

**Employment Outcomes for Persons with Early vs Later Disability Onset:
Preliminary Findings from the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability**

Presented by:

Stuart Morris
Senior Research Advisor
Disability and Accessibility Research,
Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)

November 2020

Background

Previous disability research on employment (Morris et al., 2018) and disability onset (Loprest & Maag, 2003) shows the following:

- Employment rates tend to go down with age. While true for both persons with and without disabilities, it is more pronounced for those with disabilities
- Largest drops in employment rates tend to occur between ages 55 to 64 within the working age population
- Later disability onset (beyond birth or young adulthood) may moderate the impact on employment

Why is Disability Onset Important?

Persons who acquire their disability later in life may have a dual advantage when it comes to employment:

- likely to already have completed all formal schooling
- likely to already be in labor force and acquired work experience

Purpose of presentation

To present preliminary findings on the relationship between three stages of disability onset and employment outcomes

As part of broader research currently being done by the Disability and Accessibility Research (ESDC)

Data source

2017 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD)

New questions on age of disability onset in the 2017 CSD

For the first time, CSD asked respondents to self report the age at which difficulties first started to limit their daily activities for each disability type they may have

How were stages of disability onset constructed?

This study examined employment outcomes for three stages of disability onset.

Stages of onset

Based on age at which limitation first occurred:

- **Early:** **0 to 22**
- **Middle:** **23 to 45**
- **Late:** **46 and over**

Note: Since many persons can have multiple disability types, each of which can occur at a different age, the age of first occurrence of any limitation is used.

Difference between current age vs. stage of disability onset

Current age = age at time of 2017 survey
Stage of disability onset = age at which limitation first occurred

Scenario One: Same current age | different stage of disability onset

- Person A: current age = 47 | limitation first occurred at age 10 (early onset)
- Person B: current age = 47 | limitation first occurred at age 46 (late onset)

Scenario Two: Different current age | same stage of disability onset.

- Person A: current age = 35 | limitation first occurred at age 28 (middle onset)
- Person B: current age = 60 | limitation first occurred at age 28 (middle onset)

For this presentation, current age is restricted to 45 to 54 vs 55 to 64

Why these age groups?

- Better understand impact of stages of disability onset on older working age adults
- Both age groups allow analyses of all three stages of onset

Main Findings

Regardless of sex and severity

45 to 54: most likely to have middle onset

55 to 64: most likely to have late onset

Both age groups: around 1 in 4 have early onset

Distribution of onset stages about the same across education levels.

TABLE 1:

Canadians with disabilities aged 45 to 64 years, by onset stage, age, and education, 2017

Age and education	Stage of onset		
	Early	Middle	Late
	Percent		
45 to 54			
Both sexes	26	54	20
High school or less	30	49	21
Trade/college/CEGEP	25	58	17
University	23	57	21
55 to 64			
Both sexes	20	32	48
High school or less	17	36	47
Trade/college/CEGEP	21	31	49
University	26	27	47

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017

Main Findings

Age: Employment rates around **1.5 times higher** for younger (45 to 54) adults

Onset stage: As onset stage advances - from early to late - employment rates tend to go up.

Late onset: Highest employment rates. The exception is women aged 55 to 64.

Sex: Men have higher employment rates than women, regardless of onset stage.

TABLE 2:

Employment rate of Canadian population with disabilities aged 45 to 64 years, by highest onset stage, age, and sex, 2017

Age and sex	Employment		Overall Rate Percent
	Stage	Rate	
	Highest	Percent	
45 to 54			
Men	Late	68	63
Women	Late	63	57
55 to 64			
Men	Late	50	46
Women	Early Middle	35	33

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017

Main Findings

Onset stage: Pattern unclear. Varies by age and severity.

Late onset: Highest employment rate for “less severe” (45 to 54) and “more severe” (55 to 64) disabilities

Early onset: Highest employment rate for “less severe” disabilities (55 to 64).

Severity: Employment rates around **2 times higher** for “less severe” compared to “more severe” disabilities, regardless of onset stage.

TABLE 3:

Employment rate of Canadian population with disabilities aged 45 to 64 years, by highest onset stage, age, and severity, 2017

Age and severity	Employment		Overall Rate Percent
	Stage	Rate	
	Highest	Percent	
45 to 54			
Less severe	Late	80	77
More severe	Early Middle	36	35
55 to 64			
Less severe	Early	59	53
More severe	Late	26	24

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017

Main Findings

Onset stage: Clear pattern in employment rates for high school or less and university.

Late onset: Highest employment rate for high school or less, regardless of age.

Early onset: Highest employment rate for university, regardless of age.

Education: Employment rates around **1.5 higher** for university compared to high school or less.

TABLE 4:

Employment rate of Canadian population with disabilities aged 45 to 64 years, by highest onset stage, age, and education, 2017

Age and education	Employment		Overall Rate Percent
	Stage	Rate	
	Highest	Percent	
45 to 54			
High school or less	Late	63	48
Trade/college/CEGEP	Early Late	71	67
University	Early	86	76
55 to 64			
High school or less	Late	40	34
Trade/college/CEGEP	No Diff	43	42
University	Early	62	50

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017

Summary

- Younger (45 to 54) adults more likely to report **middle onset**; Older (55 to 64) adults more likely to report **late onset**
- Stage of disability onset does not appear to impact educational attainment. Once separated by age group, distribution of onset is similar for all levels of education.
- Employment rates consistently around 1.5 times higher for younger (45 to 54) compared to older (55 to 64) adults - regardless of stage of disability onset
- When examined by sex, employment rates generally highest for those with late disability onset
- When examined by disability severity, pattern in highest employment rates less clear and varies by age and severity
- When examined by education, pattern in highest employment rates clear for high school or less (late onset) and university (early onset)