

■ **HEALTH:** Study shows survival rates for cancer are good, but rate of chronic disease third-highest in list of 30 countries

Mixed results for Canada

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OTTAWA — Canadian survival rates for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers are among the highest in the developed world.

But the prevalence of chronic disease, such as diabetes, is also among the highest, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Health at a Glance 2009 data indicate.

Comparative statistics from the Paris-based organization of 30 nations show that in 2006, the last year for which num-

bers are available, 70% of eligible Canadian women were screened for breast cancer. The OECD average is 62%. Seventy-three percent of eligible Canadians were screened for cervical cancer, compared to the OECD average of 64%.

The five-year survival rate for cervical cancer was 72% in Canada, placing us second only to South Korea. With a breast-cancer survival rate of 87%, Canada ranked third behind only the United States and Iceland.

Traditionally, Canada has one of the higher life-expectancy ratings in the group of

rich economies. It also spends more per capita on health care than the OECD average. But there are some exceptions to its strong statistics. For instance, it has the third-highest rate of chronic disease. The prevalence of diabetes alone in adults is estimated at 9.2%, grouping us with the U.S. and Mexico.

That is due to high-fat, high-sugar diets and lack of exercise, said Dr. Eugene Wen, manager of health indicators at the Canadian Institute for Health Information, which released the data.

The bright spot, he said, is

that hospitalizations for chronic diseases are relatively low in Canada. Health care for diabetics and others has been good enough to help many lead a relatively normal life.

The OECD didn't focus solely on adults. One finding concludes that about 35% of 15-year-olds in Canada have been drunk at least twice in their life. Denmark ranks at the undisputed drinking champ among 15-year-olds: Almost 60% of boys and 56% of girls say they've been drunk at least twice.

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HEALTH INDICATORS BY COUNTRY

