

---

## Inventory of National Rural Health Research Related Databases

---

Database name: **Health and Activity Limitation Survey**

Thematic Coverage: This post-censal disability survey collected information about the numbers and distribution of persons with a physical, sensory or psychological disability in Canada residing in health related non-penal institutions and the barriers experienced by them.

Maintained by: Housing, Family and Social Statistics, Statistics Canada

Availability: A public release version of the data files is available through the Data Liberation Initiative (DLI). Some variables are suppressed and other are aggregated to protect the anonymity of individual survey respondents. Custom tabulations are also available on a cost recovery basis.

---

Start Date: 1986  
Release Date: N/A - Discontinued  
Frequency of collection: Conducted in 1986 and 1991 only

---

Data Collection: Two Census questions on activity limitation and long term disability were designed to identify prior to the actual survey, the target population

Most of the interviews were conducted by telephone to individuals 15 years and older. In special cases, personal interviews were carried out. Statistics from this survey are estimates based on sample survey of a portion of the Canadian population.

Unweighted Sample size: Total- 91 355,  
Disabled- 25 942, Not Disabled – 65 413

Weighted Sample size: Total- 21 063 077,  
Disabled- 3 533 089, Not Disabled- 17 529 988

---

Geographic coverage: All provinces and territories  
Lowest geographic level collected: Postal Code  
Lowest geographic level of release: Province/Territory  
Existing rural variable: No

Rural definitions that can be constructed from this database include (building block)<sup>†</sup>:

- ✓ Census “rural areas” (Enumeration Area)
- ✓ Rural and Small Town definition (Census Subdivision)
- ✓ Metropolitan area and census agglomeration Influenced Zones (Census Subdivision)
- ✓ OECD “rural communities” definition (Census Consolidated Subdivision)
- ✓ OECD “predominantly rural regions” definition (Census Division)
- ✓ Ehrensaff’s “Beale codes” (Census Division)

<sup>†</sup> Results for these areas of geography could conceivably be derived from postal codes if respondent confidentiality is ensured.

---

Data Elements:

- Nature and severity of disability
- Barriers which disabled person encounter in all aspects of their daily activities
- Demographic and household characteristics
- Lifestyle
- Technical aids and services used
- Out-of-pocket expenses related to health problem, by type of expense
- Disabled persons requiring special aids and assistive devices: by age group, sex and by type of special aid or device
- Disabled persons having activity limitations: by age group, sex and by type of activity limitation
- Barriers to local transportation, by type of service and by type of problems using public transportation system
- Housing requiring special modification

Notes:

Persons living on Indian reserves were excluded, but related information can be found in the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey.

The predecessor of this survey was the Canadian Health and Disability Survey.

The 2001 Participation and Activity Limitations Survey (PALS), which is also included in this inventory, replaced the Health and Activity Limitations Survey (HALS) after a ten year absence. Comparisons between previous HALS and the new PALS cannot be made for reasons described in the Participation and Activity Limitations Survey abstract.