

Table 1. Selected methodologies used to define “rural” in Canada*			
Organization (source)	Population characteristics	Distance characteristics	Other/comments
Statistics Canada ³¹	<1000 population <400 persons/sq km	Adjacency to census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and census agglomerations (CAs) used to provide subcategories	Each enumeration area of Canada classified into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • urban core • urban fringe • rural fringe • urban outside CMA/CA • rural outside CMA/CA
Canadian Medical Association and Canada Post ³³⁻³⁵			Second character (first number) in postal code is a “0” (zero) ³³
Research Sub-Committee of the Interdepartmental Committee on Rural and Remote Canada ³⁶ using the criteria of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development ³⁷	<150 persons/sq km	Adjacency to metropolitan areas. Northern hinterlands used to provide subcategories	Each census consolidated subdivision (CCS) classified into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agglomerated • intermediate • rural, metro adjacent • rural, non-metro adjacent • rural north
Ontario Medical Association ²⁴ www.oma.org	<10 000 population	Distances to a community of 50 000+ used to provide subcategories	Used to define groups of physicians re CME subsidies: Group 1, >80 km Group 2, 50–80 km
Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians ³⁸	<10 000 population	Distances from a major regional hospital used to provide subcategories: <80 km or 60 min 80–400 km or 1–4 h >400 km or >4 h	Rural close Rural remote Rural isolated
Society of Rural Physicians of Canada ³⁹	Drawing population (i.e., total number of people) of communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distance from closest advanced referral centre • distance from closest basic referral centre • number of GPs within 25 km of community • number of specialists within 25 km of community • presence of an acute care hospital within 25 km of community 	The population and distance criteria are weighted to generate a score that is labelled as the General Practice Rurality Index.
Rural and Small Town Programme, Mount Allison University; prepared for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ⁴⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • omitting CMA/CA communities as defined by Statistics Canada, divide census subdivisions into incorporated and unincorporated categories • compute means and standard deviations (SDs) of 3 variables: total population, population density, % workforce in primary industry 	Adjacency to CMA/CA used to provide subcategories of unincorporated communities	The number of SDs away from the mean of the 3 population criteria and the adjacency index added together to produce a score for each non-CMA/CA community to generate an 8-fold classification: Rural (4 categories) Small Town (4 categories)
*The methods included here are not wholly designed for use in defining “rural” for the purposes of health research or policy formulation.			

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