

# **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**

# **Proc. 1988 Intl. Symp. on Data on Aging, Editor: Manning Feinleib**

**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...**

## **(Quote, continued)**

**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.**

# **1991 presentation re Supplement on Aging**

**Kovar, Mary Grace & William F. Forbes.**

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

***Symposium on the International Collaborative  
Effort on Measuring the Health and Health Care  
of the Aging, Rockville, MD, September 4, 1991.***

# **1995 pub (NCHS Series 5, No. 8)**

## **Prevalence of Disability Among Older Persons: United States and Canada**

**Mary Grace Kovar, Dr.P.H., National Opinion  
Research Center, University of Chicago**

**Julie Dawson Weeks, M.A., Office of Analysis,  
Epidemiology and Health Promotion, NCHS**

**William F. Forbes, Ph.D., Univ of Waterloo &  
Canadian Centre for Health Information, STC**

**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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 & 1<sup>st</sup> 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

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

**Obese: Body Mass Index (BMI)  $\geq$  30**

# **Yank Women Fatter**

**(from the *Winnipeg Sun* &  
*Edmonton Sun*, June 3, 2004)**

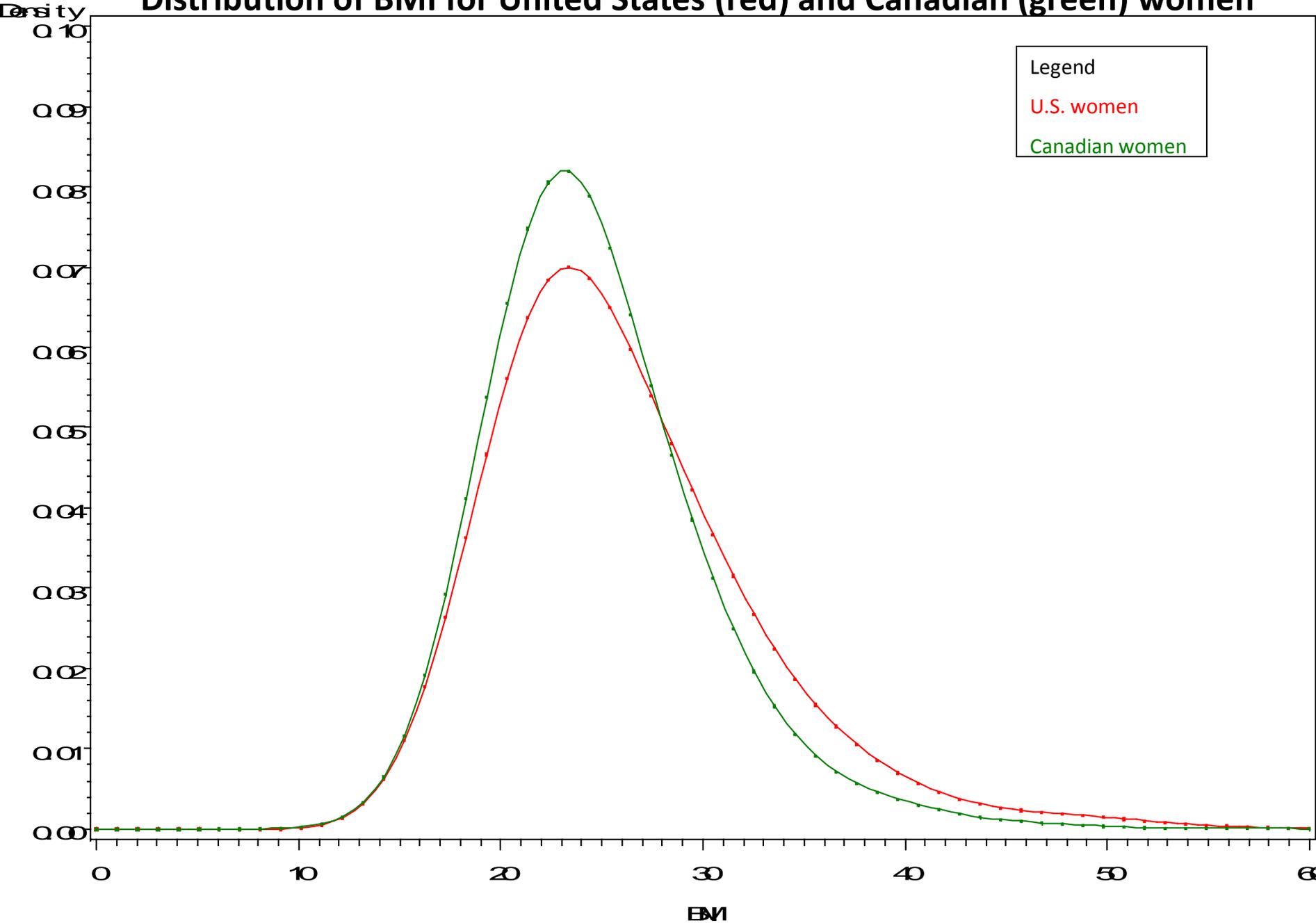
**Ottawa – When it comes to obesity, American women tip the scales compared with their Canadian sisters, a cross border health study confirms for the first time. Overall, 21% of Americans were obese compared with 15% of Canadians, says the study released yesterday by Statistics Canada and the U.S. National 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



# Distribution of BMI for United States (blue) & Canadian (black) men

