

1971 (Table 3.27). Graduating classes of the two schools of optometry were small in comparison with other professional health disciplines. In 1981, 38 people graduated from the University of Montreal School of Optometry, almost twice as many as in 1971. A total of 55 graduated in 1981 from the only other school, the University of Waterloo, an increase of 98% over the number of graduates in 1972.

Facilities. In 1980 there were 1,275 public hospitals operating and 4,743 special care facilities such as nursing homes and homes for the elderly (Tables 3.12 and 3.22). The rate of public hospital beds per 100,000 persons decreased 25% from 1970 to 1977-78 but there was an increase in the rated bed capacity in special care facilities and by 1982 the total number of these facilities had increased to 5,289.

3.4 Use of health services

Hospital services. Patients spent nearly 50 million days in public hospitals in the 1981-82 fiscal year, including more than 800,000 days in mental institutions. While the number of days spent in general and allied special hospitals had increased each year from 1978, the number of days spent in mental hospitals for the same period decreased. This was the result of extensive changes in the treatment locations for many mental patients and not a decrease in the prevalence of mental disorders (Table 3.18).

During the 1970s there was a change in emphasis toward integrating mental patients into the community instead of isolating them in institutions. This trend is reflected through shorter hospital stays, follow-up programs of out-patient visits to psychiatric clinics and special care facilities, and drug therapy.

The rate of patient-days in hospitals varied by sex and age. In the child-bearing years of the 15-24 and 25-44 age groups, the rate for women was double that for men. In the 45-64 year-old group, men had the higher rates, most likely because men suffer more heart ailments than women. After the age of 65, both men and women had a high rate of days of hospital care.

Length of stay in hospital also varied by age. Up to 44 years of age, people stayed in hospital for an average of one week. For the 45-64 year-old group, the average stay increased to 12.6 days in 1980-81. Patients 65 years old or more averaged 26 days in hospital at a time.

Physician services. There were approximately 94.3 million visits to physicians' offices, an average of four visits for each Canadian during 1978-79. On the average there were 280 physician consultations for every 1,000 Canadians, and 101 minor and 67 major surgeries performed for every 1,000 people.

From results of the Canada Health Survey it is estimated that the majority of Canadians (76.3%) made at least one visit to a medical doctor during 1978-79. Many had multiple visits. About 25% of respondents reported three to nine visits to a doctor and 9.4% had 10 or more. On the whole, women visited medical doctors in greater numbers and more frequently than men. About 81.3% of women reported at least one visit compared to 71.3% of men, and 40.8% of women had three or more visits contrasted with 29.2% of men. The proportion of multiple visits for elderly women was high with many having 10 or more visits.

Dental services. Canadians spent about \$1,500 million on dental care in 1981, slightly less than 6% of total health expenditures. About half the population visited a dentist during the year. The 5-14 year age group accounted for the greatest number of consultations.

A significant health care development since 1970 has been the growth of dental insurance. More than 6.5 million Canadians, 28.4% of the population, were insured by a third-party payment scheme in 1978.

3.5 Financing and expenditures

The overall cost of health in Canada, including expenditures by the private sector and by all levels of government, reached nearly \$30.1 billion in the calendar year 1982. That figure was up 16.8% from 1981, following annual increases of over 16% in each of the two previous years. The 1982 total was about 14 times higher than it had been in 1960. On a per person basis the 1982 total represented \$1,220, which was up by \$162 from 1981 and was more than double the per person total for 1975.

Health expenditures were taking an increasing proportion of the gross national product. From 5.6% in 1960, this share had risen quite steadily to 7.5% in 1971. For the next nine years it stayed between 7.0% and 7.5%, then rose to 8.4% in 1982 (Table 3.31).

Categories of health service. Health expenditures, when segregated by type of service being rendered, exhibit notable proportionate changes over time.

From 1960 on, hospitals have taken three-eighths or more of the health-care dollar. From 1960 when hospitals accounted for 38%, the proportion rose until 1975 when they took 47%, although there had been a brief decline between 1969 and 1971. After 1975 the proportion fell partly due to reclassification, reaching 41% in 1982.

Physician services varied between rather narrower limits. From 1960 until 1968 the proportion oscillated around 16%. It rose and attained a high point of nearly 17% in 1970. Four years of sharp decline followed, to 15% in 1976, with that proportion remaining almost unchanged over the ensuing six years.