Eleven years of the Interchange between Statistics Canada and the National Center for Health Statistics

Jane F. Gentleman
National Center for Health Statistics
Some common activities

• Vital statistics

• Surveys/censuses of health care providers
  (with CIHI)

• National health interview surveys:
  Natl Population Health Survey (STC)
  Canadian Community Health Survey (STC)
  Natl Health Interview Survey (NCHS)
Some NOT common activities

• Cancer registry (STC only)
• Long-term longitudinal surveys (STC only)
• Physical measures (NCHS only, then)
• Data Users Conference (NCHS only, then)
Manning Feinleib, Director of NCHS: 1983-1995
Ed Sondik, Director of NCHS: 1995-present
Ivan Fellegi, Chief Statistician of STC: 1985-2008
Closing remarks by Mary Grace Kovar, Dr.P.H., Special Assistant for Data Policy and Analysis, NCHS:

The proposed international collaborative effort is only one of many that will be needed if we are to reach the ultimate goal...We need to plan collaborative research...I hope that the research is designed to begin the development of a manageable set of questions that can be used in interview surveys to measure the prevalence of functional disability and the need for care from another person...
I think that we agree that dissimilar questions can measure similar concepts and that similar questions can measure dissimilar concepts. Therefore, we need to develop conceptually similar questions on functional disability and the need for care that can be used in cross-cultural and cross-national population studies…[W]e can use the data that we have and design tabulations to make comparisons that we can trust across cultures and nations. I think that Dr. Forbes has shown the way, and we are ready to begin.
Kovar, Mary Grace & William F. Forbes.

“Risk of Disability in the U.S. and Canada,”

There has been a long-term annual Interchange between Statistics Canada & the U.S. Census Bureau

1999: First Interchange between Statistics Canada and NCHS, at NCHS

... 

2010: Now preparing for 12th annual Interchange, at STC
Some Interchange legacies

- We know each other & interact between Interchanges
- Technical knowledge exchange
- Joint research, presentations, publications
- Canadian Health Measures Survey, MEC, winterization, analytic plan, comparisons
- STC Health Data Users Conference
- Joint Canada/United States Survey of Health (JCUSH) (conceived at 2000 Interchange)
1993-4 JCUSH

• Produced highly comparable estimates:
  same sample design
  same questions
  same time
  same phone centers (STC ROs)
  same editing & processing procedures

• Joint release: microdata & 1st analysis
JCUSH (cont.)

- Questions taken from ongoing national health surveys:
  - National Health Interview Survey (NCHS)
  - National Population Health Survey (STC)
  - Canadian Community Health Survey (STC)

- 4 sets of disability/fcnl limitations questions
A main JCUSH analytic result

3 populations:

• U.S., without health insurance
• U.S., with health insurance
• Canada

Last two remarkably similar
Some JCUSH results on obesity

\[ \text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (kg)}}{[\text{Height(m)}]^2} \]

Obese: Body Mass Index (BMI) ≥ 30
Ottawa – When it comes to obesity, American women tip the scales compared with their Canadian sisters, a cross border health study confirms for the first time. Overall, 21% of Americans were obese compared with 15% of Canadians, says the study released yesterday by Statistics Canada and the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics....

continued.....
Previous research has suggested obesity may be more prevalent in the United States, but this is the first definitive confirmation, said Diane Finegood, a scientific director of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR).

“Whenever I go down there I think, God, there really is a difference, but this is in fact the first data I’m aware of where a survey was done at the same time in Canada and the United States with the same question and the same methodology by the same people,” said Finegood.
Distribution of BMI for United States (red) and Canadian (green) women

Legend
U.S. women
Canadian women
Distribution of BMI for United States (blue) & Canadian (black) men