

UPDATE

2001 Disability Supports

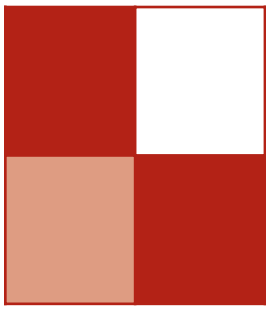
Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

A Government of Canada Report
May 2003



*“Let the world see in
Canada a society marked by
innovation and inclusion,
by excellence and justice”*

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien
Prime Minister of Canada



Introduction

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, released in December 2002, discusses five major dimensions of inclusion of Canadians with disabilities: disability supports; learning, skills development and employment; income; injury prevention and health promotion; and community capacity. Each of these areas is discussed using societal indicators that can be used to monitor progress towards full inclusion. The report also presents information about the Government of Canada's policies, programs and services in each area.

At the time of publication of *Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities*, the most recent information about access to disability supports was from the Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) conducted in 1991. Information based on four key indicators of access to disability supports is now available from the 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). The indicators are:

- Help with everyday activities
- Aids and devices for everyday activities
- Home modifications
- Local and long-distance transportation

BACKGROUND

PALS is a national survey designed to obtain detailed information about children and

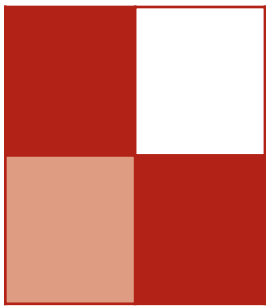
adults with disabilities. The survey was conducted following the 2001 Census and it includes people living in households in the ten provinces. PALS does not include people living in the three territories, or people living on First Nations reserves or in health care institutions.

PALS found that there are 3 601 000 Canadians living with a disability—one person in eight. This total is made up of 181 000 children aged 0–14, 1 968 000 working-age adults aged 15–64 and 1 452 000 seniors aged 65 and over. The survey asked questions about the nature and severity of disability as well as asking about access to disability-related supports, education, employment, income, family characteristics, health, leisure activities and other topics. Different survey questionnaires were used for children (0–14) and adults (15 and over).

PALS results are being released in stages between December 2002 and December 2003. This report highlights information included in the March 2003 release which focuses on disability supports for adults aged 15 and over excluding those living in the three territories, First Nations reserves and in institutions. More information about PALS is available in *Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities* (<http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/sdd-dds/odi/menu/home.shtml>) and from publications available on the Statistics Canada website.²

¹ The indicators reported here are conceptually similar to those included in *Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities*. However, due to methodological changes in PALS versus HALS, precise comparisons between the 1991 and 2001 results are not possible. See *Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities* for a more complete discussion of these changes.

² See *Disability Supports in Canada, 2001* (Catalogue No. 89-580-XIE; <http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89-580-XIE.htm>) and *Disability Supports in Canada, 2001-Tables* (Catalogue No. 89-581-XIE; <http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89-581-XIE.htm>). Information about rates, types and severity of disability may be obtained from *A Profile of Disability in Canada, 2001* (Catalogue No. 89-577-XIE; <http://www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89-577-XIE.htm>).



Disability Supports Update

Help with everyday activities

Some people with disabilities need help completing everyday activities that others may take for granted. Such activities include preparing meals; doing everyday housework; completing heavy household chores such as yard work; getting to appointments, shopping and running errands; looking after personal finances; providing childcare; and personal care such as washing and dressing. PALS asked whether people receive help with these activities and whether they need assistance.

Figure 1 shows the gap between the amount of assistance that adults with disabilities receive and the amount that they need. Of 3 420 000 adults with disabilities, 2 177 000 (64%) indicated that they need assistance with everyday activities. While many receive the help that they need, others have no help or require more than they are receiving. 64% of women and 66% of men who need help have the help that they need, however, about 6% of men and women who need help don't receive any and 28% of men and 31% of women need more assistance with everyday activities than they are receiving. While the percentages of men and women needing help are similar in each category, the overall number of women who need help with every day activities is substantially higher than it is for men.

Help with everyday activities may come from a variety of sources and PALS allowed respondents to indicate more than one. The most common source of help with

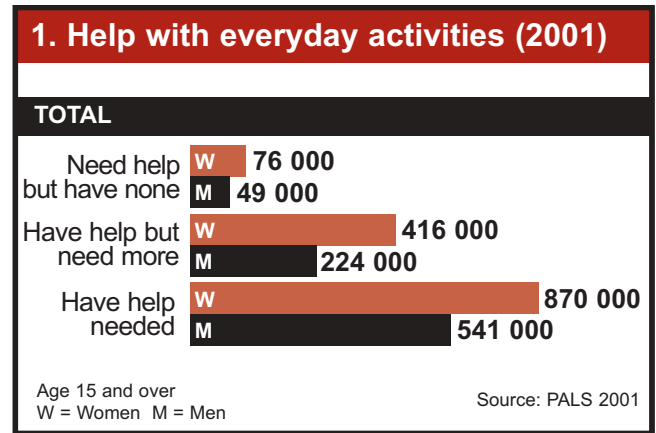


Figure 1 description—according to PALS 2001, 870 000 women and 541 000 men who need help with everyday activities are receiving all the help they need. However, 416 000 women and 224 000 men need more assistance than they are receiving while 76 000 women and 49 000 men are not receiving any of the help with everyday activities that they require.

everyday activities is family members. In total, 63% of adults with disabilities receiving help indicated that assistance comes from members of their family living with them while 42% receive help from family members who do not live in the same home. Families are the greatest source of assistance to both working-age and seniors who receive help. However, 73% of working-age adults with disabilities receive help from family members living with them while this percentage drops to 52% for seniors with disabilities who receive help. Conversely 38% of working-age persons who get help receive assistance from family members not living with them, while 48% of seniors with disabilities receiving help get help from such relatives.

As for other sources, 24% of adults receiving help get help from friends or neighbours, 22% from agencies or organizations including voluntary, private and government agencies and 14% from other sources not specifically identified on the survey. 27% of working-age persons with

disabilities get help from friends or neighbours but this rate drops to 21% for seniors. In contrast, help from organizations is more likely for seniors (31%) than it is for working age persons with disabilities, 14% of whom receive help from organizations.

Aids or devices for everyday activities

Persons with disabilities may use various assistive aids or devices to support seeing, hearing, use of arms or hands, mobility, learning or speaking. Some examples of aids are volume control telephones, sign language interpreters, magnifiers, large print reading materials, service animals, Bliss symbol boards, walkers, wheelchairs, scooters, grab bars or bathroom aids, hand or arm braces and various computer applications.

For each major type of activity limitation, people were asked whether they use aids or devices for that limitation and whether they need additional aids. When an individual indicated that they use or need some type of aid then PALS asked for more specific information about the type of aid or device required. Glasses or contact lenses are not included since most people using glasses or contact lenses do not report vision-related activity limitations. PALS includes information about the use of medication to deal with the effects of disability, however medication use is not included in the indicator presented here.

PALS found that about 1 605 000 (47%) adults with disabilities need one or more aids or devices for everyday activities. Overall, about 61% have all the aids and devices they require and this is similar for men and women. About 10% do not have any of the aids they need, while approximately 29% have some aids but require more. The percentages for men and women are similar

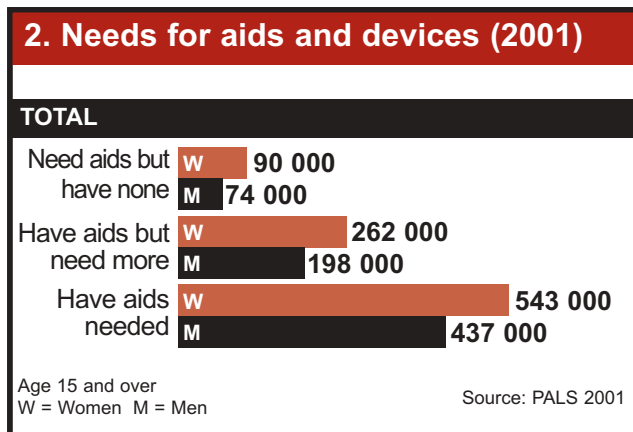


Figure 2 description—PALS 2001 found that 437 000 men and 543 000 women who need aids or devices to assist with everyday activities have all that they need. Approximately 198 000 men and 262 000 women have some of the aids they need and about 74 000 men and 90 000 women with disabilities do not have any of the aids or devices that they require.

in each category of need, but the total number of women needing aids or devices is greater than it is for men.

Figure 2 shows the overall need for aids and devices for everyday activities.

Those with more severe disabilities were more likely to indicate that they do not have all the aids or devices that they require. The percentage of those who have some but not all the aids they need goes from 10% for mild disabilities, 22% for moderate, to 33% for severe and finally rises to 50% for those with very severe disabilities. The percentage of adults with disabilities that does not have any of the aids needed does not vary significantly by severity of disability. Approximately one half (48%) of those with unmet needs indicated high costs and about one third (36%) cited lack of insurance coverage as reasons.

Home modifications

Persons with disabilities may require modifications inside or outside of their home in order to live independently or to enjoy a higher quality of life. Modifications could include such features as ramps, automatic doors, lever door handles, lift devices, visual or audio alarms or lowered kitchen counters.

PALS asked whether individuals have such modifications and whether they need additional modifications. Of 3.4 million adults with disabilities, 483 000 (14%) said that they need special features in their home. Nearly twice as many women with disabilities (313 000) than men (170 000) said that they require home modifications.

Figure 3 shows that while most people have the home modifications they require, there is a significant gap. Approximately 63% of adults with disabilities who need modifications in their home have what they need. An additional 26% don't have any of the required modifications, while about 11% have some of the changes they need in their home. While the numbers of men and women in each category differ considerably because there are so many more women who need home modifications, the percentages of men and women in each category are nearly identical.

While not shown in figure 3, there are significant differences in the profiles of working age people with disabilities and seniors who need home modifications. While nearly three quarters (73%) of seniors have the necessary features, only 49% of working-age adults have all the home modifications they require. Financial obstacles are the main reason that people do not have the features that they require. Both working age people and those over 65 who do not have necessary home modifications indicated that the specialized features are too costly or are not covered by insurance.

3. Need for home modifications 2001

TOTAL

Don't have any needed changes	W	82 000
	M	44 000
Have some but need more	W	34 000
	M	20 000
Have what is needed	W	198 000
	M	106 000

Age 15 and over
W = Women M = Men

Source: PALS 2001

Figure 3 description—PALS found that 198 000 women with disabilities and 106 000 men who need modifications in their homes have what they require. 82 000 women and 44 000 men do not have any of the special features that they need while 34 000 women and 20 000 men require changes in addition to the special features that they already have.

Local and long-distance transportation

Appropriate transportation, enabling persons with disabilities to get to jobs, school, church, appointments or leisure activities is a critical element supporting full inclusion in the community. Local transportation may take the form of accessible public transit including buses, subways and taxis, specialized bus services, or private automobiles. Long distance travel for personal or business reasons, whether by airplane, train, bus or automobile, is also important for full participation in Canadian society.

PALS asked a series of questions about local travel by public transit and by car and also about long-distance travel by public means or by car over the previous 12 months. Long-distance travel is defined as trips of 80 kilometres or more.

Figure 4 illustrates the experience of adults with disabilities traveling locally using public means of transportation. About 4% of the population of 3 420 000 adults with disabilities indicated that they are prevented

from travelling on local public transportation systems including specialized buses. Reasons preventing use of local public transit include lack of 24 hour, 7 day per week service, booking rules that do not allow last minute arrangements, getting to or locating bus stops, get on or off vehicles, and seeing signs or notices. Almost one in three adults with disabilities said they traveled on public transit within the previous 12 months and, of these 17% had some difficulty while 83% travelled without problems.

The likelihood of having problems increases with severity of disability: from 6% of adult transit users with mild disabilities to 14% of moderate, to 24% of severe and 35% of users with very severe disabilities. Overall, the PALS data suggest that women with disabilities are more likely to consider public transit than are men with disabilities. The percentage of women with disabilities using public transit having problems and the percentage prevented from using public transit are both higher than these percentages for men.³

Travelling by car also presents problems for many people with disabilities. Approximately 59 000 adults reported being completely prevented from travelling locally by car within the previous 12 months while 555,000 travelled locally but had difficulty and 2 316 000 travelled locally by car with no difficulty.

When it comes to long-distance travel, 270,000 adults with disabilities indicated that they are prevented from travelling by any mode of transport. 148 000 travelled by plane, bus or train but had some difficulties and 604 000 travelled without problems. Some of the types of difficulties experienced include high costs, lack of appropriate transportation to and from the terminal or station, boarding or disembarking, seating

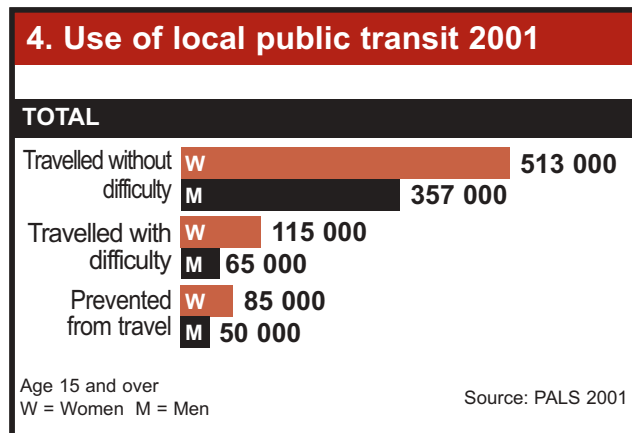


Figure 4 description—50 000 men and 85 000 women with disabilities indicated that they were completely unable to use public transportation including specialized bus services over the previous 12 months. Of 422 000 men who did use public transit, 65,000 had some difficulty while 357 000 had no problems using local public transportation. Among 628,000 women who travelled locally on public transit, 115 000 had problems and 513 000 had no difficulty.

on board, seeing signs or notices, hearing announcements, unsupportive staff, washroom facilities and transporting wheelchairs or other aids.

Of those who travelled long distance only by car, 387 000 reported having trouble due to their condition and 829 000 had no difficulties when making long-distance car trips.

³ The Canadian Council on Social Development has also published additional details about local transportation use in their Disability Information Sheet No. 12. (<http://www.ccsd.ca/drip/>)

