

2001 PALS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY

What is PALS?

PALS — the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey — is a national survey that was conducted following the 2001 Census of Population. It was designed to collect information on Canadians — both adults and children — who have a disability (specifically, those people whose everyday activities are limited because of a condition or health problem).

What Types of Information does PALS Provide?

PALS provides information on the prevalence of certain types of disabilities and the supports available for persons with disabilities. It also provides information on the employment profile, income and societal participation (e.g., work, school, social activities) of persons with disabilities.

Who Uses this Information?

All levels of government, associations, researchers and non-governmental organizations use the PALS data to support the planning of services needed by persons with disabilities to ensure that they are able to participate fully in society.

Who was Included in the Survey?

The PALS survey population (i.e., the entire group of people from which the survey sample was drawn) consisted of everyone living in private dwellings and some collective households in the 10 provinces who reported having a disability on the Census questions on activity limitations (see the text box for the activities limitations screening questions) and who were living in Canada at the time of the Census.

2001 Census Long-Form 2B Questionnaire Activity Limitations Screening Questions

Does this person have any difficulty hearing, seeing, communicating, walking, climbing stairs, bending, learning or doing any similar activities?

Does a physical condition or mental condition or health problem reduce the amount or the kind of activity this person can do:

- (a) at home?
- (b) at work or at school?
- (c) in other activities, for example, transportation or leisure?

Were any Populations Excluded from PALS?

Yes. The populations living in Aboriginal communities covered by the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, including all First Nations reserves, were excluded from PALS, as were people living in the three territories and residents of institutional collectives (e.g., nursing homes, hospitals, jails).

Also excluded for operational reasons were people living on military bases and on Canadian Armed Forces, merchant or coast guard vessels as well as people living in campgrounds or parks.

How was the PALS Sample Designed?

PALS was a post-censal survey — it used the 2001 Census as a sampling frame to identify its population.

A sample of the people who answered “yes” to the disability questions on the long-form (2B) Census questionnaire was selected. This sample consisted of 35,000 adults and 8,000 children. For Ontario, the sample was 3,221 adults (those aged 15 and older) and 737 children (those aged 0 to 14). However, when these individuals were asked the detailed PALS disability questions, 722 adults and 245 children were classified as not disabled. This means that the information in these fact sheets is based on the survey results for 2,499 adults and 492 children.

What was the Response Rate for PALS?

The overall response rate was 82.5%.

What Types of Data are Available for Adults and Children?

PALS collected the following types of data for adults and children.

Adults

Type and severity of disability
Aids/specialized equipment used
Out-of-pocket expenses
Help needed with everyday activities
Education
Leisure and recreation
Economic characteristics

Children

Type and severity of disability
Aids/specialized equipment used
Out-of-pocket expenses
Education
Leisure and recreation
Home accommodations
Economic characteristics

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