

**CHANGING FAMILY NETWORKS
OF THE 75+: CANADA AND
EUROPE OVER THE NEXT
25 YEARS**

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

- This brochure presents selected results from the research project “Planning for Canadian human resource needs in chronic home care for the elderly: Projections to 2031”, funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), 2006-2010.
- European data is drawn from the “Future Elderly Living Conditions in Europe (FELICIE)” project, that included 9 countries: Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom.
- *Why look only at the population 75 and over?*
 - ⇒ Age 75 represents a benchmark in terms of increasing physical and cognitive disability, widowhood, and associated care needs. It is expected that this population will increase dramatically by 2031 (by 133% in Canada and 72% in Europe) and that families will continue to be the largest contributors of home support for this population.

Potential Family Networks for the disabled 75 and older; 4 scenarios:

- A partner and surviving children
- A partner but no surviving children
- No partner but surviving children
- No partner and no surviving children

These categories are ordered from most to least favorable in terms of potential caregivers available. If family support is absent or deficient, the need for formal care increases.

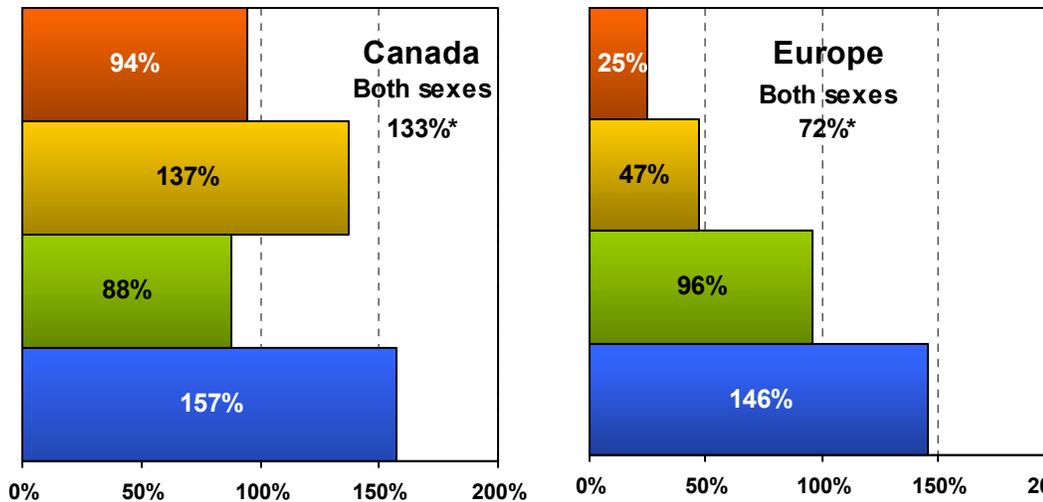
Research Methods

The population aged 75 years and older with a disability was projected for Canada (2001-2031) and for nine European countries (2000-2030). Canadian projections used Statistics Canada’s *Lifepaths Microsimulation Model* for age, sex, marital status, surviving children, level of education, place of birth, region, and partner’s age and static projections for health status. European projections used the *LIPRO Model* (Van Imhoff and Keilman) for age, sex, and marital status, and static projections for health status and surviving children. Four mutually exclusive categories were created to compare family networks between Canada and Europe.

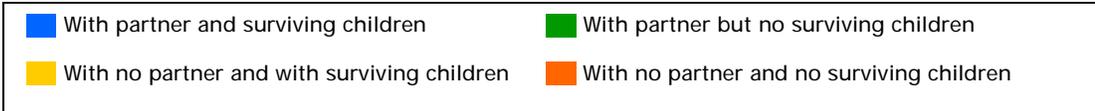
The differential in expected increase in the population 75 and older with a disability is attributable mainly to a larger baby-boom in Canada than in Europe.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Figure 1. Population increase of the 75+ with a disability, according to family composition, 2000/1-2030/1.

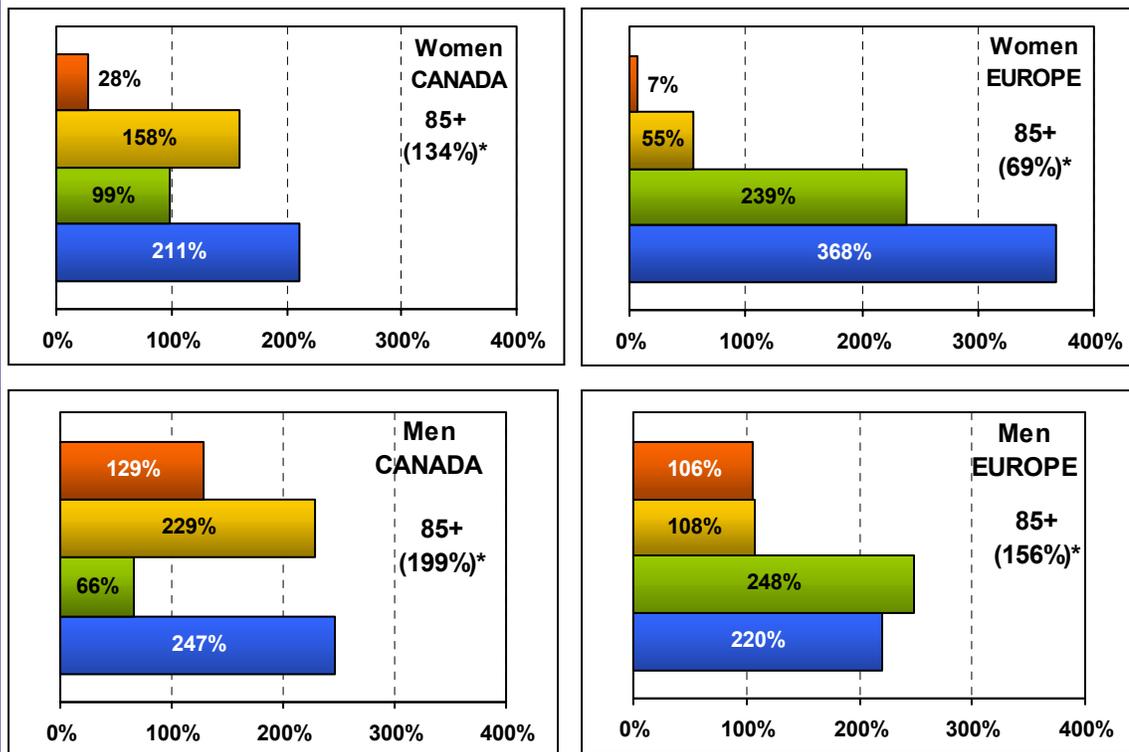


The main difference between Canada and Europe will be for the population without a partner, projected to increase for Canada by three times as much as for Europe. The rate of growth for those without any potential family support is almost 4 times larger for Canada than for Europe.



*Rate of increase for all categories.

Figure 2. Population increase of the 85+ with a disability, by family composition and gender, 2000/1-2030/1.



The population 85+ with a spouse and at least one surviving child will increase faster than the overall population in all 4 scenarios.

Canada will experience a larger increase in men and women with surviving children but no partner, while Europe will experience a larger increase in men and women with partners but no surviving children.

Sources, Figures 1 & 2: LifePaths Projection (Statistics Canada), and LIPRO Model, using assumptions developed by the research team.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This research has several implications for home care planning:

- Accelerated increases in the population 75+ will mean increased needs for care, with the bulk of the change coming after 2020. Policy-makers must plan accordingly to meet demand for services and human resources.
- Future family composition will impact source of support (i.e., family/friend or formal sources).
- The growth of men living to older ages will mean more older people living as couples. However, this could also mean an increase in the number of couples with two disabled partners.
- Unknown future improvements in health could impact morbidity and lower demand for care.
- A limitation of this research is that it does not take into account changes in cultural norms and behavior. Potential trends—e.g., women's workforce participation, increased egalitarianism between the sexes with regards to care, increasing divorce rates, and less inclination among baby-boomers to place the burden of care on their children—may also impact future demand for care.

The need for home care will increase substantially in the next 25 years.

- The family composition of the 75+ with a disability will improve in Canada and in Europe in the coming decades, but the more substantial improvement will be experienced by Europe.
- This improvement will be most pronounced among those 85 and older, especially women, since the proportion of women growing old with a partner will increase in both regions.

For further reading, look for: Gaymu, J., Busque, M-A., Légaré, J., Décarie, Y., Vézina, S., & Keefe, J. (accepted for publication—2010). What will the family composition of older persons be like tomorrow? A comparison of Canada and France. *Canadian Journal on Aging*, Special Supplement.

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