

A profile of Canadians with mental health-related disabilities

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Many Canadians experience mental illness, and it can affect various aspects of their lives, including health, well-being, social functioning, education and employment. Some can feel limited in their daily activities because of their condition, at which point they are considered to have a mental health-related disability.

In recognition of Bell Let's Talk Day, Statistics Canada is releasing a new infographic, "[Canadians with mental health-related disabilities](#)," based on findings from the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability. The infographic presents certain characteristics related to employment, the average age when a person became limited by their disability, the use of health care services, and mental health-related disability rates by region.

More than 2 million Canadians have a mental health-related disability

Over 2 million Canadians aged 15 and older (7.3%) had a mental health-related disability. The prevalence of mental health-related disabilities varied across Canada, with a higher percentage reported in the Atlantic provinces (9.9%) compared with other regions. In contrast, the percentage was lower in Quebec (4.6%) compared with other regions in Canada.

On average, those with a mental health-related disability, compared with other disability types, begin to feel limited by their condition at a relatively young age

The average age that a person with a mental health-related disability started to feel limited in their daily activities was 31. This was lower than for most other disability types; only learning and developmental disabilities had a lower reported age of limitation onset. In some cases, persons with disabilities can feel limited to the point where they are unable to leave their home environment because of their condition. Almost one-quarter (24%) of those with a mental health-related disability considered themselves housebound.

Less than half of those with a mental health-related disability are employed

Nearly 666,000 adults aged 25 to 64 with a mental health-related disability were not in the labour force, and another 99,000 were unemployed. Just under half, or 655,000 Canadians, were employed. The employment rate among those with a mental health-related disability was 46%, compared with approximately 80% for those without a disability. Over half (52%) of those with a mental health-related disability believed they were disadvantaged in employment because of their condition.

Mental health care service use differs between men and women

Over 1 million Canadians with a mental health-related disability reported requiring counselling services from a psychologist, psychiatrist, psychotherapist or social worker. Support group services, drop-in centre services, and telephone information or support lines were reported as being required by 370,000 Canadians, and another 90,000 needed addiction services. The likelihood of needing these different types of services varied by sex. Women were more likely to report requiring counselling and support group services, while men were more likely to report requiring addiction services.

Note to readers

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability provides comprehensive data on persons with disabilities by province and territory, age group, disability type, and severity of the disability. The survey population consists of Canadians aged 15 years and older as of the 2016 Census of Population (May 10, 2016) living in private dwellings.

It is important to note that the majority of those reporting a mental health-related disability also reported at least one other type of disability. Therefore, the data are based on the impact of all disability types individuals with a mental health-related disability may have had.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3251.

The infographic "[Canadians with mental health-related disabilities](#)" is now available as part of the *Statistics Canada — Infographics (11-627-M)* series.

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).