

Research Insight

Determinants of Seniors' Housing Choices—Part II

The Research

CMHC commissioned a multi-part project to explore the factors that influence seniors' housing choices late in life, and to determine how and why they may choose supportive housing (see sidebar). The first part of the research reviewed literature on the living arrangements of seniors, factors involved in seniors' decisions to move to supportive housing, and later life housing demands. The second part, discussed here, examined data from Statistics Canada's 2007 General Social Survey (GSS) to produce profiles of seniors living in supportive housing and those considering it, and sought to create a predictive model.

Key Findings

Who is living in supportive housing?

- This survey found that 6.5% of Canadians aged 65 or older, and 3% of all those 45+, said they were living in supportive housing;
- Half those living in supportive housing were 75 years or older.
- About one-third of these oldest residents had lived in supportive housing less than three years, and slightly more than a third (35%) had been in supportive housing for more than 10 years.
- Many people experienced changes in their living arrangements in the 65-75 age range.

Who might choose supportive housing?

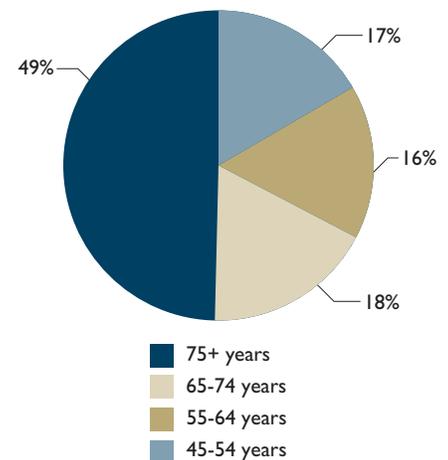
Canadians who were not living in supportive housing were asked whether they would consider this type of housing in the future.

- Of those 45+, 62% said they would strongly consider supportive housing while 38% said they would not.
- Interest was highest among 55 to 64 year olds
- By age 75, those living alone, with their spouse or with friends/other family were more likely to consider supportive housing, compared to those living with a child (and possibly others).
- Those aged 75+ with a younger spouse were less interested in supportive housing.
- Those 75+ who had moved within the past year were least likely to consider supportive housing.
- Homeowners aged 75+ were less interested in supportive housing than renters; and those living in detached dwellings, less interested than those in multiple-unit dwellings.
- For immigrants aged 75 plus, those who came to Canada at an early age were more likely to consider supportive housing than those who arrived as older adults.

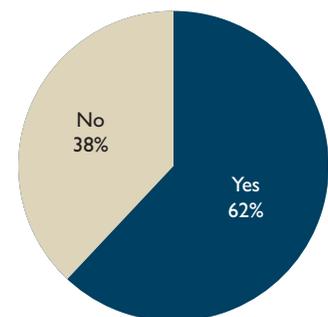
Supportive Housing:

The General Social Survey defined supportive housing as "housing designed for people who only need minimal to moderate care, such as homemaking or personal care and support, to live independently".

Age of those living in supportive housing

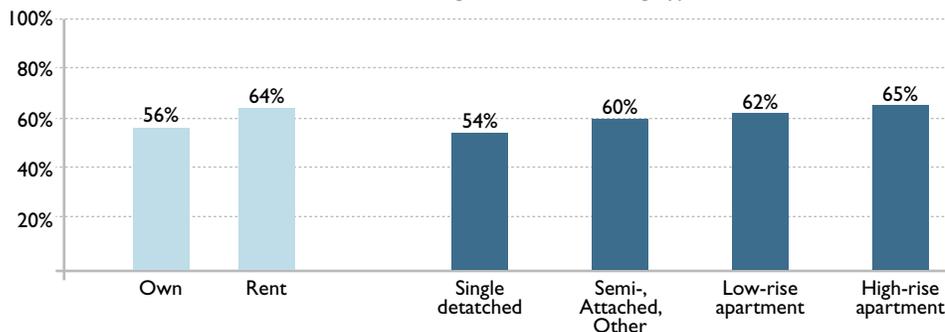


Would you seriously consider supportive housing for your future housing needs?



Yes, Would Seriously Consider Supportive Housing

75+ Years Old, Housing Tenure and Dwelling Type



Predictive Modelling:

A number of characteristics identified in the literature review were subsequently found in the profile analysis to be related to supportive housing status, especially for those aged 75 years and over. The final phase of the study was to determine which characteristics were the key drivers of usage or consideration of supportive housing, using multivariate analysis. The sample of almost 17,000 individuals in the GSS provided data about demographics, finances, health, retirement planning, housing history, family and living arrangements. Using these characteristics as independent variables, a series of logistic regressions were carried out to predict who would use or consider using supportive housing, the dependent variable.

Although significant relationships were found between a number of socio-economic characteristics and the dependent variable, only a small proportion of the overall variance in supportive housing consideration/usage was explained in the multivariate analysis. These results highlighted the complexity of seniors' decisions about housing arrangements.

Implications for the Housing Industry:

For many Canadians, changes in living arrangements occurred between ages 65 and 75. However, it is difficult to predict when and how many seniors will wish to use supportive housing. It is unclear whether the proportion of seniors in supportive housing is constrained by supply or demand. Attitudes toward supportive housing and the factors leading to a move are complex. Personal characteristics, current living arrangements, need for and availability of supports, and housing history can all influence attitudes toward supportive housing.

CHARACTERISTICS SHOWING THE STRONGEST RELEVANCE TO SUPPORTIVE HOUSING STATUS IN THE PREDICTIVE MODELLING WERE:

- financial preparation for retirement (savings/investment/pension)
- education level
- living arrangements
- overall health
- cognitive capacity
- need for and access to assistance (paid or unpaid)
- having moved to eliminate stairs
- having moved to be closer to public transit or health care.

Further Reading

FULL REPORT

[Analysis of Housing Choices and Changing Housing Needs of Seniors and Pre-seniors by Age Group](#)

RELATED INSIGHTS

[Determinants of Supportive Housing for Canadian Seniors – Part I](#)

RELATED RESEARCH

[Housing for Older Canadians](#)

[Impacts of the Aging of the Canadian Population on Housing and Communities](#)

[Community Indicators for an Aging Population](#)

[2011 Census/National Household Survey Housing Conditions Series: Issue 1 Demographics and Housing Construction, 1971-2011](#)

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