

2001 PALS: DISABILITY RATES AND NATURE OF DISABILITY AND SEVERITY OF DISABILITY

How is Disability Defined?

PALS based its definition of disability on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). This classification views disability as the interrelationship between body functions, activities and social participation, while recognizing the role of the environment as providing both barriers and facilitators.

For adults aged 15 and over, disability in PALS is defined as a limitation in activity as a result of a health problem or condition. The following types of disabilities are included: seeing, hearing, speaking, mobility, agility, learning, cognition (e.g., memory, development), psychological, pain and unknown (i.e., the type of limitation was not specified).

For children aged 5 to 14, PALS identifies the following 10 specific types of disabilities: seeing, hearing, speaking, mobility, dexterity, psychological, learning, developmental delay, chronic health condition and unknown.

For children aged 0 to 4, PALS identifies 5 broader types of disability: hearing, seeing, chronic health conditions, developmental delay and disabilities of an unknown nature.

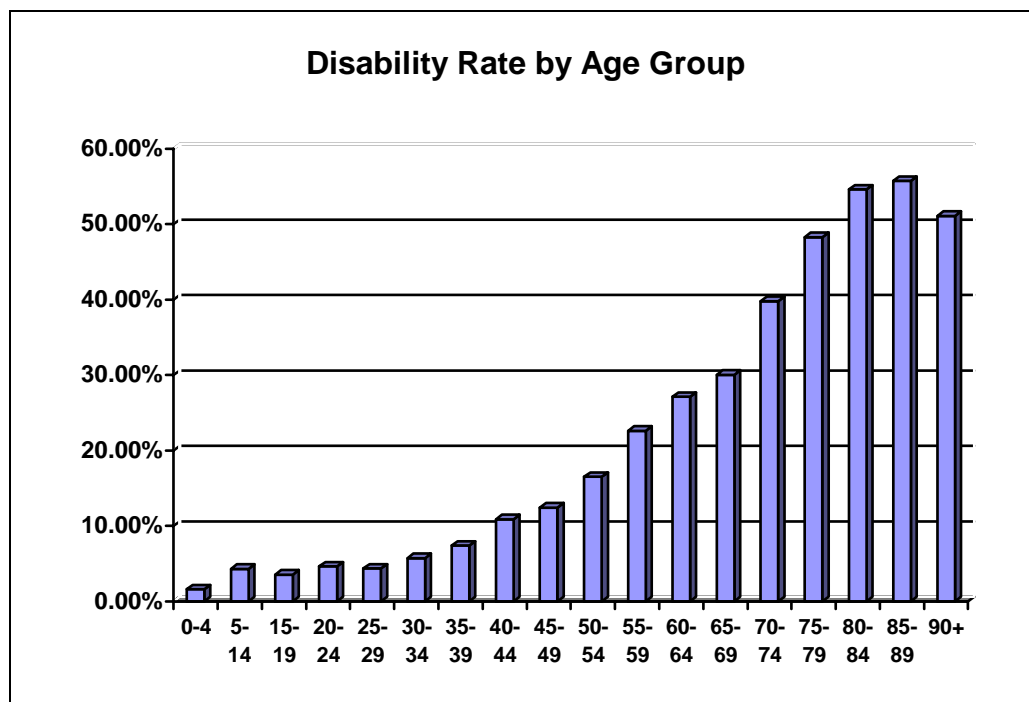
What Percentage of Ontarians Have a Disability?

In Ontario, 13.3% of people living in private households and collective dwellings reported some form of disability. The rate is 12.1% for males; it is slightly higher (14.4%) for females.

Note: Seniors living in nursing homes and residential care facilities were not included in PALS.

Does the Disability Rate Change as People Get Older?

Yes. As the chart below shows, the disability rate increases as the population ages. Less than 4% of children (0 to 14) and young adults (15 to 34) reported a disability. This figure rises to a high of 51.5% for people aged 75 and older.



Is there a Difference in the Disability Rates for Men and Women?

For most of the age groups there are only slight differences between the disability rates for men and women. Some exceptions are as follows:

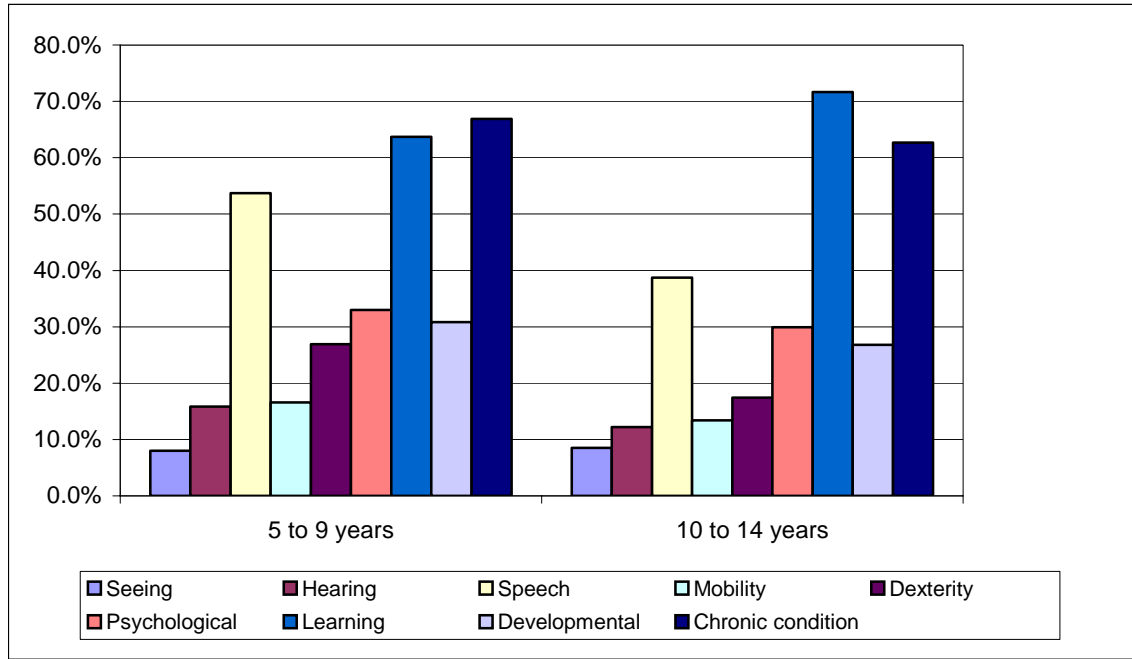
- 5.2% of boys aged 5 to 14 reported a disability, as compared to 3.4% of girls.
- 18.9% of women aged 50 to 54 reported a disability, as compared to 14.1% of men.
- 29.3% of women aged 60 to 64 reported a disability, as compared to 24.7% of men.
- 70.2% of men aged 90 and older reported a disability, as compared to 44.7% of women.

What Types of Disabilities are Reported for Children Aged from Birth to Four Years?

While questions were asked to identify five types of disabilities in very young children, the majority of these children were reported to have only two types of disabilities — the presence of a chronic condition that reduces the kind or amount of activity that they can do and delay in development. Among the 10,700 children aged from birth to four years whose parent reported that they had some type of disability, 73.5% had delay in

development and 65.5% had a chronic condition that limited the kind or amount of activity that they could do.

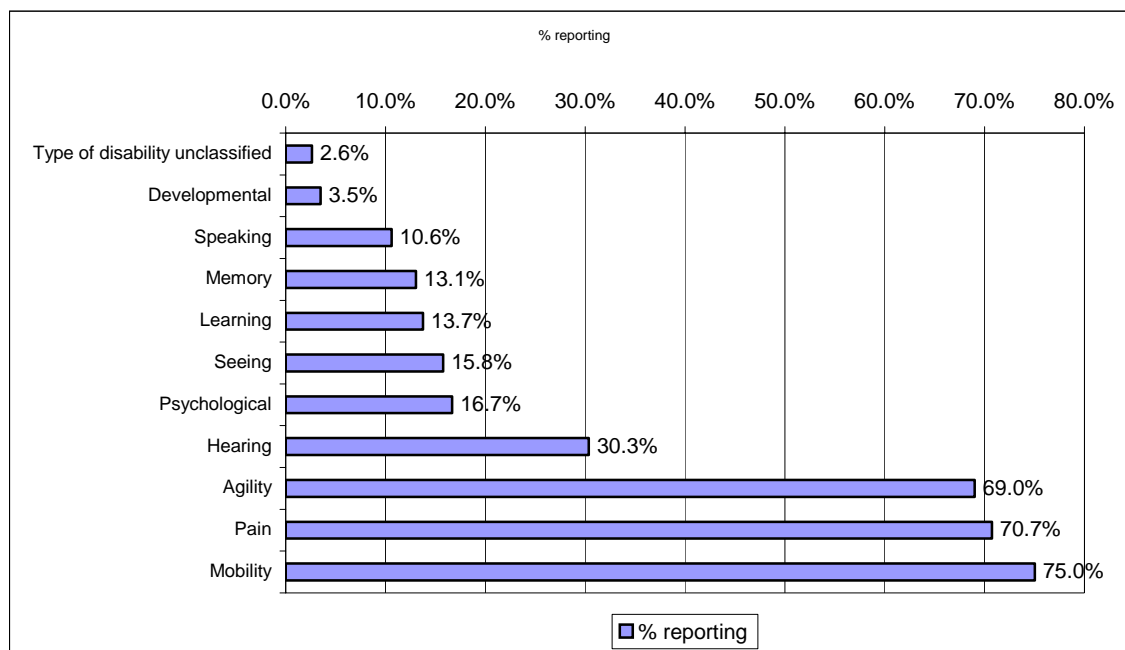
What Types of Disabilities are Reported for Children Aged Five to Fourteen Years?



Among children aged 5 to 9 years, three types of disabilities are the most prevalent. Just over two-thirds (66.9%) of the 30,495 children with a disability have a chronic condition that reduces the kind or amount of activity that they can do, 63.7% had a learning disability, and 53.7% had difficulty speaking.

The same three types of disability are the most prevalent among children aged 10 to 14 years. One in seven (71.6%) of the 37,145 children were reported to have a learning disability, 62.7% have a chronic condition that reduces the amount or kind of activities that they can participate in, and just under one in four (38.7%) report having difficulty speaking.

What Types of Disabilities are Reported among Adults Aged 15 and Older?



Agility, pain, and mobility are the three types of disabilities most often reported by the 1,436,045 Ontarians who reported having a disability. Across all age groups, 69% reported having difficulty activities that require either flexibility or agility, e.g. – bending down and picking up a small object from the floor, getting into and out of bed, reaching in any direction, etc. Seven out of ten (70.7%) reported that pain or discomfort reduced the amount or kind of activities that they could do. Three out of four Ontario adults who reported having a disability reported that they had difficulty with mobility, e.g. - walking up and down a flight of stairs without resting, moving from one room to another, etc.

Does the Prevalence of Type of Disability Differ Among Age Groups?

Yes. There are major differences among the age groups, for example:

- 60% of young adults aged 15 to 19 years report having a learning disability while the provincial rate across all adults with disabilities is 13.7%.
- 25% of young adults aged 15 to 19 and 11.4% of adults aged 20 to 24 years report a developmental disability while the provincial rate across all age groups is 3.5%.
- 36.4% of adults aged 25 to 29 years report a psychiatric disability – more than double the rate among all Ontario adults with disabilities.
- Both hearing and seeing disabilities increase as age increases.
- The percentage of young adults aged 15 to 19 years who report a speaking disability is more than four times greater than for all adults — 34% versus 10.6%.

How did PALS Determine the Severity of a Respondent's Disability?

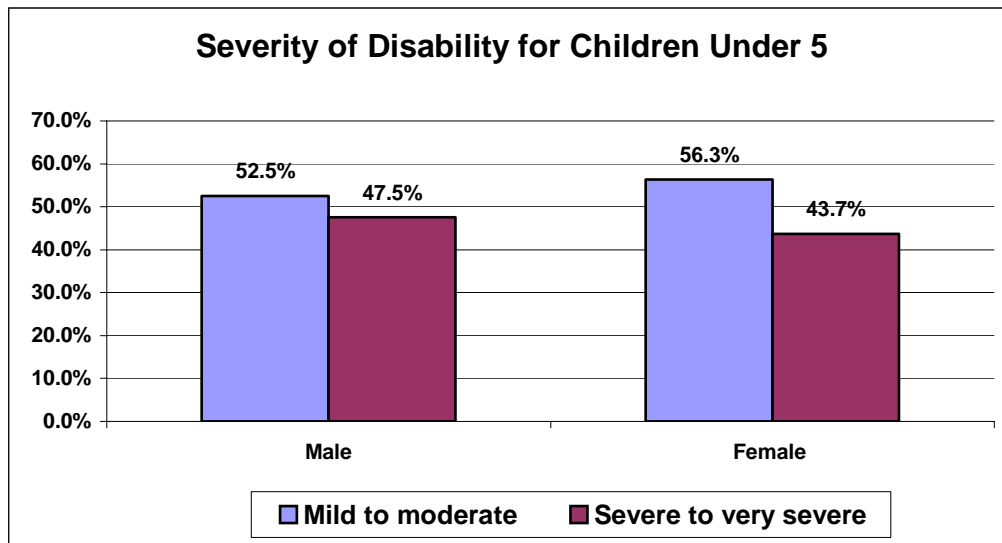
Survey responses were used to develop a PALS severity index. For each type of disability reported by a respondent, points were given based on the intensity and frequency of the activity limitation experienced. These scores were then standardized to between 0 and 1. A respondent's final score is the average of the scores for each type of disability he/she reported.

Different severity scales were developed for adults, children 5 to 14 and children under 5. Each of these scales was then divided into different severity levels as follows:

- Adults – mild, moderate, severe and very severe
- Children 5 to 14 – mild, moderate, severe and very severe
- Children under 5 – mild to moderate and severe to very severe

How many Children Under 5 have a Disability that is Severe to Very Severe?

Among boys under 5 who were identified by their parent or guardian as having some form of disability (6,105 boys in total), almost half (47.5%) have a disability that was severe to very severe. The figure was lower among girls under 5 (a total of 4,595 were identified by a parent or guardian as having some form of disability) at 43.7%.

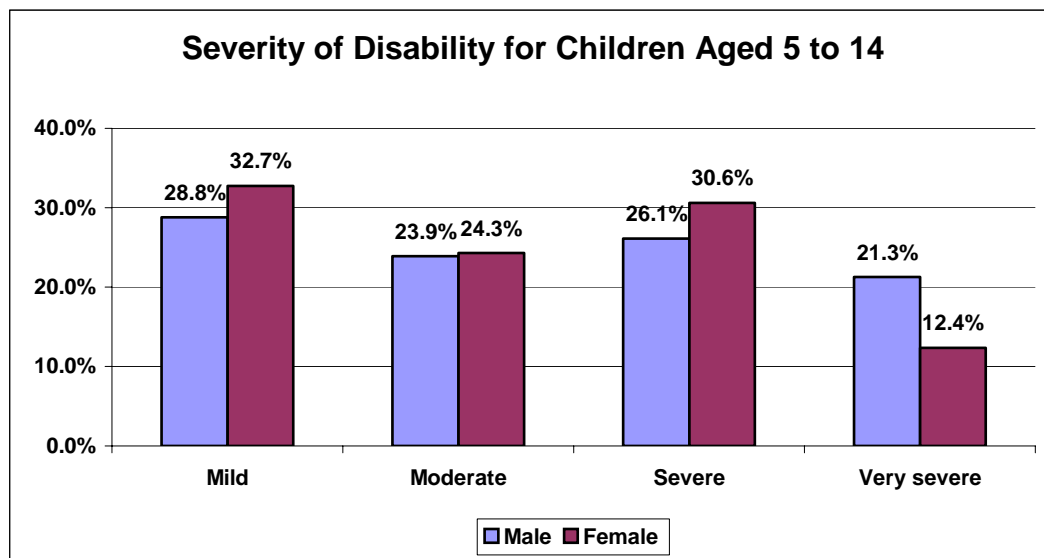


How Severe are the Disabilities Reported for Children Aged 5 to 14?

A total of 67,640 children aged 5 through 14 were reported to have some form of disability. Of these children, 62% are males and 38% are females.

As the chart on the following page shows, almost one-third of females with a disability aged 5 to 14 (32.7%) have a mild disability. Among males, the figure is lower at 28.8%.

Almost half of males with a disability aged 5 to 14 (47.4%) have a disability that is either severe or very severe. The figure is 43% among females in this age group.

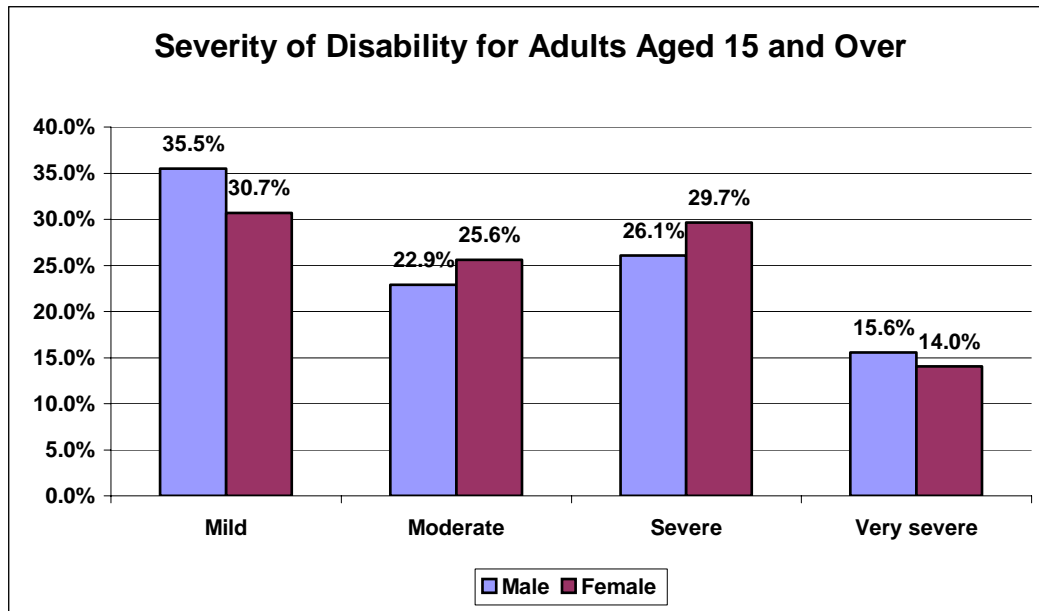


How Severe are the Disabilities Reported for Adults Aged 15 and Older?

A total of 1,436,045 adults aged 15 and older reported that they had some form of disability. Of these adults, 43.5% are males and 56.5% are females.

As the chart below shows, more than one-quarter of females with a disability aged 15 and older (30.7%) have a mild disability. Among males, the figure is higher at 35.5%.

15.6% of males with a disability aged 15 and older have a disability that is severe. The figure is 14% among females in this age group.



Source: A profile of disability in Canada, 2001 (available on the Statistics Canada website at www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-577XIE/index.htm).