



ABOUT ICES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is ICES?

ICES is a not-for-profit research institute made up of a community of research, data and clinical experts. We work with Ontario's health-related data and aim to inform health system policy and planning to improve the health of all Ontarians. (ICES is pronounced by reading the letters of the name, I-C-E-S or eye-see-ee-ess).

What does ICES do?

ICES leads research studies that evaluate healthcare delivery and outcomes. Since 1992, the Ontario government has entrusted ICES with using health information from Ontario residents in a secure way. Our researchers access Ontario's health-related data, including health surveys, anonymous patient records, and clinical and administrative databases. ICES is recognized as a leader in maintaining the privacy and security of health information. Our mission is research excellence, resulting in trusted evidence that makes policy better, health care stronger, and people healthier.

To learn more about ICES, check out our website, www.ices.on.ca or watch this [video](#).

What else should I know about ICES?

ICES is not an advocacy group or community organization but rather a research organization that looks at many conditions, diseases and experiences in the health care system. The research we conduct is mainly quantitative (which means that it uses numbers and data to study a question we want to answer).

ICES conducts research in different areas. The research is organized into eight programs:

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular (heart health)
- Chronic Disease and Pharmacotherapy (diseases that are lifelong and medications)
- Kidney, Dialysis and Transplantation
- Life Stage (how health looks different at different times in life)



- Mental Health and Addictions
- Populations and Public Health
- Primary Care and Health Systems

What are health data or administrative health data?

Health data are generated from health care services delivered by hospitals, doctors' offices, and health care providers and are available for research at ICES. These data are typically used to make payments and track services delivered. Ontarians produce health data every time they interact with the health care system, whether through visiting a doctor's office, undergoing a procedure (like cancer screening), being admitted to hospital, or receiving a prescription at a pharmacy. Administrative data can also be linked between data sources, creating a clearer picture of the population's healthcare journey.

For example, when an individual goes to the emergency department, their visit is captured in their health record. The report includes information such as their name and OHIP number, the date of the visit, the reason for the visit, and a description of the service provided. When they leave the hospital to fill a prescription, that data is also captured and can tell a story of the healthcare journey when linked together. These data can be used to study different health issues on a population level (in other words, we don't look at information for just one person but we look at what a group of people might be doing).

What data does ICES have?

ICES receives most of its data from the provincial Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-term Care. Some data come from federal and provincial agencies and organizations like Cancer Care Ontario, Statistics Canada, or Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The ICES Data Repository also holds data from other sources, such as census information, immigration data, and weather data. A full list of the data sets in the ICES Data Repository is available to the public [here](#).

Looking for more information?

ICES works to engage with the public through our Public Advisory Council and other aspects of our work.

Visit these resources to learn more about how we steward data and how our research has impacted the healthcare system.

[About ICES](#)

[Privacy and Cyber Security](#)

[What is Health Administrative Data](#)

