

Study: Dwelling satisfaction among older adults: Dwelling characteristics and their influence on satisfaction

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, September 7, 2023

Housing choices and requirements often shift as individuals age, based on personal preferences, proximity to services, functional impairments and financial considerations. Despite shifting needs, older adults are the most satisfied with their current housing situation, by far. In 2021, nearly three-quarters (74%) of adults aged 55 and older rated their dwelling satisfaction as 8.0 or higher on a 10-point scale. This compares with 61% among middle-aged adults (35 to 54 years) and 55% among adults younger than 35 years.

Even among older adults, levels of satisfaction were successively higher with age, going from an average score of 8.0 among those aged 55 to 64 years, to a high of 8.7 for seniors aged 75 years and older.

The drivers of dwelling satisfaction are varied, often changing as a person ages. A new study released today examines these drivers, helping to identify possible gaps between housing needs and reality among the fastest growing segment of Canadian society—adults aged 55 years and older. The study pays special attention to differences across pre-seniors (aged 55 to 64), young seniors (aged 65 to 74) and older seniors (75 years and older).

Homeownership does not increase dwelling satisfaction among older seniors

Realizing the dream of homeownership is intrinsically linked to greater dwelling satisfaction, except for older seniors. In the face of the increasing need for home accessibility and reduced desire or ability to maintain a home, older seniors were about as content with their home, whether they owned (8.8 out of 10) or rented it (8.4 out of 10). This contrasts with the reality of pre-seniors and young seniors, who were much more satisfied with their home if they owned it.

Likewise, the dwelling type made little difference for older seniors' level of dwelling satisfaction, as they had about the same level of satisfaction, whether they lived in a single-detached home (8.8 out of 10) or a multi-unit dwelling (8.6 out of 10). Again, this result differs from that of pre-seniors and young seniors, whose satisfaction was higher if they lived in a single-detached home.

Older adults most satisfied with number of bedrooms and least satisfied with home accessibility

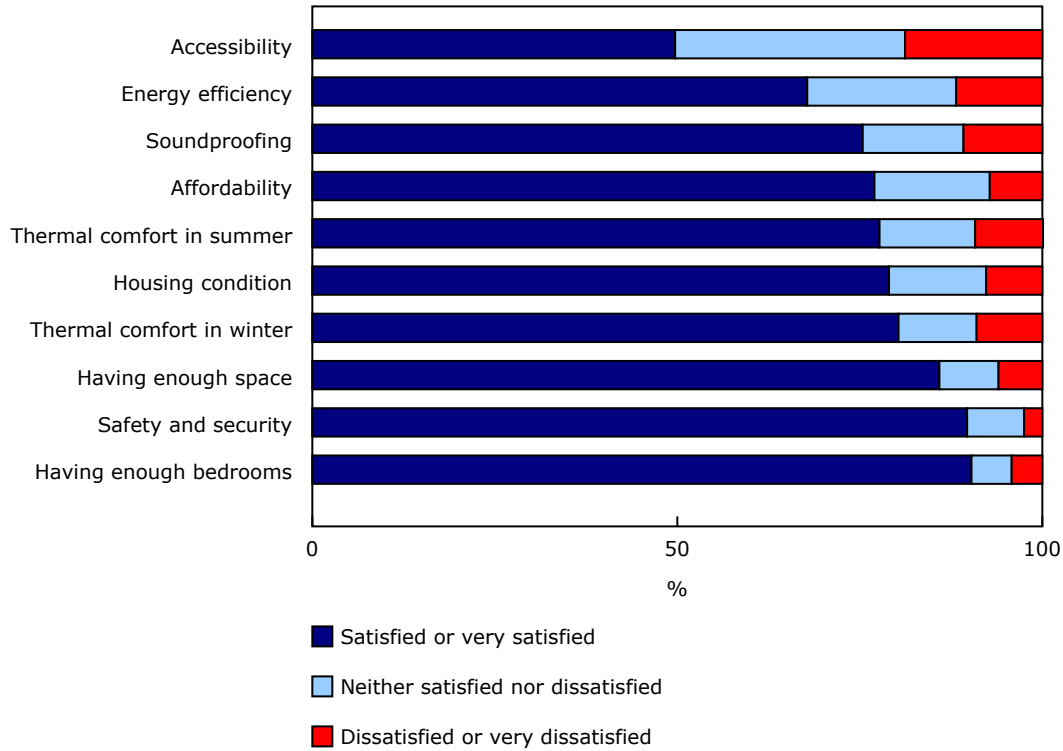
When asked to report their level of satisfaction with dwelling conditions, 90% of older adults were satisfied with having enough bedrooms and 86% were happy with the amount of space in their dwelling. These findings likely reflect the living arrangements of older adults, who were most commonly living alone (39%) or in a couple without children (36%), and the related phenomenon of [older adults living in homes with extra bedrooms](#). The latter explanation may be linked to older adults' desire to stay in their homes for as long as possible, coupled with the current housing market and associated difficulties in downsizing.

Home accessibility, which has been identified as a key component of "aging in place," allowing for independence and mobility, ranked lowest in terms of older adults' satisfaction. Half (50%) of older adults said that they were satisfied or very satisfied that their dwelling was accessible to someone with a physical limitation. The second least satisfying dwelling aspect was energy efficiency, with 68% feeling either satisfied or very satisfied.



Chart 1

Distribution of satisfaction with specific dwelling aspects among older adults aged 55 years and older, 2021



Note(s): Reference persons were asked to select their satisfaction with each dwelling aspect from "very dissatisfied," "dissatisfied," "neither dissatisfied nor satisfied," "satisfied" and "very satisfied."

Source(s): Canadian Housing Survey (5269), 2021.

Note to readers

This study used data from the 2021 Canadian Housing Survey (CHS). The target population is that of Canada's 10 provinces and the capitals of three territories, excluding residents of institutions, members of the Canadian Forces living in military camps, and people living on reserves and other Indigenous settlements.

The CHS measures dwelling satisfaction based on the opinion of the respondent, which may differ from the opinions of other members of the household. The respondent is the person who completed the CHS questionnaire on behalf of the household. The CHS asks that the person responsible for housing decisions in the household complete the questionnaire.

Reference persons were asked several questions about their satisfaction with the dwelling and the aspects of it:

1. Using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means "Very dissatisfied" and 10 means "Very satisfied," how satisfied are you with your dwelling?
2. Compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic, has your satisfaction with your dwelling increased, decreased or remained about the same?
3. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your dwelling? (Very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied)
 - A. Having enough space overall in your home
 - B. Having enough bedrooms
 - C. Being affordable
 - D. Its condition
 - E. Blocking regular noise from outside or from neighbours
 - F. Being accessible to someone with a physical limitation
 - G. Being safe and secure within the home
 - H. Being energy efficient
 - I. Being able to maintain a comfortable temperature in the winter
 - J. Being able to maintain a comfortable temperature in the summer

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5269](#).

The article entitled "[Dwelling satisfaction among older adults: Dwelling characteristics and their influence on satisfaction](#)" is now available in *Insights on Canadian Society* ([75-006-X](#)).

The infographic "[Dwelling satisfaction among older adults aged 55 years and older](#)" is now available in the series Statistics Canada - Infographics ([11-627-M](#)).

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).