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NEWS RELEASE

Health and Income Adequacy — Essential Determinants of Ageing Well

New survey provides key insights about growing older in Canada

TORONTO, January 31, 2024 — Canadians aged 50 years and older as a whole are generally doing well in terms of their social wellbeing, financial security, health and independence. 63 per cent of Canadians 50 years and older feel positively about the prospect or experience of getting older.

In a new report by the National Institute on Ageing (NIA), in partnership with the [Environics Institute for Survey Research](#), the [2023 NIA Ageing in Canada Survey](#) takes an in-depth look at the perspectives of growing older in Canada using a base sample of 5,875 Canadians. The survey is the largest of its kind in Canada and provides the first follow-up look at the perspectives and experiences of Canadians 50 and older across three key dimensions of ageing well — social well-being, financial security, and health and independence — since its inaugural launch last year.

Using 10 indicators of ageing well, the 2023 survey again provides key insights into ageing Canadians' experiences of growing older in Canada and their prospects for continuing to do so.

"This long-term study makes important contributions to the Canadian research and policy landscape," says Alyssa Brierley, Executive Director for the NIA. "As we look at key indicators of ageing, we can improve the lives of older adults and support the success of Canada as a whole."

"Adequately understanding the circumstances and evolving needs of the ageing population requires hearing directly from older Canadians on their experiences and perspectives," said report lead co-author Natalie Iciaszczyk, Research Program Manager at the NIA. "First launched in 2022, the survey provides key insights into whether or not Canadians 50 and older are ageing well."

For the second year, Canadians aged 80 years and older who are still living independently, reported the best perspectives and experiences. They had stronger social networks, better access to health care services and reported more financial security compared to their younger counterparts.

While some population groups reported more favourably across dimensions of ageing well, those in poor health and with lower incomes were found to be among the most vulnerable. When analyzing health and independence, those who reported being in poor health and were struggling financially consistently had the greatest need for care yet reported the worst access to both health care and home care services. This group also expressed the least confidence in being able to access support in the future, whether it be health care or home care services.

“It’s concerning that despite having a greater need for home care services, only 37 per cent of those who reported fair or poor health said they received the home care they needed all or most of the time in the last year,” said Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Health Policy Research at the NIA. “We need to ensure more reliable access exists to home care services for all older adults despite their health status or income.”

The survey once again explored the perceived ability of Canadians 50 and older to financially support themselves later in life with indicators of financial well-being, retirement readiness and future financial concerns. Against the backdrop of the current economic climate, one in four Canadians reported that their income was not enough for them or that they were having a hard time financially.

“Overall, as they contemplate getting older, the rising cost of living was by far the most frequently reported concern among Canadians aged 50 and above,” said Dr. Bonnie-Jeanne MacDonald, Director of Financial Security Research for the NIA. “Next came running out of money.”

“This survey fills an important gap in our understanding of how older Canadians think about and experience ageing today, and how this may be similar or different depending on one’s age and circumstances,” said Dr. Keith Neuman, Senior Associate at the Environics Institute. “This research is essential to helping us as a society to move beyond assumptions and casual stereotypes about older adults.”

In order to meet the unique and evolving care needs of older Canadians, more resources and targeted efforts are required to adequately support persons in worse health and with lower incomes to support Canada's ageing population.

About The National Institute on Ageing

The National Institute on Ageing (NIA) improves the lives of older adults and the systems that support them by convening stakeholders, conducting research, advancing policy solutions and practice innovations, sharing information and shifting attitudes. Our vision is a Canada where older adults feel valued, included, supported, and better prepared to age with confidence.

About the Environics Institute for Survey Research

The Environics Institute for Survey Research conducts in-depth public opinion and social research on the issues shaping Canada's future. It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society. The Institute is a not-for-profit corporation that works in collaboration with other organizations from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, who provide the thought leadership, networks and capacity to connect research insights to meaningful action and social change.

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