

As in the previous study, this survey showed a significant increase in disability rates in advancement through the life cycle. While the survey showed that 5.2% of children aged 0-14 had a disabling condition, in the population aged 15-64, 10.7% reported a disability. The prevalence increased to 45.5% for the population aged 65 and older. Disability rates are also higher for males up to the age of 64 and then higher for females aged 65 and older.

The approach used to identify disabled children was somewhat different than for adults. Parents or guardians were asked if the child used a technical aid, had a chronic health condition or experienced any limitation in the type or amount of activity they could undertake. There were 277,445 children under the age of 15 for whom a disabling condition was reported. This represented 5.2% of the Canadian population in this age group. The prevalence rate rose from 3.4% of those aged 0-4 to 6.4% among those aged 10-14. Over 99% of the children with disabilities lived in private households. Approximately 2,400 disabled children (0.9%), resided in health-related institutions. The majority (65.7%) of the children in institutions were 10 to 14 years of age.

Two-thirds of the disabled population aged 15 and older reported having more than one type of disability. The prevalence of multiple disabilities increased with age; in the disabled population aged 15-34, 45.5% reported having more than one disability — the total increased to 76% in the population 65 and older.

Approximately 45% of the population aged 65 and older reported some form of disability. Of the 1,221,995 disabled Canadian seniors, 1,026,915 resided in private households and 195,080 lived in institutions or homes for senior citizens. Twelve out of every 100 disabled males aged 65 and older resided in institutions or homes for senior citizens, compared to 19 out of every 100 females in the same age group. The percentage of disabled seniors residing in households decreased as age increased. The survey showed that in the age group 65 to 69, 96% of disabled seniors lived in households; by the age of 85 and older, this number fell to 57%. Male disabled seniors aged 85 and older were more likely to remain in a household: 66% of males compared to 54% of females. Over 8% of disabled seniors residing in households reported never participating in activities outside their home.

Approximately 88% of disabled seniors who participated in activities outside their homes reported that they visited friends and 84% went shopping at least once a month. Attending religious activities or doing volunteer work was

the third most frequent category with 50% of disabled seniors reporting these activities. Almost 25% of disabled seniors residing in households indicated that they were not satisfied with the amount of activity they participated in outside their residence; 172,295 persons in this group reported that they were physically unable to do more, while 49,240 stated that they could do more if they had help. High costs, location too far, and inadequate transportation were other reasons given for not being able to participate in more activities outside the home.

There were five types of institutions included in this survey. Seventy-nine percent of this institutionalized population resided in special-care homes and institutions for the elderly and the chronically ill. This category included most of the institutions and most of the institutionalized population. It should be noted that only 7.7% of disabled persons residing in institutions reported a single disability; 12.4% reported six types of disabilities, compared to 1.5% in the total population.

3.1.4 Specific health conditions

Mental disorders treated in psychiatric hospitals and general hospitals on an in-patient basis were responsible for approximately 12 million patient-days in 1984-85, with psychiatric hospitals accounting for 62% of these days, and general hospitals accounting for 38%. During the last decade, the number of patient-days for mental disorders has been increasing in general hospitals and decreasing in psychiatric hospitals.

General hospitals are primarily used for short-term intensive treatment of mental disorders, whereas psychiatric hospitals are used for both short- and long-term treatment. In psychiatric hospitals the median length of stay in 1984-85 for males and females was 26 days and 32 days, respectively, while in general hospitals it was 9 days and 11 days, respectively.

An examination of patient-days by diagnosis indicates that in psychiatric hospitals the largest utilization of patient-days was for cases diagnosed as schizophrenic, organic psychotic conditions and mental retardation, while in general hospitals it was for cases diagnosed as organic psychotic conditions, schizophrenic, and affective psychoses (Table 3.21).

Although the number of patient-days for mental disorders in general hospitals was less than the number of patient-days in psychiatric hospitals, the number of separations for mental disorders was greater in general hospitals than in psychiatric hospitals. In 1984-85 general hospitals reported 158,399 cases diagnosed as mentally ill, whereas