Housing: Household crowding

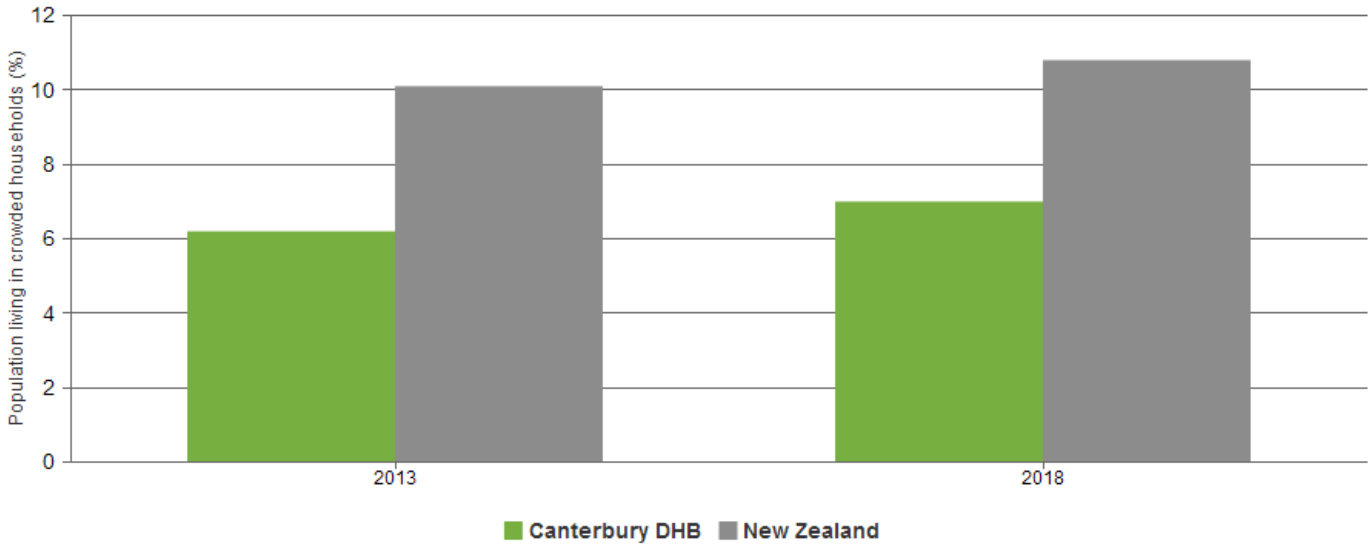
Household crowding increases the risk of infectious diseases spreading (such as bronchiolitis, pneumonia, gastroenteritis, and meningococcal disease), particularly among children [13]. Household crowding also increases the likelihood of adverse psychological responses to living in high-density conditions, such as stress and feelings of lack of privacy [14,15].

Household crowding is measured with census data, by applying the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (based on a formula that includes the number of bedrooms, and the number of occupants and their gender, age, and relationships). Crowding is defined as needing one or more bedrooms; severe household crowding is defined as needing two or more bedrooms.

The complexity of the relationship between household crowding and negative health and wellbeing outcomes makes it difficult to separate the effects of crowding from other factors. Related factors include the physical condition and type of housing, socioeconomic factors, and risk behaviours such as smoking [15]. Despite these complexities, household crowding remains a useful overall indicator of people's exposure to poor housing conditions.

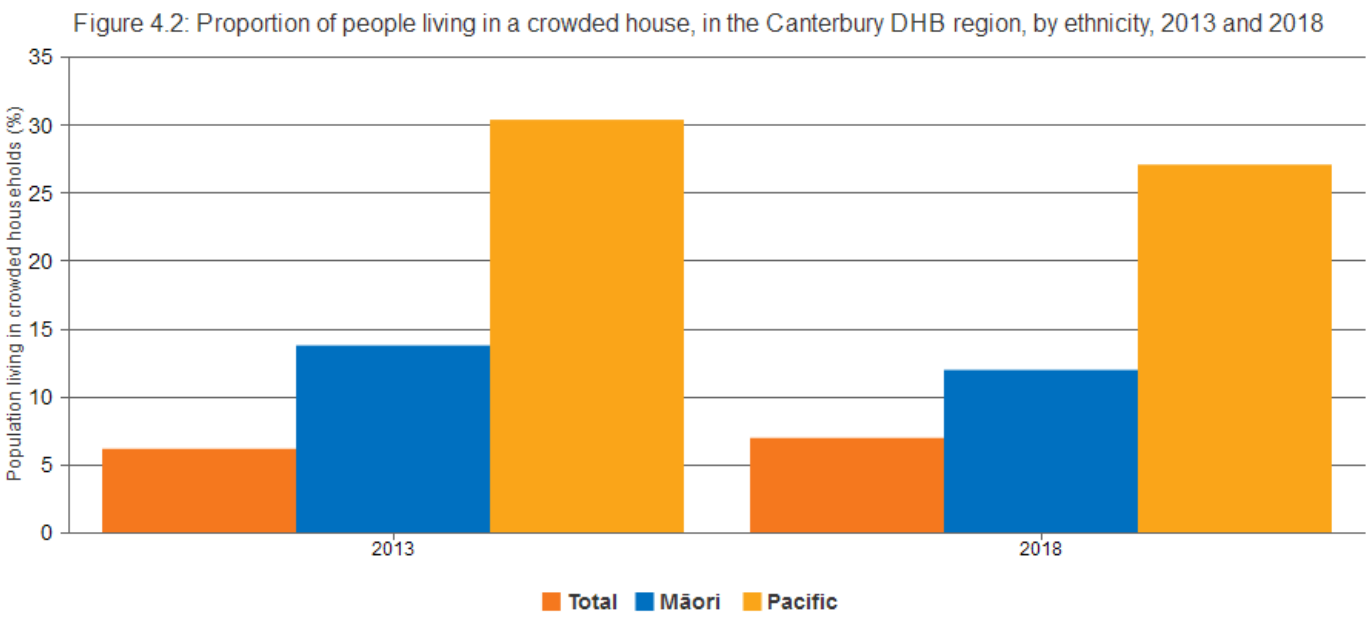
This indicator presents the proportion of the population living in a crowded household (needing one or more bedrooms based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard) for the Canterbury District Health Board region, in 2013 and 2018.

Figure 4.1: Proportion of people living in a crowded house, in the Canterbury DHB region and New Zealand, 2013 and 2018



The figure shows the proportion of those exposed to household crowding for the Canterbury DHB region compared with New Zealand as a whole. In 2013, 6.2 percent of the Canterbury DHB population and 10.1 percent of the New Zealand population overall, lived in crowded households, increasing to 7 percent and 10.8 percent, respectively, in 2018. The relative difference remains unchanged.

Breakdown by ethnicity



The figure shows that the distribution of exposure to household crowding in the Canterbury DHB region is uneven, with higher levels for Pacific peoples and Māori, relative to the total population. Proportions living in homes defined as crowded in 2013 and 2018 were 30.4 and 27.1 percent for Pacific peoples, 13.8 and 12.0 percent for Māori, and 6.2 and 7.0 percent for the total population, respectively.

Data Sources

Source: Statistics New Zealand.
Survey/data set: Census of Population and Dwellings. Custom request for Canterbury DHB region.
Source data frequency: Census conducted every 5 years.

Metadata for this indicator is available at https://www.canterburywellbeing.org.nz/our-wellbeing/index-data

REFERENCES

This is the full reference list for **Housing**.

1 Ministry of Social Development (2016) *The Social Report 2016: Te pūrongo oranga tangata*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

2 Howden-Chapman P (2004) Housing standards: A glossary of housing and health. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 58: 162-168.

3 National Health Committee (1998) *The social, cultural and economic determinants of health in New Zealand: Action to improve health*. Wellington: The National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability.

4 Thomson H, Thomas S, Sellstrom E,Petticrew M (2013) Housing improvements for health and associated socio-economic outcomes. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*: Cd008657.

5 Baker MG, Goodyear R, Telfar Barnard L,Howden-Chapman P (2012) *The Distribution of Household Crowding in New Zealand: An analysis based on 1991 to 2006 Census data*. Wellington: He Kainga Oranga / Housing and Health Research Programme, University of Otago.

6 Carter D, Sharp S,British Medical Association (2003) *Housing and health: Building for the future*. London: British Medical Association.

7 Howden-Chapman P, Matheson A, Crane J, Viggers H, Cunningham M, et al. (2007) Effect of insulating existing houses on health inequality: Cluster randomised study in the community. *BMJ* 334: 460.

8 Howden-Chapman P, Pierse N, Nicholls S, Gillespie-Bennett J, Viggers H, et al. (2008) Effects of improved home heating on asthma in community dwelling children: Randomised controlled trial. *BMJ* 337.

9 Mitchell I,O'Malley S (2004) How affordable is housing in New Zealand and what strategies are available to reduce housing stress? Social Policy, Research and Evaluation Conference, 25–26 November. Wellington.

10 Bentley A,He kāinga ora he hapori ora | Ministry of Housing And Urban Development (2022) Change in housing affordability indicators Concepts, sources, and methods. Wellington: He kāinga ora, he hapori ora | Ministry of Housing And Urban Development.

11 Ministry of Business Innovation Employment (2017) *Housing Affordability in New Zealand: Methodology of HAM version 1.0 10 May 2017*. Wellington: Ministry Of Business, Innovation & Employment.

12 Miller S, Suie S,Bycroft C (2018) *Comparing housing information from census and tenancy bond data*. Wellington: Statistics New Zealand.

13 Baker MG, McDonald A, Zhang J,Howden-Chapman P (2013) *Infectious Diseases Attributable to Household Crowding in New Zealand: A systematic review and burden of disease estimate*. Wellington:.

14 Crothers C, Kearns R,Lindsey D (1993) Housing in Manukau City: Overcrowding, Poor Housing and Their Consequences *Working Papers in Sociology, University of Auckland* 27.

15 Evans GW (2003) The built environment and mental health. *Journal of Urban Health* 80: 536-555.

16 Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand - Waitaha Canterbury (2023) *The Canterbury Wellbeing Survey: Report prepared by NielsenIQ for Te Whatu Ora and partnering agencies*. Christchurch: Te Whatu Ora | Waitaha Canterbury.

