

Income distributions by family characteristics

6.1.5

Income distributions are influenced by a variety of personal and labour force characteristics of the family and its head. These include such characteristics of the head as sex, age, employment status, occupation, immigration status and education. Family characteristics used for classifying incomes include tenure (whether owner or renter), size of family, number of children, number and combination of income recipients, and labour force participation of wife. While only three summary classifications of family income are presented here relating to age and sex of head, education of head and income recipients, data on all other variables may be found in the annual report *Income distributions by size in Canada*, Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 13-207.

Incomes by age and sex of family head. Table 6.5 shows that the average income of families headed by males (\$15,448) was almost twice that of families headed by females (\$8,229) in 1974. For the younger age groups, in fact, the male-headed average was more than twice the female-headed one. The position of the 65 year and over female-headed families was greatly improved, however, and their average income of \$9,635 was almost the same as the male-headed average of \$9,968. Explaining this difference in income is the fact that many of the families headed by females are also single-parent families where the woman may find it difficult to obtain or hold a steady job due to the presence of young children in the family, or because many women still work in lower-paying occupations such as clerical, stenographic or sales.

For both male- and female-headed families the average incomes increase with age to reach a peak: for males at age 45-54 and for females at age 55-64.

Incomes by education of family head. Education of the family head is another factor which greatly affects the family income. Table 6.6 shows that the average income of families whose head had a university degree was nearly two and a half times that of families whose head had four years of schooling or less, and 65% higher than families whose head had attended but not completed high school. While 37% of families whose head had not completed high school had incomes of \$15,000 or more in 1974, 74% of families whose head had a university degree were in that same income group and 30% had incomes of \$25,000 or more. The difference in income between families whose head had only completed high school and families whose head had taken non-university post-secondary courses was minimal.

Incomes by combination of income recipients. The number and combination of family members receiving income will obviously affect the income of the family. In Table 6.7 families are first divided into two groups: (a) husband-wife families and (b) all other families. This latter group includes single-parent families as well as groups of relatives living together but not in a parent-child relationship, e.g. brothers and sisters. As expected, the average income of husband-wife families with at least three income recipients (head, wife and other relative) was much higher (\$19,902) than the average for families with only the head as income recipient (\$12,611). The same situation occurs for other families where the average with at least two recipients was \$11,234 compared with \$5,669 when the head was the only recipient.

Family spending

6.2

Household surveys of family expenditure provide information on consumer spending that can be related to family characteristics such as geographic location, family size and income level. In general, the survey program has consisted of two phases: the collection, by means of monthly record-keeping surveys throughout the reference year, of detailed information on family food expenditures; and the collection of information by annual recall of all family expenditure, income and