

Study: Women in Canada: Senior women

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, March 30, 2016

Almost 90% of senior women reported having been employed in their lifetime. Over the last several decades, women have increasingly become labour force participants, resulting in a rising proportion of senior women having been employed in their lifetime.

In 1976, 58.4% of women aged 65 and older had ever worked for pay in their lifetime. By 2015, this had increased to 89.3%. While this proportion was still lower than that for senior men, the gender gap had narrowed considerably, falling from 40.0 percentage points in 1976 to 8.6 percentage points in 2015.

The findings are taken from "[Senior Women](#)," a chapter of *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, released today. This chapter examines many aspects related to senior women in Canada including their socio-demographic characteristics, life expectancy, living arrangements, social participation, Internet use, health, assistance with daily living and leading causes of death, as well as economic characteristics including their labour force participation and income.

Employment rate of senior women nearly doubles over last decade

The employment rate among women aged 65 and older nearly doubled in the decade from 2005 to 2015. In 2005, the employment rate among senior women was 4.8%. It had risen to 9.1% by 2015. The employment rate also increased for senior men during this time, from 11.7% in 2005 to 17.2% in 2015.

Among senior women, increasing employment rates since the 2000s contrast with relatively stable employment levels in the three preceding decades. For senior men, the increase from 2005 to 2015 reversed what had generally been a downward trend since the 1970s.

Increasing share of senior women's income is from market sources

The share of senior women's total income that came from market sources—such as employment, investment and retirement earnings—increased from 44.6% in 2003 to more than 50% by 2013. During the same period, the share of senior men's total income that came from market sources rose from 58.6% to 62.6%. This rising share of income from market sources was primarily due to an increase in the proportion of total income from employment earnings, from 4.1% to 9.0% among senior women, and from 7.9% to 16.3% among senior men.

Among senior women, the proportion of total income from retirement income increased from 26.3% in 2003 to 31.5% in 2013. However, this was not the case among senior men. Their share of total income from retirement income decreased, from 40.7% in 2003 to 36.6% in 2013. This difference is, in part, due to the fact that, unlike senior men, the proportion of senior women who have had paid employment in their lifetime also increased during this time period. This increased their likelihood of having retirement income.

More than half of senior women are Internet users

More than half (54%) of senior women in private households used the Internet in the 12 months preceding the 2013 General Social Survey. Younger senior women (aged 65 to 74) were almost twice as likely as older senior women (aged 75 and older) to have done so (69% compared with 35%).

Among senior women, nearly 40% of Internet users had at least one social media account. Over two-thirds of Internet users (68%) searched for information on goods and services within the last month, while 45% had done electronic banking and 18% had made an online purchase within the same timeframe.



Note to readers

The term "**senior**" refers to people who are aged 65 and older.

The term "**ever worked**" refers to people who worked at a job or business at any point in their lifetime. This measure does not account for the duration of their employment (for example, whether they worked for 1 year or 20 years) or the age at which they were employed.

Employment data in this release are from the Labour Force Survey.

Income data in this release are from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics and the Canadian Income Survey.

Internet-use data in this release are from the 2013 General Social Survey on Social Identity.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3701](#), [3889](#), [5024](#) and [5200](#).

This release is based on the chapter "[Senior Women](#)," in *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, seventh edition ([89-503-X](#)), now available online. From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, choose *Publications*.

The publication *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report* is a collaborative effort of Status of Women Canada and Statistics Canada.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).