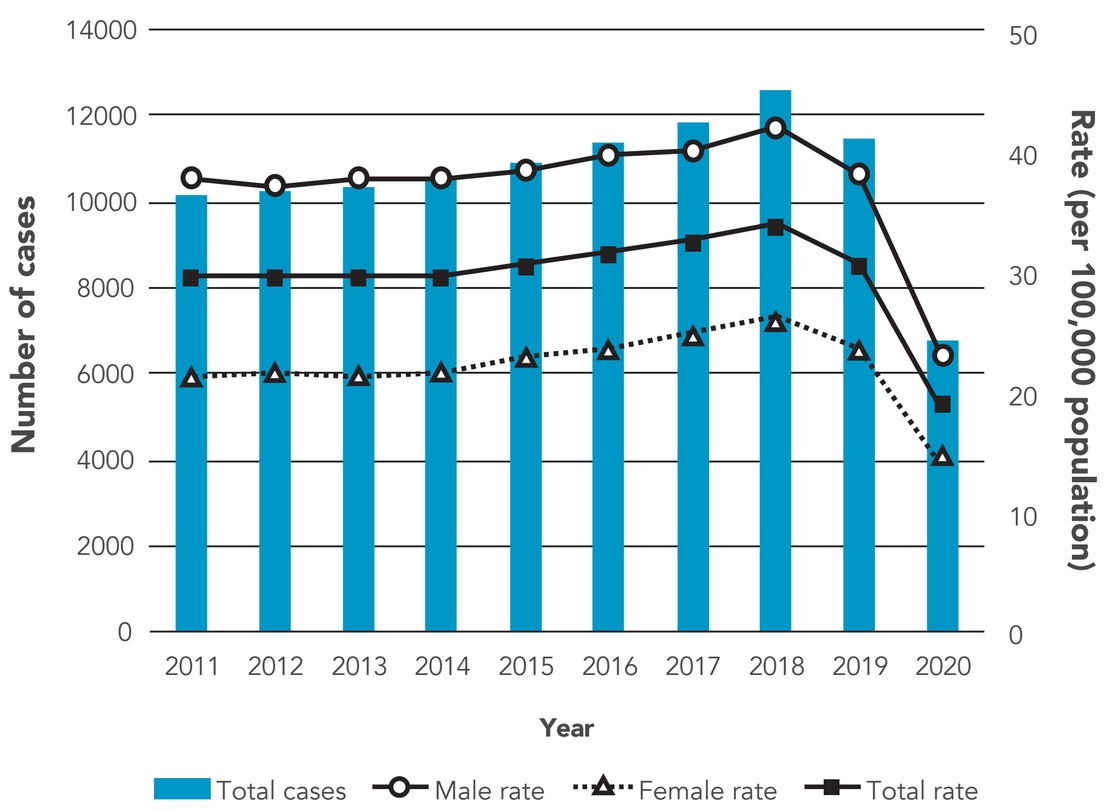
Hepatitis C in Canada: 2020 surveillance data update

In 2020, **6,736 cases of hepatitis C** (acute, chronic, and unspecified combined) were reported, for a rate of **18.4 cases per 100,000 people**[1, 2]. Between 2011 and 2018, annual rates increased slightly. Whether the slight decrease observed in 2019 represents a trend remains to be confirmed.

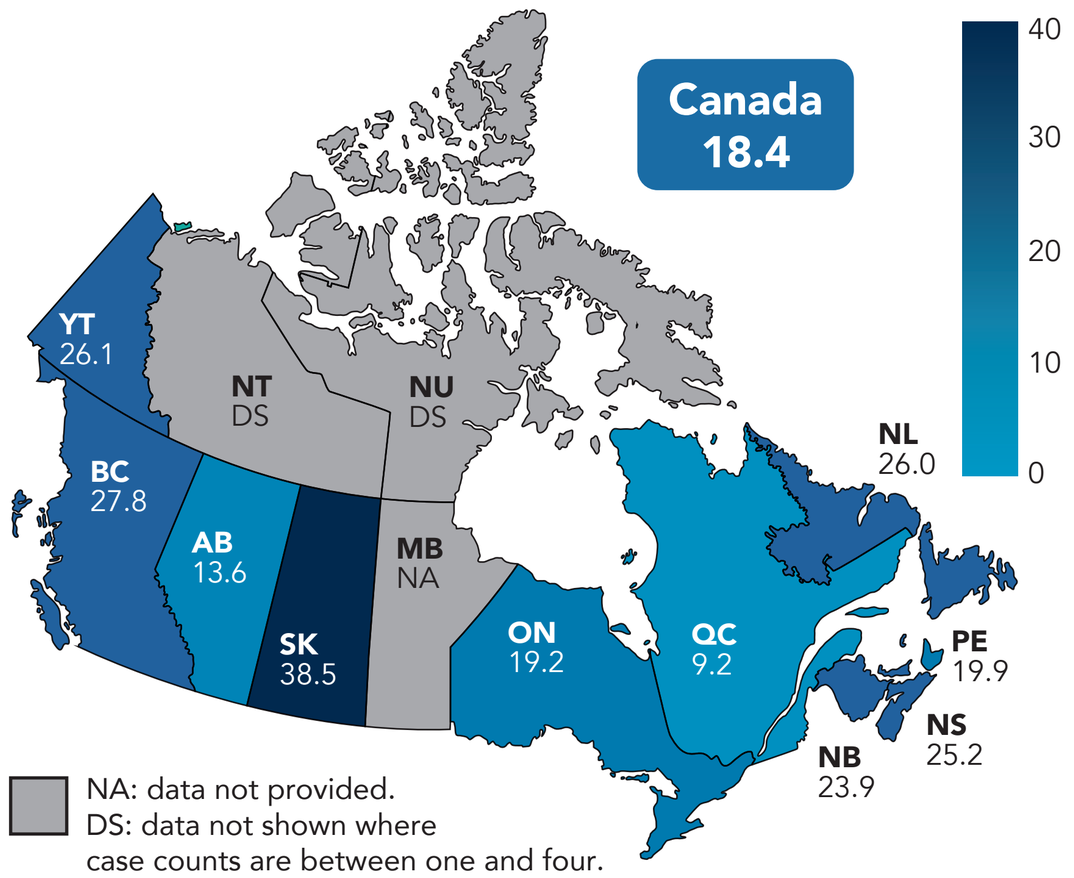
In 2020, **62%** of reported cases were **male**.
Among **males**, those **aged 30 to 39** years had the **highest reported rate** of total hepatitis C.
Among **females**, those **aged 25 to 29** years had the **highest reported rate** of total hepatitis C.

The COVID-19 pandemic reduced the demand for and access to services related to sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, including harm reduction and testing. This likely impacted new hepatitis C diagnosis rates in 2020, by artificially reducing them.

Number of reported cases and rates of hepatitis C in Canada overall and by sex, 2011 to 2020



Rates per 100,000 population of reported cases of hepatitis C by province and territory in Canada, 2020



Acute hepatitis C, 2020

In 2020, **186 cases** of acute hepatitis C were reported by British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Yukon Territory and Nunavut, for a rate of **1.0 case per 100,000 people**.

59% of reported acute hepatitis C cases were **male**.

Among **males**, those aged **30 to 39 years** had the **highest reported rate** of acute hepatitis C.

Among **females**, those aged **25 to 29 years** had the **highest reported rate** of acute hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C continues to be a public health concern

In 2019, it was estimated that one in four people in Canada who ever had hepatitis C were not aware of their current or past infection and could benefit from testing[3].

Hepatitis C disproportionately affects certain populations and communities including, people who inject drugs; people who are incarcerated; First Nations, Inuit and Métis people; gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men; immigrant population; and the 1945 to 1975 birth cohort[3].

Hepatitis C is curable! Early diagnosis and treatment leads to better health outcomes.

1. Data source: Canadian Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (https://diseases.canada.ca/notifiable/); hepatitis C cases include acute, chronic, and unspecified cases.
2. Population denominator data is from Statistics Canada April 2022 yearly population estimates.
3. People living with Hepatitis C (HCV) in Canada, 2019 https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/infographic-people-living-with-hepatitis-c.html

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