

Study: Women in Canada: Women with Disabilities

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Over 2 million women aged 15 or older—nearly 15% of women in Canada—reported at least one disability that limited their daily activities in 2012. This was the case for 1.7 million men (12.5%).

People with disabilities are more likely than people without disabilities to experience social exclusion and discrimination, which can result in unequal access to social, cultural, political, and economic resources. For example, nearly half of women and men with disabilities aged 25 to 54 reported that they were disadvantaged in employment due to their condition.

Today, Statistics Canada releases a new chapter, "[Women with Disabilities](#)," from the publication *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*. This chapter provides a broad statistical portrait of women with disabilities. Where relevant, comparisons are made in the study between women with and without disabilities. Comparisons are also made between women and men with disabilities. The findings presented in *The Daily* focus on the use of mobility and agility-related devices, as well as transit used by women with disabilities compared with men with disabilities.

More than 8 in 10 women and men with disabilities report using at least one aid or assistive device

The use of at least one aid or assistive device increased with the severity of disability. More than 7 in 10 women with mild or moderate disabilities (72.5%), and more than 9 in 10 women with severe or very severe disabilities (93.1%), reported using at least one aid or assistive device.

A larger proportion of women (80.5%) than men (76.1%) reported using mobility or agility-related aids or assistive devices (for example, a cane, orthopaedic footwear, or widened doorways). The likelihood of using mobility or agility-related aids or assistive devices increased with the severity of disability among both women and men.

Close to half of women with severe or very severe disabilities report difficulty using transit services

About 1 in 5 women (21.2%) and men (17.9%) with disabilities reported regularly using public transit, such as a bus or subway. Among those with severe or very severe disabilities, women (20.5%) were more likely to report regularly using this type of transit than were men (16.2%).

Among those with disabilities, 8.7% of women and 6.3% of men regularly used specialized transit, such as a special bus or van or a subsidized accessible taxi service. Among those with severe or very severe disabilities, 11.2% of women and 8.6% of men reported regularly using specialized transit.

Close to half (46.1%) of women with severe or very severe disabilities, who used public or specialized transit, reported "some" or "a lot" of difficulty using these services. This was the case for a smaller proportion (13.9%) of women with mild or moderate disabilities.



Note to readers

Data in this release are from the [2012 Canadian Survey on Disability \(CSD\)](#). The **CSD** defines disability based on a social model, which recognizes that disabilities are the result of the interaction between a person's functional limitations and an unsupportive environment. Following a social model, a set of *Disability Screening Questions (DSQ)* were used on the 2012 CSD to measure the type and severity of disabilities that had lasted or were expected to last six months or more.

Using the DSQ, the term disability was used when the reported frequency of the limitation was "sometimes," "often" or "always," or if the frequency of limitation was "rarely" and the associated level of difficulty experienced was "a lot" or "cannot do".

The DSQ screened for seeing, hearing, mobility, flexibility, dexterity, pain, learning, developmental, mental/psychological, and memory disabilities. For the purpose of this chapter, people with a mobility or agility-related disability included people who had difficulty walking on a flat surface for 15 minutes without resting, walking up or down a flight of stairs without resting, bending down and picking up an object from the floor, or reaching in any direction.

Mobility or agility-related aids or assistive devices included many types of equipment or adapted facilities, such as a cane, walker, or wheelchair; orthopaedic footwear; adapted tools or utensils; a device for dressing; bathroom aids; or widened doorways or hallways.

Findings presented in *The Daily* focus on mobility and agility-related devices as well as transit used by women with disabilities compared with men with disabilities. These findings are taken from the chapter "[Women with Disabilities](#)" from the publication *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, released today. Topics examined in the chapter include prevalence of disability; causes of main condition and disability types; use of aids, assistive devices, and prescribed medications; help needed and help received; use of public and specialized transit; education; labour force participation and experiences; and income.

Data in this chapter are presented and analyzed by sex, as per international guidelines for producing gender statistics. For more information, see United Nations Statistics Division, [Gender Statistics Manual](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3251](#).

This release is based on the chapter "[Women with Disabilities](#)," part of *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, seventh edition ([89-503-X](#)), which is now available.

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).