

Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012

Seeing disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years and older, 2012

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- | | |
|----------------|--|
| . | not available for any reference period |
| .. | not available for a specific reference period |
| ... | not applicable |
| 0 | true zero or a value rounded to zero |
| 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 <i>Statistics Act</i> |
| ^E | use with caution |
| F | too unreliable to be published |
| * | significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$) |

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Seeing 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 seeing 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. <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/bsoic/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=89-654-X2014001&lang=eng>

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 756,300 (2.8% of Canadian adults) were identified as having a seeing disability that limited their daily activities (Table 1). Of those who were identified as having a seeing disability, only 5.8% reported that they were legally blind.¹

Table 1
Prevalence of disability by type, 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".

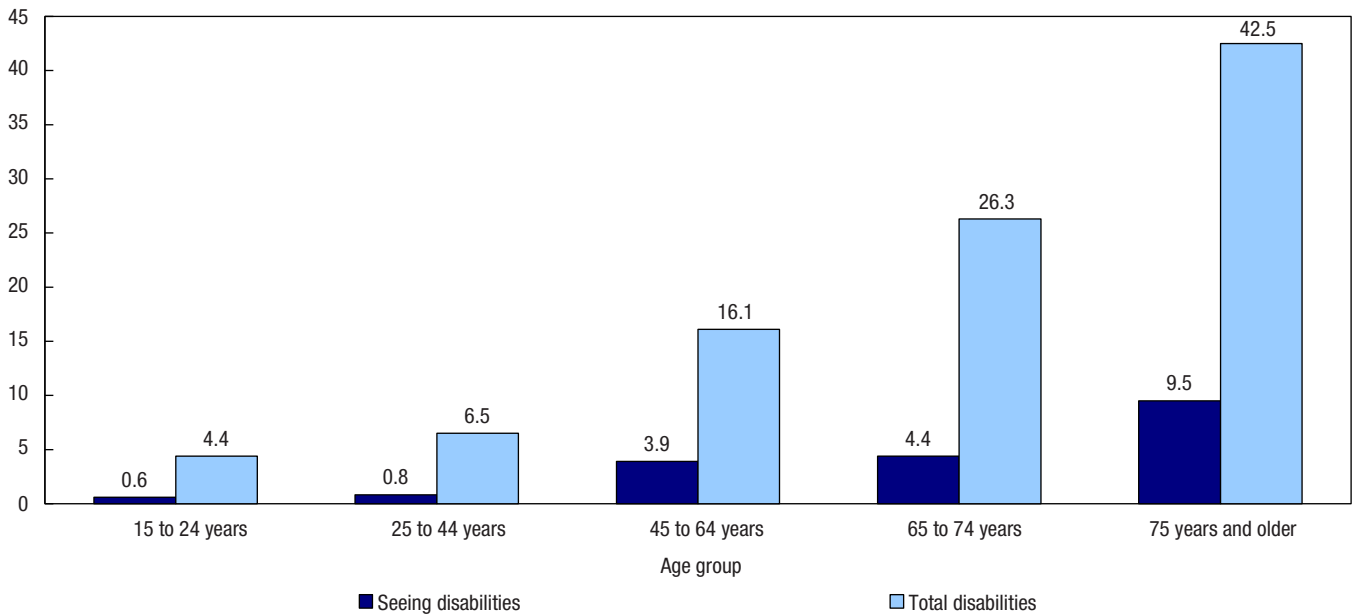
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

As highlighted in Chart 1, the prevalence of seeing disabilities increased with age, and was highest among those 75 years and older (9.5%). Overall, the prevalence of seeing disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years and older was higher for women than men (3.1% and 2.4% respectively).

1. To be classified as legally blind, an individual must have a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the best correction. Persons with a severely restricted field of vision (no more than 20 degrees across) may also be classified as legally blind. Retrieved from <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/plcy-pltq/guides/assessment-evaluation/apwd-eph/pdf/apwd-eph-eng.pdf>.

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

percent



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

The difference in seeing disability rates between women and men was statistically significant for those aged 25 to 44, at 1.1% and 0.6%, respectively, and for those aged 65 to 74, at 5.1% and 3.7%, respectively, but not for other age groups.

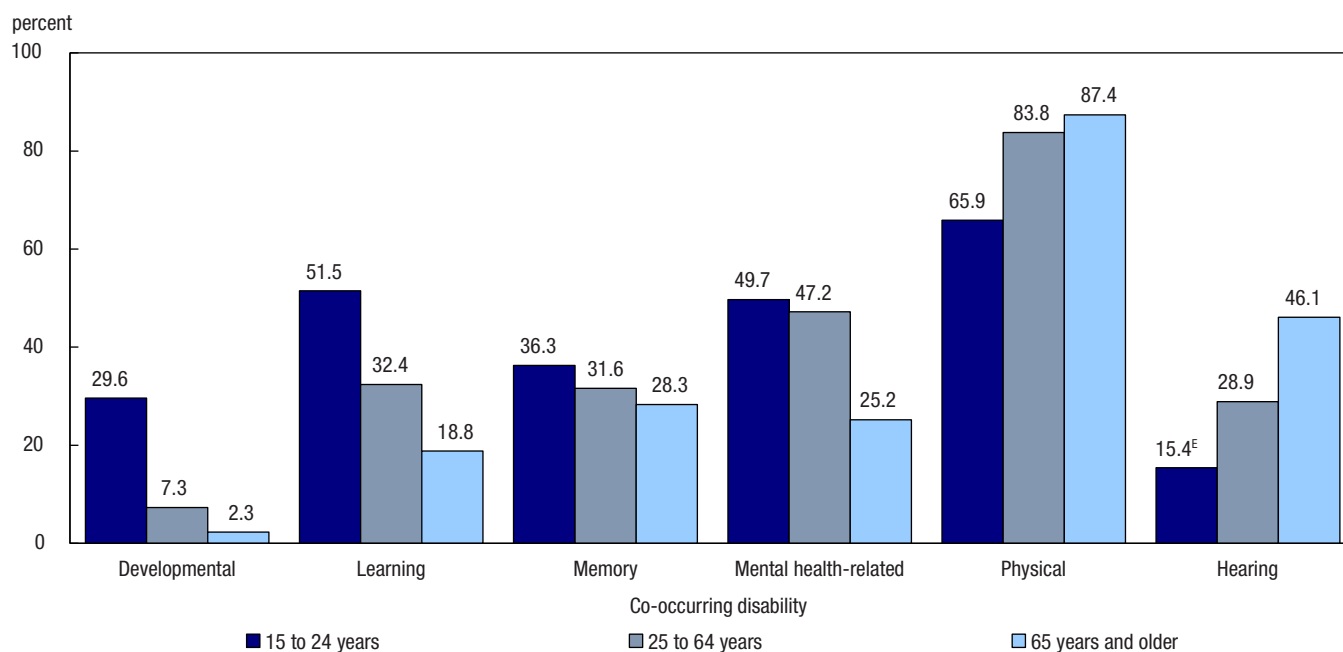
Multiple disabilities

Seeing disabilities frequently co-occurred with other types of disability: 89.5% of those with a seeing disability reported at least one other type of disability.

Physical disability types were prominent among adults with a seeing disability across all age groups. Mental health-related disability co-occurred prominently with a seeing disability for younger (15 to 24) and middle-aged adults (25 to 64), but was less prominent for the 65 and older age group. As well, a learning disability often co-occurred with a seeing disability for the 15 to 24 age group, but was less common among older age groups.

Chart 2

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



^E use with caution

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

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

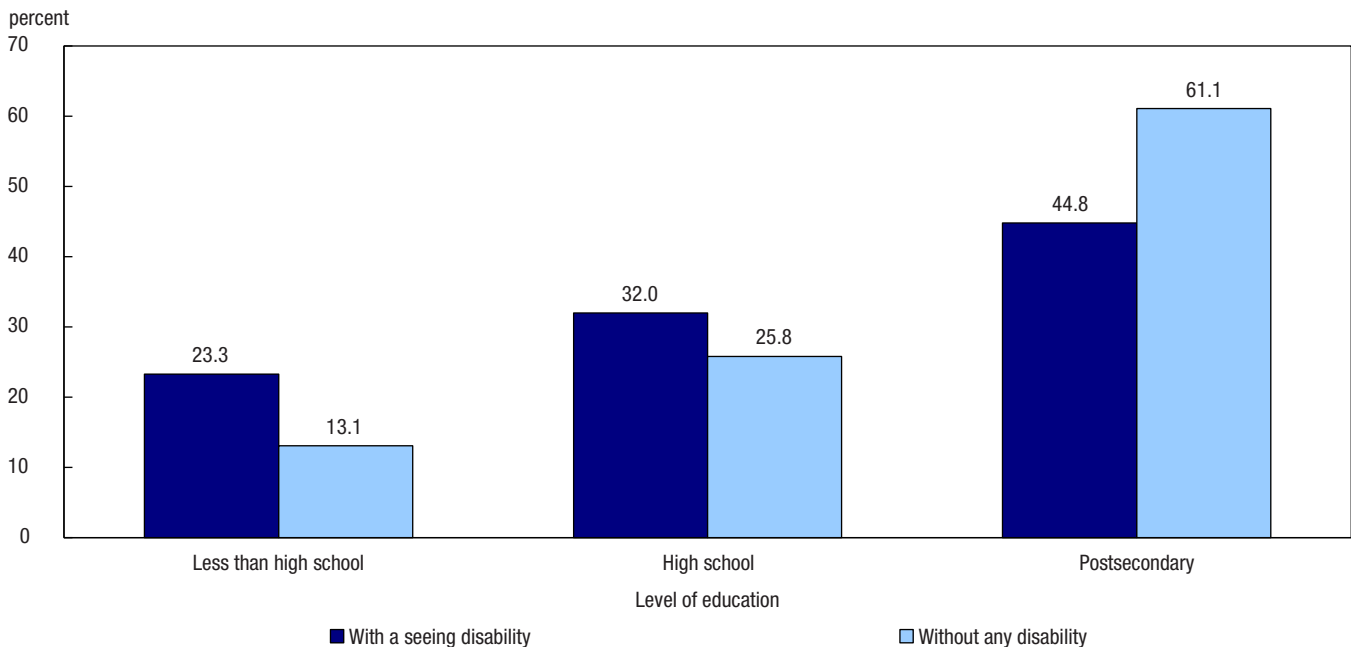
Education

Educational attainment

Adults with a seeing disability had lower levels of educational attainment than those who did not have any type of disability. Among adults aged 15 to 64 who were currently not attending school, those with a seeing disability were more likely than adults without any disability to have not completed high school (23.3% versus 13.1%). They were also significantly less likely to have obtained postsecondary qualifications (44.8% versus 61.1%) (Chart 3).²

Chart 3

Proportion of the population with a seeing disability compared to those without any disability, by highest level of education, aged 15 to 64 years, Canada, 2012



Notes: Excludes population still in school.

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

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

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

Educational experiences

Among adults with a seeing disability aged 15 and older, who were currently or had recently been in school, a majority (88.0%) stated that their educational experiences were directly impacted by their disability.³ More than two-thirds (67.7%) of adults with a seeing disability reported that their condition(s) had influenced their choice of courses or careers, and that the presence of their condition resulted in them taking fewer courses (51.8%) and changing their course of studies (48.1%) (Table 2).

Table 2

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

Effect of disability	Percentage
Choice of courses/career influenced by disability	67.7
Took fewer courses due to disability	51.8
Changed course of studies due to disability	48.1
People avoided/excluded you in school due to disability	46.3
Went back to school for retraining due to disability	45.8
Education interrupted due to disability	43.8
Took longer to achieve current level of education due to disability	43.6
Bullied at school because of disability	39.5 ^E
Discontinued education due to disability	37.4 ^E
Attended special education in a regular school due to disability	32.4 ^E
Additional school expenses due to disability	31.9 ^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.

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

Employment

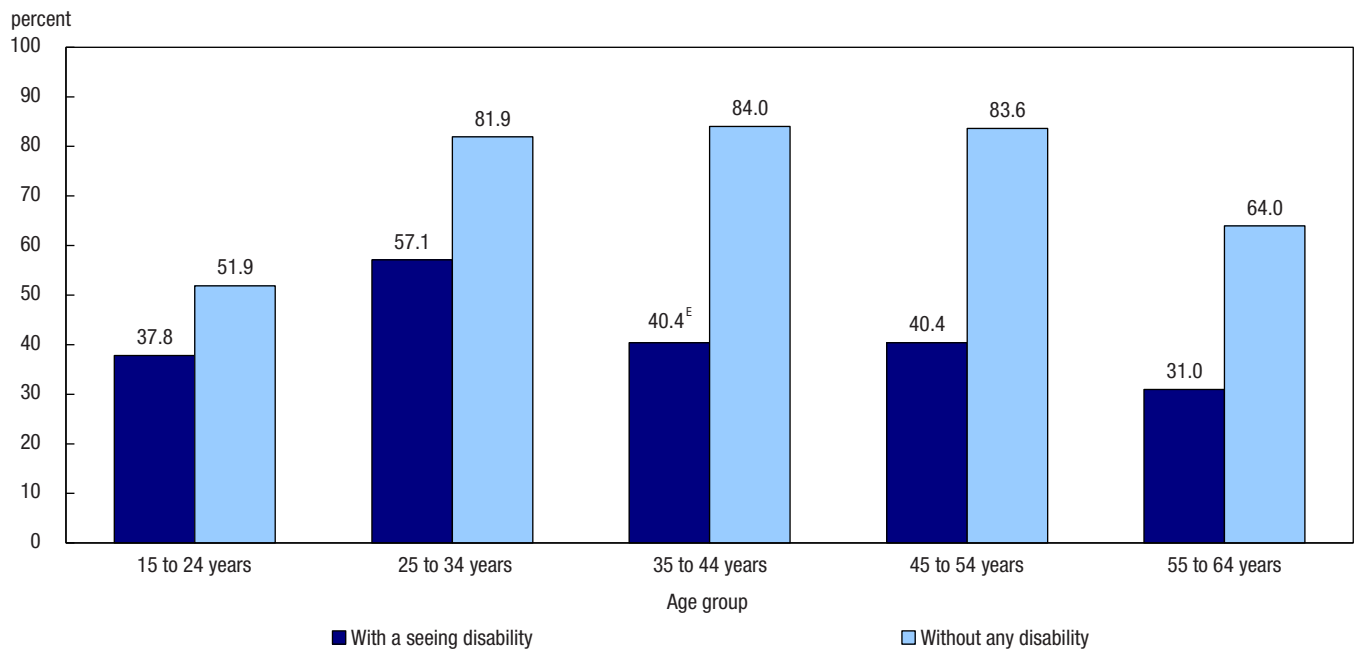
Labour force status

More than half (55.2%) of adults aged 15 to 64 with a seeing disability were not in the labour force, and another 7.2%^E were unemployed. The employment rate for adults, aged 15 to 64, with a seeing disability was 37.6%, which was significantly lower than the employment rate for adults without any disability (73.6%).

Low employment rates for adults with a seeing disability relative to adults without any disability are observable for all age groups (Chart 4). The largest relative difference existed for groups aged 35 and older. There were no significant gender differences in the employment rates of those with a seeing disability.

Chart 4

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



^E use with caution

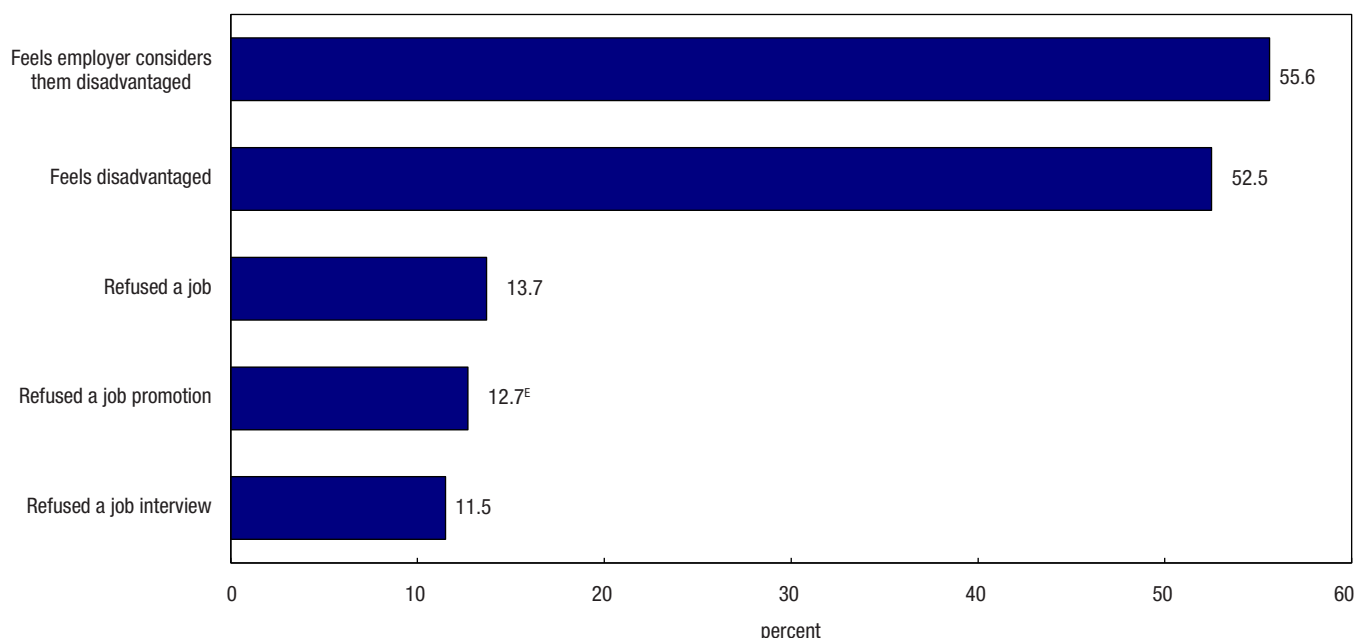
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012.

Disability in the workplace

Among those with a seeing disability who were either currently in the labour market or had been within the previous five years, 55.6% reported that they believed their employer considered them to be disadvantaged at work and 52.5% reported that they themselves felt disadvantaged (Chart 5). With respect to more specific indicators of disadvantage in the labour market, 13.7% believed that they had been refused a job, 12.7%^E felt they had been refused a promotion, and 11.5% believed they had been refused a job interview because of their disability or disabilities.⁴ It is important to remember that this is based on the impact of all disability types these individuals with a seeing disability may have had.

Chart 5

Perceived employment discrimination or disadvantage among adults with a seeing disability, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



^E use with caution

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

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

Job modifications

Among adults with a seeing disability, who were employed or had recently been employed⁵, 50.8% reported having some requirement for a job accommodation. Of these, 58.1% reported that all of their needs had been met, while 22.3% stated having some needs met and the remaining 19.6% indicated having none of their needs met. The most commonly required accommodations included modified work hours (29.8%), modified workstations (15.5%) and modified duties (15.0%). A high proportion of adults who required a job modification reported that they had not received the required job modification. Most notably, of those requiring a modified workstation, 60.6% reported that their need was unmet.

4. 89.5% of those reporting a seeing disability also reported at least one other type of disability.

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.

Hours worked

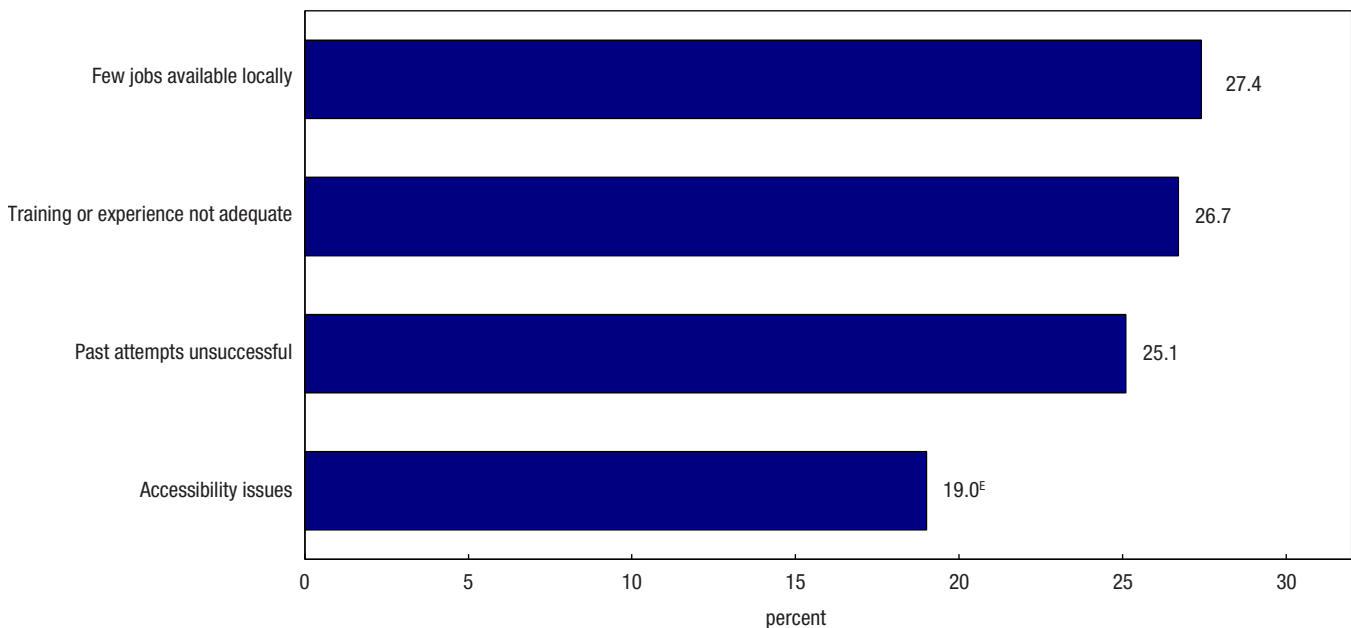
Employed adults with a seeing disability, aged 15 to 64, worked fewer average hours⁶ per week than those without any disability (33 hours versus 37 hours), and many (41.3%^E) reported that they worked fewer than 30 hours per week because of their disability or health condition. The gap was largest for the 15 to 24 age group: those with a seeing disability worked an average of 18 hours per week, compared to 29 hours for those without any disability.

Not in the labour force

Many of those who were not in the labour force encountered barriers that discouraged them from looking for work. The most commonly cited deterrents to entering the labour force were lack of locally available jobs (27.4%), inadequate training or experience (26.7%), and being unsuccessful in the past (25.1%) (Chart 6).

Chart 6

Prevalence of job search barriers among adults with a seeing disability, who were not in the labour force, aged 15 to 64 years, Canada, 2012



^E use with caution

Note: Excludes those who retired more than five years ago, those who retired voluntarily, and those who stated they had never worked but that their condition did not limit the amount or kind of work they could perform.

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

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

Supports

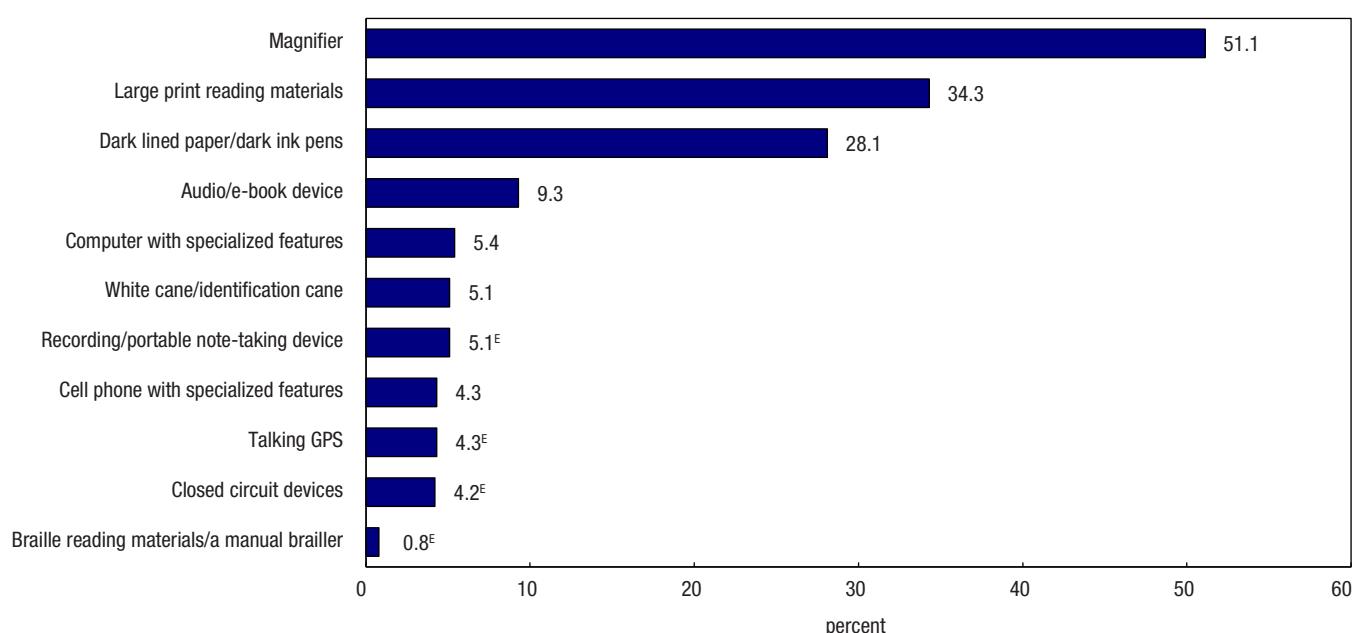
Vision aids

Overall, 83.1% of adults who reported a seeing disability that limited their daily activities wore glasses or contact lenses. The proportion who wore glasses or contact lenses was lower for those aged 15 to 24 (64.7%), but increased significantly to 82.0% for those aged 25 to 64, and to 86.6% for those aged 65 and older.

Among adults aged 15 years and older with a seeing disability, 69.6% reported that they had used at least one type of aid or assistive device specific to vision disabilities. The types of aids and assistive devices most frequently used by adults with a seeing disability, other than glasses or contact lenses, were magnifiers (51.1%), large print reading materials (34.3%), and dark lined paper/dark ink pens (28.1%) (Chart 7).

Chart 7

Type of vision aids used by adults with a seeing disability, aged 15 years and older, Canada, 2012



^E use with caution

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

Almost three-quarters (72.3%) of adults aged 15 and over with a seeing disability reported that they needed at least one type of vision aid or device. Of those who reported that they needed at least one type of aid or device, 79.8% reported that all of their needs were met, 16.2% reported that at least some of their needs were met, and 4.1%^E reported that none of their needs were met. Among those who have an unmet need, 61.9% reported that at least one of the reasons was the high cost of an aid or assistive device. Of those who reported using some type of vision aid or assistive device, almost a third (31.0%) had incurred out-of-pocket or direct expenses.

Help with everyday activities

A large proportion (81.1%) of adults aged 15 and older with a seeing disability reported that they required help⁷ with at least one type of everyday activity. The most commonly reported types of help needed by adults with a seeing disability were help with heavy household chores (64.3%), everyday housework (54.2%), and getting to appointments or running errands (53.8%).

7. Some of the help required by adults with a seeing disability could be due to another disability type.

For adults with a seeing disability, help with everyday activities was most likely to have come from family members, particularly those in the same household. For example, among those receiving assistance with such activities, 67.3% received some help from family members living with them and 42.9% received some help from family members not living with them. As well, among those with a seeing disability who received some assistance, 32.6% received help from a friend or neighbour, 14.4% from an organization free of charge, and 21.3% paid an organization or individual for help.

Among adults with a seeing disability who required help with everyday activities, those aged 65 and older received more help (83.2%) than those aged 15 to 64 (68.1%). In addition, a large proportion of adults with a seeing disability (46.6%) reported receiving help on a daily basis.

Income

Personal income for working-age adults

Working-age adults with a seeing disability⁸, aged 15 to 64, reported a median personal income of \$17,700 (before taxes), which was significantly lower than that of adults without any reported type of disability (\$31,200).⁹ Among those with employment income, the median employment income for adults with a seeing disability was significantly less than the employment income of adults without any disability (\$23,200 and \$34,100 respectively).

Adults with a seeing disability were more likely than those without any disability to receive government transfers as a major income source.¹⁰ Among those who received government transfers, the median transfer income for adults with a seeing disability was \$8,500, over five times that of adults without any disability (\$1,600). Further, 55.7% of adults with a seeing disability aged 15 to 64 received more from government transfers than they did from employment income; this was true for only 18.7% of adults without any disability.¹¹

Conclusion

Adults with a seeing disability face significant challenges in many aspects of their daily lives. Co-occurrence of a seeing disability with other disability types was very high, and adults with a seeing disability were highly reliant on a variety of vision aids and devices in their daily lives. Adults with a seeing disability had lower educational outcomes than adults without any disability, and many reported that their disability has directly affected their educational experiences. There were lower employment rates for adults with a seeing disability than for adults without any disability, and many reported additional difficulties in the labour market. Working-age adults with a seeing disability experienced lower incomes and were more dependent on government transfers than those without any disability as their major source of income.

8. It is important to note that 89.5% of those reporting a seeing disability also reported at least one other type of disability.

9. This calculation includes those with zero or negative personal income amounts before taxes.

10. 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.

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

Appendix A

Identification of adults with a seeing disability

The 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) identifies persons with a seeing disability as persons whose daily activities are limited because of difficulties with their ability to see. The survey used the newly developed Disability Screening Questions (DSQ) to identify disability. The initial step in identifying a seeing disability was to establish the existence of a seeing 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 seeing (with their glasses or contact lenses on, where applicable):

DSQ_08 With your glasses or contact lenses, which of the following best describes your ability to see: You

- Have no difficulty seeing
- Have some difficulty (seeing)
- Have a lot of difficulty (seeing)
- Are blind or legally blind

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

DSQ_09 How often does this difficulty/condition limit your daily activities?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

A seeing 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 seeing disability if they also indicated having a lot of difficulty or if they reported being blind or legally blind.

An estimated 1,446,900 Canadian adults reported having a seeing condition. Of these, 690,500 (2.5% of the population) reported not being limited by their condition. However, 756,300 (2.8%) of Canadian adults aged 15 years and older, and 472,200 (2.0%) of Canadian working-age adults (aged 15 to 64) were identified as having a seeing disability, based on the methodology described above.