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Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012

Hearing disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years and older, 2012

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- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
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- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- P preliminary
- r revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Hearing disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years and older, 2012

The results presented in this fact sheet are from the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), which surveyed residents of private dwellings who reported an activity limitation and who were aged 15 years and older at the time of the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS).

According to the CSD, respondents are considered to have a disability only if they report a difficulty or impairment due to a long-term condition or health problem and they report that they are limited in their daily activities as a result of their condition. Appendix A describes how the CSD defines hearing disabilities.

It should be noted that the population living in institutions, including residential care facilities, was not included in the 2012 CSD. Further details are available in the *Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012: Concepts and Methods Guide*: [89-654-X2014001](#).

According to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), 3,775,900 (13.7%) Canadians aged 15 years and older reported some type of disability, and 874,600 (3.2% of Canadian adults) were identified as having a hearing disability that limited them in their daily activities (Table 1). Among adults aged 15 years and older who were identified as having a hearing disability, 75.2% reported that they had some difficulty hearing, while 22.5% had a lot of difficulty.

Table 1
Prevalence of disability by type, among adults aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012

Disability type	Population	Percentage
Total disability	3,775,900	13.7
Pain-related	2,664,200	9.7
Flexibility	2,078,000	7.6
Mobility	1,971,800	7.2
Mental health-related	1,059,600	3.9
Dexterity	953,100	3.5
Hearing	874,600	3.2
Seeing	756,300	2.8
Memory	628,200	2.3
Learning	622,300	2.3
Developmental	160,500	0.6
Unknown	79,500	0.3

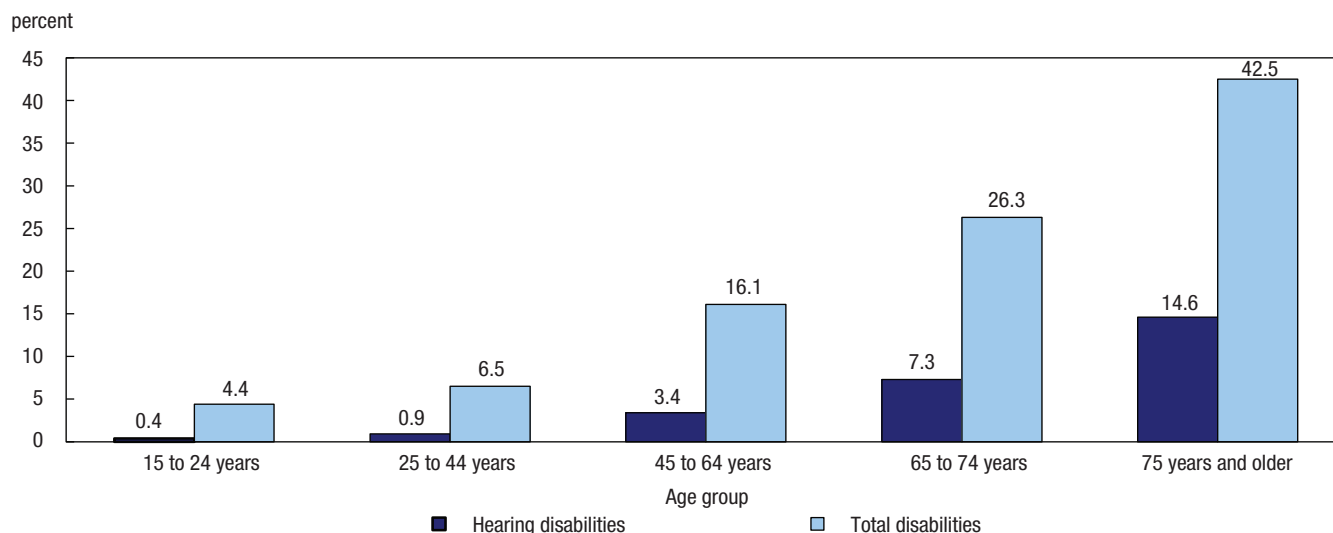
Note: Individuals may have more than one type of disability; therefore, the sum of all individual disability types is greater than the number of "total disabilities".

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Chart 1 highlights that the prevalence of both hearing disabilities and all disabilities increased with age. For example, among adults aged 15 to 24, 0.4% reported having a hearing disability, while among those aged 75 and older, 14.6% reported having a hearing disability.

The difference in hearing disability rates between men and women was significant for those aged 65 to 74, at 8.9% and 5.9%, respectively, and for those aged 75 and older, at 17.0% and 12.9%, respectively, but not for other age groups.

Chart 1
Prevalence of hearing disabilities and total disabilities by age group, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



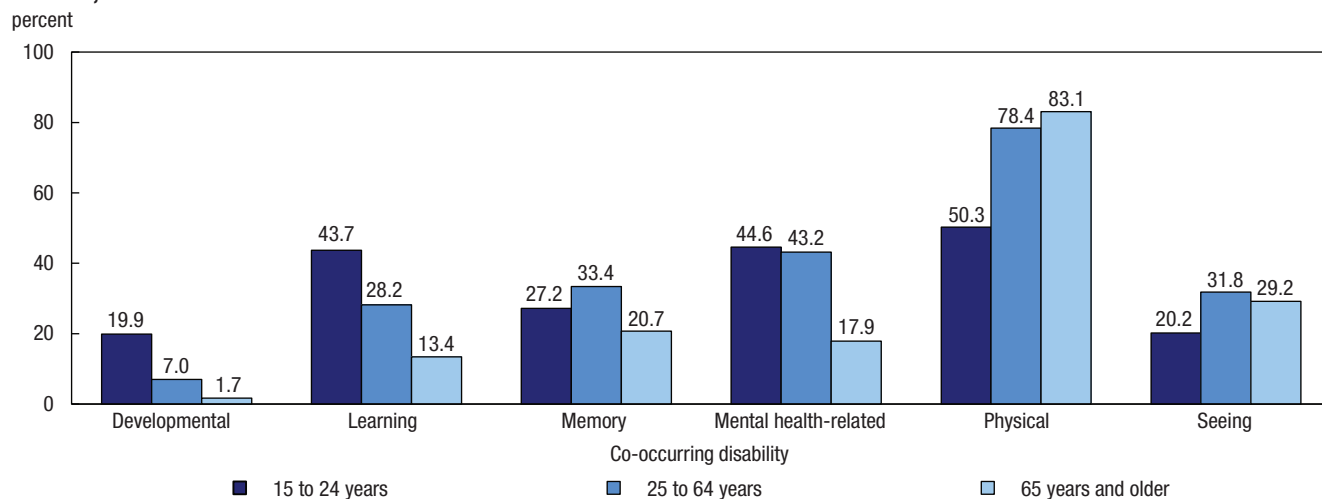
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Multiple disabilities

Hearing disabilities frequently co-occurred with other types of disability: 85.9% of people with a hearing disability reported at least one other type of disability.

The pattern of co-occurrence varied by age. Physical disability had the highest rate of co-occurrence for adults with a hearing disability among all age groups. Hearing disability also frequently co-occurred with mental health-related disability for younger (aged 15 to 24) and middle-aged adults (aged 25 to 64). Learning disability had a high rate of co-occurrence among adults with a hearing disability aged 15 to 24.

Chart 2
Prevalence of co-occurring disability types among adults with a hearing disability, by age group, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



Note: Physical includes mobility, flexibility, dexterity, and pain-related disability types.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Education

Educational attainment

Adults with a hearing disability had a lower level of educational attainment than those who did not have any type of disability. Among adults aged 15 to 64, who were not currently attending school at the time of the survey, those with a hearing disability were more likely than those without any type of disability to have not completed high school (23.0% versus 13.1%). They were also less likely to have a postsecondary qualification¹ than adults without any disability (50.3% versus 61.1%).

Effect of disability on educational experiences

Among adults aged 15 and older with a hearing disability, 9.4% reported that they were currently or had recently been in school.² Of these, 84.2% stated that their educational experiences were directly impacted by their disability.³ The most common impacts reported by those with a hearing disability included having to change their choice of courses or career (49.4%), taking fewer courses (44.3%), and having their education interrupted (41.2%^E) (Table 2).

Table 2

Effect of disability on educational experiences of adults with a hearing disability, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012

Effect of disability	Percentage
Choice of courses/career changed due to disability	49.4
Took fewer courses due to disability	44.3
Education interrupted due to disability	41.2 ^E
Took longer to achieve current level due to disability	38.3 ^E
Changed course of studies due to disability	36.4 ^E
People avoid/exclude due to disability	36.4 ^E
Went back to school for retraining due to disability	34.3 ^E
Additional school expenses due to disability	32.8 ^E
Attended special education classes in a regular school due to disability	31.6 ^E

^E use with caution

Note: Includes individuals currently in school or in school within the last five years and who had a disability while in school.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Educational aids and services

Among those with hearing disabilities, aged 15 and older currently attending or who recently attended school, 24.6% required some sort of education aid or service. Of those who required educational aids or services, 58.8% reported that all of their needs had been met, 38.6% reported that at least some of their needs had been met, while 2.6% reported that none of their needs had been met.

1. Postsecondary includes trades certificates, college diplomas, and university certificates below bachelor level and university degrees.

2. Includes those who were currently in school or had been in school within the past five years and who had their disability during their educational experience.

3. Note that these individuals could have multiple disabilities, and thus these educational experiences could have been a result of any combination of them.

Employment

Labour force status

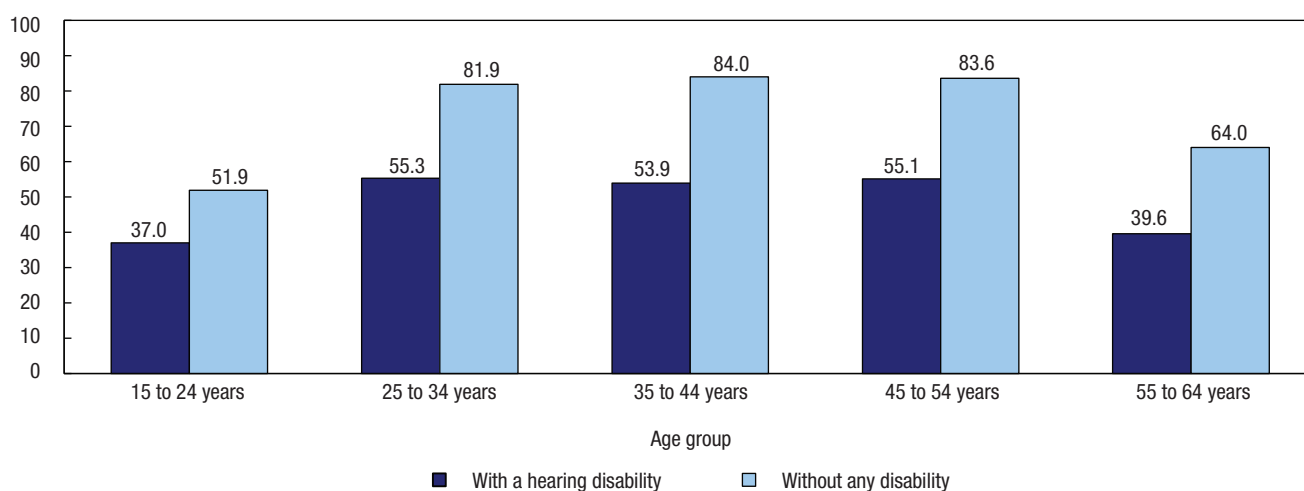
Among adults with a hearing disability, aged 15 to 64, 43.6% were not in the labour force, and another 8.5%^E were unemployed.

The employment rate of working-age adults, aged 15 to 64, with a hearing disability was 47.9%: this was much lower than the employment rate for adults without any disability (73.6%). The difference in employment rates was observable for all age groups (Chart 3).

Chart 3

Employment rates of adults with hearing disabilities and adults without any disability, by age group, aged 15 to 64 years, Canada, 2012

percent



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Overall, there was a significant difference in the employment rates for men and women with a hearing disability. While 53.7% of men were employed, only 41.5% of women were employed. When employment rates were compared within age groups, the only significant gender difference was for adults aged 45 to 54: in this age group, 69.4% of men were employed and only 42.2% of women were employed. The other age groups had slight but non-significant differences in employment rates.

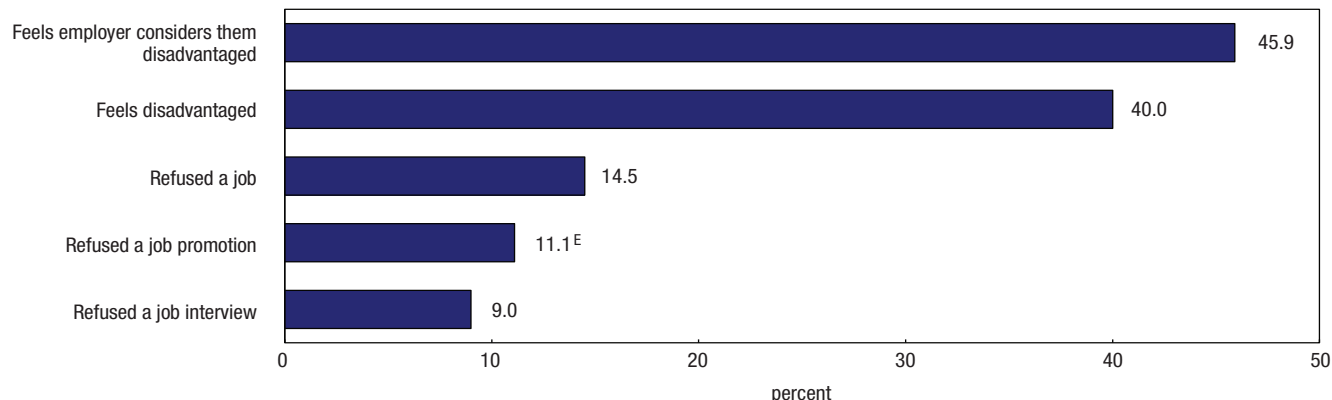
Disability in the workplace

One-third (33.8%) of adults with a hearing disability who were employed reported that their employer was unaware of their condition(s).

Among those with a hearing disability who were either in the labour market at the time of the survey or had been in the previous five years, 45.9% reported that they believed their employer considered them disadvantaged in the labour market and 40.0% reported that they themselves felt disadvantaged (Chart 4). In addition, 14.5% believed that they had been refused a job, 11.1%^E believed they had been refused a promotion, and 9.0% believed they had been refused a job interview because of their disability or disabilities.⁴

4. It is important to note that 85.9% of those reporting a hearing disability also reported at least one other type of disability. Some of the issues discussed in the "Disability in the workplace" section may, in part, be due to other disabilities experienced by the individual.

Chart 4

Perceived employment discrimination or disadvantage among adults with a hearing disability, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012^E use with caution

Note: Includes individuals currently in the labour force or within the last five years.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Job modifications

Among adults with a hearing disability, who were or had been recently employed,⁵ 38.5% said that they required at least one type of job accommodation. Of these, 59.2% reported that all of their needs had been met, 20.0% reported that some of their needs had been met, and 20.8% reported that none of their needs had been met. The most commonly required accommodation was modified work hours (21.4%). Of those who required modified work hours, 65.8% reported that their need was unmet.

Hours worked

Employed working-age adults, aged 15 to 64, with a hearing disability worked approximately the same number of hours per week⁶ as employed adults without any reported type of disability (37 hours). Of those who worked fewer than 30 hours per week on average, 24.2%^E reported that the main reason they did so was due to their disability or health condition and 30.4% reported that they could not find more hours, or that more hours were not available.

Not in the labour force

The proportion of adults with a hearing disability who were not in the labour force was lowest for those between the ages of 25 and 44 (26.6%^E). It was higher for the 15 to 24 age group (53.7%), and was also higher for those aged 45 to 54 (40.9%) and 55 to 64 (53.8%).

A large percentage of adults with a hearing disability between the ages of 15 and 64 reported that their condition prevented them from working (75.3%).⁷ Of those whose condition prevented them from working, 15.3%^E said that there was some type of accommodation that would allow them to work, and 20.8%^E said that they were intending to look for work during the next year.

The most commonly cited barriers preventing adults with a hearing disability from entering the labour force included: being unsuccessful at finding a job in the past (31.6%^E), not having adequate training or experience (31.3%^E), and there being few locally available jobs (30.9%^E).

5. Includes those who were employed, those who were unemployed and had worked in the past five years, those who were not in the labour force but had worked in the past five years (and were able to work or stated that an accommodation would allow them to work), and those who retired within the past five years who stated that their retirement was involuntary.

6. Refers to the actual number of hours worked for pay during the week prior to the reference week on the National Household Survey.

7. It is important to note that 85.9% of those reporting a hearing disability also reported at least one other type of disability. Therefore, their condition preventing them from working may have been due to another co-occurring disability.

Supports

Hearing aids

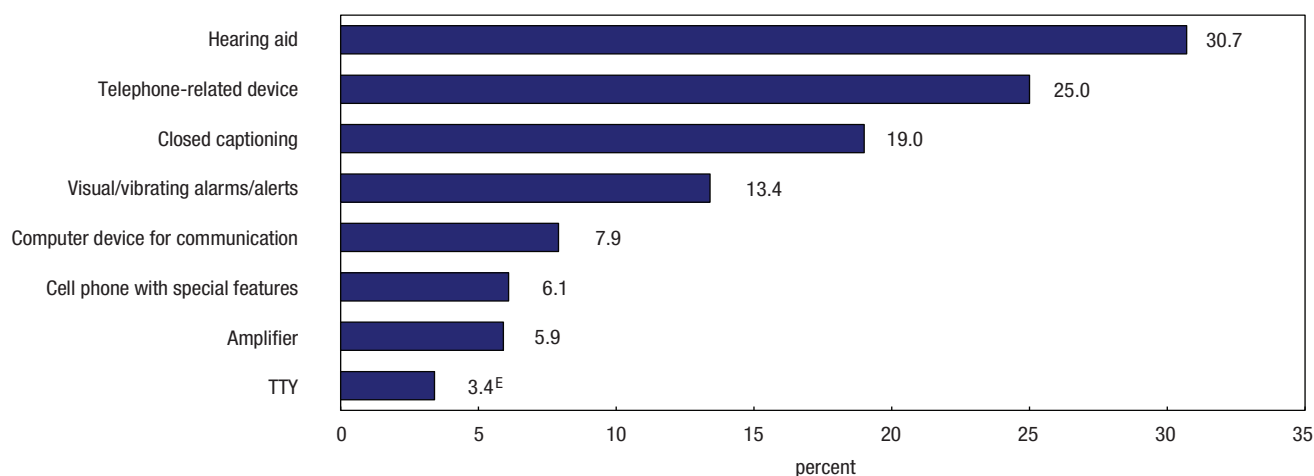
Among all adults aged 15 and older with a hearing disability that limited their daily activities, 32.0% reported that they lip-read, and 3.6%^E reported using sign language.

Over half (55.1%) of adults with a hearing disability aged 15 and older reported they used at least one type of aid or assistive device. The types of aids or assistive devices most frequently used by adults with a hearing disability were hearing aids (30.7%), telephone-related devices such as volume controllers/flashers (25.0%), and closed captioning on their television (19.0%) (Chart 5).

Approximately two-thirds (67.5%) of adults aged 15 and older with a hearing disability reported that they needed at least one type of hearing aid or assistive device. Of these, 56.2% stated all of their needs had been met, 25.4% stated some of their needs had been met, and 18.4% stated that none of their needs had been met. Of those who did not have access to a required aid, 48.9% reported that at least one of the reasons was its high cost. Of adults with a hearing disability, who used at least one type of hearing aid or assistive device, 33.1% reported that they had incurred some out-of-pocket or direct expenses.⁸

Chart 5

Types of hearing aids used by adults with hearing disabilities, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



^E use with caution

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Income

Personal income for working-age adults

Working-age adults with a hearing disability,⁹ aged 15 to 64, reported a median personal income of \$24,200 (before taxes), which was significantly lower than that of adults without any reported type of disability (\$31,200).¹⁰ Among those with employment income, the median employment income for adults with a hearing disability was lower than that of adults without any disability (\$27,100 and \$34,100 respectively).

8. It is important to note that 85.9% of those reporting a hearing disability also reported at least one other type of disability. Therefore, some of the out-of-pocket expenses incurred may have been for an aid or device related to a different disability type.

9. It is important to note that 85.9% of those reporting a hearing disability also reported at least one other type of disability.

10. This calculation includes those with zero or negative personal income amounts before taxes. As well, there were no statistically significant gender differences in median personal income for those with a hearing disability.

Adults with a hearing disability were far more likely to receive government transfers¹¹ as a major source of income compared to adults without any disability. Among those who received government transfers, the median transfer income for adults with a hearing disability was \$7,800, over four times that of adults without any disability (\$1,600). Further, 46.0% of adults with a hearing disability aged 15 to 64 received more from government transfers than they did from employment income; this was true for only 18.7% of those without any disability.¹²

Conclusion

Adults with a hearing disability face significant challenges in their daily lives. Co-occurrence of hearing disability with other disability types was very high, and was observable across all age groups. Adults with a hearing disability had lower educational outcomes than adults without any type of disability, and they reported that their disability had directly affected their educational experience. There were lower employment rates for adults with a hearing disability than for adults without any disability, and many reported additional difficulties related to their work experiences. This included facing discrimination, having unmet requirements for job accommodations, and facing barriers to finding a job. Adults with a hearing disability also experienced lower income and a higher proportion was in receipt of government transfers.

11. Government transfers include a variety of transfer payments from federal, provincial, territorial, or municipal governments such as: Old Age Security; Guaranteed Income Supplements; Canada or Quebec Pension Plan; Employment Insurance; Social Assistance; Child Benefits; and other income from government sources.

12. Excludes individuals who did not receive either of the two income types.

Appendix A

Identification of adults with a hearing disability

The 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) identifies persons with a hearing disability as persons whose daily activities are limited because of difficulties with their ability to hear. The survey used the newly developed Disability Screening Questions (DSQ) to identify disability. The initial step in identifying a hearing disability was to establish the existence of a hearing condition. This was done using the following question:

DSQ_01 Do you have any difficulty seeing or hearing?

For those who said yes to such a condition, another question was asked to determine the amount of difficulty a person has in hearing (with their hearing aid or cochlear implant, where applicable):

DSQ_11 With your hearing aid or cochlear implant, which of the following best describes your ability to hear: You

- Have no difficulty hearing
- Have some difficulty (hearing)
- Have a lot of difficulty (hearing)
- Cannot hear at all
- Are deaf

Those who reported having at least some difficulty hearing received a follow-up question to determine how often this difficulty limited their daily activities:

DSQ_12 How often does this difficulty/condition limit your daily activities?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

A hearing disability was identified when respondents reported being limited at least sometimes, regardless of degree of difficulty. If they reported being limited rarely, they were only considered to have a hearing disability if they also indicated having a lot of difficulty or if they reported being unable to hear at all or were deaf.

An estimated 1,821,200 Canadian adults reported having a hearing condition. Of these, 946,600 (3.4% of the adult population) reported not being limited by their condition. However, 874,600 (3.2%) Canadian adults aged 15 years and older, and 424,840 (1.5%) Canadian working-age adults (aged 15 to 64) were identified as having a hearing disability, based on the methodology described above.