

Study: Canadians with unmet home care needs, 2012

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Tuesday, September 9, 2014

In 2012, 792,000 Canadians 15 years of age and older reported that their needs for care in the home for a long-term illness, aging or disability condition were only partly met or not met at all.

In its most recent cycle on caregiving and care receiving, the General Social Survey asked respondents 15 years of age and older about their home care needs. The survey did not cover those living in institutions or in long-term care facilities.

The 792,000 Canadians can be divided into two groups. The first group, some 461,000 in all, needed care at home to deal with a long-term illness, aging or disability condition but did not receive any care.

The second group, about 331,000, received care at home for a long-term illness, aging or disability condition but reported not receiving all the care they needed.

These numbers compare with 1.8 million Canadians who were care recipients in 2012 and received all the care they needed.

Individuals with unmet home care needs are generally younger than care recipients

Among the 461,000 Canadians who had unmet home care needs, 24% were 65 years of age and older, 40% were 45 to 64 years old and 37% were 15 to 44 years old.

In comparison, among those receiving home care, 40% were 65 years of age and older, 31% were 45 to 64 years old and 30% were 15 to 44 years old.

Because they were younger than those already receiving care, individuals who had unmet home care needs were less likely to report physical problems (including vision, hearing, speech, mobility, pain or dexterity problems) than care recipients.

In 2012, 59% of those with unmet needs reported that they had at least one physical problem, compared with 70% among care recipients.

The lower prevalence of physical problems among those who had unmet needs, however, did not extend to all conditions.

For instance, individuals with unmet needs and those who already received care were just as likely to report that they suffered from pain or discomfort. This was the case of more than half of the individuals in both groups.

Other socioeconomic characteristics were also associated with the probability of having unmet home care needs. In particular, immigrants and individuals with a household income of less than \$20,000 were more likely to report that they had unmet home care needs.

Care recipients with back problems most likely to have partly met needs

The 331,000 Canadians who received care or help at home in 2012 differed from the other 1.8 million care recipients whose needs were fully met.

For example, Canadians with certain types of health conditions or problems were more likely to report that their needs were partially met.

Among those who received care or help for back problems, 30% reported that they had not received all the help they needed, compared with 11% among those who received care or help because of cancer.



Other factors related to partly met needs among care recipients included the relationship to the main caregiver.

For example, 17% of care receivers aged 65 and older and who were primarily helped by friends or neighbours reported that not all their needs were met.

Conversely, that rate was lower among care recipients 65 years of age and older and who were primarily receiving help from their daughter (8%), their spouse (11%) or their son (12%).

The extent to which professional help was received was also associated with partly met needs. About 10% of care recipients who received at least 10 hours a week of professional help reported that not all their needs were met, compared with 16% among those who received less than 10 hours of professional help a week.

Adverse effects for persons with unmet or partially met needs

Individuals who lacked the home care they needed reported lower levels of mental well-being than those who received all the care they needed.

In 2012, 48% of those with unmet home care needs and 62% of care recipients who did not have all the help they needed reported loneliness, compared with 31% among care recipients who received all the help they needed.

Other indicators of mental well-being that were covered by the survey include sleeping problems and feelings of stress.

Two-thirds of care recipients with partly met needs reported sleeping problems, compared with 58% of individuals with unmet needs and 44% of care recipients whose needs were fully met.

Those with partly met needs were also the most likely to report that most days were quite a bit or extremely stressful (50% compared with 27% of care recipient with met care needs).

Note to readers

In this study, data from the General Social Survey are used to examine the characteristics of individuals with a long-term illness, aging or disability condition who needed home care, but did not receive any—or were care recipients, but did not receive all the help they needed.

Care recipients (or care receivers) are defined as individuals 15 years of age and older who had a long-term illness, aging or disability condition and benefited from home care services over the 12 months preceding the survey collection in 2012.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 4502.

The article "Canadians with unmet home care needs" is now available online in *Insights on Canadian Society* (75-006-X). From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, choose *Publications*.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Martin Turcotte (613-854-3304; martin.turcotte@statcan.gc.ca), Labour Statistics Division.

For more information on *Insights on Canadian Society*, contact Sébastien LaRoche-Côté (613-951-0803; sebastien.larochelle-cote@statcan.gc.ca), Labour Statistics Division.