



WHAT DO WE KNOW AND NEED TO KNOW?

Who are we taking about?

Persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities are defined as: "People with below average intellectual functioning: IQ below 70. Significant limitations in adaptive functioning as a result of deficits in two of the following: communication, self-care, home living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-direction, functional academic skills, work, leisure, health and safety and onset before the age of eighteen".⁽¹⁾

Why should the needs of developmentally disabled people be acknowledged?

Persons with developmental disabilities are at increased risk of developing a number of acute and chronic health problems throughout the course of their lives, which, in turn, increases their need for health and social services. The process of providing services for these persons is complex and often requires coordination across multiple sectors.⁽²⁾ The Ontario Partnership on Aging and Developmental Disabilities (OPADD; www.opadd.on.ca) is a partnership that relies on the ideas and contributions of people working in the developmental and seniors services (community and long-term care) sectors. The Ottawa/ Champlain OPADD planning committee was established for Ottawa and its surrounding communities, to provide advice and feedback to organizations such as the Champlain LHIN Geriatric Advisory Committee and the Regional Systems Planning Table of the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) Office.

Where and how can we recognize these persons in Ottawa, Ontario?

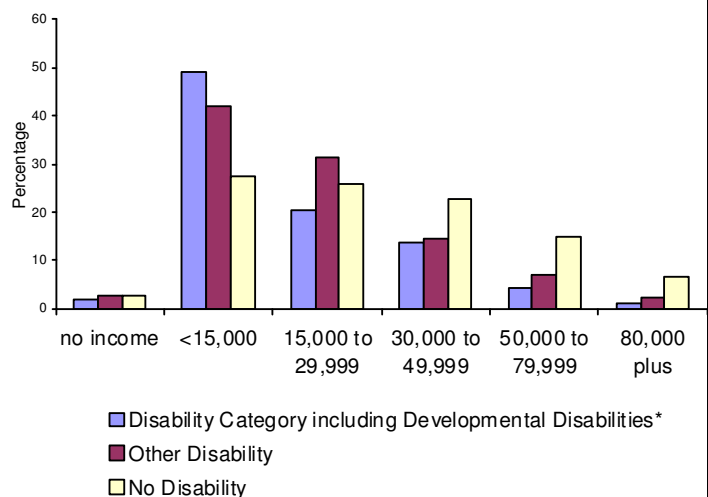
For the purpose of this Newsletter, the Ottawa/ Champlain OPADD Planning Committee defined the target population as persons 45 years or over with developmental disabilities who are currently receiving or waiting for services from health and social programs in the area.

What do surveys and reports tell us about the needs of persons 45 years and over with developmental disabilities?

Persons with Developmental Disabilities Reporting in the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Statistics Canada, 2001

The Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), conducted by Statistics Canada in 2001,⁽³⁾ reported on the total income and general health status of developmentally disabled persons [mental retardation (MR) and mental disorders] in comparison to the general Canadian population. More persons with developmental disabilities report low total income than the general population of Canadians (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Total Income by Disability Status for Canadians 45 years and older (PALS, 2001)

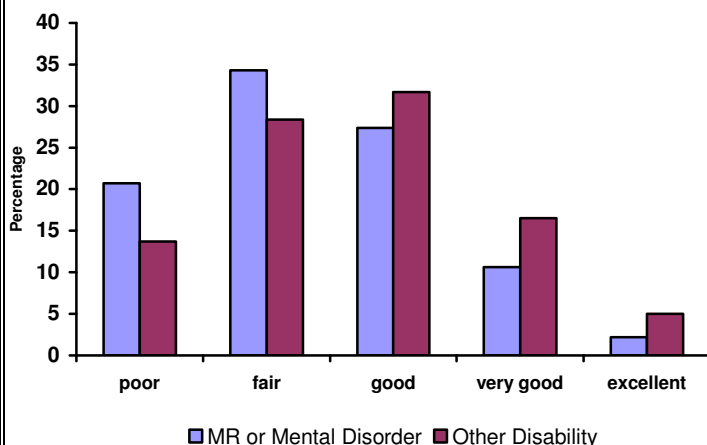


* Mental retardation (MR) and mental disorders

Source: Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Statistics Canada, 2001.

Persons reporting developmental disabilities [mental retardation (MR) and mental disorders] also reported poorer health status in comparison to those reporting other forms of disabilities (Figure 2).

Figure 2: General Health Status by Disability Status for Canadians 45 years and older (PALS, 2001)



Source: Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Statistics Canada, 2001.

Developmentally Disabled Residents in Long-term Care Homes in Ontario, 2006

Persons with developmental disabilities comprised 2.2% of the total long-term care home resident population across Ontario in 2006. The average age of these residents was 52.6 years, whereas the average age of other residents was 30 years older (median age was 83 years).

Clinical assessments within long-term care homes revealed that residents with developmental disabilities were healthier, more independent and used less medication (about 15% less) than other residents. Physical care needs for Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) were one-fifth (22%) less than the requirements for other residents. Thirteen percent of persons with developmental disabilities had movement-related diagnoses – neurological or musculoskeletal coordination. Whereas residents without developmental disabilities within long-term care homes were likely to exhibit wandering and sadness/depression, ⁽⁴⁾ those with developmental disabilities were two to three times more likely to

exhibit the following behaviors: hoarding, aggression, agitation, inappropriate sexual contact, demands for attention and anxiety.

Review of Persons Living in Ottawa with Disability

A document released in December 2006 by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, titled “Living in Ottawa with Disability”, reported that persons with all types of disabilities face numerous challenges in accessing housing appropriate to their needs. Focus group participants identified many problems with their access to appropriate services, including cutbacks, lack of coordination between different services, inadequate information, poor service, rigid policies, waiting lists and a shortage of workers in some areas. ⁽⁵⁾

Persons 45 Years and Over with Developmental Disabilities Living in South-Eastern Ontario (6)

Kingston and Southeastern Ontario has a developmental disabilities surveillance system with participation of all health and social service agency. About one-third of persons with developmental disabilities live in group homes, while another one-third live independently with supports. Approximately 10% continue to live with family members, while an equivalent proportion live with a host family. A minority live in other settings, including care facilities/long-term care homes, hospitals and retirement homes/seniors homes. One-third (34%) have a dual diagnosis (concurrent mental illness), one-half had a behaviour disorder and one-fifth had a seizure disorder. Two percent of persons with developmental disabilities were technologically dependent: that is, they had intensive health needs, such as feeding tube. While only 9% were wheelchair dependent, 24% had a mobility limitation(s).

If the 0.4% prevalence estimate in Southeastern Ontario is applied to the Ottawa/Champlain adult population 45 years and over, it is estimated that there are 1,864 persons (0.4% of 465,890) with a developmental disability in this region.

Persons 45 Years and Over with Developmental Disabilities Waiting to Receive Health and Social Services, Ottawa, 2008

Seventeen agencies provide social and health services for aging people with developmental disabilities in the City of Ottawa, Ontario. Using data from the Ministry of Community and Social Services' Service Coordination Agency, an analysis was conducted of persons 45 of years and over with developmental disabilities, waiting for services (Table 1).

The analysis revealed that in March 2008, 93 persons were waiting to receive access to services. There were approximately the same number of males and females and the number of persons waiting decreased with age. English, as opposed to French, was the preferred language of communication among both men (82%) and women (74%) requesting services (Figure 3).

Table 1. Distribution of persons with developmental disabilities waiting to receive services by age and sex, Ottawa, Ontario, 2008.

Gender	Age group (years)					Total	%
	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	≥ 65		
Men	23	11	11	1	0	47	50
Women	17	17	7	4	2	46	51
Total	40	28	18	5	2	93	
%	43	30	19	5	2		100

Source: MCSS, Service Coordination Agency, Ottawa, 2008

Figure 3. Preferred communication language reported by persons 45 years and over with developmental disabilities waiting to receive agencies admission. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. 2008.

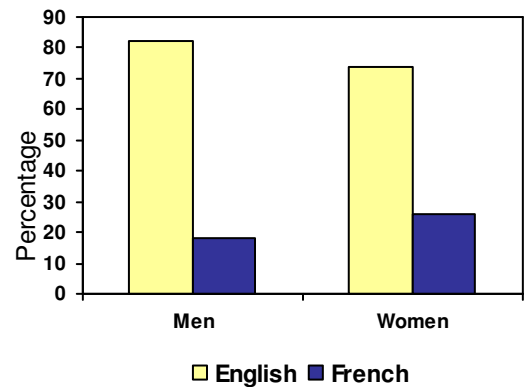
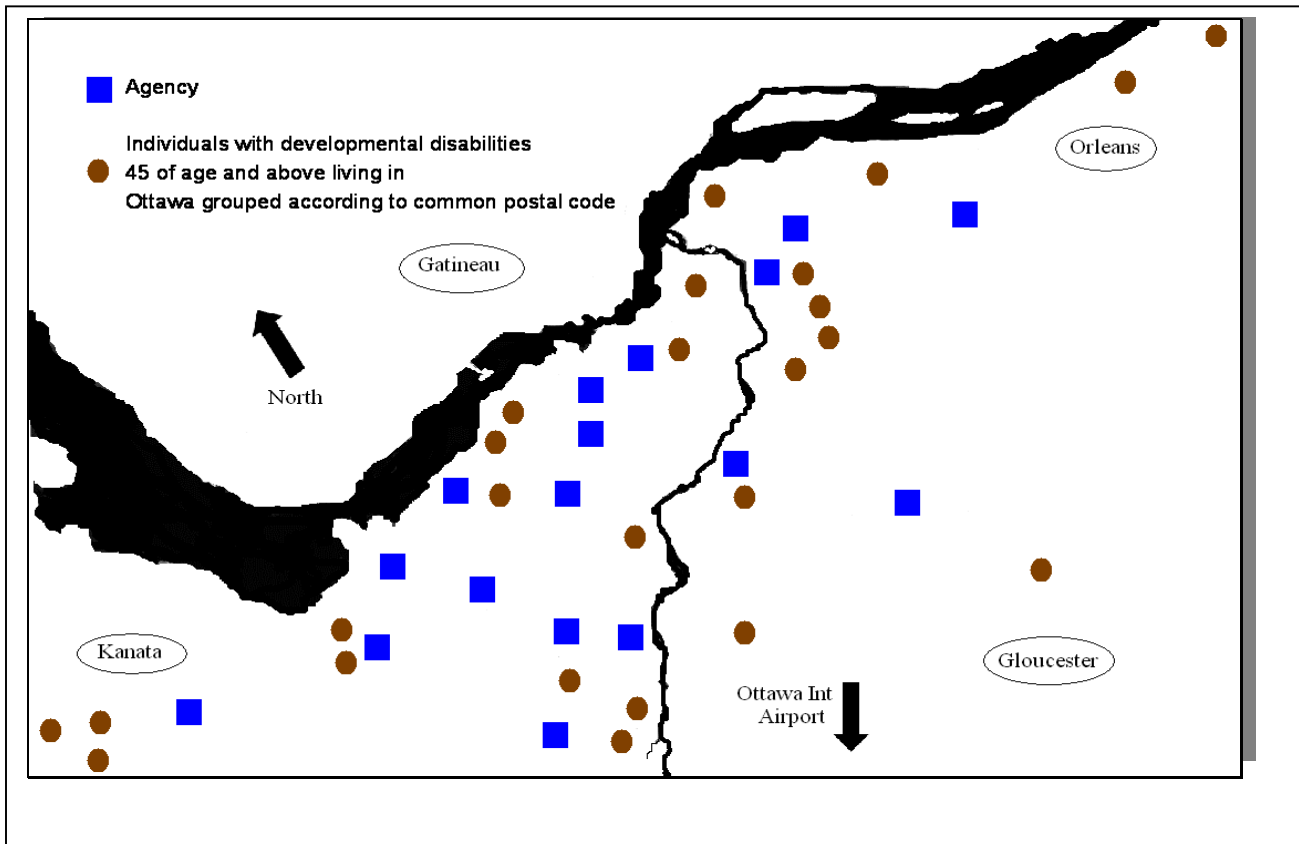
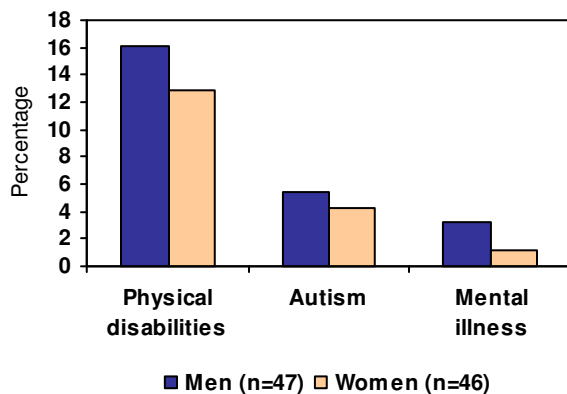


Figure 4: Location by postal area of persons 45 years and over with developmental disabilities waiting for services from one or more of 17 agencies in Ottawa, March, 2008 (n=93)



Mapping the current addresses of persons on waiting lists revealed that they live in selected areas of the city (Figure 4). Physical disabilities, according to the intake staff in the 17 agencies, were reported to be the most common concurrent illnesses, followed by autism and mental illness (Figure 5). The persons waiting for service may differ from those receiving services. A future report will be based on those receiving services from all of the agencies in Ottawa.

Figure 5: Concurrent health problems reported by persons 45 years and over with developmental disabilities waiting to receive services by sex. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, 2008



Source: MCSS, Service Coordination Agency, Ottawa, 2008

Conclusion

Approximately 1,864 (0.4%) persons 45 years and over in Ottawa/Champlain has a developmental disability. These persons with developmental disabilities make up 2.2% of the long-term care home population. These persons with developmental disabilities are unlikely to live with their families. They have lower incomes and they are more likely to have concurrent physical and mental health problems than the general population. There is a need to enhance coordination of health and social services for this vulnerable group of persons. More information about these persons will be gleaned from reports from Ottawa service agencies in a future report.

References

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This newsletter was prepared for the Ottawa/Champlain OPADD Planning Committee.

Aljasir B, Chambers L. Ouellette-Kuntz H. Aging people with developmental disability 45 years and above in Ottawa and surrounding communities. *What do we know and need to know? Ottawa/Champlain OPADD Newsletter*. 2008;1:1-4.