



Adults with Developmental Disabilities and Aging

What is this research about?

Adults with developmental disabilities are living longer and are thought to age prematurely - this means that they may be accessing aging care services earlier. There is a need for a better understanding of the health and health care of those with developmental disabilities who are aging.

What did the researchers do?

Examining a sample of adults with developmental disabilities 18 to 99 years of age, the Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities (H-CARDD) program projected the population's age distribution, occurrence of frailty, and use of home care and long-term care, using administrative and clinical data held at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES).

What did the researchers find?

The number of older adults with developmental disabilities in Ontario is growing. By 2021, the number of Ontarians with developmental disabilities between the ages of 45 and 84 years could be as high as 25,000.

Adults with developmental disabilities are more likely to experience frailty and to be frail at younger ages. For example, as early as 50 years of age, adults with developmental disabilities can be as frail as an 80+ year old without developmental disabilities.

What you need to know

Adults with developmental disabilities experience early onset of aging, and access home care and long term care earlier. They need timely access to appropriate aging care services.

The researchers also found that adults with developmental disabilities use aging care services more often and at much earlier ages than the general population. For example, twice as many adults with developmental disabilities than the general population were admitted to home care between 2009 and 2014.

After controlling for other factors (e.g., age, sex, mental illness and addiction, self-care skills, cognitive performance, supports received), home care users with developmental disabilities were more likely to be admitted to long-term care.

In addition, adults with developmental disabilities were admitted to long-term care 25 years earlier than the general population.

How can you use the research?

This research provides valuable evidence related to early onset of aging among adults with developmental disabilities. It should be used to advocate and plan for timely access to appropriate aging care services for this population.

About the researchers

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Keywords

Developmental disabilities, older adults, aging, home care, long-term Care

Do you want to know more/additional resources?

You can find more information about this work at www.hcardd.ca on the [aging project page](#)

View the virtual town hall [here](#)

“Using an accumulation of deficits approach to measure frailty in a population of home care users with intellectual and developmental disabilities: an analytical descriptive study” article can be found [here](#)

AHRQ report “Aging Profiles of Adults With and Without Developmental Disabilities in Ontario” can be found [here](#)

For more information on clinical resources, go to the Ontario Partnership on Aging and Developmental Disabilities (www.opadd.ca)

About H-CARDD

Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities (H-CARDD) is a research program with the primary goal of enhancing the overall health and well-being of people with developmental disabilities through improved health care policy and services. H-CARDD research is conducted by dedicated teams of scientists, policymakers, and health care providers.

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