

98-126

Census 1986

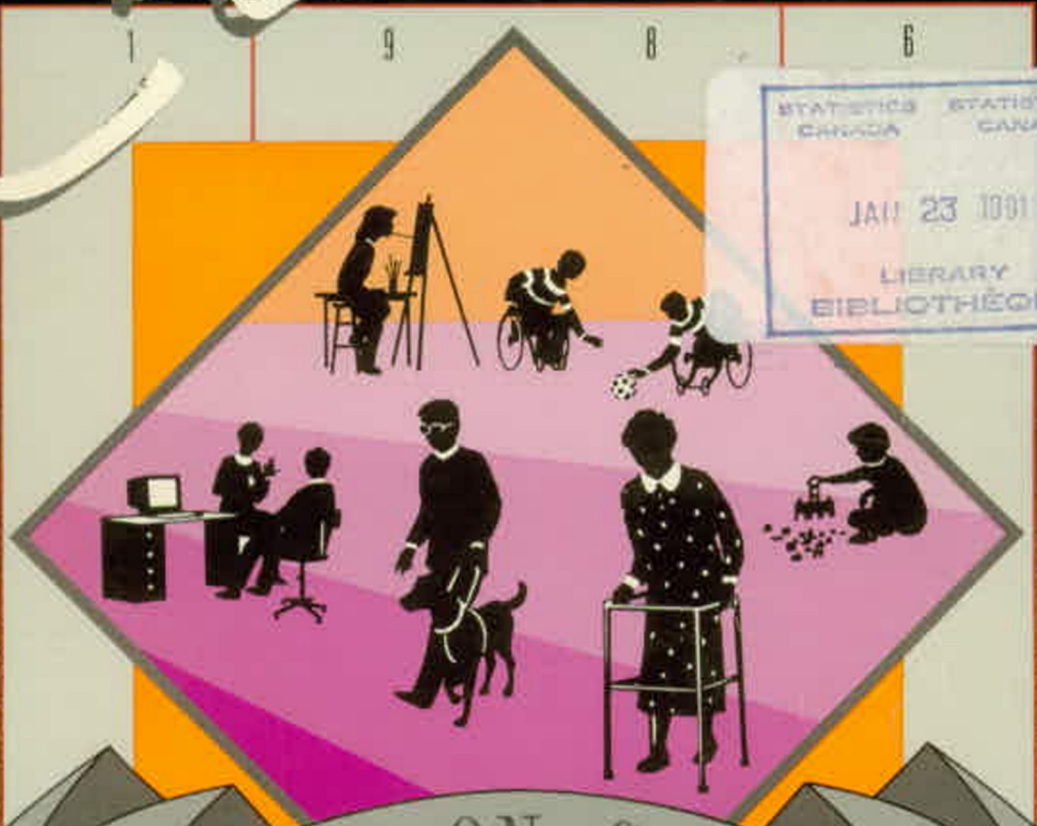
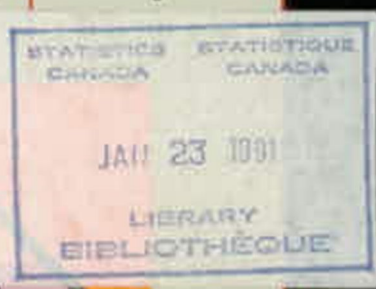
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## FOCUS ON CANADA

Catalogue 98-126

### A PROFILE OF THE DISABLED IN CANADA

Canada



## ERRATA

Catalogue  
98-126  
A profile of persons with disabilities in  
Canada  
1990

Furrie, Adele  
A profile of persons with disabilities in  
Canada  
(1986 Census of Canada) (Focus on  
Canada)  
Title on added t.p.: Un profil des  
personnes ayant une incapacité au  
Canada.  
Text in English and French with French  
text on inverted pages.

ISBN 0-660-54018-5  
CS98-126

1. Handicapped — Canada —  
Statistics.
2. Canada — Census, 1986. I. Coombs,  
John W. (John William).  
II. Statistics Canada. III. Title.  
IV. Title: Un profil des personnes  
ayant une incapacité au Canada.  
V. Series: Census Canada, 1986.  
VI. Series: Focus on Canada  
(Ottawa, Ont.).

HV1559.C2 F87 1990  
305.9'0816'0971'021  
C90-098018-4E

## ERRATA

Catalogue  
98-126  
Un profil des personnes ayant une  
incapacité au Canada  
1990

Furrie, Adele  
Un profil des personnes ayant une  
incapacité au Canada  
(Recensement du Canada de 1986) (Le  
Canada à l'étude)  
Titre de la p. de t. addit.: A profile of  
persons with disabilities in Canada  
Texte en français et en anglais disposé  
tête-bêche.

ISBN 0-660-54018-5  
CS98-126

1. Handicapés — Canada —  
Statistiques.
2. Canada — Recensement, 1986.  
I. Coombs, John W. (John William).  
II. Statistique Canada. III. Titre.  
IV. Titre: A profile of persons with  
disabilities in Canada. V. Collection:  
Recensement Canada, 1986.  
VI. Collection.

HV1559.C2 F87 1990  
305.9'0816'0971'021  
C90-098018-4F

1986 Census of Canada

## A PROFILE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN CANADA



by Adele Furrle and John Coombs

Published under the authority of the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology.

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December 1990

Price: Canada, \$10.00  
Other Countries, \$11.00

Catalogue 98-126

ISBN 0-660-54018-5

Ottawa



## PREFACE

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**T**he 1986 Census of Canada provided, as did all the previous censuses, a rich source of information on individual, family and household characteristics of Canadians. The census data allow individual researchers as well as academic, business, cultural, social and governmental organizations to undertake in-depth enquiries and analyses on those social issues which interest and concern them.

This study is part of the 1986 Focus on Canada Series. The series is a modest effort by Statistics Canada to provide overviews of a wide variety of subjects on which the 1986 Census collected information. The studies have been written by experts, both inside and outside Statistics Canada, in non-technical language supported by simple tables and attractive charts. The topics include demographic characteristics (population, families, farmers, youth, seniors, persons with disabilities), socio-cultural characteristics (ethnicity, language, education), and economic characteristics (women in the labour force, affordability of housing, occupational trends, employment income, family income).

The present study on profiling disabled Canadians is based on the in-depth post-censal survey conducted immediately following the census. The 1986 Census included a question on disability which was used to identify the individuals to be interviewed. The authors of the study were Adele Furrie, Post-Censal Surveys Program and John Coombs, Institutions and Social Statistics Branch in Statistics Canada.

I would like to express my appreciation to the authors, to the reviewers and to the staff of the Bureau involved in managing and producing this series.

We hope that the studies in the Focus on Canada Series will not only provide Canadians with very useful information on various facets of Canadian society, but will also be an inducement for them to undertake further research on the topics.

Ivan P. Fellegi  
Chief Statistician of Canada



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## HIGHLIGHTS

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- Over 3.3 million Canadians had some degree of disability in 1986. This represents more than one in eight (13%) Canadians.
- The disability rate increased with age, from 5% among children aged 0 to 14 to 6% for the population aged 15 to 34 and 16% for the population aged 35 to 64. For seniors aged 65 and over, the prevalence of disability reached 46%.
- Although, overall, females reported a slightly higher rate of disability (14%) than males (13%), the disability rates women experienced at ages under 35 were lower than their male counterparts.
- Among provinces and territories, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and New Brunswick recorded the highest rates of disability (17%, 16% and 16% respectively). Rates were lowest in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories (9% in each).
- Eight per cent of all disabled persons lived in institutions and homes for senior citizens.
- Over 64% of the disabled population aged 15 and over reported more than one type of disability. Most prevalent were mobility and agility disabilities (66% and 58% respectively).

### Disabled Children

- An estimated 277,445 children under 15 years (156,190 males and 121,255 females) were identified as disabled. Of these children, 99% lived in private households while the remaining 1% resided in institutions.
- Disability among children increases with age. Among children aged 0 through 4, 3% were reported as being disabled. This proportion rose to 6% among children aged 5 to 9 and aged 10 to 14.
- Of all disabled children in private households, the vast majority (196,600 or 92%) attended school. Of those who reported attending school, most attended regular schools (173,400), while a small number (12,200) reported attending special schools.

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## Disabled Adults Aged 15 to 64

- In the age group 15 to 64 years, an estimated 1,817,400 persons reported some disability in 1986. This represents one in nine (11%) adults in Canada, most of whom (97%) lived in private households.
- The majority of disabled adults aged 25 to 64 lived with a spouse. Compared to their non-disabled counterparts, however, disabled persons were shown to have a relatively greater probability of living alone.
- Overall, disabled adults aged 15 to 64 who resided in private households reported less education compared to the non-disabled population of the same age and sex. For example, 29% reported less than a Grade 9 education compared with 11% for the non-disabled population.
- Of the estimated 1,767,600 disabled adults who were residing in households, 840,000 (48%) indicated that they were in the labour force (that is, employed or unemployed). This percentage is considerably lower than the labour force participation rate of 78% for the non-disabled population.
- Of the disabled adults who were in the labour force, 56% indicated that they were limited in the kind or amount of work that they could do because of their health condition.
- An estimated 896,000 disabled persons aged 15 to 64 were not in the labour force — 69% reported that they were completely unable to work and a further 18% reported that they were limited in the kind or amount of work they could do if they worked.
- Over 2.6 million Canadians aged 15 to 64 years were members of census low income families in 1985. It is estimated that 19% of all individuals living in low income households were disabled persons.
- Compared to their non-disabled counterparts who earned an average income of \$18,765, employed disabled persons between 15 and 64 years had an average employment income of \$16,875 (90% of the former).

## Disabled Seniors Aged 65 and Over

- There were an estimated 1,222,000 seniors (46%) in the total population 65 years and over who reported some level of disability. This compares with 1,462,700 seniors who reported no disability.
- The disability rate increased dramatically for older seniors. While 37% of the population aged 65 to 74 were disabled, the comparable statistic for those aged 85 and over was 82%.
- Women reported a higher disability rate than men for the senior population aged 75 and over.
- Sixteen per cent of all disabled seniors were residents of health-related institutions. This percentage was highest for the oldest disabled seniors: 43% of the population aged 85 and over resided in such institutions.

- 
- The percentage of disabled women over 65 years living alone in private households was almost three times that of men — 42% versus 14%.
  - Over half of disabled seniors who were women and lived alone had an income below the census low income cut-off, compared with 40% of non-disabled women who lived alone. For both the disabled and non-disabled senior men, the comparable rate was almost 30%.



## INTRODUCTION

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In 1986, for the first time in recent history, the census of population included a question on disability status. This question, as well as the subsequent conduct of the Health and Activity Limitation Survey, were part of Statistics Canada's response to **Obstacles**, the report of the 1981 Special Parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped. This Committee directed Statistics Canada to:

"give a high priority to the development and implementation of a long-term strategy which will generate comprehensive data on disabled persons in Canada . . ." (**Obstacles**, Recommendation 113)

The 1986 Census of Population and the Health and Activity Limitation Survey provide the most comprehensive statistical profile of disabled individuals and their families in Canada to date.

### The Survey

The responses to the new census question on disability were used to identify a sample of approximately 200,000 individuals. These individuals were subsequently asked to participate in the Health and Activity Limitation Survey.

The Health and Activity Limitation Survey was also conducted in a sample of institutions where approximately 18,000 individuals participated. Penal institutions and correctional facilities were not covered by the survey.

The survey included questions on the nature and severity of the individual's disability as well as questions on barriers these people encountered in everyday life. The data, combined with census information on the socio-economic and family characteristics of the disabled survey respondents, provide a rich source of information on the status of disabled persons in Canada.

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## Disability Defined

The concept of disability, as used in the Health and Activity Limitation Survey was provided by the World Health Organization. Disability is defined as:

“... any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.”<sup>1</sup>

Persons/respondents aged 15 and over were asked questions concerning their ability to perform activities that most people carry out daily, for example, walking up and down a flight of stairs. Persons who indicated some difficulty in performing at least one of these activities (termed activities of daily living) or indicated that they were “limited in the kind or amount of activity (they could do) because of a long-term emotional, psychological or mental health condition” were considered, for the purposes of this survey, to be disabled. Using this operational definition allows a broader delineation of the disabled population than that which is commonly associated with the term “disability”. The disabled population, for which information was collected by this survey, ranged from those individuals with mild limitations to those with very severe disabilities.

As methodological difficulties made it impossible to use the same approach for measuring disability limitations in children (under the age of 15), the survey used the presence of any of the following as an indication of a disability being present — a general limitation in the kind or amount of activity that the child could do, the presence of chronic conditions or health limitations, the use of technical aids and the presence of a seeing, speaking or hearing limitation.

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<sup>1</sup> International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps, page 28, World Health Organization.

**DISABLED PERSONS: AN OVERVIEW**







## DISABLED PERSONS: AN OVERVIEW

### How Many Canadians Have a Disability?

As shown in Table 1, it is estimated that over 3.3 million Canadians had some degree of disability in 1986. This represented more than one in eight or 13% of all Canadians.

Because disability is defined in terms of limitation to an individual's activity resulting from a health condition, it is not surprising that the disability rate increases with age. Among children aged 0 to 14, 5% were reported as having a disability. This rate increased to 6% for the population aged 15 to 34 and 16% for the population aged 35 to 64. For

seniors aged 65 and over, the prevalence of reported disability was 46%.

Although, overall, females reported a higher rate of disability (14%) than males (13%), the differential varies in magnitude and direction for different age groups. Females reported a slightly lower rate in the younger age groups than males. However, this difference gradually disappears in older age groups and, in fact, the disability rate for women 65 years and over was higher than that for men. Although men have a shorter life expectancy than women, this finding indicates that disability is less prevalent for men who survive past age 65 than for their female counterparts of the same age.

**Table 1. Disability Rate and Distribution of Total Population and Disabled Persons in Households and in Health-related Institutions by Sex and Age Groups, Canada, 1986-87**

Sex and age group	Disability rate	Total population <sup>1</sup>	Disabled persons
	%	No.	No.
Both sexes — Total	13.2	25,061,270	3,316,875
0 — 14 years	5.2	5,325,185	277,445
15 — 34 years	5.7	8,570,150	486,935
35 — 64 years	15.7	8,481,270	1,330,505
65 years and over	45.5	2,684,660	1,221,995
Males — Total	12.7	12,346,440	1,568,420
0 — 14 years	5.7	2,730,585	156,190
15 — 34 years	5.9	4,275,840	253,005
35 — 64 years	15.8	4,209,570	664,885
65 years and over	43.7	1,130,440	494,340
Females — Total	13.8	12,714,830	1,748,455
0 — 14 years	4.7	2,594,605	121,255
15 — 34 years	5.4	4,294,310	233,930
35 — 64 years	15.6	4,271,700	665,620
65 years and over	46.8	1,554,220	727,655

<sup>1</sup> Estimate of population covered by the survey. The 1986 Census of Population showed a total population of 25,309,330. The survey excluded residents of penal institutions and correctional facilities as well as Indian reserves who did not participate in the 1986 Census of Population. For a complete description of the sample design, contact the Post-Censal Surveys Program, Ottawa.

## Where Do People With Disabilities Live?

As noted in Table 2, disability rates varied substantially among the provinces and the territories. Among the provinces, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and New Brunswick recorded the highest rates (17%, 16% and 16%, respectively) while the lowest rates were recorded by Alberta and Quebec (12% and 11%, respectively). The Yukon and the Northwest Territories recorded lower rates than any province (9% each). Part of this difference in rates is due to the differing age structures of the provinces and territories. In 1986, the percentage of the population aged 65 and over in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories was only 4% and 3% of the total populations, respectively, compared with 11% of the population in all of Canada.

Disabled persons living in institutions<sup>1</sup> accounted for 8% of the total disabled population. Quebec, Ontario and Saskatchewan reported the highest rates of persons in institutions (9%, 8% and 8% respectively).

## What Kind of Disabilities Do Adult Canadians Report?

The type of disabilities experienced by disabled respondents 15 years and over (Chart 1) were categorized from reported functional limitations.

From Chart 1 it is evident that mobility, agility, seeing and hearing disabilities increased with age. Overall, mobility and agility disabilities were more frequently reported by women than men. On the other hand, more men reported a hearing condition than women. The latter differential is most striking for those 65 years and over — 53% of men reported a hearing limitation compared with 39% of women.

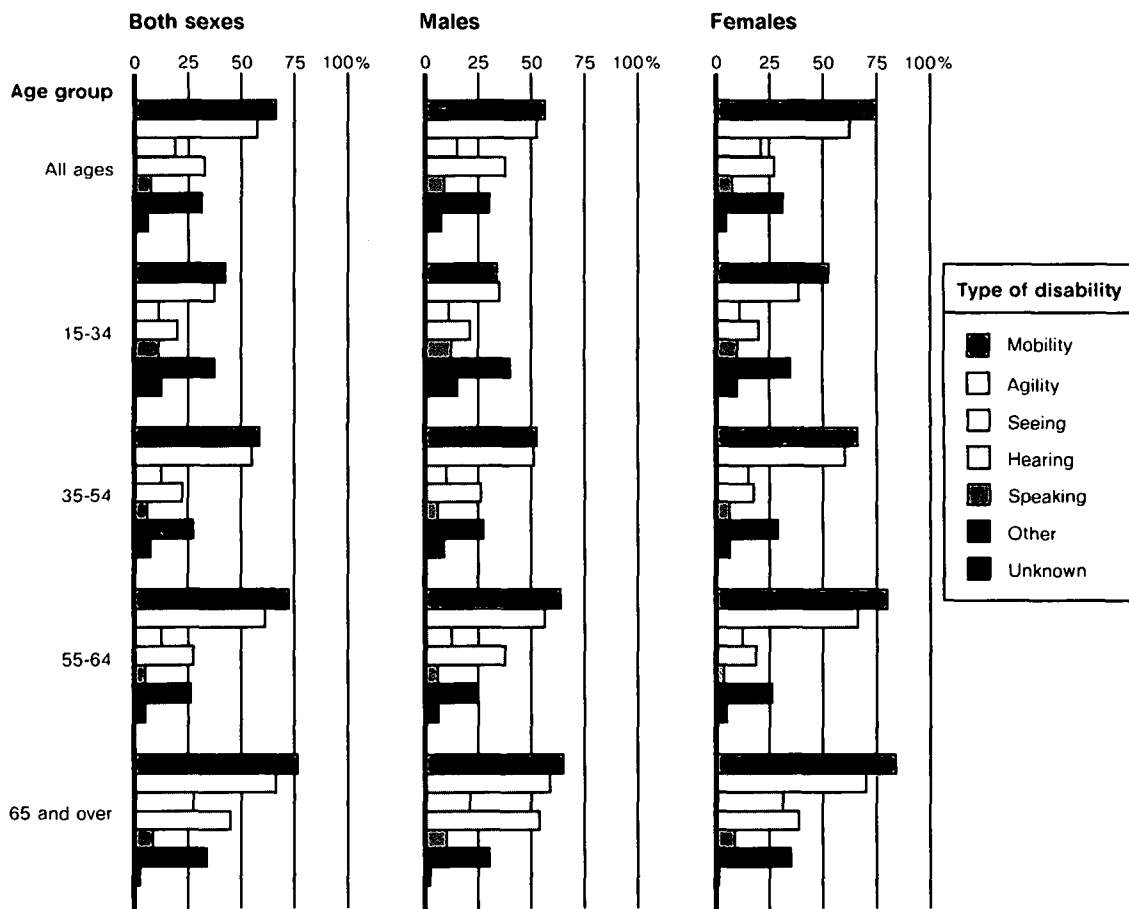
Mobility and agility disabilities were the most common disability affecting the population aged 15 and over. Over 66% of disabled adults reported a mobility disability and 58% reported an agility disability. The remaining types of disabilities were reported by less than one in three disabled persons; speaking disability (8%) was the least common of any type of disability.

**Table 2. Disability Rate and Distribution of Disabled Persons Residing in Households and in Health-related Institutions, for Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1986-87**

Province	Disabled persons					
	Disability rate	Total	In households		In health-related institutions	
	%	No.	No.	%	No.	%
CANADA	13.2	3,316,875	3,069,600	92.5	247,275	7.5
Newfoundland	13.1	73,105	69,605	95.2	3,500	4.8
Prince Edward Island	14.7	18,450	17,490	94.8	960	5.2
Nova Scotia	16.9	145,720	139,675	95.9	6,045	4.1
New Brunswick	15.5	109,105	103,265	94.6	5,840	5.4
Quebec	11.3	727,740	663,245	91.1	64,495	8.9
Ontario	13.9	1,263,215	1,167,395	92.4	95,820	7.6
Manitoba	15.7	160,865	150,855	93.8	10,010	6.2
Saskatchewan	13.9	137,520	127,015	92.4	10,500	7.6
Alberta	11.9	279,430	258,780	92.6	20,645	7.4
British Columbia	13.9	395,115	365,790	92.6	29,325	7.4
Yukon	8.8	2,040	1,990	97.5	50	2.5
Northwest Territories	8.9	4,570	4,485	98.1	85	1.9

<sup>1</sup> Institutions covered by the Health and Activity Limitation Survey include group homes, hospitals, psychiatric institutions, institutions for those with mental disabilities and homes for senior citizens. The survey excluded penal institutions.

**Chart 1. Type of Disability<sup>1</sup> by Sex and Age Groups for the Disabled Population Aged 15 and Over Residing in Households and in Health-related Institutions, Canada, 1986-87**

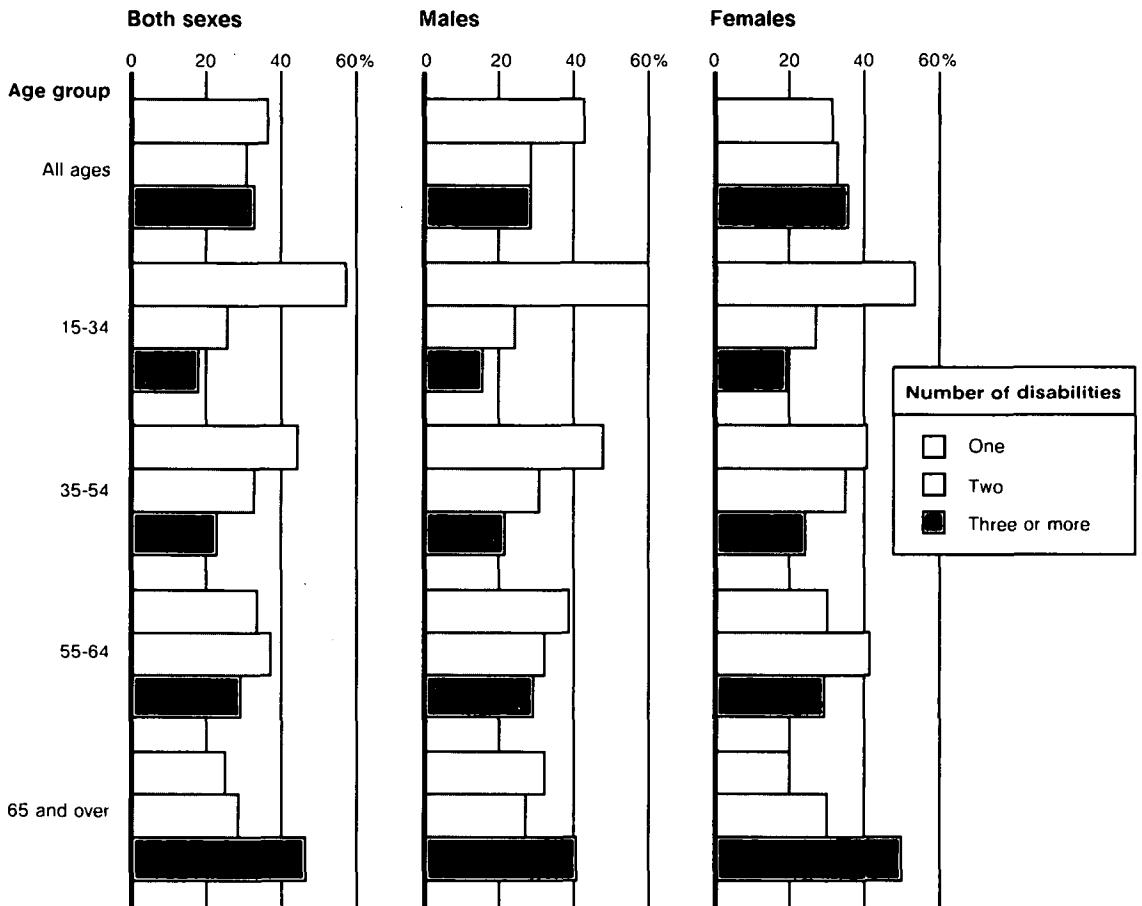


<sup>1</sup> Percentages do not add to 100 because individuals may report more than one type of disability.

Within the disabled population, more than 6 out of 10 individuals reported having more than one type of disability. As with the disability rate, the average number of disabilities experienced by disabled individuals increases with age. Information from the survey (Chart 2) shows that by age 35, it

is more common for disabled individuals to have multiple disabilities rather than a single disability. In the age group 55 to 64, the proportion of persons with multiple disabilities increases to two-thirds. Three-quarters of the population over age 65 have multiple disabilities.

**Chart 2. Number of Disabilities by Sex and Age Groups for the Disabled Population Aged 15 and Over Residing in Households and in Health-related Institutions, Canada, 1986-87**



## DISABLED CHILDREN UNDER 15 YEARS OF AGE

### Age-Sex Characteristics

In 1986, an estimated 277,445 Canadian children under age 15 had a disability (Table 3). Among these disabled children, boys slightly outnumbered girls — approximately 56 disabled children out of 100 were male.

The prevalence of disability among very young children (from birth to 4 years) was higher for girls than for boys — 4% compared with 3%. This relationship reversed in the two older age groups. Boys aged 5 to 9 reported a disability rate of 7% compared with a rate of 4% for girls; by age 10 to 14, 7% of boys compared with 6% of girls were reported as having a disability.

Most disabled children lived in private households. Slightly less than 2,400 disabled children resided in institutions, and of those, two-thirds were

aged 10 to 14. The proportion of female to male disabled children (0.76 females to 1 male) in institutions was almost the same as the proportion in the household population.

### Nature of Disability Among Children

It was not possible to identify the precise nature of disability experienced by all children, as was done for adults. The survey questions used to identify the presence of a childhood disability did not necessarily reveal the nature of the disability. Questions were asked about the use of technical aids, the presence of chronic conditions, and about general limitations experienced in activity. Only questions concerning hearing, speaking and seeing limitations provided information comparable to that obtained for the disabled adults.

**Table 3. Disability Rate and Distribution of Disabled Children Under 15 Years Residing in Households and in Health-related Institutions by Sex and Age Groups, Canada, 1986-87**

Sex and age group	Disabled children			
	Disability rate	Total	In households	In health-related institutions
	%	No.	No.	No.
Both sexes — Total	5.2	277,445	275,050	2,390
0 — 4 years	3.4	61,170	61,020	--
5 — 9 years	5.8	103,040	102,365	680
10 — 14 years	6.4	113,235	111,665	1,570
Males — Total	5.7	156,190	154,825	1,360
0 — 4 years	3.2	29,160	29,075	--
5 — 9 years	7.3	64,960	64,630	325
10 — 14 years	6.8	62,075	61,120	955
Females — Total	4.7	121,255	120,225	1,030
0 — 4 years	3.7	32,010	31,945	--
5 — 9 years	4.3	38,085	37,730	350
10 — 14 years	6.0	51,160	50,545	615

-- Amount too small to be expressed; i.e. sampling variability (coefficient of variation) is greater than 25%.

As may be observed in Table 4, of more than 275,000 disabled children (from birth to 14 years) residing in private households, 53% were characterized as having a general limitation, while one-half were reported to have chronic conditions. Hearing and vision limitations were reported least often (48,000, or 17%, and 28,000, or 10%, disabled children respectively).

Table 5 portrays similar data for children residing in institutions. The small number of children from birth to 4 years who were institutionalized prevented the production of estimates from the Health and Activity Limitation Survey for this group.

For those disabled children aged 5 to 14, general limitations and chronic conditions were each reported more than 1 1/2 times as often for institutionalized children as for children living in private households. Also of note is the relatively high proportions of institutionalized children indicated to have psychiatric conditions and/or speaking limitations (71% and 63% respectively).

These results touch on the special problems associated with the identification of disability among children. Especially for younger children, differentiation between the presence of developmental delay versus a long term functional limitation or disability may be difficult. The reduction in the percentage of disabled children who were characterized as having a "general limitation" between the 0 to 4 and 5 to 14 age groups may be the result of

increasingly clear indication of the presence of a specific condition.

### Schooling of Disabled Children Residing in Private Households

The information collected on schooling for disabled children aged 5 to 14 was different for those residing in private households than for those in institutions.

For the estimated 214,000 disabled children residing in households, the information included type of school attended, type of classes attended, and whether or not their disability resulted in delays in their education. For disabled children residing in institutions, the only data on schooling was the nature of education, training or therapy being obtained.

As can be seen in Chart 3, most children (92%) with disabilities living in private households were receiving some form of schooling. Almost 9 out of 10 disabled children who attended school in April 1986 did so at a regular school. A relatively small number (12,200) of disabled children were reported to have attended a special school.

Of the 13,000 disabled children who were not attending school in April 1986, an estimated 5,700 had not yet started school, and 1,300 had never attended school because of their disability.

**Table 4. Disabled Children Under 15 Years Residing in Households by Disability Characteristics,<sup>1</sup> for Selected Age Groups, Canada, 1986**

Disability characteristics	Age group					
	0 - 14		0 - 4		5 - 14	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total number of disabled children in households	275,050	100.0	61,020	100.0	214,030	100.0
Uses aids	71,325	25.9	21,900	35.9	49,425	23.1
General limitation	145,640	53.0	30,640	50.2	115,000	53.7
Attends special school	71,745	26.1	6,775	11.1	64,970	30.4
Chronic condition	137,735	50.1	22,360	36.6	115,375	53.9
Vision problem	27,770	10.1	6,485	10.6	21,285	9.9
Hearing problem	47,970	17.4	12,420	20.4	35,545	16.6
Speaking problem <sup>2</sup>	NA		NA		37,110	17.3
Psychiatric <sup>2</sup>	NA		NA		27,440	12.8
Other problem	26,235	9.5	12,860	21.1	13,375	6.2

NA Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Percentages do not add to 100 because individuals may report more than one disability.

<sup>2</sup> Questions were asked for children aged 5 to 14 only.

**Table 5. Disabled Children Under 15 Years Residing in Health-related Institutions by Disability Characteristics,<sup>1</sup> for Selected Age Groups, Canada, 1986-87**

Disability characteristics	Age group					
	0 - 14		0 - 4		5 - 14	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total number of disabled children in health-related institutions	2,395	100.0	--	--	2,250	100.0
Uses aids	1,160	48.4	--	--	1,060	47.1
General limitation	2,075	86.6	--	--	1,925	85.6
Attends special school	1,800	75.2	--	--	1,750	77.8
Chronic condition	2,135	89.1	--	--	1,985	88.2
Vision problem	750	31.3	--	--	695	30.9
Hearing problem	415*	17.3*	--	--	405*	18.0*
Speaking problem <sup>2</sup>	NA		NA		1,410	62.7
Psychiatric <sup>2</sup>	NA		NA		1,605	71.3
Other problem	515	21.5	--	--	495	22.0

NA Not applicable.

-- Amount too small to be expressed; i.e. sampling variability (coefficient of variation) is greater than 25%.

\* High sampling variance (coefficient of variation between 16.5% and 25%); use with caution.

<sup>1</sup> Percentages do not add to 100 because individuals may report more than one disability.

<sup>2</sup> Questions were asked for children aged 5 to 14 only.

Additional information from the survey (Chart 4) indicates that of the estimated 173,400 disabled children living in private households, who attended regular schools in 1986, about 92% received some or all of their schooling in regular classes. (Over one-third of these also attended some special classes.) An additional 8% of those attending regular schools attended only special classes.

For the 66,800 disabled children who attended special schools or those who attended special classes in regular schools, the type of program provided included regular academic subjects, physical therapy, daily living skills, and trade and vocational training. As shown in Table 6, almost 74% of these students attending special classes received academic

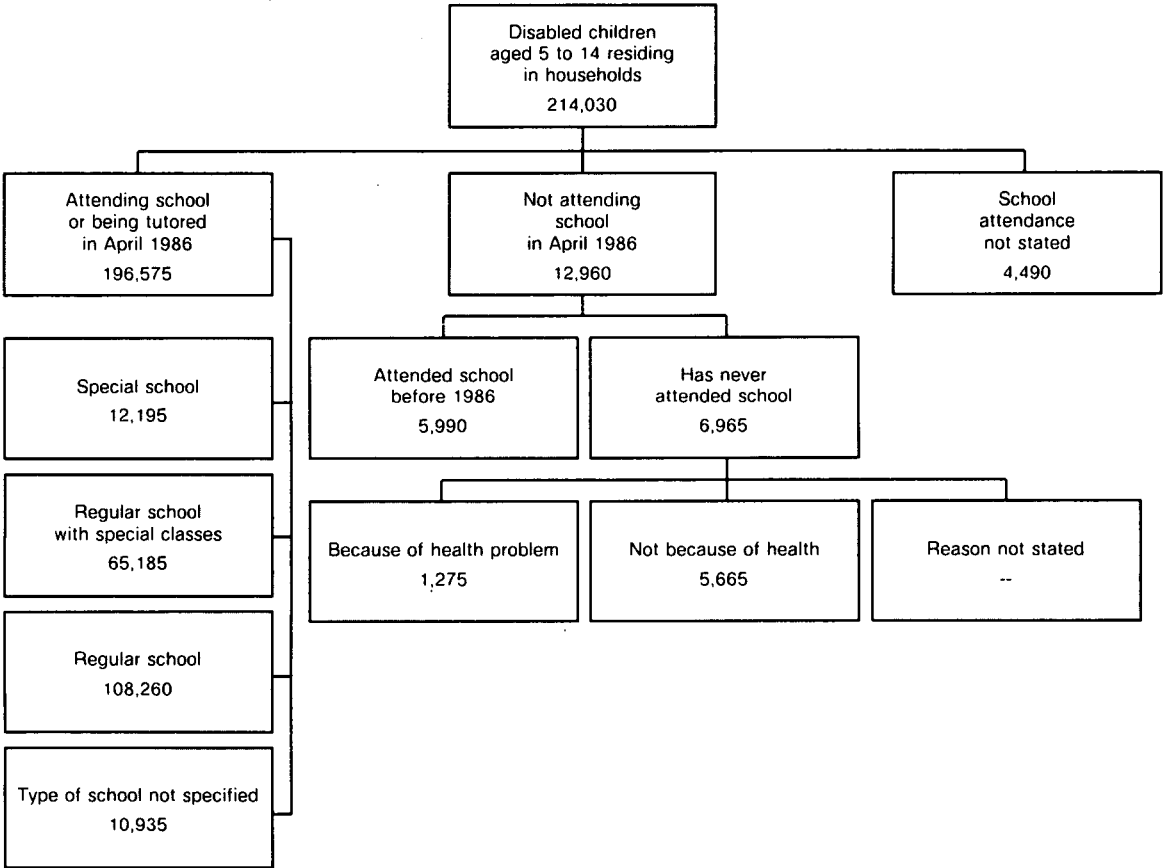
training and 47% received physical therapy. Relatively smaller percentages received training in living skills (31%) and trade or vocational subjects (5%).

The survey also provides information on how their condition or limitation has affected the education of disabled children (Table 7). Because of their condition or limitation, almost 12,900 disabled children had started school later than their non-disabled peers. Long interruptions in schooling because of their health conditions were reported for 36,200 disabled children. Parents or guardians also reported that an estimated 68,600 disabled children took longer to achieve their present level of education, again because of their condition.



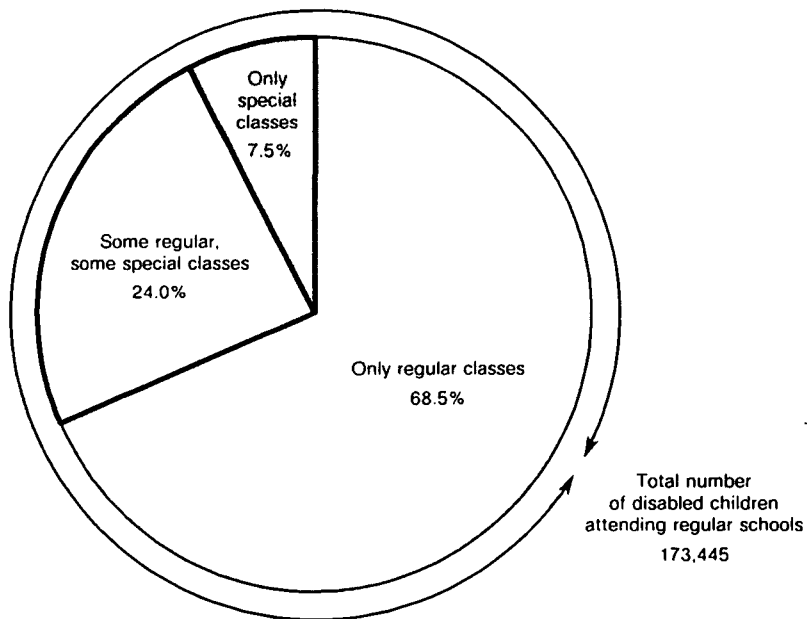
**Chart 3.**

**School Attendance Characteristics in April 1986 for Disabled Children Aged 5 to 14 Residing in Households, Canada**



-- Amount too small to be expressed; i.e. sampling variability (coefficient of variation) is greater than 25%.

**Chart 4. Percentage Distribution of Disabled Children Aged 5 to 14 Residing in Households by Type of Class Attended in Regular Schools in April 1986, Canada**



**Table 6. Disabled Children Aged 5 to 14 Residing in Households by Type of Special Classes Attended in April 1986, Canada**

	Disabled children	
	No.	%
Total attending some special classes	66,840	100.0
In special schools	12,195	18.2
In regular schools	54,645	81.8
Type of special classes <sup>1</sup>		
Academic subjects	49,290	73.7
Physical or communication therapy	31,575	47.2
Daily living skills	20,760	31.1
Trade or vocational	3,205	4.8

<sup>1</sup> Percentages do not add to 100 because individuals may report more than one type of class.



## DISABLED ADULTS AGED 15 TO 64

An estimated 1,817,400 adults aged 15 to 64 reported some level of disability in 1986 (Table 7). This represents more than one adult in nine in Canada. Disabled men are slightly more common than disabled women in this age group.

As noted earlier, disability increased with age from a rate of 5% for persons aged 15 to 24, to 26% for the population aged 55 to 64. Except for the age group 35 to 44 years, the disability rate for men marginally exceeds or equals that of women.

The majority of disabled persons aged 15 to 64 resided in households (97%). The remaining 3% (49,800) of disabled individuals resided in institutions. Slightly more disabled men than women aged 15 to 64 lived in institutions (3.2% or 29,200 disabled men versus 2.3% or 20,600 disabled women). The proportion of 15 to 34-year-olds was significantly larger than the other age groups in the institutional population. This was true for both disabled men and women.

**Table 7. Disabled Adults Aged 15 to 64 by Sex and Age Groups, Showing Number and Percentage Residing in Households and in Health-related Institutions, Canada, 1986-87**

Sex and age group	Disabled adults					
	Disability rate	Total	In households		In health-related institutions	
			%	No.	No.	%
Both sexes — Total	10.7	1,817,440	1,767,640	97.3	49,805	2.7
15 — 24 years	4.6	187,500	181,325	96.7	6,175	3.3
25 — 34 years	6.7	299,435	288,700	96.4	10,735	3.6
35 — 44 years	9.4	343,560	335,090	97.5	8,470	2.5
45 — 54 years	15.0	378,380	370,075	97.8	8,305	2.2
55 — 64 years	26.1	608,565	592,445	97.4	16,120	2.6
Males — Total	10.8	917,890	888,685	96.8	29,205	3.2
15 — 24 years	4.7	97,185	93,685	96.4	3,500	3.6
25 — 34 years	7.1	155,820	148,925	95.6	6,895	4.4
35 — 44 years	9.3	170,645	165,565	97.0	5,080	3.0
45 — 54 years	15.7	196,950	192,195	97.6	4,755	2.4
55 — 64 years	26.3	297,290	288,315	97.0	8,975	3.0
Females — Total	10.5	899,550	878,950	97.7	20,590	2.3
15 — 24 years	4.4	90,315	87,640	97.0	2,675	3.0
25 — 34 years	6.4	143,615	139,775	97.3	3,840	2.7
35 — 44 years	9.6	172,915	169,520	98.0	3,390	2.0
45 — 54 years	14.4	181,430	177,885	98.0	3,545	2.0
55 — 64 years	25.9	311,275	304,130	97.7	7,140	2.3

Apart from those aged 15 to 24, the majority of disabled adults lived with a spouse (Table 8). However, compared to non-disabled individuals in the 25 to 64 age group, relatively larger proportions of disabled persons lived alone or with others. The differences were particularly striking for women. For example, in the age group 55 to 64, 21% of disabled women lived alone compared with 14% for non-disabled women of the same age.

### Educational Attainment of Disabled Adults

Overall, disabled adults who resided in private households reported lower levels of educational attainment than the non-disabled individuals of the same age and sex.

Nearly 29% of disabled persons aged 15 to 64 reported less than a Grade 9 education compared to 11% for the non-disabled population (Table 9). In contrast, only 5% of disabled adults reported having a university degree compared with 11% of their non-disabled colleagues.

Similar differences are noted for each age-sex group. Such differences are particularly pertinent for those individuals aged 25 to 34 who may have been in the process of establishing a career. Approximately 7% of disabled adults in that age group reported a university degree compared with 14% of non-disabled adults in the same age group. However, the situation of disabled persons 25 to 34 years is better than that of older disabled persons — only 3% of disabled individuals 55 to 64 years reported a university degree, compared to 7% of non-disabled adults.

**Table 8. Type of Living Arrangement by Sex and Age Groups for Disabled and Non-disabled Adults Aged 15 to 64 Residing in Households, Canada, 1986**

Sex and age group	Disabled adults				Non-disabled adults			
	Total	With spouse	Alone	With others	Total	With spouse	Alone	With others
	No.	%	%	%	No.	%	%	%
Both sexes — Total	1,767,640	61.5	12.1	26.4	15,231,450	60.8	6.8	32.4
15 — 24 years	181,325	17.3	6.0	76.7	3,920,225	15.9	4.1	80.0
25 — 34 years	288,700	54.0	12.9	33.1	4,161,990	69.2	8.9	21.9
35 — 54 years	705,165	69.3	10.4	20.3	5,428,595	81.9	5.8	12.3
55 — 64 years	592,445	69.3	15.6	15.1	1,720,645	76.2	11.4	12.4
Males — Total	888,690	64.3	10.4	25.3	7,565,820	59.5	7.4	33.1
15 — 24 years	93,685	12.1	2.6	85.3	1,975,295	10.4	4.1	85.5
25 — 34 years	148,925	52.1	16.7	31.2	2,046,850	66.0	10.4	23.6
35 — 54 years	357,760	71.8	9.9	18.3	2,712,095	83.5	7.0	9.5
55 — 64 years	288,315	78.2	10.4	11.4	831,575	81.9	8.8	9.3
Females — Total	878,950	58.6	13.8	27.6	7,665,635	62.1	6.3	31.6
15 — 24 years	87,640	22.8	9.5	67.7	1,944,925	21.4	4.1	74.5
25 — 34 years	139,775	56.1	8.8	35.1	2,115,135	72.3	7.4	20.3
35 — 54 years	347,405	66.8	10.9	22.3	2,716,500	80.4	4.6	15.0
55 — 64 years	304,130	60.8	20.6	18.6	889,070	70.9	13.8	15.3

**Table 9. Highest Level of Schooling by Sex and Age Groups for Disabled and Non-disabled Adults Aged 15 to 64 Residing in Households, Canada, 1986**

Sex and age group	Highest level of schooling				
	Total	Less than Grade 9	Secondary	Some/completed postsecondary	University degree
	No.	%	%	%	%
<b>Disabled adults</b>					
Both sexes — Total	1,767,640	28.9	39.9	26.0	5.2
15 — 24 years	181,325	12.8	65.1	21.0	1.1
25 — 34 years	288,700	13.0	46.2	33.5	7.3
35 — 54 years	705,165	26.0	37.2	29.9	6.9
55 — 64 years	592,445	45.0	32.5	19.2	3.3
Males — Total	888,690	27.2	40.7	26.5	5.6
15 — 24 years	93,685	15.4	64.3	18.7	1.6
25 — 34 years	148,925	12.9	46.5	32.8	7.8
35 — 54 years	357,760	25.0	37.9	30.6	6.5
55 — 64 years	288,315	41.2	33.4	20.8	4.6
Females — Total	878,950	30.6	39.2	25.5	4.7
15 — 24 years	87,640	10.0	65.9	23.5	--
25 — 34 years	139,775	13.2	45.9	34.1	6.8
35 — 54 years	347,405	27.0	36.4	29.3	7.3
55 — 64 years	304,130	48.6	31.6	17.8	2.0
<b>Non-disabled adults</b>					
Both sexes — Total	15,231,450	11.2	44.3	33.7	10.8
15 — 24 years	3,920,225	3.9	59.7	32.2	4.2
25 — 34 years	4,161,990	4.1	40.7	41.0	14.2
35 — 54 years	5,428,595	15.3	37.6	33.1	14.0
55 — 64 years	1,720,645	31.9	39.5	21.4	7.2
Males — Total	7,565,820	11.4	42.6	33.6	12.4
15 — 24 years	1,975,295	4.6	61.1	30.6	3.7
25 — 34 years	2,046,850	4.2	38.7	42.4	14.7
35 — 54 years	2,712,095	14.7	34.2	33.4	17.7
55 — 64 years	831,575	34.7	36.1	19.4	9.8
Females — Total	7,665,635	10.9	46.3	33.8	9.2
15 — 24 years	1,944,925	3.2	58.4	33.7	4.7
25 — 34 years	2,115,135	3.9	42.6	39.7	13.8
35 — 54 years	2,716,500	15.9	41.0	32.8	10.3
55 — 64 years	889,070	29.3	42.7	23.3	4.7

-- Amount too small to be expressed; i.e. sampling variability (coefficient of variation) is greater than 25%.

## Employment Characteristics of Persons With Disabilities

Of the estimated 1,767,640 disabled persons aged 15 to 64 who were residing in households (Table 10), almost half indicated that they were in the labour force (that is, employed, or unemployed but available for and looking for work). This percentage is considerably lower than the 78% labour force participation rate reported by the non-disabled population.

For persons aged 15 to 24, the difference between the labour force participation rates of disabled and non-disabled persons was less dramatic, although

substantial. Fifty-three per cent of disabled persons reported being in the labour force compared with 68% of the non-disabled population. For both disabled and non-disabled persons, the highest labour force participation rate was for the age group 25 to 34 — 66% and 85% respectively. Although the labour force participation rate for both disabled and non-disabled persons declined for age groups over 34 years, the difference in the rates between the disabled and non-disabled increased for each successive age group. In the 55 to 64 age group, only 25% of disabled persons were active labour force participants, compared with 60% of the non-disabled population.

**Table 10. Disabled and Non-disabled Adults Aged 15 to 64 Residing in Households by Labour Force Status and Age Groups, Canada, 1986**

Labour force status and age group	Disabled adults	Non-disabled adults
Total	1,767,640	15,231,450
15 — 24 years	181,325	3,920,225
25 — 34 years	288,700	4,161,990
35 — 54 years	705,165	5,428,595
55 — 64 years	592,445	1,720,645
Not in labour force <sup>1</sup>	895,985	3,363,715
15 — 24 years	82,155	1,240,580
25 — 34 years	96,095	608,710
35 — 54 years	284,320	832,990
55 — 64 years	433,415	681,440
In labour force <sup>1</sup>	839,965	11,867,720
15 — 24 years	95,565	2,679,645
25 — 34 years	189,835	3,553,265
35 — 54 years	406,880	4,595,605
55 — 64 years	147,690	1,039,205
Labour force status not stated	31,690	--
15 — 24 years	3,605	--
25 — 34 years	2,775	--
35 — 54 years	13,970	--
55 — 64 years	11,340	--
Participation rate <sup>2</sup>		
Total, 15 — 64 years	47.5	77.9
15 — 24 years	52.7	68.4
25 — 34 years	65.8	85.4
35 — 54 years	57.7	84.7
55 — 64 years	24.9	60.4

-- Amount too small to be expressed; i.e. sampling variability (coefficient of variation) is greater than 25%.

<sup>1</sup> The labour force is composed of those persons who were either employed or unemployed during the week prior to enumeration.

<sup>2</sup> The participation rate is the labour force within the specified age group expressed as a percentage of the total population for that group.

## Disabled Adults in the Labour Force

Of the estimated 840,000 disabled persons who indicated that they were in the labour force (that is, employed or unemployed), 56% indicated that they were limited in the kind or amount of work that they could do because of their health condition (Chart 5).

Although there was little difference in work limitations between men and women overall, when age was considered, disabled women under 34 years reported a higher prevalence of work-related limitations than men. Although the proportion of disabled men in the labour force with work-related limitations increases for each age group, the equivalent proportion for females is highest for ages 25 to 34, then declines.

As might be expected, unemployment rates were higher for disabled men who were limited at work

than for those who were not limited (Table 11). Nineteen per cent of disabled men aged 15 to 64 who were limited at work were unemployed compared with 8% of disabled men who reported no work limitation. Similar differences can be noted in all age groups from 15 to 54 for both men and women (although the experience of women is seen to be much more variable than men).

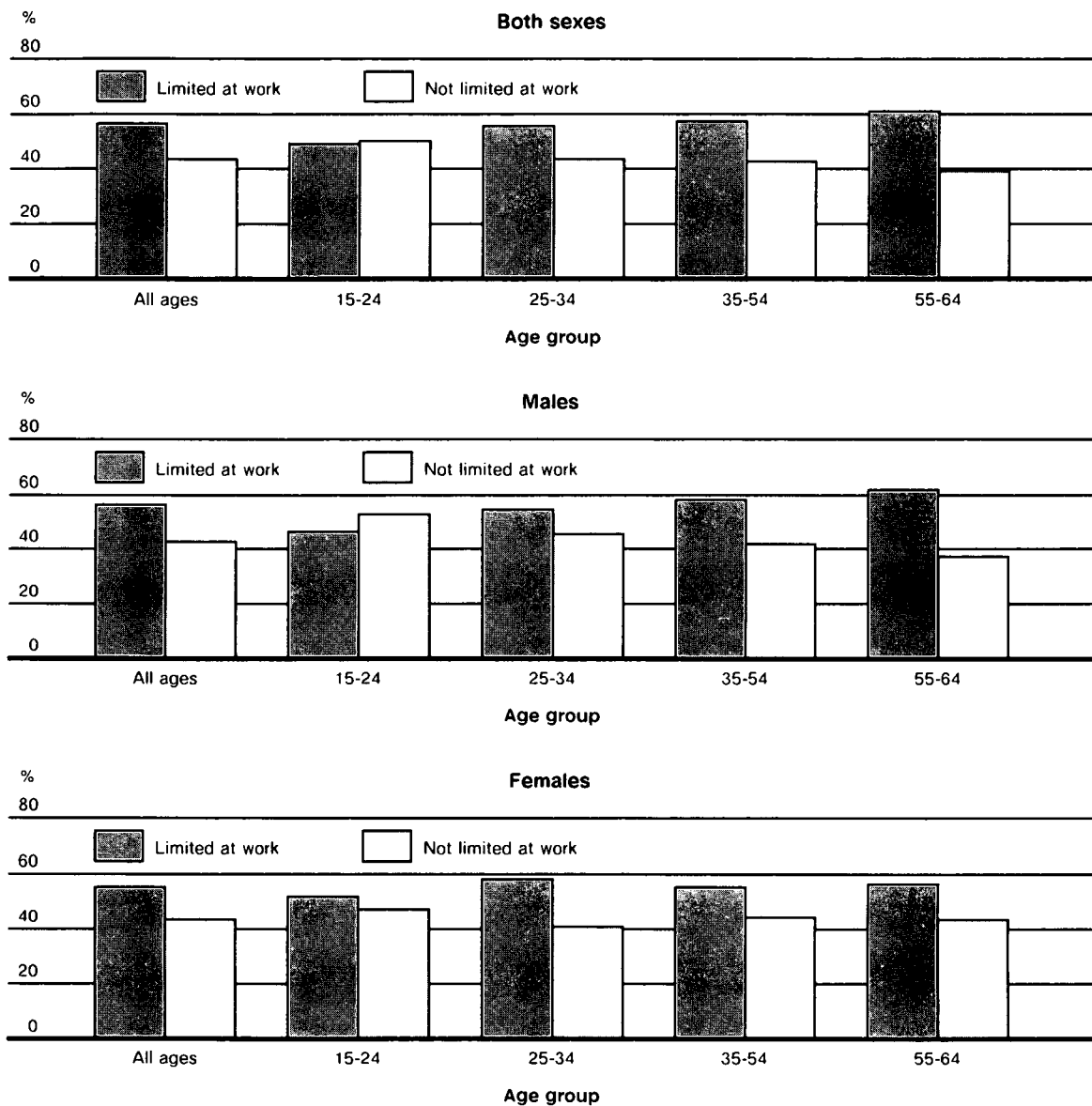
For disabled individuals aged 55 to 64, the experience differed substantially by sex. Although unemployment was higher among men who were limited at work than among men who were not limited (consistent with the experience of younger age groups), women reported the opposite. Women aged 55 to 64 without work-related limitations had a collective unemployment rate more than 10 percentage points higher than individuals with work limitations. No reason for this differential is readily apparent.

**Table 11. Disabled Adults Aged 15 to 64 Residing in Households by Sex and Age Groups, Showing Labour Force Characteristics for Persons Limited at Work and Not Limited at Work, Canada, 1986**

Sex and age group	Limited at work			Not limited at work		
	Labour force	Employed	Unemployed	Labour force	Employed	Unemployed
	No.	%	%	No.	%	%
Both sexes — Total	473,660	80.0	20.0	363,370	90.9	9.1
15 — 24 years	46,830	70.7	29.3	48,185	90.5	9.5
25 — 34 years	106,155	78.1	21.9	83,385	86.9	13.1
35 — 54 years	231,325	80.3	19.7	173,785	94.2	5.8
55 — 64 years	89,345	86.4	13.6	58,020	87.4	12.6
Males — Total	292,060	81.0	19.0	220,890	92.2	7.8
15 — 24 years	24,945	74.0	26.0	28,230	88.5	11.5
25 — 34 years	60,875	76.5	23.5	51,585	88.5	11.5
35 — 54 years	143,450	81.4	18.6	103,290	94.1	5.9
55 — 64 years	62,790	87.0	13.0	37,785	94.9	5.1
Females — Total	181,605	78.4	21.6	142,480	88.9	11.1
15 — 24 years	21,885	67.0	33.0	19,950	93.2	6.8
25 — 34 years	87,875	78.4	21.6	70,495	94.3	5.7
35 — 54 years	45,285	80.1	19.9	31,800	84.2	15.8
55 — 64 years	26,555	84.9	15.1	20,235	73.3	26.7



**Chart 5. Percentage distribution<sup>1</sup> of Disabled Labour Force Participants<sup>2</sup> Aged 15 to 64 Residing in Households by Presence of Work-related Limitation, Sex and Age Groups, Canada, 1986**



<sup>1</sup> Percentages do not add to 100 for any age group because the total number of disabled persons in the labour force includes 0.3% who failed to report whether or not they were limited at work.

<sup>2</sup> The labour force is composed of those persons who were either employed or unemployed during the week prior to enumeration.

## Disabled Adults Not in the Labour Force

Of the estimated 896,000 disabled persons aged 15 to 64 who were not in the labour force and lived in private households, 69% reported that they were completely unable to work as a result of their condition (Table 12).

A further 18% reported that they were limited in the kind or amount of work they could do if they were to work.

Only 10% reported having no work limitation, ranging from 24% in the younger 15 to 24 year-old age group to only 8% for those over age 35.

The proportion of disabled individuals not currently in the labour force who reported that they were completely unable to work increased dramatically with age. While 34% of those not in the labour force in the 15 to 24 age group reported that they were unable to work as a consequence of their condition, this proportion exceeded 70% for all age groups over 34 years.

## Disabled Adults as Members of Low Income Families

Over 2.6 million Canadians aged 15 to 64 were members of census low income families in 1985 (Table 13). It is estimated that 19% of all individuals living in low income households were disabled persons.

Disabled persons had twice the likelihood of living in low income families compared to their non-disabled counterparts — 28% of disabled persons aged 15 to 64 lived in low income families versus 14% of non-disabled persons in the same age group. The proportion of disabled persons aged 15 to 64 living in low income families was highest for the oldest and youngest age groups in this age range. Similar patterns were evident for both men and women.

Although disabled men aged 15 to 64 outnumbered disabled women, in total more disabled women were members of low income families than men — 268,000 disabled women versus 222,000 disabled men. Disabled women in low income families outnumbered men in all age groups in the age range.

**Table 12. Disabled Adults Aged 15 to 64 (Residing in Households) Who Are Not in the Labour Force by Age Groups, Showing Degree of Work-related Limitation, Canada, 1986**

Age group	Not in labour force <sup>1</sup>	Degree of work-related limitation		
		Completely unable to work	Limited in the kind or amount	Not limited
		No.	%	%
Total,				
15 — 64 years	895,985	68.7	17.5	10.2
15 — 24 years	82,155	33.5	38.6	23.5
25 — 34 years	96,095	55.0	25.7	13.5
35 — 54 years	284,320	70.2	18.3	8.2
55 — 64 years	433,415	77.5	11.1	8.2

<sup>1</sup> Includes 32,710 persons who failed to report whether they were limited, not limited or completely unable to work.

**Table 13. Disabled and Non-disabled Adults Aged 15 to 64 Residing in Households as Members of Census Low Income Families in 1985 by Sex and Age Groups, Canada**

Sex and age group	Total <sup>1</sup>		Disabled adults		Non-disabled adults	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Both sexes — Total	2,606,890	15.3	490,630	27.8	2,116,260	13.9
15 — 24 years	810,755	19.8	62,515	34.5	748,235	19.1
25 — 34 years	663,910	14.9	82,480	28.6	581,430	14.0
35 — 54 years	735,570	12.0	174,340	24.7	561,230	10.3
55 — 64 years	396,655	17.1	171,290	28.9	225,360	13.1
Males — Total	1,175,180	13.9	222,190	25.0	952,990	12.6
15 — 24 years	404,145	19.5	30,550	32.6	373,590	18.9
25 — 34 years	275,300	12.5	37,405	25.1	237,890	11.6
35 — 54 years	335,425	10.9	83,515	11.8	251,915	9.3
55 — 64 years	160,310	14.3	70,720	24.5	89,590	10.8
Females — Total	1,431,710	16.8	268,435	30.5	1,163,270	15.2
15 — 24 years	406,610	20.0	31,965	36.5	374,645	19.3
25 — 34 years	388,615	17.2	45,075	32.2	343,540	16.2
35 — 54 years	400,145	13.1	90,825	26.1	309,315	11.4
55 — 64 years	236,340	19.8	100,570	33.1	135,770	15.3

<sup>1</sup> Excludes Indian reserves, collective dwellings and all of Yukon and Northwest Territories; low income family status is not calculated for these areas.

Of those disabled persons between 15 and 64 years who are members of low income families, 70% are over age 35. This proportion is approximately the same for both men and women.

### Average Employment Income of Disabled Adults

Compared to their non-disabled counterparts who earn an average employment income of \$18,765, employed disabled persons between 15 and 64 years had an average employment income of \$16,875 (90% of the former) (Table 14). As is the case for the non-disabled, average earned income increased significantly between ages 15 to 24 and 25 to 34; income reached a maximum at age 35 to 54, then declined for those aged 55 to 64. This pattern may be observed for both disabled and non-disabled men and women.

Also evident was the very substantial difference in the average earnings of disabled men (\$20,290) and disabled women (\$11,495). This parallels a similar difference found in the earning patterns of non-disabled persons. Disabled females have both lower average earnings for all age groups as well as slower rate of increase in average earnings with age. Illustrative of this is the ratio of maximum average earnings (for ages 35 to 54) compared to average earnings of all disabled women aged 15 to 64. For disabled men this ratio is 1.19 (compared to 1.34 for non-disabled men); for disabled women the ratio is substantially less at 1.10 (compared to 1.22 for non-disabled women).

The relative difference in the earnings of disabled and non-disabled females for all age groups was less, both numerically and as a proportion, than similar differences for disabled and non-disabled males.

**Table 14. Average Employment Income of Disabled and Non-disabled Adults Aged 15 to 64 Residing in Households by Sex and Age Groups, Canada, 1985**

Sex and age group	Average employment income	
	Disabled adults	Non-disabled adults
Both sexes — Total	16,875	18,765
15 — 24 years	6,185	7,440
25 — 34 years	15,555	18,885
35 — 54 years	19,640	24,665
55 — 64 years	17,325	22,030
Males — Total	20,290	23,560
15 — 24 years	6,520	8,155
25 — 34 years	18,385	23,045
35 — 54 years	24,200	31,565
55 — 64 years	19,805	26,450
Females — Total	11,495	12,775
15 — 24 years	5,770	6,675
25 — 34 years	11,645	14,005
35 — 54 years	12,600	15,575
55 — 64 years	12,150	14,070



## DISABLED SENIORS AGED 65 AND OVER

### Residential Circumstances of Disabled Seniors

Of the estimated 1.2 million disabled persons aged 65 and over in Canada, 16% or 195,000 resided in general or chronic care hospitals and in special care facilities (including homes, treatment centres and other facilities for disabled persons and the chronically ill) (Table 15).

The proportion of disabled seniors who resided in these institutions increased as age increased. An estimated 43 out of every 100 disabled seniors aged 85 and over resided in an institution, whereas

only 6 out of every 100 disabled persons aged 65 to 74 lived in an institution. Such differences are very supportive of the notion that the needs of persons over age 65 are heterogeneous; the support required for disabled seniors over age 85 may be strikingly different than for those aged 65 to 74.

Once again, differences by sex are notable; while 12 out of every 100 disabled male seniors resided in institutions, the corresponding rate for women was 19 per 100. The greatest difference was among disabled persons aged 85 and over. Fully 34 out of every 100 disabled men resided in institutions, and the comparable proportion for disabled women was 46 out of every 100.

**Table 15. Disabled Seniors Aged 65 and Over Residing in Households and in Health-related Institutions by Sex and Age Groups, Canada, 1986-87**

Sex and age group	Total disabled population	Disabled population residing in households		Disabled population residing in health-related institutions	
	No.	No.	%	No.	%
Both sexes — Total	1,221,995	1,026,915	84.0	195,080	16.0
65 — 74 years	604,095	568,585	94.1	35,510	5.9
75 — 84 years	440,825	356,875	81.0	83,950	19.0
85 years and over	177,075	101,455	57.3	75,620	42.7
Males — Total	494,340	437,615	88.5	56,720	11.5
65 — 74 years	293,195	277,285	94.6	15,910	5.4
75 — 84 years	153,225	128,865	84.1	24,365	15.9
85 years and over	47,920	31,470	65.7	16,450	34.3
Females — Total	727,655	589,295	81.0	138,360	19.0
65 — 74 years	310,900	291,300	93.7	19,600	6.3
75 — 84 years	287,600	228,010	79.3	59,585	20.7
85 years and over	129,155	69,985	54.2	59,170	45.8

## Age-Sex Characteristics of Disabled and Non-disabled Seniors

Although an estimated 1,222,000 seniors aged 65 or over reported some level of disability in 1986, a numerically larger number (1,463,000) reported no disability (Table 16). The overall disability rate for those 65 years and over was 46%.

Of special note was the impact of mortality — not unexpectedly, the number of disabled and non-disabled seniors decreases as age increases. However, the age composition of the disabled and non-disabled populations was different. Whereas 71% of the non-disabled senior population was in the 65 to 74 age group, the comparable proportion among disabled persons was 49%. Consequently, as at younger ages, the population of disabled persons 65 years and over is on average older than the comparable non-disabled population.

Although women have a longer average life expectancy, Table 16 supports other studies which

indicate that a substantial proportion of this longer life expectancy may be spent in a disabled state. For example, for the disabled population over age 84, almost three-quarters are females.

## Marital Status of Disabled and Non-disabled Seniors

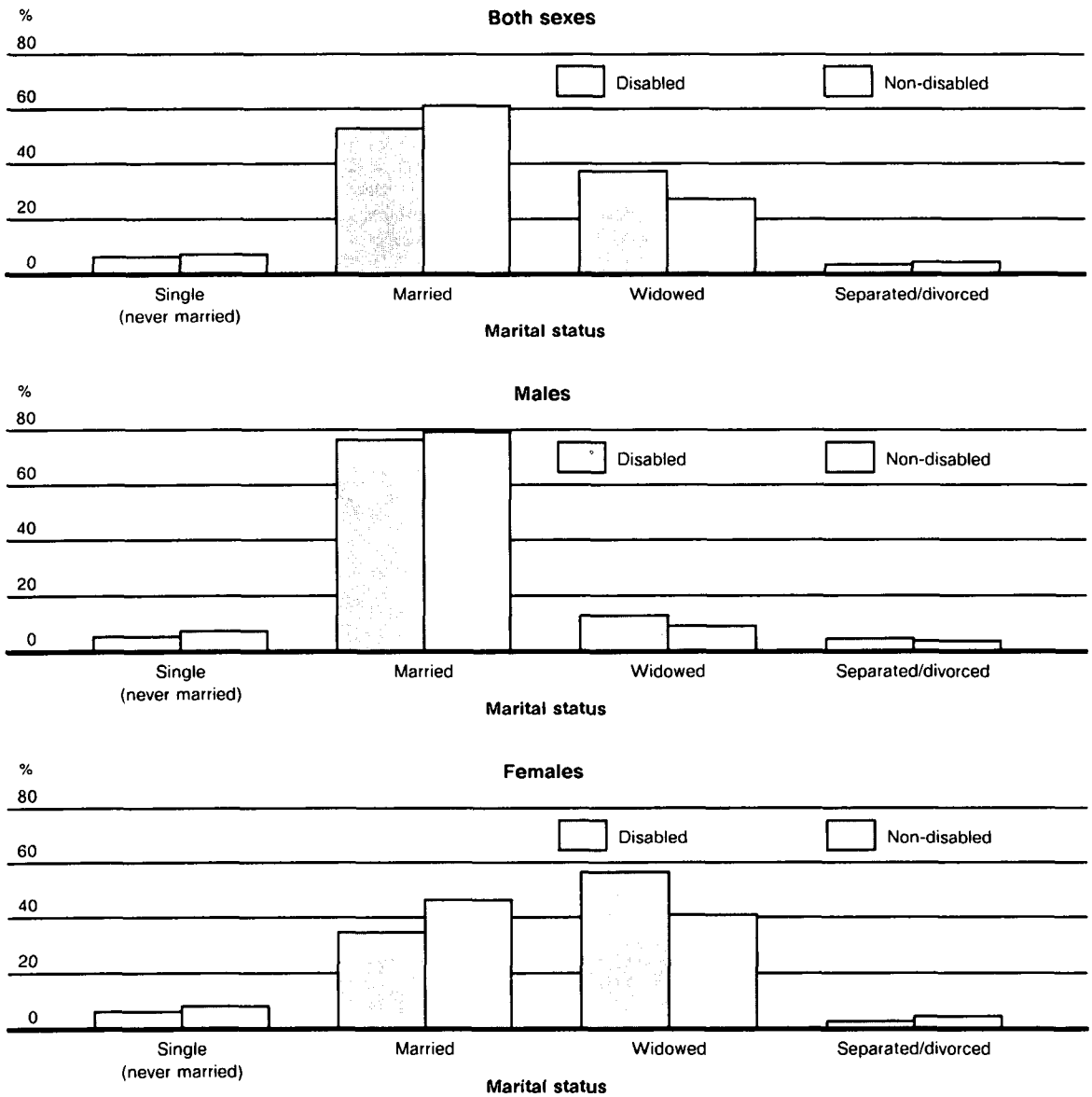
Of the 1,026,900 disabled seniors aged 65 and over residing in private households, 52% were married and almost 38% were widowed (Chart 6).

As might be expected, differences in marital status patterns existed between disabled senior men and women. Just over three-quarters of senior disabled men who resided in private households were married. Less than 4 out of 10 disabled women in this same age group, who resided in private households, reported that they were married; the majority reported themselves as widowed. Higher proportions of non-disabled men and women reported themselves as married compared with their disabled counterparts.

**Table 16. Disabled and Non-disabled Seniors 65 Years and Over Residing in Households and in Health-related Institutions by Sex and Age Groups, Canada, 1986-87**

Sex and age group	Disability rate	Disabled population		Non-disabled population	
	%	No.	%	No.	%
Both sexes — Total	45.5	1,221,995	100.0	1,462,665	100.0
65 — 74 years	36.7	604,095	49.4	1,043,200	71.3
75 — 84 years	53.6	440,825	36.1	380,970	26.1
85 years and over	82.1	177,075	14.5	38,495	2.6
Males — Total	43.7	494,340	100.0	636,100	100.0
65 — 74 years	39.2	293,195	59.3	453,870	71.3
75 — 84 years	47.9	153,225	31.0	166,515	26.2
85 years and over	75.3	47,920	9.7	15,715	2.5
Females — Total	46.8	727,655	100.0	826,565	100.0
65 — 74 years	34.5	310,900	42.7	589,330	71.3
75 — 84 years	57.3	287,600	39.5	214,455	25.9
85 years and over	85.0	129,155	17.8	22,780	2.8

**Chart 6. Percentage Distribution of Disabled and Non-disabled Seniors Aged 65 and Over Residing in Households by Marital Status and Sex, Canada, 1986**





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## **Disabled Seniors Living Alone**

Of the 1,027,000 disabled seniors aged 65 and over who were residing in private households at the time of the survey, 30% (or 308,000) lived alone (Chart 7A). This compares with 26% (or an estimated 383,000) in the non-disabled population over age 65.

The frequency of disabled women in this age group living alone was almost three times the comparable rate for men — 42% versus 14%. Although this relative difference between the sexes declines with age, a higher proportion of women live alone in all age groups (Chart 7B).

### **Income**

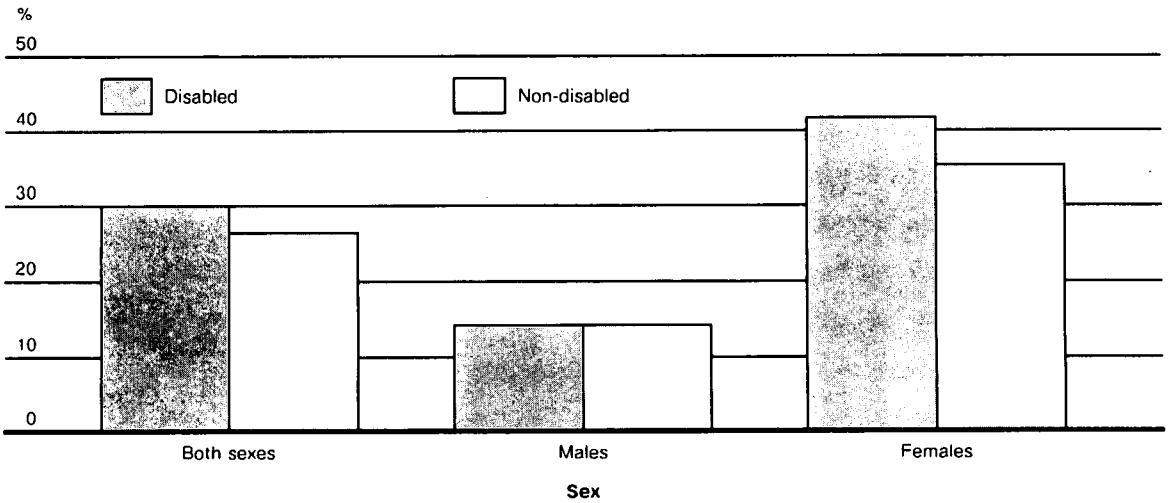
In 1985, the number of disabled seniors who lived alone and reported income below Statistics

Canada's low income cut-off was higher than those who were non-disabled — 47% for disabled seniors compared with 37% for non-disabled seniors.

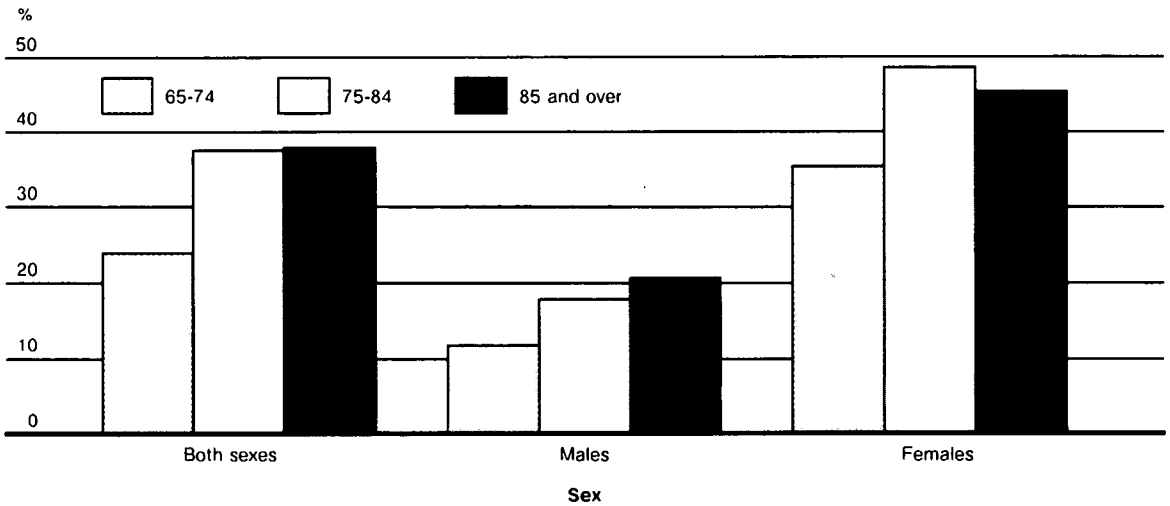
Women accounted for all of this difference. Just over half (52%) of disabled senior women reported income below the low income cut-off. For their non-disabled counterparts, this rate was 40%. Both of the male populations — disabled and non-disabled seniors living alone — had a rate of almost 30%.

For the disabled population living with other people, there was little difference between disabled senior men and women. However, compared with the non-disabled population, the percentage living with incomes below the low income cut-off was higher — 10% for disabled seniors living with others compared with 6% for non-disabled seniors.

**Chart 7A. Proportion of Disabled and Non-disabled Seniors Aged 65 and Over Living Alone in Households by Sex, Canada, 1986**



**Chart 7B. Proportion of Disabled Seniors Aged 65 and Over Living Alone in Households by Sex and Age Groups, Canada, 1986**





## CONCLUSION

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**T**his study has focused on the results of the Health and Activity Limitation Survey which was conducted in association with the 1986 Census of Canada. This survey provided detailed information on the characteristics of disabled persons, the severity and the type of their disability and the barriers that they encounter in daily life. This publication has focused on disabilities of youth, working age adults and seniors. The study has confirmed and amplified many of the conclusions derived from previous studies of disability in Canada.

Over 3.3 million Canadians (13%) were disabled in 1986. The survey found that the disability rate increases dramatically with age. Although most disabled persons live in private households, 8% of all disabled persons live in institutions and homes for senior citizens. Disabled Canadians tend to have multiple disabilities — more than 6 out of 10 disabled persons over 14 years of age reported more than one kind of disability. The most prevalent disabilities involve problems with mobility and agility.

More than a quarter million children under 15 years were identified by the survey as disabled. Of these children, 99% lived in private households while the remaining 1% resided in institutions. As with the older individuals, prevalence of disability among children increases with age.

The majority of disabled adults aged 25 to 64 lived with a spouse. Overall, the majority of disabled adults who resided in private households reported that they lived with a spouse. Although they indicated less education compared to the non-disabled population of the same age and sex, almost half of them reported that they were in the labour force (that is, employed or unemployed). Of those disabled adults who were not in the labour force, almost 9 out of 10 reported that they were completely unable to work or that they were limited in the kind or amount of work they could do if they worked.

The majority (54%) of seniors aged 65 and over reported no disability. The disability rate, however, increased dramatically for those 85 years and over. The disability rate for women aged 85 and over was 85.0 compared to 75.3 for men in that age group.

Although 16% of all disabled seniors were residents of care-giving institutions, almost three times the percentage of disabled women over 65 years lived alone in private households compared to men.

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Like many other countries in the industrialized world, the population of Canada, on average, is growing older. While the population 65 years and over numbered 2.7 million in Canada in 1986 (11% of the total population), Statistics Canada has provided one estimate (Statistics Canada, Population Projection No. 3 assuming medium fertility and high net immigration) that this number may grow to 8.4 million individuals by the year 2036 (25% of the total population).

As we have seen in this report, increased age tends to be associated with increased incidence of functional limitation and disability. As a consequence, it is reasonable to expect increasing numbers of disabled persons in Canada over the coming 50 years.

The specific challenges that such a growth may pose to Canadian society are difficult to precisely determine. For example, new forms of treatment and interventions, the development of new types of aids based on technological breakthroughs and provision of services to disabled persons in new innovative ways may have the potential to substantially limit the degree of functional limitation or disability which individuals may experience.

It is hoped that this report, by profiling the current status of disabled persons in Canada, may be supportive of the development of appropriate means to overcome barriers faced by disabled persons in Canada.

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