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# How long do Canadians with and without disabilities stay with their employer? A novel analysis by disability type



by Jenny Watt

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# ***How long do Canadians with and without disabilities stay with their employer? A novel analysis by disability type***

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## **Abstract**

This study uses a novel data linkage to provide nationally representative statistics on job tenure—the amount of time with the same employer—for employees with and without disabilities. The primary empirical challenge is that employees with disabilities differ from employees without disabilities in characteristics that predict job tenure, such as age. To overcome this challenge, the study uses a decomposition method that involves estimating expected job tenure given the observable characteristics of the study population. By doing so, the study finds that, overall, employees with disabilities have a median job tenure that is in line with what is expected given their age, gender and sector of employment. However, median job tenure is lower than expected for employees with certain disability types, for employees with non-episodic disabilities and for employees with more severe disabilities.

## **Keywords**

Adults with disabilities, data integration, employees, employment tenure

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## Introduction

Studies across high-income countries show that persons with disabilities generally have lower employment rates than persons without disabilities (Ali et al., 2011; Benoit et al., 2012; Bonaccio et al., 2020; Burlock, 2017; Gupta et al., 2021; Hébert et al., 2024; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2007; Schimmele et al., 2021a; Turcotte, 2014; Vergara & Hardy, 2024; Vornholt et al., 2018; Wall, 2017). Considerably less is known about the job tenure of persons with disabilities, measured as the amount of time employed with the same business. This study examines three main questions related to the job tenure of employees with disabilities and without disabilities. First, what is the distribution of job tenure for Canadian employees with and without disabilities? Second, how does median job tenure vary by type of disability, whether the disability is episodic and severity of disability? Third, how much of the differences in tenure are explained by differences in age, gender and sector of employment?

To answer these questions, the study uses a novel data linkage of the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD) (Pianosi et al., 2023) and the Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database (CEEDD)—a linked data environment based on tax records (Statistics Canada, 2022a). This linkage provides advantages over using administrative or survey data alone to examine the job tenure of employees with disabilities. Administrative data on disability have traditionally identified persons with disabilities by using the receipt of disability-related tax credits, but research shows that many persons with disabilities do not claim these tax credits (Dunn and Zwicker, 2018; Leanage et al., 2025).<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, disability-specific surveys can have a disadvantage when it comes to answering certain questions because the surveys often lack data on persons without disabilities—making it difficult to construct an appropriate control group. Using linked administrative and survey data allows the production of novel nationally representative estimates on the job tenure of employees with and without disabilities.

Job tenure is related to the goals of Canada’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan—which seeks to improve the financial security, employment and social inclusion of persons with disabilities (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2022). Past research shows that in addition to income, employment provides social contact and networks, increased routine, enhanced self-confidence, and a sense of community (Crompton, 2010; Lindsay et al., 2018). Canadian research also shows that the life satisfaction of persons with disabilities is highest for fully utilized permanent employees (Konrad et al., 2012).

Stable employment for persons with disabilities also has advantages for employers, who have reported that retaining employees with disabilities can lead to increased profitability and other competitive advantages (Lindsay et al., 2018). Research shows that disability accommodations help employers retain high-quality employees and reduce hiring and training costs (Hartnett et al., 2011). Additionally, the presence of these accommodations fosters a sense among all employees that employers value individual workers. Yet, despite the advantages of hiring and retaining persons with disabilities, limited evidence suggests that persons with disabilities are more likely to report being in precarious employment (Jetha et al., 2020).

There are two main caveats to the present research. The first caveat is that caution must be used when comparing this analysis with existing studies, which use varying concepts of disability that may rely on alternative questionnaires, administrative data or the presence of medical diagnoses (Lengnick-Hall et

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1. For more detailed information on identifying individuals with disabilities in tax data, see Lafrance-Cooke and Bemrose (2022). In short, persons with disabilities can be identified in tax data by using the disability tax credit (DTC) or by determining whether an individual claimed attendant care expenses. To claim the DTC, individuals must have a medical certificate from their doctor indicating that the disability is severe and prolonged. Research indicates that the number of individuals claiming the DTC or claiming attendant care expenses is much lower than the estimated number of Canadians with disabilities in the CSD.

al., 2007; Vornholt et al., 2018). The survey used in the current study relies on the Disability Screening Questions (DSQ) (Grondin, 2018; Pianosi et al., 2023), based on the social model of disability. The second caveat is that there is sometimes a lack of understanding that disability status may change over the life cycle. It is possible for a person to begin or stop meeting the DSQ criteria at some point in their life (Gignac et al., 2021). For persons with disabilities, the CSD contains information on age of onset, but for persons without disabilities, there is no way to determine past disability status. It should be kept in mind that the employees with disabilities in the study population may not have met the DSQ criteria for the entirety of their working life, and employees without disabilities in 2022 may have met the DSQ criteria earlier in their working life. Additionally, employees with disabilities in the study population may have stopped meeting the criteria after 2022. Thus, while CEEDD data are available for more recent years, this study focuses on employment tenure in 2022, when disability status is known.

Even with the advantages of the linked dataset used in the study, a primary empirical challenge is that employees with disabilities may differ from employees without disabilities in characteristics that predict job tenure, making estimates misleading. To counter this, the study uses a simple decomposition method to present data on observed and counterfactual (standardized) job tenures. By doing so, it can provide insights as to whether the distribution of job tenure for employees with disabilities is different than expected given data on age, gender and sector of employment. For median tenure, this decomposition method is also used to produce statistics by type of disability, whether the disability is episodic and severity of disability. This allows the study to determine whether differences in age, gender and sector of employment can explain some of the differences between groups, thereby providing a more complete picture of the relationship between disability and job tenure.

## Background

Though there is a lack of research on job tenure and disability, studies on the education and employment of persons with disabilities can provide insights as to why job tenure might vary by disability status and type. Before entering the job market, persons with disabilities face distinct barriers to accessing and completing postsecondary education (Arim & Frenette, 2019; Schimmele et al., 2021a), affecting the types of jobs they can obtain. Persons with disabilities are also limited in their choice of job when their disability affects the amount or type of work they can do (Schimmele et al., 2021b). Once they are employed, persons with disabilities are more likely to face interruptions for health reasons (Galarneau & Radulescu, 2009). Employees with disabilities may struggle because of a lack of accommodations. As of the 2022 CSD, an estimated 35% of employees with disabilities had unmet needs at work (Schimmele et al., 2024). Employers may be reluctant to accommodate employees because of perceived costs, even though most accommodations involve no costs or low one-time costs (Bonaccio et al., 2020). Some employers report that they wish to accommodate employees, but lack of a disclosure is a barrier (Olsen, 2022), while employees with disabilities may fear that disclosure will lead to discrimination (Olsen, 2022; Tarlo et al., 2022). Other employees with disabilities may not personally identify as a person with a disability, even when acknowledging that they need support (Tarlo et al., 2022).

Discrimination may also create a work environment that causes employees with disabilities to leave a job either voluntarily or involuntarily. In a series of interviews and focus groups in Alberta, persons with disabilities indicated that employer attitudes towards them were more of a barrier to stable employment than a lack of accommodations or measures (Shier et al., 2009). In the 2016 General Social Survey, 16.1% of Canadian employees with disabilities reported discrimination or unfair treatment at work in the last 12 months (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Discrimination may vary by disability type. Several studies show that employers have more positive attitudes towards physical disabilities than mental health-related disabilities (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2007). Still, a Quebec study found that firms were less likely to interview

wheelchair users even when they could receive a government-sponsored wage subsidy (Bellemare et al., 2018).

Again, while these studies do not focus specifically on job tenure, it is possible that these issues could shorten tenure by causing employees to leave either voluntarily or involuntarily. Conversely, some employees with disabilities may have longer-than-desired job tenure because changing jobs can cause difficulties in obtaining supports or accommodation (Choi, 2017). The current study investigates this phenomenon by examining the distribution of job tenure by disability status.

## Data and descriptive statistics

This study uses a novel linkage of the CSD and the CEEDD. The CSD is a nationally representative survey that occurs every five years and is designed to provide information about Canadian youths and adults whose everyday activities are limited because of a long-term condition or health-related problem (Pianosi et al., 2023). Respondents are sampled from those who reported having difficulties “sometimes,” “often” or “always” to one of the activities of daily living (ADL) questions on the 2021 Census of Population long-form questionnaire. CSD respondents complete the DSQ, which are used to determine whether the respondents have a disability. More information on how affirmative responses to the DSQ are used to identify persons with a disability is available in Appendix B of *Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022: Concepts and Methods Guide* (Pianosi et al., 2023). Within the CSD, disability is considered to be the result of the interaction between a person’s functional limitations and barriers in the environment, including social and physical barriers that make it harder to function day to day (Pianosi et al., 2023). Different definitions of disability may be used in other studies or contexts.

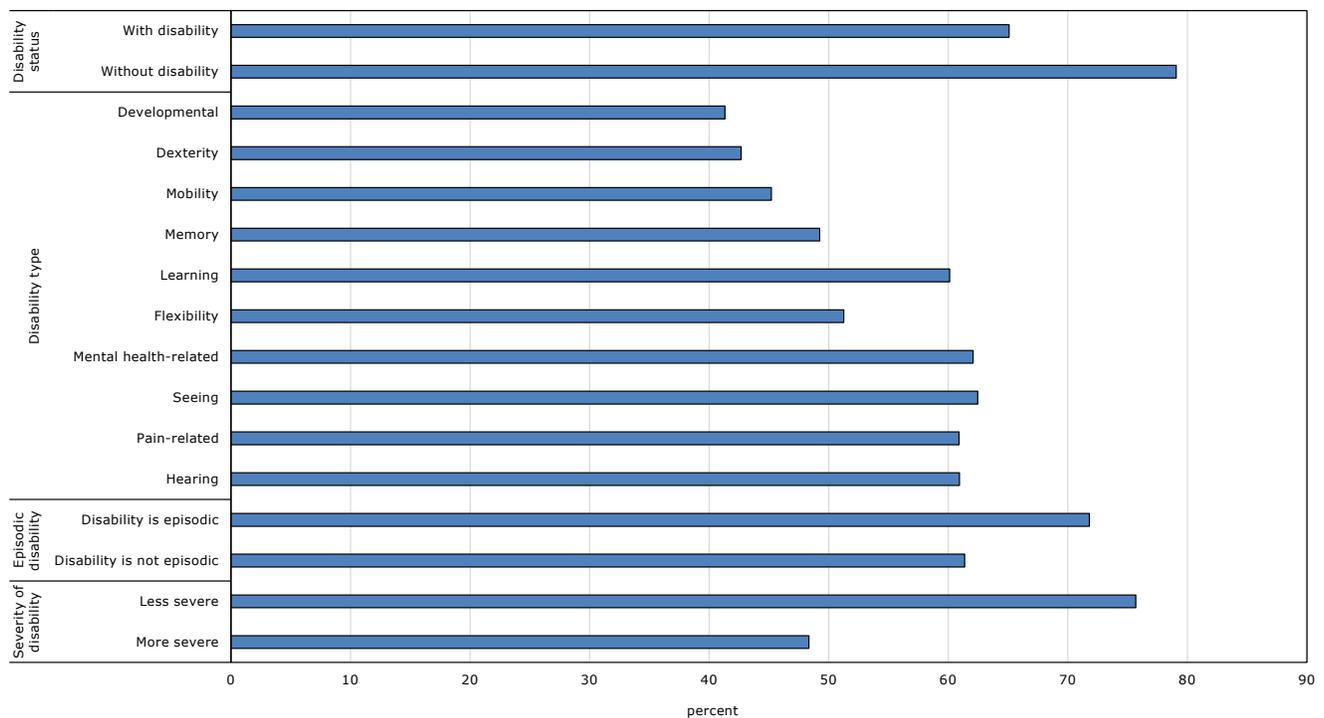
The CSD data also contain information on persons without disabilities, who can be used as a control group (Pianosi et al., 2023). These individuals are CSD respondents who did not provide affirmative responses to the DSQ, as well as those who did not report difficulties on the ADL questions on the census. Therefore, linking to the CEEDD is helpful because it allows the calculation of job tenure for both the population of persons with disabilities and the population of persons without disabilities.

The CEEDD is a linked data environment from the Analytical Studies and Modelling Branch of Statistics Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022a). It combines tax data from all tax-filing production units in Canada, including incorporated firms, unincorporated firms (self-employed individuals) and governments. It also covers all employees issued a T4 Statement of Remuneration Paid. About 96.0% of individuals in the CSD file can be located on the CEEDD, but because of the nature of this study, only employed individuals are included in the study population. In addition, individuals younger than 25 or aged 65 or older are excluded, since they are less likely to seek work as their main activity. Individuals younger than 25 are more likely to have recently been in school relative to other age groups and would not have had time to establish tenure at a permanent job. In this study, individuals are employed in 2022 if they were issued a T4 in 2022. Self-employment is not captured.

In 2022, among individuals aged 25 to 64, 65.1% of persons with disabilities were employed, and 79.1% of persons without disabilities were employed (Chart 1). The percentage of persons employed by disability type varies from 41.3% (for persons with developmental disabilities) to 62.5% (for persons with seeing disabilities). Persons can have more than one disability type, so findings for a given disability type are not mutually exclusive. A higher proportion of persons with an episodic disability (71.8%)—where the person has periods of one month or more where they do not feel limited in their daily activities—are employed than persons with a disability that is non-episodic (61.4%). As well, a higher proportion of persons with less severe disabilities (75.7%) are employed than persons with more severe disabilities (48.3%). Severity of disability is based on the global severity score. The global severity score was

developed for the CSD and takes into account the number of disability types that a person has, the level of difficulty experienced in performing certain tasks and the frequency of activity limitations. To simplify the concept of severity, four severity classes were established: mild, moderate, severe and very severe. However, it is important to understand that the name assigned to each class is simply intended to facilitate the use of the severity score and is not a label or judgment concerning the person’s level of disability. In this study, the mild and moderate classes are collapsed into “less severe,” and the severe and very severe classes are collapsed into “more severe.” More information on the severity scores and classes is available in Appendix C of *Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022: Concepts and Methods Guide* (Pianosi et al., 2023). After limiting the sample to the respondents who were employed in 2022, the sample size is 7,296 for employees with disabilities and 63,904 for employees without disabilities.

**Chart 1**  
**Percentage of persons with disabilities employed in 2022, among those aged 25 to 64, by disability status, disability type, whether disability is episodic and severity of disability**



**Notes:** Survey weights are applied. A person is considered to be employed if they were issued a T4 Statement of Remuneration Paid in the year. These numbers do not represent employment rates. For employment rates, the denominator is the number of individuals in the labour force.  
**Sources:** Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022; and Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database.

## Calculating job tenure

In some cases, employees in the sample have multiple employers within the same year. For the purposes of this study, the main job of each employee is defined as the job with the highest earnings in 2022. Then, job tenure is calculated based on the number of years in which the employee has been issued a T4 from the employer associated with that job.<sup>2</sup> For example, if the employee was issued a T4 from the employer for their main job in 2022 but not in previous years, the tenure of the employee would be one tax year. If

2. There are situations where an identifier for an employer may change in the data from year to year, such as when an employer is acquired by another firm. The calculation of tenure accounts for changes in identifiers, so that employees are considered to remain at the same job even if the identifier of their employer changes.

the employee was issued a T4 from the employer for their main job in 2020, 2021 and 2022, then the tenure of that employee would be three tax years. Since the CEEDD goes back to 2001, tenure is unknown for employees who worked at their main job before 2001. Therefore, the study uses median tenure and the distribution of tenure, rather than mean tenure. Survey weights are used for all statistics, and bootstrap replicates are used in all significance testing. For medians, the standard errors used in significance testing are based on Woodruff's method (Dorfman & Valliant, 1993).

When comparing groups, descriptive statistics on job tenure can be misleading when the groups involved have different distributions of characteristics that affect job tenure, such as age, gender and sector of employment. To counter this, the study presents both observed and counterfactual tenures. Counterfactual tenures are constructed using the tenures of the control group, persons without disabilities. More specifically, the data of the control group are reweighted so that it is as if persons without disabilities have the same distribution of characteristics as persons with disabilities. This is similar in concept to the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition, which combines the regression coefficients from one group with the characteristics of another (Elder et al., 2010) to decompose the effect of differences in characteristics between groups. It is also like direct standardization of population estimates (Naing, 2000). Note that counterfactual tenures are not representative of any group. Rather, they represent what the tenures of persons with disabilities are expected to be given their characteristics and if the relationships between job tenure and their characteristics were the same as in the control group. The characteristics used in the decomposition are age group; gender; and sector of employment, as based on the two-digit North American Industry Classification System code of the employer (Statistics Canada, 2024). Therefore, an observed median job tenure shorter than the counterfactual median job tenure would imply that the median job tenure for persons with disabilities was lower than expected given their age, gender and sector of employment.

Since the decomposition method relies on comparing the distributions of variables between groups, the variables used for adjustment must be valid for both groups. For example, if an employee has a disability, then there is a variable indicating whether that disability is episodic. But since this variable is not valid for employees without disabilities, it cannot be used for adjustment. Therefore, the results by disability status (whether an employee has a disability or not) do not adjust for the proportion of employees with episodic disabilities. Instead, episodic disability can be examined by restricting the sample to employees with episodic disabilities and employees without disabilities, and then performing the decomposition method on that restricted sample.

## Results

Table 1 presents statistics on age group, gender, sector of employment and median tenure of the sample population, by disability status. Overall, employees with disabilities (6.29 tax years) have significantly higher median tenure than employees without disabilities (5.70 tax years; Table 1). However, employees with disabilities are older on average than employees without disabilities, and tenure increases by age group. This is important because it indicates that employees with and without disabilities differ in a characteristic that predicts tenure (age). This in turn implies that the overall picture would be different with adjustments for age. A higher proportion of employees with disabilities are women (57.6%) than employees without disabilities (47.8%), but tenure is similar between men and women. Though gender is not a significant predictor of tenure, it is left in the decomposition process to allow for interaction effects between age group, gender and sector. A lower proportion of employees with disabilities are in goods-producing sectors (e.g., construction) than employees without disabilities (15.6% versus 21.4%), and a higher proportion are in services-producing sectors (e.g., retail) (84.4% versus 78.6%). This is important since tenures are somewhat higher in services-producing sectors.

When comparing median tenure between employees with and without disabilities from the same demographic groups, the result that median tenure is higher for employees with disabilities holds by gender and by sector of employment, but not for all age groups. Among employees aged 25 to 34 years, median tenure is significantly lower for employees with disabilities (2.77 tax years) relative to employees without disabilities (3.12 tax years). In contrast, among employees aged 35 to 44 years, median tenure is significantly higher for employees with disabilities (6.15 tax years) relative to employees without disabilities (5.52 tax years). When reflecting on these results, it should be remembered that the employees captured in these groups experience disabilities that vary by type, severity, episodic nature and age of onset. For example, younger employees with disabilities may experience different types, dynamics or severity of disabilities than older employees with disabilities, complicating the interpretation of the results. Table 2 explores characteristics and median tenure by disability type, whether the disability is episodic and severity of disability.

**Table 1**  
**Median tenure (tax years) of employees aged 25 to 64, by disability status and characteristics, 2022**

	Employees without disabilities				Employees with disabilities			
	Weighted percentage of group		Median tenure		Weighted percentage of group		Median tenure	
	percent	tax years	95% confidence interval		percent	tax years	95% confidence interval	
			lower	upper			lower	upper
<b>Whole sample</b>	100.0	5.70	5.67	5.72	100.0	6.29 **	6.18	6.41
<b>Age group</b>								
25 to 34 years	28.1	3.12	3.08	3.15	23.9	2.77 **	2.71	2.84
35 to 44 years	27.7	5.52	5.47	5.57	24.1	6.15 **	5.95	6.35
45 to 54 years	24.7	8.65	8.55	8.75	26.2	8.06 *	7.64	8.48
55 to 64 years	19.5	11.79	11.65	11.92	25.8	11.66	11.25	12.06
<b>Gender</b>								
Men+	52.2	5.70	5.66	5.74	42.4	6.36 **	6.17	6.55
Women+	47.8	5.69	5.65	5.73	57.6	6.23 **	6.09	6.38
<b>Sector of employment</b>								
Goods-producing	21.4	5.58	5.51	5.64	15.6	5.79	5.51	6.08
Services-producing	78.6	5.84	5.80	5.87	84.4	6.47 **	6.34	6.59

\* significantly different from employees without disabilities in the corresponding group (p < 0.05)

\*\* significantly different from employees without disabilities in the corresponding group (p < 0.001)

**Notes:** Survey weights are applied. The category “Women+” includes women and some non-binary persons, while the category “Men+” includes men and some non-binary persons. This aggregation was performed because of small counts of non-binary respondents.

**Sources:** Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022; and Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database.

Characteristics (age, gender, and sector of employment) vary substantially by type of disability, and less by whether the disability is episodic (Table 2). Employees with developmental disabilities are the youngest on average (38.5 years), while employees with dexterity disabilities are the oldest on average (50.3 years). This may indicate differences in the age of onset for different disabilities. Men make up a minority of employees with most disability types, with 35% of employees with mental health-related disabilities being men. Men make up a narrow majority of employees with hearing disabilities (50.5%) and the majority of employees with developmental disabilities (55.5%). Groups with a higher proportion of men also had a higher proportion of persons employed in goods-producing sectors (e.g., construction), where tenures tend to be lower relative to services-producing sectors. Relative to employees with non-episodic disabilities (45.5 years), employees with episodic disabilities (43.8 years) are a little younger on

average. As well, a lower proportion of employees with episodic disabilities are men (41.5% of those with episodic disabilities versus 43.1% of those with non-episodic disabilities), and a lower proportion are employed in goods-producing sectors (14.3% of those with episodic disabilities versus 16.4% of those with non-episodic disabilities). Employees with more severe disabilities are a little older on average (46.3 years) than those with less severe disabilities (44.2 years). As well, a lower proportion of employees with more severe disabilities are men (37.5% of those with more severe disabilities versus 44.4% of those with less severe disabilities), and a lower proportion are employed in goods-producing sectors (15.3% of those with more severe disabilities versus 15.6% of those with less severe disabilities).

In terms of employment tenure, employees with disabilities have significantly lower median tenure than employees without disabilities if their disability is one of the following types: developmental, learning or mental health-related. They have significantly higher median tenure than employees without disabilities if their disability is one of the following types: dexterity, mobility, flexibility, seeing, pain-related or hearing. Employees with disabilities have higher median tenure than employees without disabilities, regardless of whether their disability is episodic. For employees with less severe disabilities, tenure is significantly higher than for employees without disabilities. For employees with more severe disabilities, tenure is not significantly different from that of employees without disabilities. The tenures presented in Table 2 are not adjusted by age, gender or sector of employment.

**Table 2**  
**Characteristics and median tenure (tax years), by disability status, disability type, whether disability is episodic and severity of disability**

	Average age years	Men weighted percent	Employed in a goods-producing sector	Median tenure		
			weighted percent	tax years	95% confidence interval	
					lower	upper
<b>Disability status</b>						
Without disability	42.9	52.2	21.4	5.70	5.67	5.72
With disability	44.8	42.4	15.6	6.29 *	6.18	6.41
<b>Disability type</b>						
Developmental	38.5	55.1	17.2	4.86 **	4.33	5.40
Dexterity	50.3	45.0	18.4	6.92 *	6.30	7.54
Mobility	49.8	38.4	15.2	6.93 *	6.61	7.24
Memory	44.7	40.9	14.6	5.51	5.28	5.75
Learning	41.0	44.4	14.0	5.17 *	4.94	5.40
Flexibility	42.9	45.8	17.2	7.22 *	6.96	7.48
Mental health-related	41.3	35.0	10.7	5.15 *	4.96	5.35
Seeing	46.9	39.7	15.9	7.37 *	7.06	7.69
Pain-related	46.5	41.3	15.5	6.45 *	6.30	6.61
Hearing	48.2	50.5	19.7	7.61 *	7.34	7.87
<b>Episodic disability</b>						
Disability is episodic	43.8	41.5	14.3	6.50 *	6.32	6.69
Disability is not episodic	45.5	43.1	16.4	6.13 *	5.96	6.30
<b>Severity of disability</b>						
Less severe	44.2	44.4	15.6	6.45 *	5.88	7.03
More severe	46.3	37.5	15.3	5.78	5.61	5.96

\* significantly different from employees without disabilities ( $p < 0.001$ )

\*\* significantly different from employees without disabilities ( $p < 0.01$ )

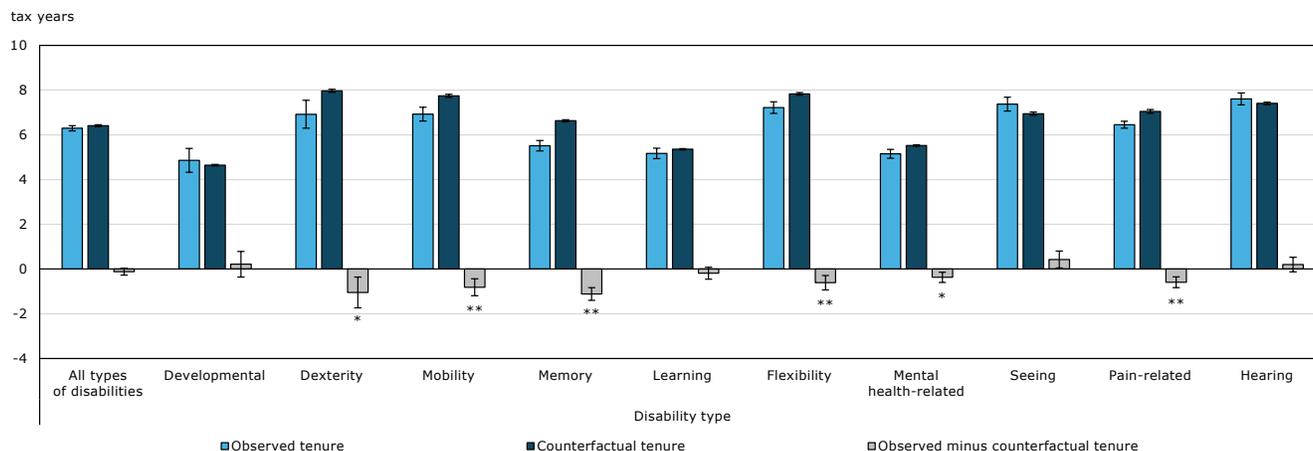
**Note:** Survey weights are applied.

**Sources:** Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022; and Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database.

Chart 2 presents the results of the decomposition (standardization) process, by disability status and type. Overall, employees with disabilities do not have lower-than-expected tenure given their age, gender and sector of employment. This means that even though employees with disabilities have higher median tenures than employees without disabilities, their tenure is in line with what is expected given that employees with disabilities are older and more likely to work in services-producing industries, where tenures are longer on average.

When considering type of disability, the observed tenure is significantly lower than the expected tenure when the disability is one of the following types: dexterity, mobility, memory, flexibility, mental health-related or pain-related. The differences are not significant for other groups. These results must be interpreted with the knowledge that average characteristics vary by group. For example, while observed tenure is lower for employees with developmental disabilities, expected tenure is also lower because employees with these disabilities are younger relative to employees with other types of disabilities. It should also be remembered that these statistics include only employed individuals, and the percentage of respondents who were employed varied between groups. For example, 41.3% of respondents with developmental disabilities are employed, so many respondents with developmental disabilities are not reflected in this analysis.

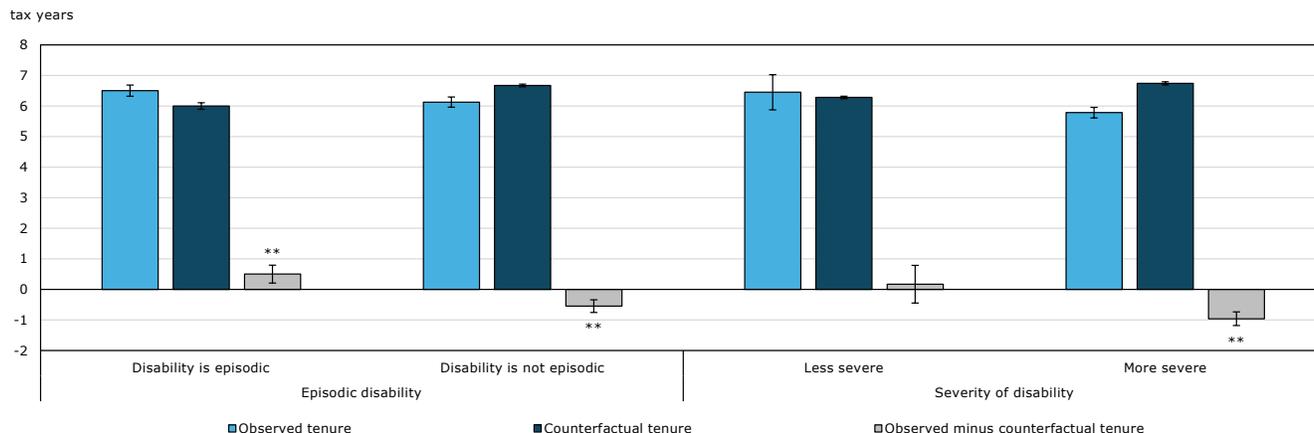
**Chart 2**  
Decomposition results, median job tenure, employees with disabilities aged 25 to 64, by disability type, 2022



\* significant difference between observed and counterfactual tenure ( $p < 0.01$ )  
 \*\* significant difference between observed and counterfactual tenure ( $p < 0.001$ )  
 Note: Survey weights are applied.  
 Sources: Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022; and Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database.

For employees with episodic disabilities, tenure is higher than expected given their age, gender and sector of employment (Chart 3). For employees with non-episodic disabilities, median tenure is significantly lower than expected. Given that persons with non-episodic disabilities have more severe disabilities on average, it is to be expected that non-episodic disabilities would have large impacts on employment. However, it is uncertain why employees with episodic disabilities have higher tenure than expected. For employees with less severe disabilities, tenure is about what is expected given their age, gender and sector of employment. For employees with more severe disabilities, tenure is significantly shorter than expected.

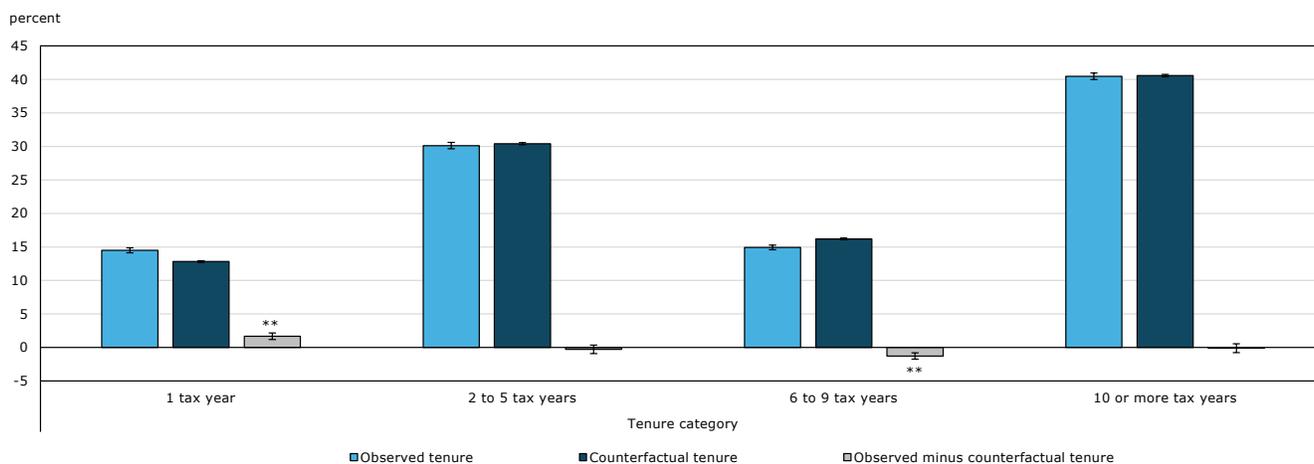
**Chart 3**  
Decomposition results, median job tenure, employees with disabilities aged 25 to 64, by whether disability is episodic and severity of disability, 2022



\*\* significant difference between observed and counterfactual tenure ( $p < 0.001$ )  
**Note:** Survey weights are applied.  
**Sources:** Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022; and Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database.

Median estimates of job tenure paint a limited picture since they provide no information about the spread of job tenure for employees with and without disabilities. If employees with disabilities have more difficulty changing employers, they may sometimes have longer job tenure than desired. To examine this, the decomposition method is repeated, but the reweighted tenures are placed into four groups: 1 tax year, 2 to 5 tax years, 6 to 9 tax years, and 10 or more tax years. The results show that employees with disabilities have a tenure of one tax year more often than expected and have a tenure of six to nine tax years less often than expected (Chart 4). They have a tenure of 2 to 5 tax years and 10 or more tax years about as often as expected. This means that this analysis does not find evidence that a lack of job mobility causes employees with disabilities to have higher-than-desired job tenure. However, this does not mean that the phenomenon never occurs. It may be hidden in the data by the fact that many employees with disabilities have short job tenures given their age, gender and sector of employment.

**Chart 4**  
Decomposition results, distribution of job tenure, employees aged 25 to 64 with disabilities, 2022



\*\* significant difference between observed and counterfactual tenure ( $p < 0.001$ )  
**Note:** Survey weights are applied.  
**Sources:** Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022; and Canadian Employer–Employee Dynamics Database.

## Discussion

Studies across high-income countries show that persons with disabilities generally have lower employment rates than persons without disabilities, but little is known about how long persons with disabilities stay with the same employer. This study involved creating a linkage between the CSD and the CEEDD, to create novel nationally representative statistics on persons with disabilities. About 96.0% of individuals from the CSD are present on the CEEDD. While the CEEDD is longitudinal, respondents may have a different disability status in years outside the survey year, limiting the types of analyses that are appropriate.

This initial study of the data focused on job tenure, finding that employees with disabilities have higher median job tenure than employees without disabilities; however, the two groups differ in characteristics that predict tenure, such as age and sector of employment. By adjusting for differences in characteristics, the study finds that overall, employees with disabilities have a median job tenure that is in line with what is expected given their age, gender and sector of employment. However, median job tenure is lower than expected for some types of disability, when the disability is non-episodic and when the disability is more severe. In addition, when examining the distribution of tenure, employees with disabilities had a tenure of one tax year in higher proportions than expected, and a tenure of six to nine years in lower proportions than expected.

While this work focused on job tenure, the data linkage involved provides many opportunities for future research. For instance, the linked data could be used to examine self-employment and business ownership among persons with disabilities. Future work could also incorporate more of the responses from the survey portion of the data, examining the alignment between the perspectives of respondents and their labour market outcomes. For example, persons who report that they have been unable to obtain workplace accommodations may be more likely to leave their job or to participate in self-employment or business ownership. These types of explorations would lead to a richer and more complete understanding of the diverse work experiences of persons with disabilities.

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