

## Health Fact Sheet

# Functional Difficulties: Washington Group, 2017

Release date: June 26, 2018



Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

Canada

---

## How to obtain more information

For information about this product or the wide range of services and data available from Statistics Canada, visit our website, [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca).

You can also contact us by

**email at** [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)

**telephone**, from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the following numbers:

- Statistical Information Service 1-800-263-1136
- National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired 1-800-363-7629
- Fax line 1-514-283-9350

### Depository Services Program

- Inquiries line 1-800-635-7943
- Fax line 1-800-565-7757

## Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, Statistics Canada has developed standards of service that its employees observe. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca) under “Contact us” > “Standards of service to the public.”

## Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued co-operation and goodwill.

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada as represented by the Minister of Industry, 2018

All rights reserved. Use of this publication is governed by the Statistics Canada [Open Licence Agreement](#).

**An HTML version is also available.**

*Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.*

---

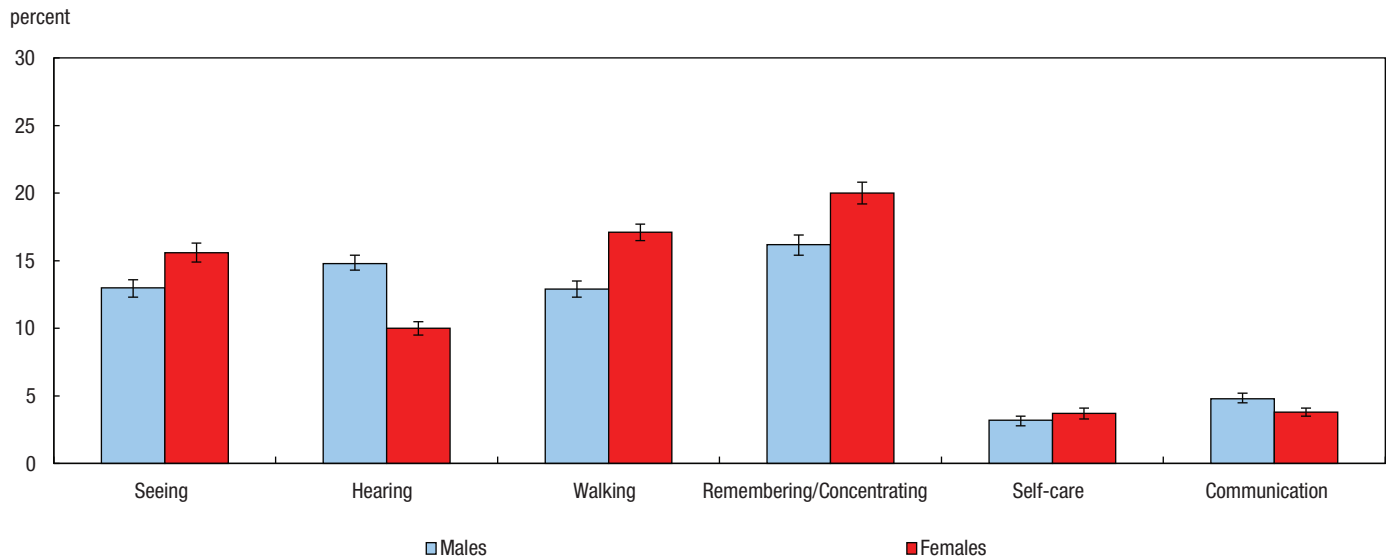
# Health Fact Sheets

Statistics Canada, Catalogue no.82-625-X

## Functional Difficulties: Washington Group, 2017

According to data from the 2017 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 18.1% of Canadians aged 18 and older had at least some difficulty remembering or concentrating, 14.3% had at least some difficulty seeing and 15.0% had difficulty walking (Chart 1).<sup>1</sup> Females were more likely than males to have difficulty with seeing, walking, remembering and self-care. Whereas males were more likely to have difficulty with hearing and communicating.<sup>2</sup>

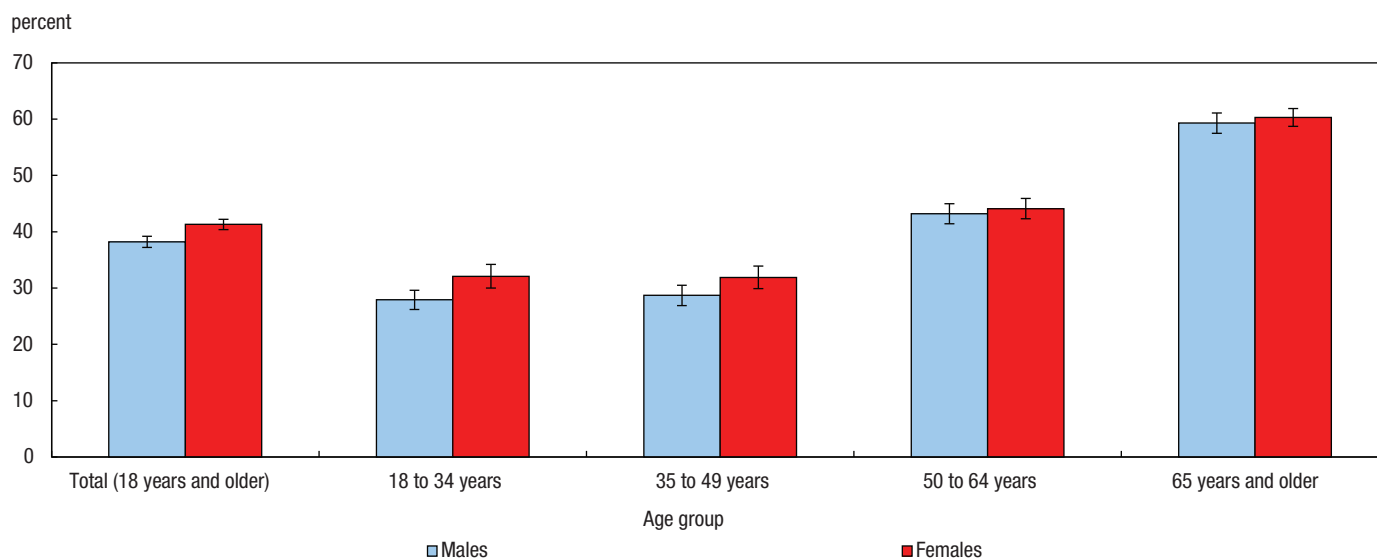
**Chart 1** Prevalence of functional difficulties, by sex, population aged 18 and older, Canada, 2017



**Note:** Functional difficulty is defined as having some difficulty, a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all.  
**Source:** Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017.

The prevalence of functional difficulties differed by age group. In 2017, the proportion of Canadians with a functional difficulty increased between each age group from 35 to 49 to 65 and older. Among both sexes, the percentage reporting a functional difficulty was highest among those aged 65 and older. Among Canadians aged 65 and older, 59.8% had at least some difficulty in one or more domain of functional health (Chart 2).

**Chart 2** Functional difficulty, by age group and sex, population aged 18 and older, Canada, 2017



**Note:** Functional difficulty is defined as having some difficulty, a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all with one or more of the following: vision, hearing, mobility (walking or climbing steps), cognition (memory and concentration), self-care and communication.

**Source:** Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017.

In 2017, Canadians who have at least some difficulty in one or more domain of functional health were less likely to have obtained a post-secondary diploma or university degree (57.6%), compared with Canadians without any difficulty (72.4%).<sup>3</sup> Canadians with a functional difficulty were also less likely to have worked at a job or business in the past 12 months (66.7%), compared with 82.0% of people with no difficulties.<sup>4</sup>

In 2017, 63.7% of Canadians aged 18 and older with a functional difficulty said that their sense of belonging to the local community was very strong or somewhat strong, compared with 71.0% of Canadians with no difficulties. The proportion of Canadians who reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with life was also lower among those who experienced a difficulty (86.1%) than among those who experienced no difficulty (96.5%).

## About Washington Group

The Washington Group (WG) on Disability Statistics was established by the United Nations to address the need for comparable statistics on disability cross-nationally and to address equalization of opportunities. The 2017 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) used the WG Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) which looks at six functional health components including vision, hearing, mobility (walking or climbing steps), cognition (memory and concentration), self-care and communication.<sup>5 6</sup> The WG-SS in combination with other indicators, such as employment and education, can improve understanding of social inclusion for people with functional difficulties.

## Notes

1. Estimates in this article referring to the national average or Canada rate exclude the territories. This is because the coverage of the CCHS in 2017 does not represent the entire population of the territories. Only half of the communities in the territories were visited in 2017, and the other half will be visited in 2018. Analyses based on the territories are only available for two year cycles of the CCHS (e.g. 2017-2018).
2. In this article, when two estimates are said to be different it is an indication that the difference was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level (p-value less than 5%).
3. Population aged 25 and older who reported that they have obtained a post-secondary certificate, diploma or university degree.
4. Population aged 18 to 75 who reported working at a job or business in the past 12 months.
5. The Washington group short set asks respondents about their level of difficulty (no difficulty, some difficulty, a lot of difficulty, cannot do at all) with 6 functional health components. This indicator does not represent all functional difficulties, and is designed to cover the most commonly occurring difficulties.
6. Washington Group on Disability Statistics. 2016. Statement of rationale for the Washington Group general measure on disability. [http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Rationale\\_WG\\_Short-1.pdf](http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Rationale_WG_Short-1.pdf) (accessed April 17th, 2018).

For more information on the Canadian Community Health Survey, please contact Statistics Canada's Statistical Information Service (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 613-951-8116; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)).