

2 Patterns of Disability

Key points

This chapter describes the nature and extent of disability experienced by people living in New Zealand households. It examines the prevalence of disability in different age groups, the specific types of disability people experience, the most common causes of disability and the degree to which people's disability conditions are severe and long-lasting.

Prevalence of disability

- In 2001, 22 percent of adults (people aged 15 years and over) and 11 percent of children (people aged 0–14) living in households had a disability. This was an estimated 716,500 people: 626,500 adults and 90,000 children.
- Males had a slighter higher rate of disability than females, with an age-standardised rate of 18,000 per 100,000, compared with the female rate of 17,000 per 100,000. An important factor contributing to this was the higher prevalence of disability among boys (13 percent) compared with girls (9 percent).
- Older people were substantially more likely than younger people to experience disability, with just 9 percent of adults aged 15–24 having a disability, compared with 87 percent of people aged 85 and over.
- An estimated 106,500 Māori had a disability, as did 27,700 Pacific peoples, 551,100 Europeans, and 21,100 Asian/Other peoples. These totals included substantial numbers of children, with an estimated 28,400 Māori and 5700 Pacific children having a disability, along with an estimated 52,300 European and 2200 Asian/Other children.
- Of the four main ethnic groups, Māori had the highest age-standardised rate of disability (24,100 per 100,000). The Asian/Other ethnic group had the lowest rate (13,400 per 100,000).

Types of disability

- Mobility disabilities were the most common type of disability in adults. An estimated 346,300 adults, 12 percent of adults living in households, had mobility disabilities. This included 213,400 adults whose main disability was a mobility disability.
- An estimated 35,500 children, 4 percent of children living in households, used special education because of long-term conditions or health problems.
- Over half (57 percent) of people with disability living in households had more than one type of disability (for example, a hearing disability and a seeing disability).
- The most common cause of disability was disease/illness. An estimated 281,000 adults and children, 8 percent of all people living in households, had at least one disability caused by disease/illness.
- Accident/injury was the second most common cause of disability, with disability caused by accident/injury affecting an estimated 214,200 people.

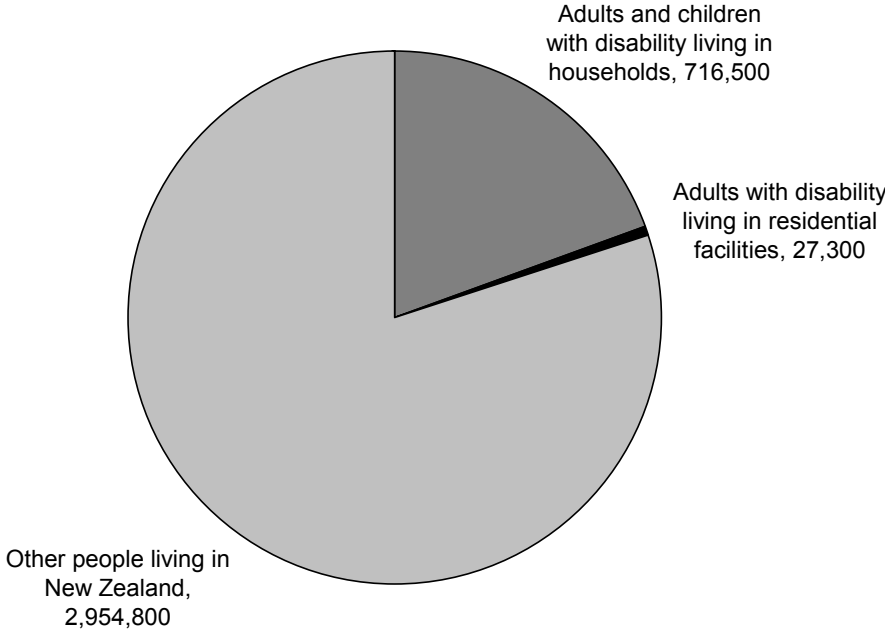
- An estimated 88,100 adults and children, 2 percent of all people in households, had severe disability. This meant they required daily help from someone else for tasks such as bathing or preparing meals.
- Eleven percent of all people aged 75 and over living in households had severe disability.

Introduction

In 2001, an estimated 743,800 people with disability were living in New Zealand. This is a disability prevalence rate of 20 percent or one in five (Figure 2.1).

Most (96 percent) New Zealanders with disability were living in private households such as houses, flats or apartments. The rest were living in residential facilities such as homes for older people or rest homes, public and private hospitals, or units for people with intellectual, psychiatric or physical disability.¹

Figure 2.1: Number of people with disability in the New Zealand population, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey, 2001 Disability Survey of Residential Facilities

Note: The 2001 Disability Survey of Residential Facilities did not include children living in residential facilities.

This chapter examines the nature and extent of disability experienced by people living in households.² It describes the prevalence of disability in different age and ethnic groups, the specific types of disability people experienced (for example, mobility, hearing, intellectual or psychiatric disability), the most common causes of disability, and the degree to which people’s disability conditions were severe and long-lasting. Taken together, this information shows the diversity of the disability conditions and circumstances experienced by New Zealanders at different ages and life-stages.

¹ For more detail on how private households and residential facilities were defined in the 2001 Household Disability Survey and the 2001 Disability Survey of Residential Facilities, see chapter 1 and the Glossary.

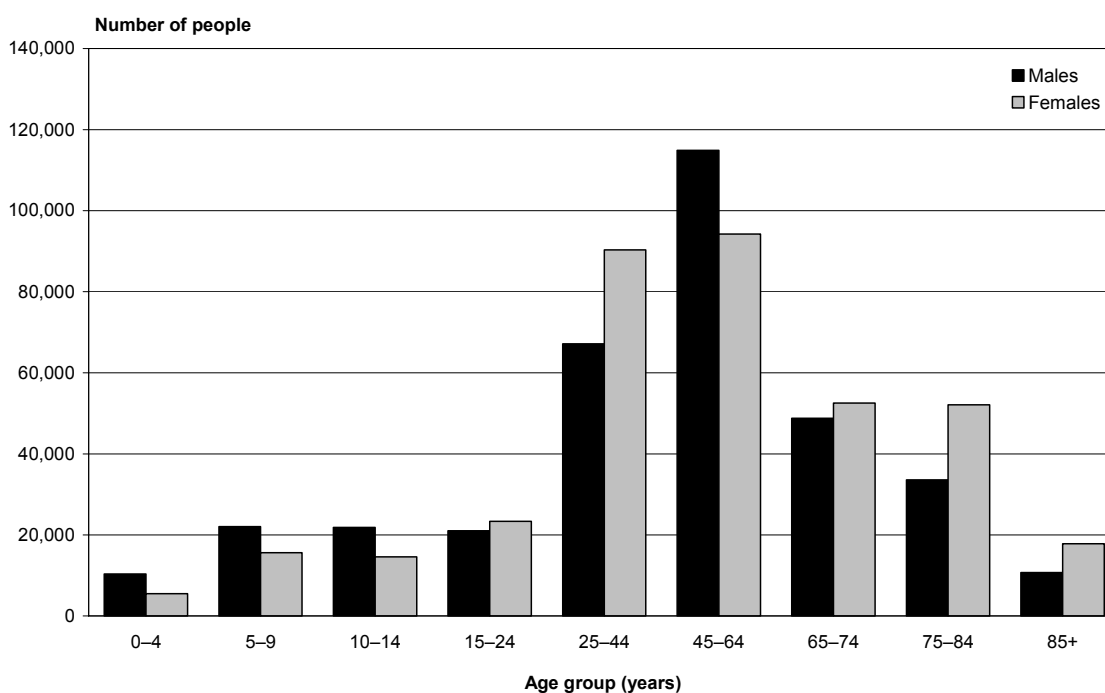
² Chapter 10 describes the nature and extent of disability among adults living in residential facilities.

Prevalence of disability

In 2001, an estimated 716,500 people with disability, 626,500 adults and 90,000 children, were living in private households.³

Slightly more than half (51 percent) of these 716,500 people were aged 25–64, 26 percent were aged 65–84 and 4 percent were aged 85 and over. An estimated 366,100 (51 percent) were female and 350,400 (49 percent) were male (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Number of people (adults and children) with disability living in households, by age and sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.1.

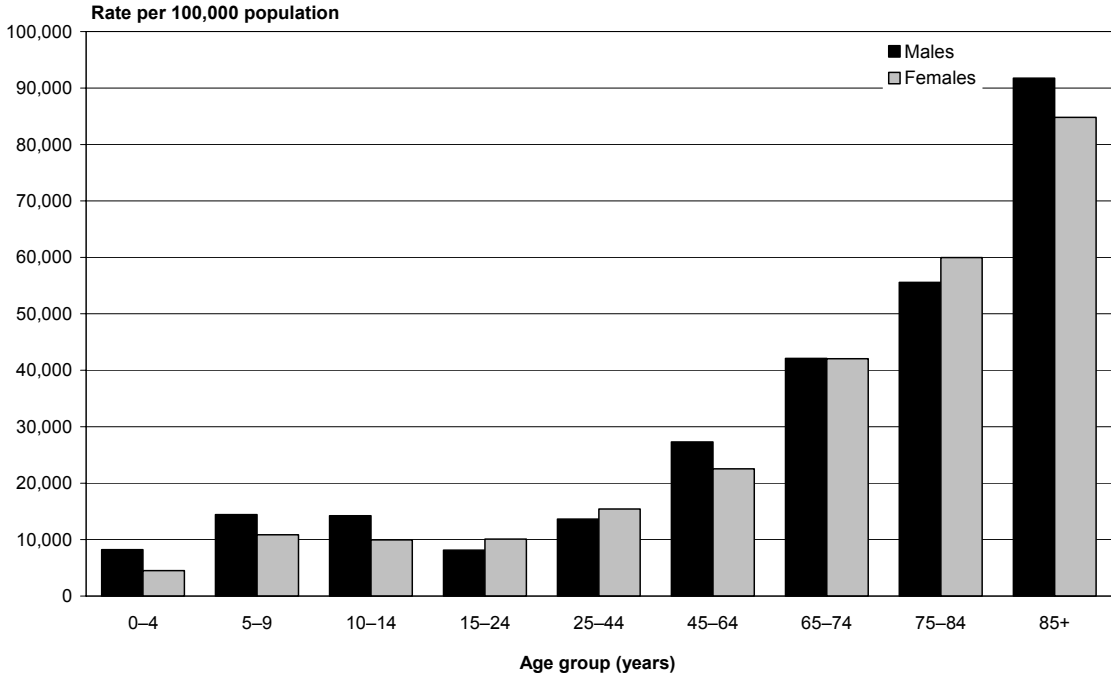
When these estimates of the number of people with disability are compared with the total number of people living in New Zealand households (that is, people with disability plus people without disability), they show that 22 percent of adults and 11 percent of children had at least one kind of disability in 2001.

³ See Chapter 1 for a description of how households were defined in the 2001 Household Disability Survey.

Age-specific and age-standardised rates of disability

The prevalence of disability increases with age, and is substantially higher in the older age groups. People aged 85 and over had the highest age-specific rate of disability (87,300 per 100,000), with people aged 75–84 (58,200 per 100,000) and 65–74 (42,100 per 100,000) having the next highest rates. By contrast, the 0–4, 5–9, 10–14 and 15–24 age groups all had age-specific rates of disability below 13,000 per 100,000 (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Rates of disability among people (adults and children) living in households, by age and sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.2.

Overall, males had a slightly higher age-standardised rate of disability than females (18,000 per 100,000 compared with 17,000 per 100,000).⁴ An important factor contributing to this was the higher prevalence of disability among boys (13 percent) compared with girls (9 percent). Males also had higher age-specific rates of disability than females in the 45–64 and 85 and over age groups.

⁴ Age standardisation adjusts for the different age structures of groups within a population, allowing for better comparison of disability rates between groups. For more detail on the use of age-standardisation, see chapter 1.

Disability prevalence and ethnicity

In 2001, just over three-quarters (77 percent) of people with disability living in households were European, 15 percent (an estimated 106,500 people) were Māori, 4 percent (an estimated 27,700) were Pacific peoples, and 3 percent (an estimated 21,000 people) were Asian/Other peoples (Table 2.1).⁵

Table 2.1: Number and percentage of people (adults and children) with disability living in households, by age, sex and ethnic group, 2001

Ethnic group	Sex	Age group (years)							
		0–14	%	15–64	%	65 or over	%	Total	%
European	Male	33,500	12	154,100	57	84,500	31	272,100	100
	Female	18,800	7	152,600	55	107,700	39	279,000	100
	Total	52,300	9	306,700	56	192,200	35	551,100	100
Māori	Male	15,600	32	29,400	60	4,100	8	49,100	100
	Female	12,800	22	38,400	67	6,200	11	57,400	100
	Total	28,400	27	67,800	64	10,300	10	106,500	100
Pacific	Male	3,500	27	8,200	63	–	–	13,000	100
	Female	2,100	15	10,200	70	2,300	16	14,700	100
	Total	5,700	21	18,300	66	3,700	13	27,700	100
Asian/Other	Male	1,100	11	7,300	69	2,200	21	10,600	100
	Female	1,100	10	5,500	53	3,900	37	10,500	100
	Total	2,200	11	12,800	61	6,100	29	21,100	100
Not specified	Male	–	–	4,200	74	–	–	5,600	100
	Female	900	20	–	–	2,400	54	4,500	100
	Total	1,400	14	5,300	53	3,400	34	10,100	100
Total	Male	54,200	15	203,000	58	93,100	27	350,400	100
	Female	35,700	10	207,900	57	122,500	33	366,100	100
	Total	90,000	13	410,900	57	215,600	30	716,500	100

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

– Percentages too small to report (estimated frequencies outside the 70 percent relative sampling error cut-off point).

Note: The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.

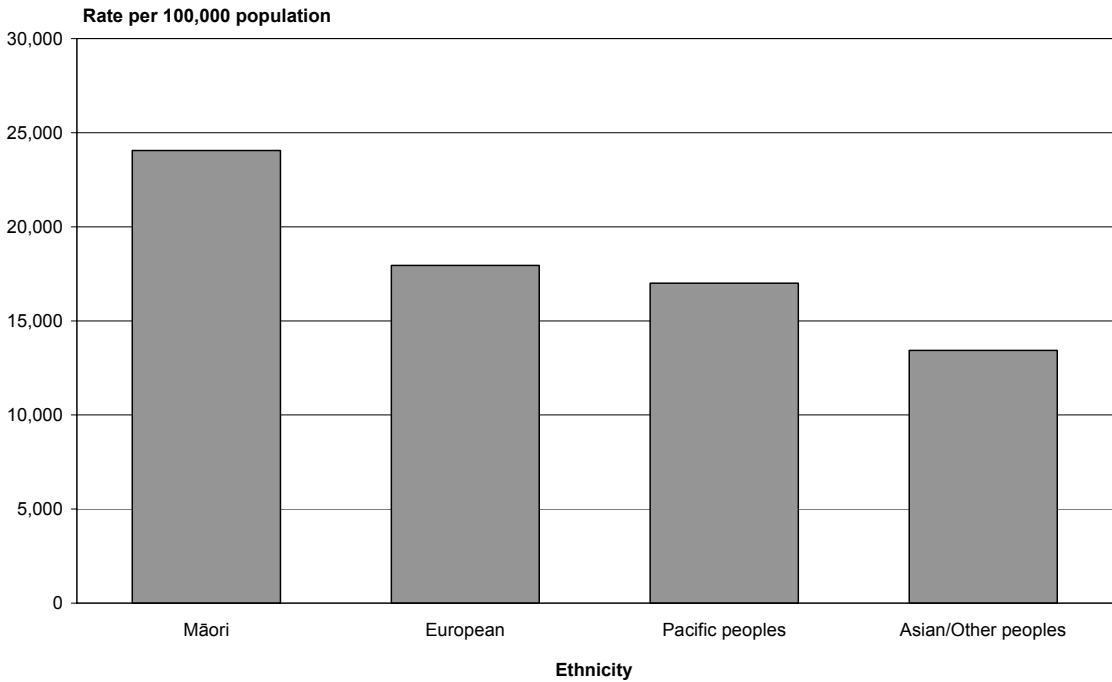
⁵ Therefore, the ethnic composition of the population of people with disability was similar, but not identical, to the ethnic composition of the New Zealand population as a whole. In 2001, the total New Zealand household population (that is, people with disability plus people without disability) was estimated to include 70 percent Europeans, 14 percent Māori, 5 percent Pacific peoples and 6 percent Asian/Other people.

Children with disability featured prominently in the Māori and Pacific ethnic groups. More than a quarter of Māori with disability (27 percent) and one in five Pacific peoples with disability (21 percent) were children. This contrasted with the European ethnic group where only 9 percent of those with disability were children. Likewise, in the Asian/Other ethnic group only 11 percent of people with disability were children.

Unadjusted for age (that is, before age standardisation to adjust for age-related factors such as the relatively high proportion of older people in the European group), 22 percent of Europeans and 21 percent of Māori had one or more disabilities, compared with 14 percent of Pacific peoples and 10 percent of Asian/Other peoples.

After age standardisation, Māori had the highest rate of disability (24,100 per 100,000). European people had the next highest rate (17,900 per 100,000), followed by Pacific peoples (17,000 per 100,000). The Asian/Other group had the lowest rate (13,400 per 100,000) (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Age-standardised rates of disability in people (adults and children) living in households, by ethnic group, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Calculated from data in Appendix Table 2.4.
- Age-standardised to World Health Organization (WHO) World Standard Population.

Prevalence of disability in urban and rural areas

Eighty-seven percent of New Zealanders with disability, an estimated 621,000 people, lived in households in urban areas. The remaining 13 percent, an estimated 95,500 people, lived in households in rural areas.⁶

People living in urban households had only a slightly higher age-standardised rate of disability (17,900 per 100,000) than people living in rural households (16,600 per 100,000). However, in the 75 and over age group, urban women had a markedly higher rate of disability than rural women (Table 2.2). Rates of disability were also higher for urban males compared with rural males in the 75 and over age group, and for urban females compared with rural females in the 0–14, 15–44 and 65–74 age groups (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Rates (per 100,000 population) of disability among people (adults and children) living in urban and rural households, by age and sex, 2001

		Age group (years)				
		0–14	15–44	45–64	65–74	75 and over
Males	Urban	12,500	11,500	27,700	42,000	62,000
	Rural	12,500	13,700	25,600	42,700	57,100
	Total	12,500	11,800	27,300	42,100	61,400
Females	Urban	9,100	14,400	22,100	42,600	66,300
	Rural	6,300	10,400	24,600	38,100	49,200
	Total	8,700	13,900	22,600	42,100	64,800

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Prevalence of disability by region

To assist with the funding and delivery of health and disability support services across the country, New Zealand is divided into administrative regions. In 2001 these were the Northern, Midland, Central and Southern regions.⁷ The Northern region included Northland and Auckland, the Midland region included Waikato, Rotorua, Taupo, Bay of Plenty and Taranaki, the Central region included Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Wairarapa, Wanganui, Manawatu and Wellington, and the Southern region covered the whole of the South Island.

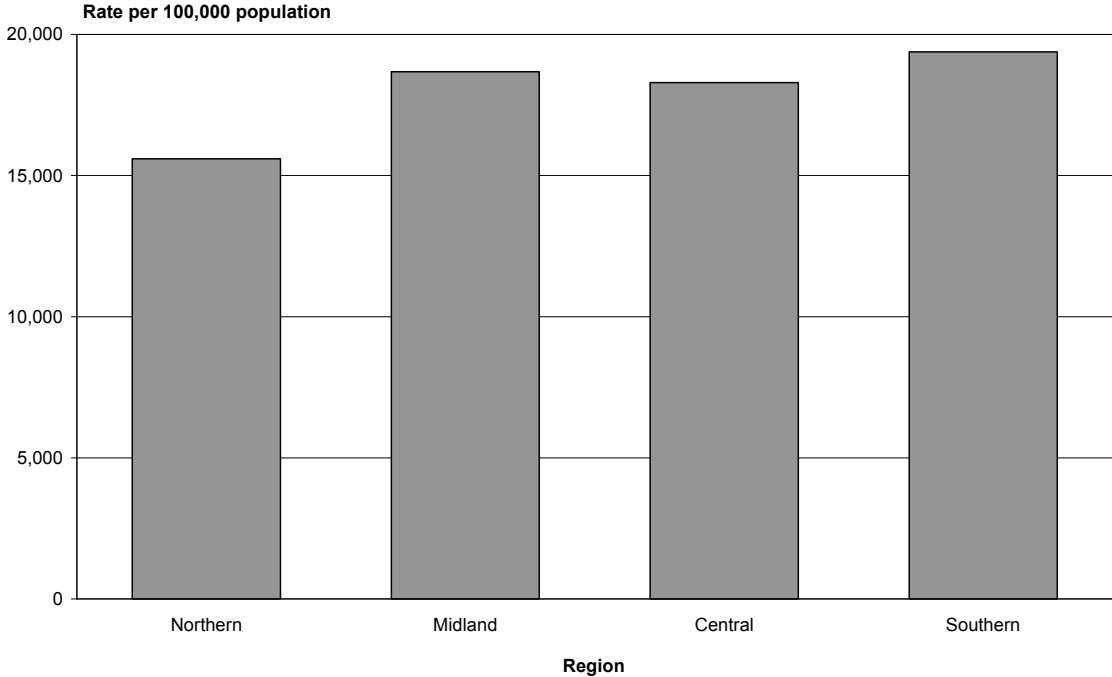
In 2001, the Northern region had the most people with disability living in households, an estimated 199,900 individuals or 28 percent of all people with disability in households. Not far behind was the Southern region with 192,600 people with disability (27 percent). The Central region had 153,300 people with disability (21 percent), while the Midland region had the lowest number, an estimated 134,900 people or 19 percent of the total population of people with disability in households.

⁶ An urban area is defined as a part of a city or parts of cities and/or part of a district or parts of districts with a population of 1000 people or more (Statistics New Zealand 2001). A rural area is any other part of New Zealand.

⁷ In 2001, these regional boundaries were used by the Ministry of Health and Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC).

Figure 2.5 shows the age-standardised rates of disability for the four regions. In 2001, the Northern region had the lowest disability rate (15,600 per 100,000 population). The Central region (18,300 per 100,000) and Midland region (18,700 per 100,000) had mid-range rates, and the Southern region had the highest rate (19,400 per 100,000).⁸

Figure 2.5: Age-standardised rates of disability among people (adults and children) living in households, by region, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Calculated from data in Appendix Tables 2.8 and 2.9.
- Age-standardised to WHO World Standard Population.

⁸ See chapters 8 and 9 for age-specific rates for Māori/non-Māori and Pacific/non-Pacific populations.

Multiple disabilities

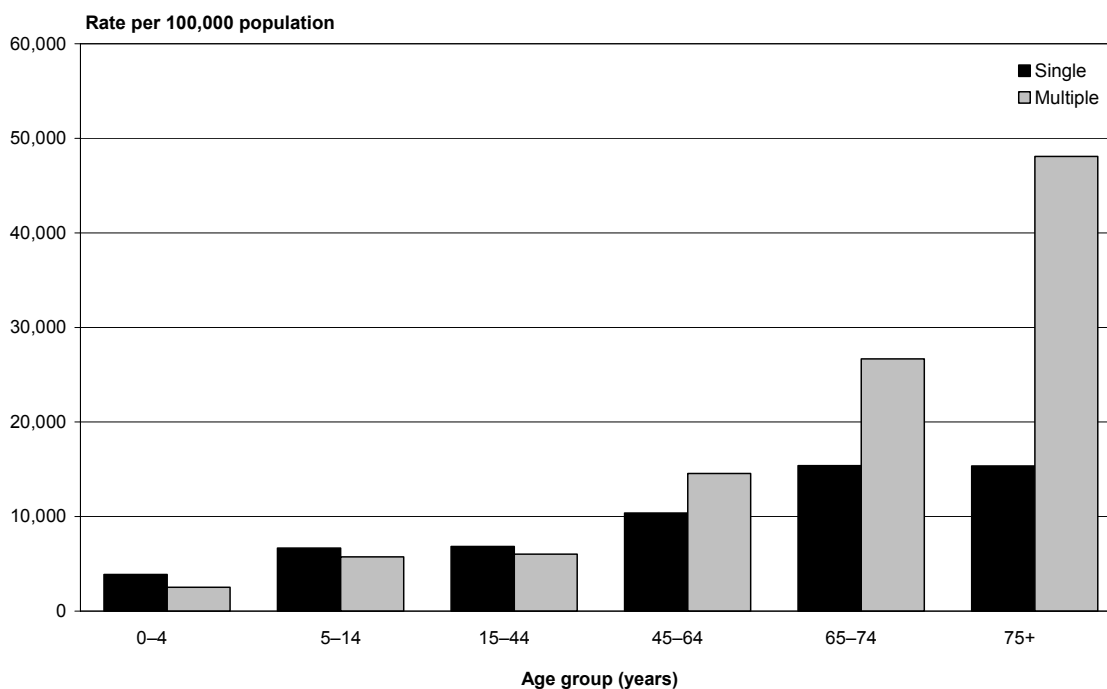
The 2001 Household Disability Survey examined how many people with disability had more than one type of disability, such as a hearing disability combined with a seeing disability, or a mobility disability combined with an intellectual disability.⁹

Over half (57 percent) the 716,500 people with disability living in households had multiple disabilities. A similar proportion of females and males had multiple disabilities (58 percent and 56 percent respectively).

Older people were more likely than younger people to have multiple disabilities. Seventy-six percent of people aged 75 and over with disability had multiple disabilities, as did 58 percent of people aged 45–64 with disability.

Comparing these figures with the total number of New Zealanders living in households (that is, people with disability plus people without disability) shows that 48 percent of all people aged 75 and over had multiple disabilities, as did 27 percent of people aged 65–74. By contrast, only 3 percent of people aged 0–4 and 6 percent of people aged 5–14 and 15–44 had multiple disabilities (Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6: Rates of single and multiple disabilities among people (adults and children) living in households, by age, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.11.

⁹ A person with a single disability may not necessarily be less severely disabled than a person with multiple disabilities. Sometimes a person with a single disability may be severely impaired, while a person with two or three types of disability may be only mildly or moderately impaired.

Types of disability

This section describes the types of disability experienced by adults and children living in households. Adults and children are considered separately, as the 2001 Household Disability Survey defined some types of disability differently for children than adults.

Disability type – adults

The types of disability reported by adults in the 2001 Household Disability Survey were categorised into 10 groups:

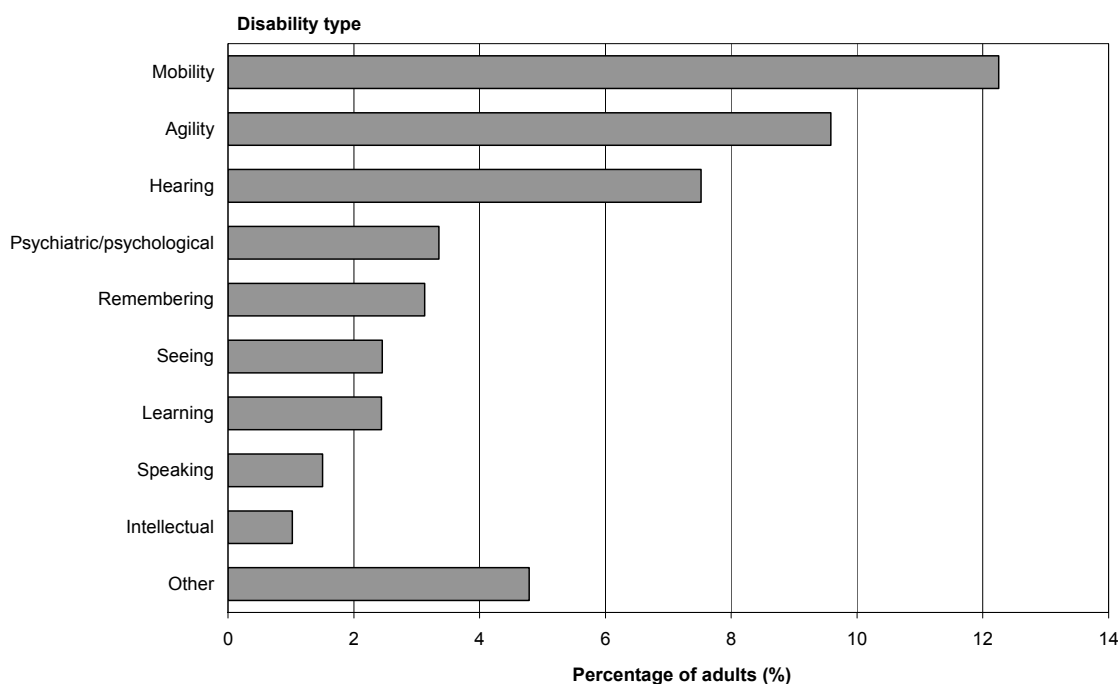
- mobility
- agility
- hearing
- seeing
- speaking
- psychiatric/psychological
- learning
- remembering
- intellectual
- other.¹⁰

¹⁰ The 'other' category includes other types of long-term condition or health problem that cause people ongoing difficulty with, or stops them from doing, everyday activities that people their age can usually do.

Figure 2.7 shows the percentage of all adult New Zealanders living in households (that is, people with disability plus people without disability) estimated to have these types of disability in 2001.

Readers should note that participants in the 2001 Household Disability Survey could report more than one type of disability. The data in Figure 2.7 include all the different disabilities reported, not just those identified as a person’s main disability.¹¹

Figure 2.7: Percentage of adults living in households experiencing different types of disability, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Calculated from data in Appendix Table 2.12.
- If individuals reported more than one disability type, they were counted in each applicable disability group.

Mobility

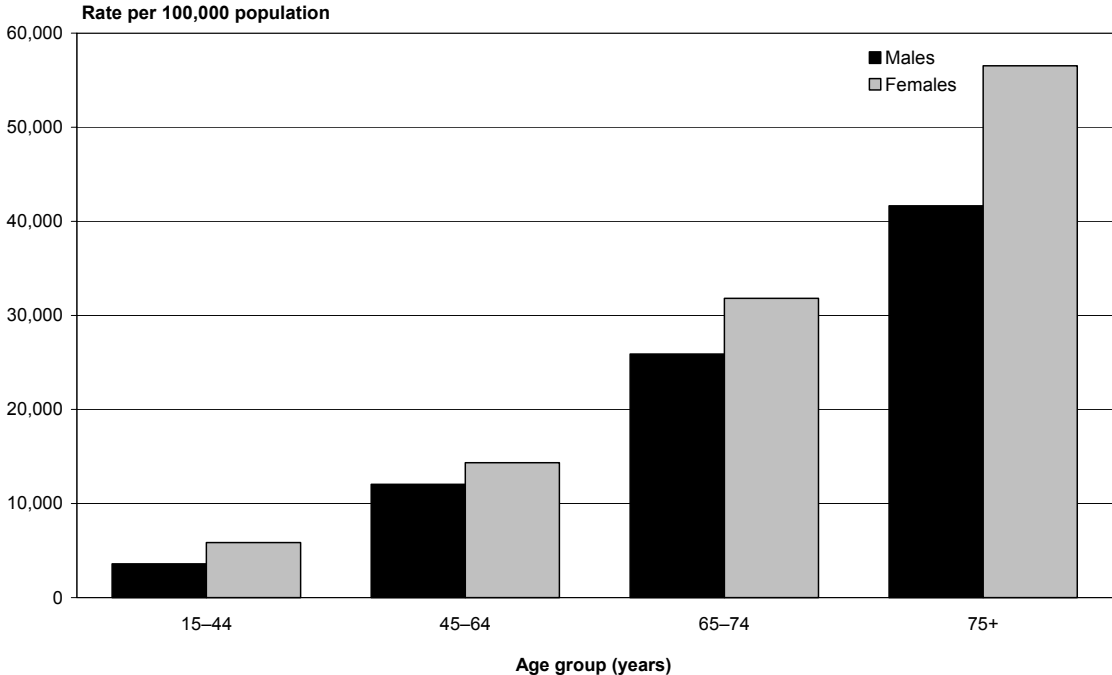
Mobility disability was the most common type of disability identified in adults. An estimated 346,300 adults living in households, 12 percent of the adult household population (that is, people with disability plus people without disability), had mobility disabilities. The specific kinds of mobility disability they experienced included having difficulty with or being unable to:

- walk about 350 metres without resting
- walk up or down a flight of stairs
- carry an object as heavy as 5 kilograms for 10 metres
- move from room to room
- stand for longer than 20 minutes.

¹¹ Survey results relating to people’s main disability are presented later in this chapter.

Mobility disability was especially common in older New Zealanders, with an estimated 29 percent of people aged 65–74 and 51 percent of people aged 75 and over living in households having a mobility disability (Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8: Rates of mobility disability among adults living in households, by age and sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.13.

Across all the adult age groups, women were more likely than men to have mobility disability. Fourteen percent of women living in households had mobility disability, compared with 10 percent of men.

The most common kind of mobility disability was difficulty walking or not being able to walk 350 metres without resting. Nearly two out of three adults with a mobility disability had this kind of limitation (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Categories of mobility limitation in adults living in households, 2001

Category of mobility limitation	Percentage of adults with a mobility disability who had this kind of limitation (%)	Estimated number of adults in New Zealand households with this kind of mobility limitation
Can walk 350 m but with difficulty	46	159,100
Cannot walk 350 m	19	65,300
Total	65	224,400
Can walk up and down a flight of stairs but with difficulty	48	167,400
Cannot walk up and down a flight of stairs	8	26,000
Total	56	193,400
Can carry 5 kg for 10 m but with difficulty	35	122,000
Cannot carry 5 kg for 10 m	19	65,100
Total	54	187,100
Can stand for 20 minutes but with difficulty	40	139,500
Cannot stand for 20 minutes	10	34,800
Total	50	174,200
Can move from one room to another but with difficulty	10	35,300
Cannot move from one room to another	1	2,900
Total	11	38,100

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- If individuals reported more than one category of mobility limitation they were counted in each applicable mobility limitation category.
- The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.

Difficulty walking or being unable to walk up and down a flight of stairs was the second most common kind of mobility limitation, experienced by over half (56 percent) the adults with any kind of mobility disability.

Almost as common was difficulty carrying or not being able to carry a 5 kilogram weight for 10 metres. This kind of mobility limitation was reported by 54 percent of adults with a mobility disability. Difficulty standing or not being able to stand for 20 minutes was reported by 50 percent of adults with a mobility disability.

The least common kind of mobility limitation was difficulty moving or not being able to move from one room to another. This significant limitation was reported by 11 percent of adults with mobility disability living in households, an estimated 38,100 adults.

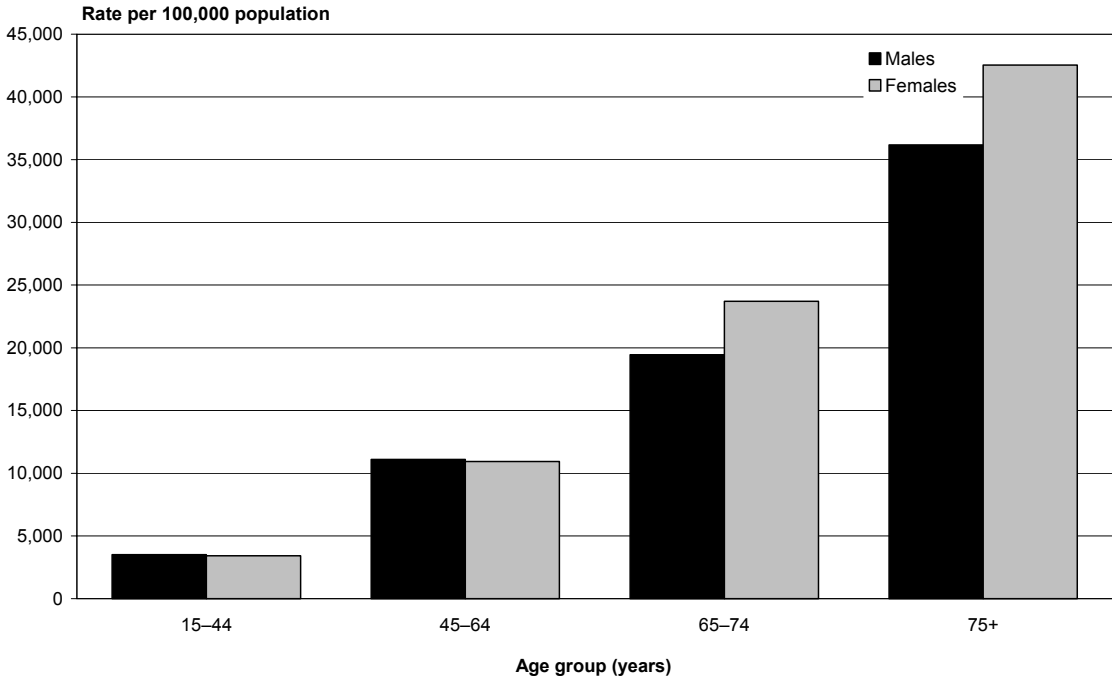
Agility

Agility disability was the second most common disability type in adults. An estimated 270,900 adults, 10 percent of the total adult household population, had an agility disability.

People with agility disability had difficulty with or could not do one or more of the following: bending; dressing; grasping; cutting their toenails; reaching; cutting their food; or getting themselves in or out of bed.

Like mobility disability, agility disability was most common in the older age groups. An estimated 22 percent of people aged 65–74 and 40 percent of people aged 75 and over living in households had an agility disability (Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9: Rates of agility disability among adults living in households, by age and sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey
 Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.13.

The two most common kinds of agility limitation were:

- difficulty bending down or not being able to bend down to pick up something off the floor
- difficulty cutting or not being able to cut one’s toenails.

Both these kinds of agility limitation were experienced by 57 percent of adults with agility disability, corresponding to an estimated 154,100 people in the case of bending down and 155,700 people in the case of cutting toenails.

An estimated 96,000 adults, 35 percent of all people with agility disability, had difficulty reaching out in certain directions with one or both arms, or were unable to reach out at all with one or both arms.

An estimated 74,600 adults, 28 percent of all people with agility disability, had difficulty using or were unable to use their fingers to grasp things like scissors or pliers. This included an estimated 7100 people who were completely unable to hold these kinds of object.

A smaller proportion of adults with agility disability (16 percent), an estimated 42,400 people, had difficulty getting, or were unable to get, into and out of bed, because of a long-term condition or health problem.

Twelve percent of adults with agility disability, an estimated 31,600 people, had difficulty cutting or could not cut their food.

Hearing

In the 2001 Household Disability Survey, adults were defined as having a hearing disability if they reported experiencing any long-term (six months or more) difficulty hearing what was being said in a conversation with another person or three other people. If the difficulty or inability to hear was completely corrected by, for example, a hearing aid, the person was *not* defined as having a hearing disability.¹²

Hearing disability was the third most common disability type in adults. An estimated 212,500 adults, 8 percent of all adults living in households, had some kind of hearing disability.

Within this group, an estimated 202,400 people, or 95 percent of all people with hearing disability, had difficulty hearing or were unable to hear what was said in a conversation with three other people (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Categories of hearing limitation in adults living in households, 2001

Categories of hearing disability	Percentage of adults with a hearing disability who had this kind of limitation (%)	Estimated number of adults in New Zealand households with this kind of hearing limitation
Can hear conversation with three other people but with difficulty	91	194,000
Cannot hear conversation with three other people	4	8,400
Total	95	202,400
Can hear conversation with one other person but with difficulty	50	106,100
Cannot hear conversation with one other person	1	2,100
Total	51	108,300

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

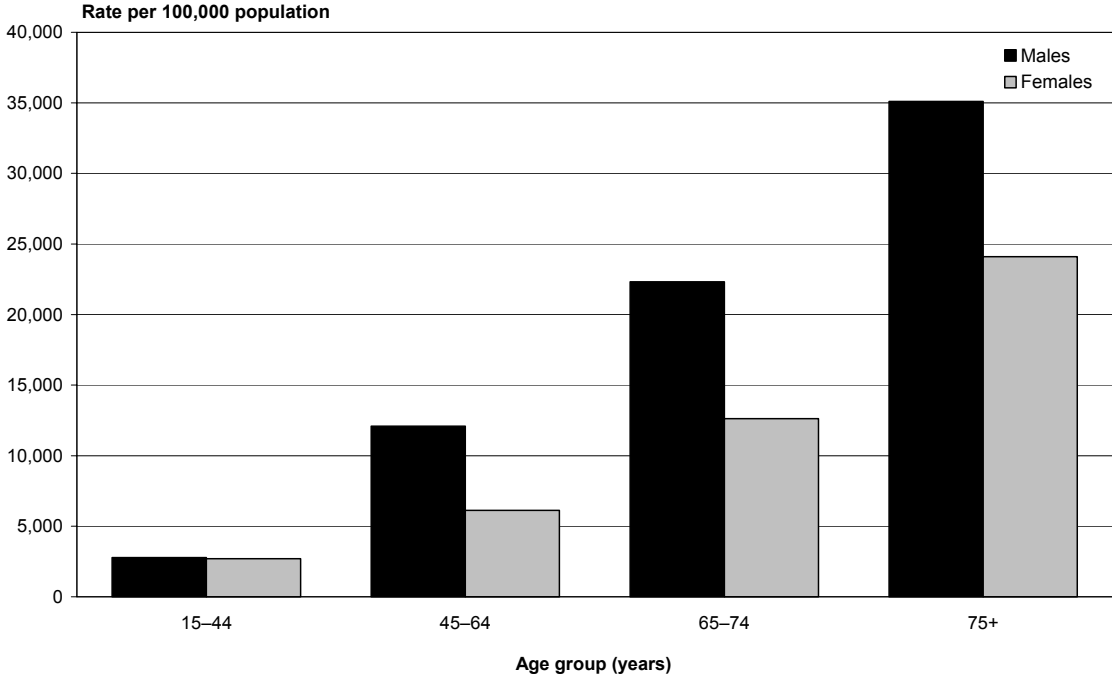
- If individuals reported more than one category of hearing disability, they were counted in each applicable hearing disability category.
- The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.

¹² All children using hearing aids were defined as having a hearing disability.

An estimated 108,300 people, or 51 percent of all adults with hearing disability, had difficulty hearing or were unable to hear what was said in a conversation with one other person.

Hearing disability was most common in the older age groups. A third of all men (35 percent) and a quarter of all women (24 percent) aged 75 and over living in households had hearing disability, compared with just 3 percent of men and women in the 15–44 age group (Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10: Rates of hearing disability among adults living in households, by age and sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.13.

Seeing

In the 2001 Household Disability Survey, adults were defined as having a seeing or vision disability if they had difficulty seeing or were unable to see ordinary newspaper print or the face of someone across a room, even when using glasses or contact lenses (if these were usually worn).

Based on this definition, an estimated 69,300 adults (2 percent of all adults living in households) had a seeing disability. Men comprised 40 percent of adults with seeing disability (27,800 individuals) and women 60 percent (41,500 individuals).

Age-specific rates of seeing disability were higher in the older adult age groups and highest in the 75 and over age group, with more than 1 in every 10 people aged 75 and over (12,400 per 100,000 population) having at least one kind of seeing limitation.

It was more common for adults with seeing disability to have difficulty seeing newspaper print than to have difficulty seeing someone's face across the room, that is from 4 metres (12 feet) away (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Categories of seeing limitation reported by adults living in households, 2001

Category of seeing limitation	Percentage of adults with a seeing disability who had this kind of limitation (%)	Estimated number of adults in New Zealand households with this kind of seeing limitation
Can see newspaper print, but with difficulty	75	52,200
Cannot see newspaper print	13	8,700
Total	88	60,900
Can see someone's face across the room, but with difficulty	35	24,200
Cannot see someone's face across the room	10	6,700
Total	45	30,900

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- If individuals reported more than one category of seeing disability, they were counted in each applicable seeing disability category.
- The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.

Seventy-five percent of adults with seeing disability (an estimated 52,200 adults) *had difficulty* seeing newspaper print, but just 35 percent (24,200 individuals) had difficulty seeing someone's face across the room. Another 8700 adults were estimated to be *unable* to see newspaper print; while 6700 adults (1 in every 10 people with seeing disability) were unable to see someone's face across the room.

Speaking

Adults participating in the 2001 Household Disability Survey were defined as having a speaking disability if they had a long-term condition, health problem or injury (such as a brain injury) that caused them to have difficulty speaking and being understood.

Based on this definition, an estimated 42,500 adults, 2 percent of all adults living in households, had a speaking disability.

Rates of speaking disability were similar for men (2 percent) and women (1 percent). Age-specific rates were also similar, ranging from 1 to 3 percent in all adult age groups.

Psychiatric/psychological

Adults were defined as having a psychiatric/psychological disability if they had difficulty with or were prevented from communicating, socialising or doing everyday activities that people their age could usually do because of a long-term emotional, psychological or psychiatric condition.

Based on this definition, 94,800 adults with psychiatric/psychological disabilities were estimated to be living in households in 2001. This was 3 percent of the total New Zealand adult household population. A similar percentage of men (3 percent) and women (4 percent) were estimated to have psychiatric/psychological disability.

Over half of the adults with psychiatric/psychological disability (58 percent), a total of 55,000 people, were in the 15–44 age group.

Seventy-seven percent of the estimated 94,800 adults with psychiatric/psychological disability indicated that the disability caused them difficulty with or stopped them from doing everyday activities. A similar proportion, 75 percent, indicated that the disability caused them difficulty with or stopped them from communicating, mixing with others or socialising.

Remembering

Participants in the 2001 Household Disability Survey were defined as having a disability of recall or memory if they had a long-lasting condition or health problem that caused them to have ongoing difficulty remembering things.

An estimated 88,400 adults (43,300 men and 45,100 women) had a disability of recall or memory. This was 3 percent of the total adult household population.

The prevalence of recall or memory disability increased with age, from an age-specific rate of 2200 per 100,000 in the 15–44 age group to 8700 per 100,000 in the 75 and over age group.

Learning

A person was considered to have a learning disability if they had a long-lasting condition or health problem that affected their mental capacity and made it hard for them to learn. This category of disability was considered to be distinct from intellectual disability (see definition below) and remembering disability (see definition above).

An estimated 68,900 adults (37,200 men and 31,700 women) had learning disability. This was 2 percent of all adult New Zealanders living in households.

Age-specific rates of learning disability were similar across the different adult age groups, ranging from 2000 per 100,000 for the 45–64 age group to 3100 per 100,000 in the 75 and over age group.

Intellectual

Adults participating in the 2001 Household Disability Survey were defined as having an intellectual disability if they:

- needed help or support from organisations like IHC or People First or other people because of an intellectual disability or handicap; or
- had ever gone to a special school or received special education because of an intellectual disability or handicap.¹³

The survey estimated that 28,900 adults (14,200 men and 14,700 women) had intellectual disability. This was 1 percent of all adult New Zealanders living in households.

Seventy-one percent of these 28,900, an estimated 20,400 adults, needed help or support from other people or organisations because of intellectual disability or handicap. Fifty-two percent, an estimated 15,100 adults, had been to a special school or received special education for intellectual disability at some time in their life.

Adults with intellectual disability were predominantly in the younger age groups. Two-thirds (66 percent), an estimated 19,500 people, were in the 15–44 age group.

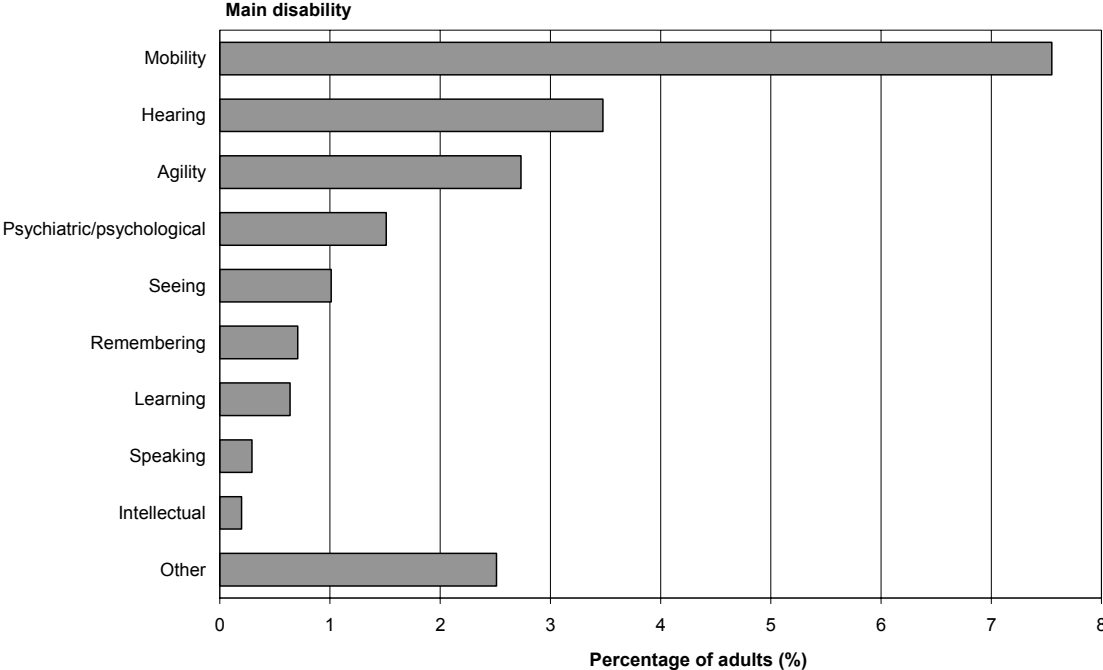
Main disability – adults

As well as identifying all the different types of disability that people had, the 2001 Household Disability Survey asked adults to identify their main disability (this question was not included in the questionnaires used for children). A main disability was defined as the disability that most limited a person's everyday activities.

¹³ This definition of intellectual disability has limitations as it is based on use of services, rather than on an ability to carry out certain types of activity. Thus, adults' access to services could influence whether they were classified as having this type of disability.

By far the most common main disability was mobility disability. Almost 8 percent of all adults living in households, an estimated 213,400 people, indicated that they had disability and that the main type of disability they had was a mobility disability (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11: Types of main disability experienced by adults living in households, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Calculated from data in Appendix Table 2.15.
- The 'Other' category includes other types of long-term condition or health problem that cause people ongoing difficulty with, or stops them from, doing everyday activities that people their age can usually do.

Older people were more likely to have a mobility disability as their main disability than younger people. For example, 35 percent of women and 24 percent of men aged 75 and over had a mobility disability as their main disability, compared with 3 percent of women and 2 percent of men aged 15–44.

Hearing disability was the second most common main disability, reported by an estimated 98,200 adults or almost 4 percent of all adults living in households. Older people were more likely to have a hearing disability as their main disability. In the 75 and over age group, 14 percent of men had a hearing disability as their main disability, as did 6 percent of women. This compared with 2 percent of men and 1 percent of women aged 15–44.

While agility disability was comparatively common in adults (see ‘Disability type – adults’ above), it was much less likely to be reported as people’s main disability. Only 3 percent of adults living in households, an estimated 77,200 people, had a main disability that was an agility disability, even though 10 percent of adults (an estimated 270,900 people) had an agility limitation of some kind. Agility disability as a main disability was more likely among older people. This was experienced by 8 percent of men and 7 percent of women aged 75 and over, compared with 1 percent of both men and women aged 15–44.

An estimated 42,700 adults, some 2 percent of all adult New Zealanders living in households, had a main disability that was a psychiatric/psychological disability.

Seeing disability was the main disability of 1 percent of adults living in households, an estimated 28,600 people.

Less than 1 percent of adults living in households, an estimated 20,000 people, had a main disability related to recall or memory (a remembering disability). A further 18,000 adults had a main disability that was a learning disability.

An estimated 8300 adults had a main disability that was a speaking disability; while an estimated 5500 had a main disability that was an intellectual disability.

Disability type – children

The types of disability experienced by children (aged 0–14) living in households were categorised into nine groups:

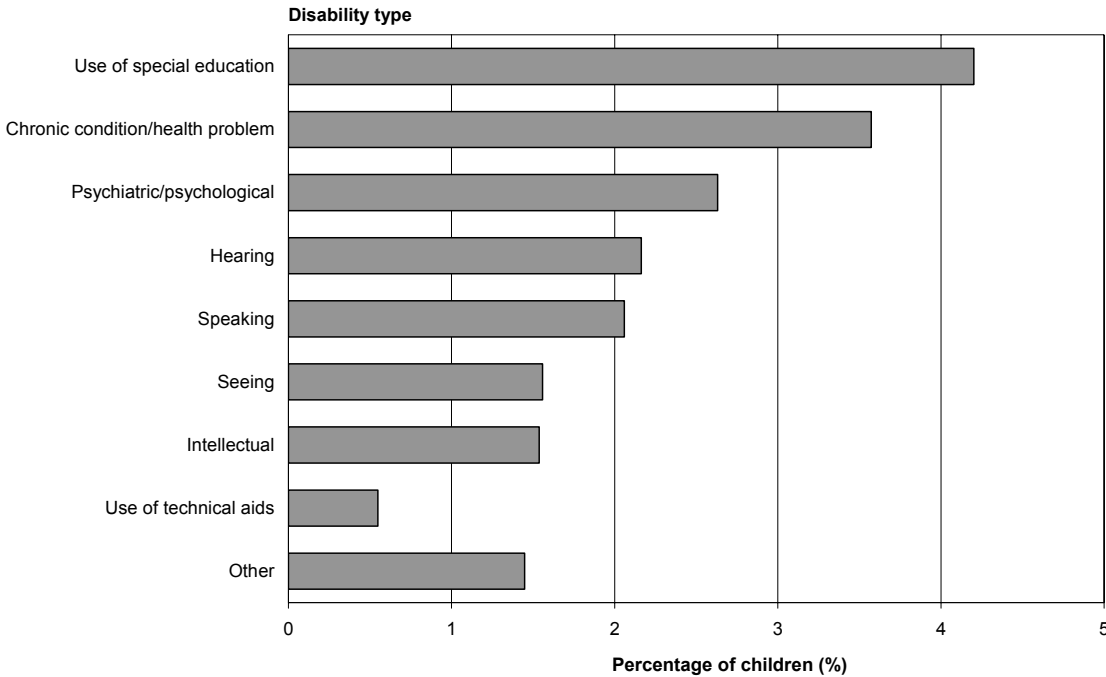
- use of special education (indicating the child was receiving some form of special education and/or had some form of learning disability)
- chronic condition/health problem
- psychiatric/psychological
- hearing
- speaking
- seeing
- intellectual
- use of technical aids (indicating the child used equipment or technology such as a wheelchair, an artificial limb or a hearing aid)
- other.

The disability types used for classifying children in the 2001 Household Disability Survey were different from those used for adults (see earlier in this chapter for the adult classification). Readers should be familiar with these differences before comparing survey results for adults and children. For example, the category ‘use of technical aids’ was not a category used for classifying disability in adults, but it was for children.

Figure 2.12 shows the percentage of all New Zealand children living in households estimated to have these different types of disability in 2001. When examining these data, remember that

45 percent of children with disability had more than one type of disability (see ‘Multiple disabilities’ above). Children with more than one type of disability will, therefore, appear more than once in the disability categories described below.

Figure 2.12: Percentage of children living in households experiencing different types of disability, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Calculated from data in Appendix Table 2.17.
- If individuals reported more than one disability type, they were counted in each applicable disability group.
- The ‘Other’ category includes other types of long-term conditions or health problems that limit a child’s participation at school, play, or any other activities considered usual for a child of their age.

Use of special education

‘Use of special education’ was the most common category of disability identified in children. It was defined as attending a special school, a special unit or class at a regular school or a regular class where special education services were provided, because of a long-term condition or health problem (received special education services). The category also included children who had an Individualised Education Programme (IEP) or Individual Development Programme (IDP) because of learning or developmental difficulties, as well as children who had learning difficulties such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The 2001 Household Disability Survey estimated that 35,500 children used special education. This was 4 percent of all children living in households.

The group included an estimated:¹⁴

- 25,000 children with learning disabilities such as dyslexia or attention deficit disorder
- 17,800 children with an individualised plan or programme at school because of learning or developmental difficulties
- 12,500 children who attended a special school or a special unit or class at a regular school (received special education services).

Boys were more than twice as likely as girls to use special education (6000 per 100,000 population compared with 2400 per 100,000).

Six percent of school-aged children (aged 5–14), an estimated 33,400 children, used special education.

For more details on the use of special education see chapter 4.

Chronic condition/health problem

Children with the following long-term conditions or health problems were defined as having the disability type ‘chronic condition/health problem’:

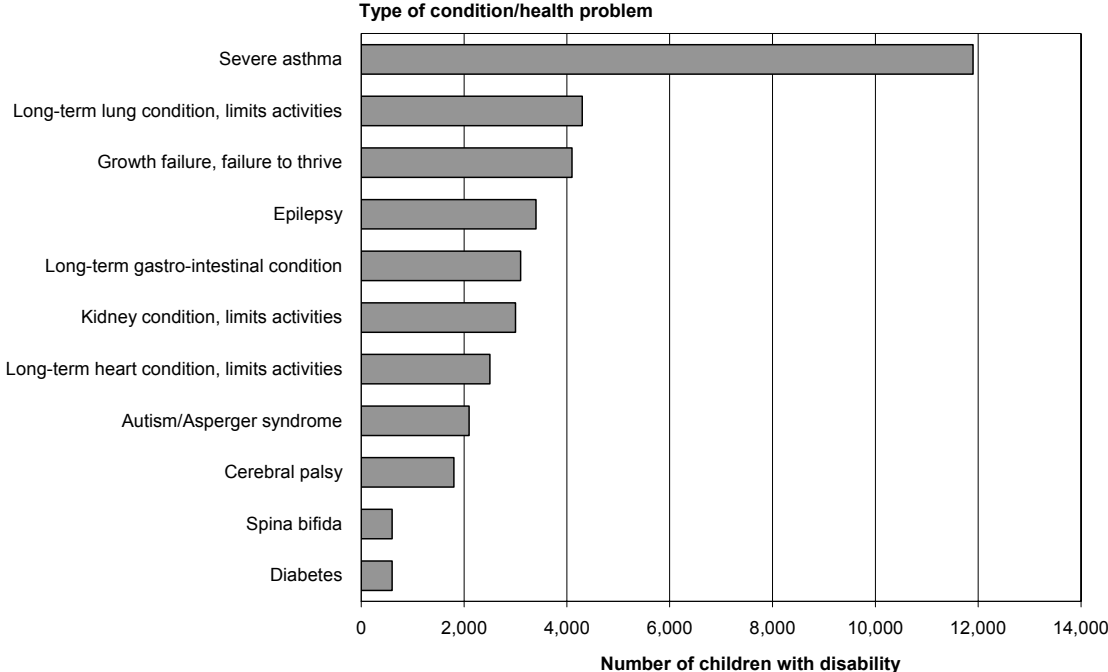
- severe asthma, lung condition or disease (excluding mild asthma or bronchitis)
- heart condition or disease (not including heart murmur)
- kidney condition or disease
- cancer
- diabetes
- epilepsy
- cerebral palsy
- muscular dystrophy
- spina bifida
- long-term gastro-intestinal condition
- growth failure or failure to thrive.

An estimated 30,200 children, 4 percent of children living in households, had chronic conditions/health problems. A slightly higher proportion of boys (4000 per 100,000) than girls (3200 per 100,000) had this kind of disability.

¹⁴ Some individuals could be included in more than one category, such as a child who had dyslexia and attended a special school or class.

Figure 2.13 indicates the most common types of chronic condition/health problem experienced by the children in this disability category.

Figure 2.13: Number of children with disability living in households experiencing most common types of chronic condition/health problem, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Data in Appendix Table 2.19.
- If individuals reported more than one type of condition/health problem, they were counted in each applicable group.

Severe asthma was by far the most common chronic condition/health problem, with an estimated 11,900 children experiencing this degree of asthma.

Psychiatric/psychological

Psychiatric/psychological disability was defined as any long-term emotional, behavioural, psychological, nervous or mental health condition that limited the kind or amount of activity that a child could do at home, school or play.

An estimated 22,200 children, 3 percent of all children living in households, had a psychiatric/psychological disability. Boys (3300 per 100,000) had higher rates of psychiatric/psychological disability than girls (1900 per 100,000).

Hearing

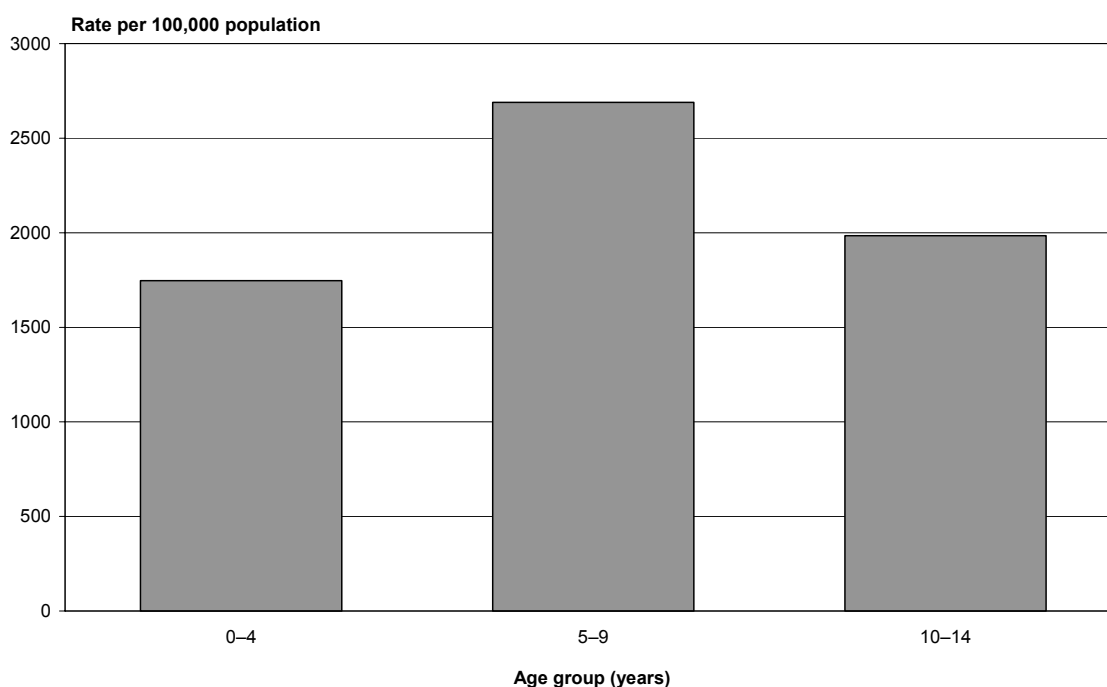
Children with a hearing problem that was not fully corrected were defined by the survey as having a hearing disability. Children wearing hearing aids were assumed to have an uncorrected hearing problem (that is, they were automatically defined as having a hearing disability).¹⁵

Children with grommets whose hearing problem was not fully corrected were also classified as having a hearing disability. However, children with grommets whose hearing problem was corrected were not classified as having a hearing disability.

Using these definitions, an estimated 18,300 children, 2 percent of all children living in households, had a hearing disability.

The highest rate of hearing disability in children was in the 5–9 years age group (Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.14: Rates of hearing disability among children living in households, by age, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.18.

Speaking

This group included children who had difficulty speaking and being understood because of a long-term condition or health problem.

An estimated 17,400 children, 2 percent of all children living in households, had a speaking disability. A slightly higher proportion of boys than girls had a speaking disability. Children in the 5–9 age group had higher age-specific rates of speaking disability than children in the 0–4 and 10–14 age groups.

¹⁵ Adults using hearing aids were classified as having a hearing disability only if their hearing loss was not corrected by their hearing aid.

Seeing

Children were defined as having a vision or seeing disability if they were blind or had a seeing difficulty that was not corrected by glasses or contact lenses.

An estimated 13,200 children, 2 percent of all children in households, had seeing disability. Similar proportions of boys and girls had seeing disability. The highest age-specific rates of seeing disability were among children aged 10–14 (2100 per 100,000).

Intellectual

An intellectual disability in children was defined as any kind of intellectual disability, intellectual handicap or intellectual developmental delay.

An estimated 13,000 children, some 2 percent of all children living in households, had an intellectual disability. Boys (2100 per 100,000) had a higher rate of intellectual disability than girls (1000 per 100,000).

Use of technical aids

The category ‘use of technical aids’ included children who, because of a long-term condition or health problem, used equipment or technology such as a brace, a wheelchair, a special buggy or trolley, a standing frame, crutches, walking sticks, a walking frame or an artificial limb.

An estimated 4600 children, 0.5 percent of all children in households, used technical aids because of a long-term condition or health problem. Use of technical aids was almost as prevalent in boys as girls (500 per 100,000 and 600 per 100,000 respectively).¹⁶

Cause of disability

Information about the causes of disability can be useful for planning strategies to prevent or reduce the incidence of disability in the population.

The 2001 Household Disability Survey categorised the causes of disability into five groups:

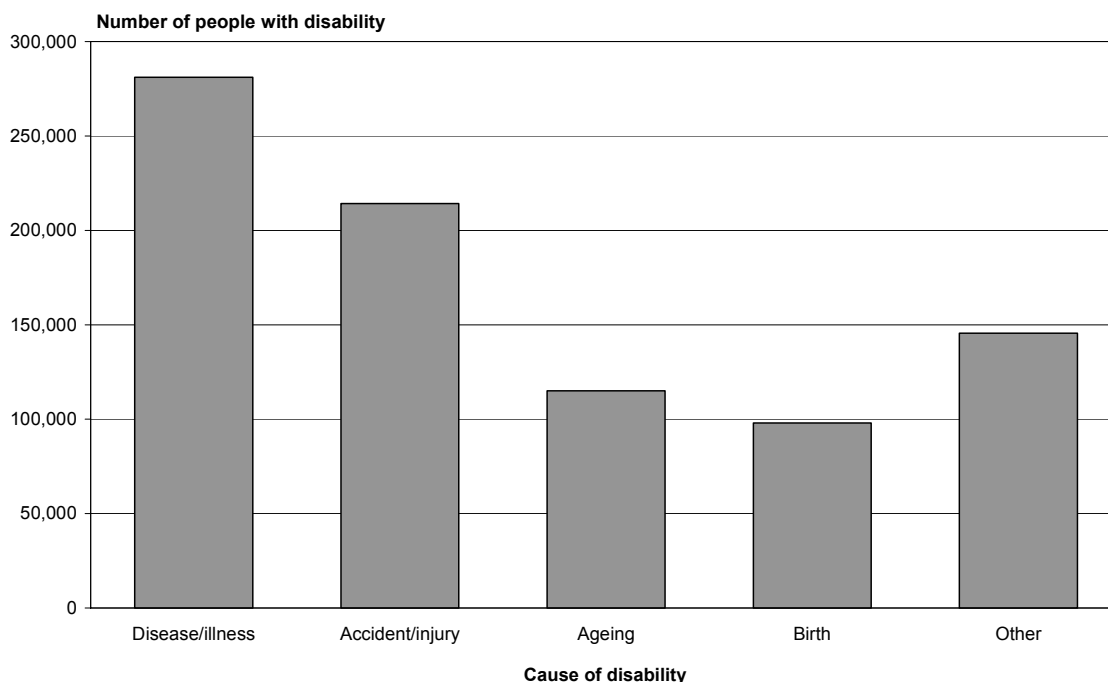
- disease/illness
- accident/injury
- conditions existing or occurring at birth
- natural ageing (this option was not initially read out by interviewers and was used only where respondents did not select one of the previous three categories)
- other (for example, childbirth, alcohol, illegal drugs, medical side-effects, working conditions and exposure to environmental factors such as noise and weather).

Only one cause was recorded for each disability type that an individual had.

¹⁶ Further information on the use of equipment and technical aids by children with disability is in chapter 3.

In 2001, the most common cause of disability among people (adults and children) living in households was disease/illness. An estimated 281,000 people, 8 percent of all people living in households, had one or more disabilities caused by disease/illness (Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15: Number of people (adults and children) living in households experiencing different causes of disability, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Data in Appendix Table 2.20.
- If individuals reported more than one disability type, they were counted in each applicable cause group.

Accident/injury was the second most common cause of disability, estimated to have caused the disabilities of 214,200 people or 6 percent of all people in households.¹⁷

This was followed by ageing, which was estimated to have caused the disabilities of 115,100 people; 3 percent of all New Zealanders in households.

The least common cause of disability was conditions existing or occurring at birth. An estimated 98,000 people or about 3 percent of all New Zealanders in households had disabilities attributed to this cause.

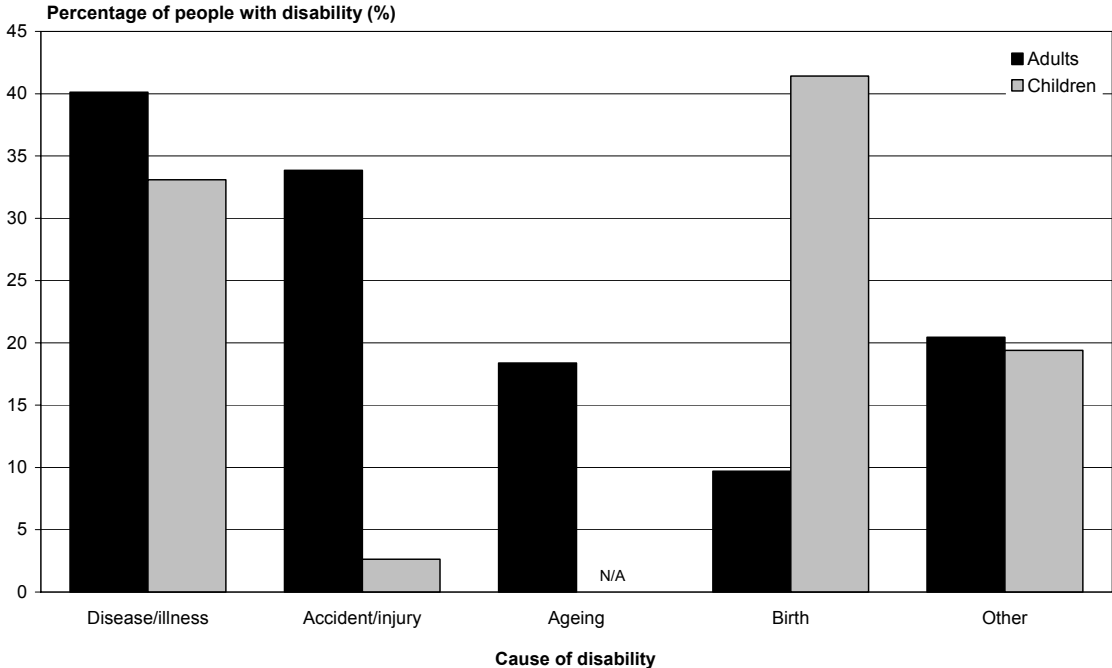
Cause of disability in adults and children

The disability cause profile of adults was different from the disability cause profile of children.

¹⁷ The phrase 'accident/injury' was used in the survey questions. However, the preferred term for 'accident' is now 'unintentional injury'.

In adults, the most common cause of disability was disease/illness, reported by 40 percent of adults with disability or an estimated 251,300 people. The second most common cause was accident/injury, reported by 34 percent of adults with disability or an estimated 212,000 people. Conditions present at birth were relatively uncommon (10 percent of adults or an estimated 60,700 people) (Figure 2.16).

Figure 2.16: Percentage of people (adults and children) experiencing different causes of disability, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

N/A: Not applicable as ageing was not a disability cause category used for children.

Notes:

- Data in Appendix Table 2.20.
- If individuals reported more than one disability type, they were counted in each applicable cause group.

In children, conditions present at birth were the most common cause of disability, affecting 41 percent of children with disability or an estimated 37,300 children.

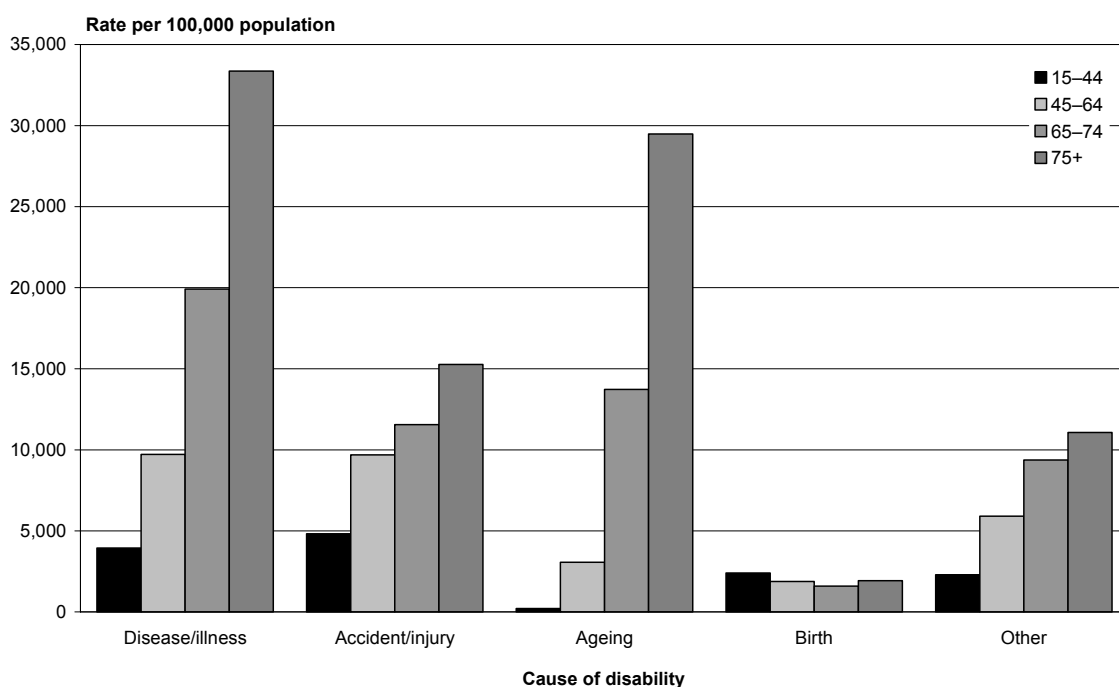
The second most common cause was disease/illness, affecting 33 percent of children with disability, an estimated 29,800 children.

In contrast to adults, disability caused by accident/injury was uncommon in children. Just 3 percent of children in households, an estimated 2400 children, had disabilities caused this way.

Age-specific rates for adults

In adults, the rate of disability caused by disease/illness increased steadily with age, from 3900 per 100,000 in the 15–44 age group to 33,400 per 100,000 in the 75 and over age group (Figure 2.17).

Figure 2.17: Rates for the causes of disability in adults living in households, by age, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Data in Appendix Table 2.21.
- If individuals reported more than one disability type, they were counted in each applicable cause group.

The same was the case for disabilities caused by ageing, which rose from a rate of 3100 per 100,000 in the 45–64 age group to 29,500 per 100,000 in the 75 and over age group.

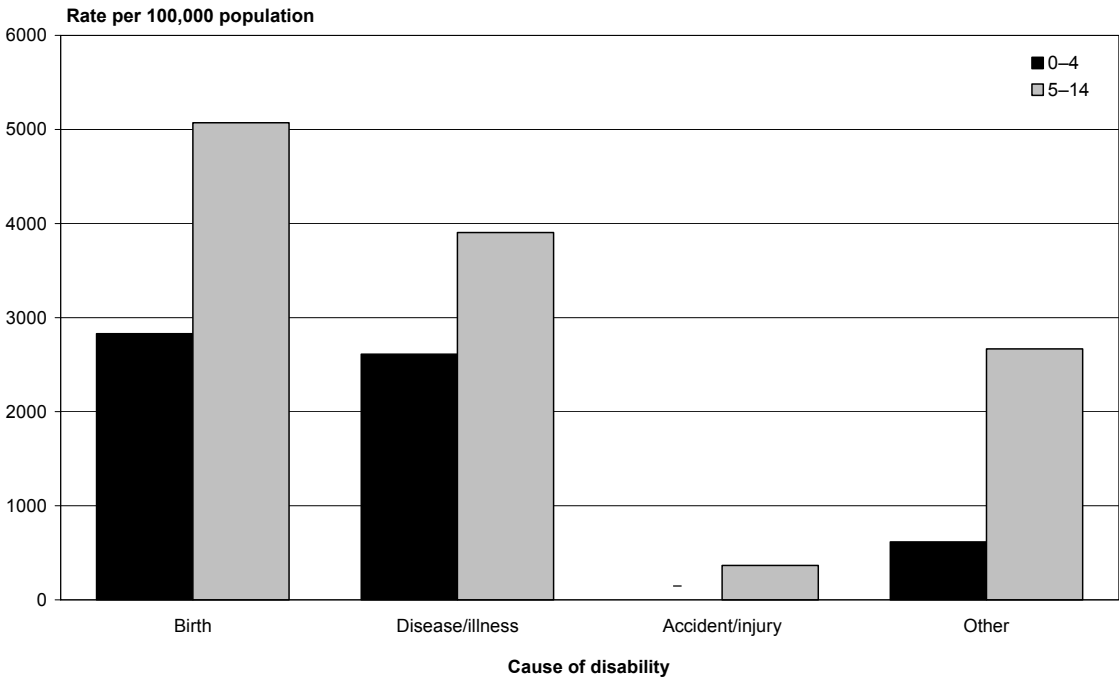
Rates for disabilities caused by accident/injury also increased with age, although not as dramatically as for disease/illness or ageing. In the 15–44 age group, 4800 per 100,000 had disability caused by accident/injury; while the rate in the 75 and over age group was about three times as high (15,300 per 100,000).

In contrast, rates of disability caused by conditions existing or occurring at birth did not vary much across the age groups, ranging from 1600 per 100,000 in adults aged 65–74 to 2400 per 100,000 in adults aged 15–44.

Age-specific rates for children

For all causes of disability, older children (aged 5–14) had slightly higher disability rates than younger children (aged 0–4). In older children, for example, the prevalence rate of disability caused by disease/illness was 3900 per 100,000; whereas for younger children the rate was 2600 per 100,000 (Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.18: Rates for the causes of disability in children living in households, by age, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

– Percentages too small to report (estimated frequencies outside the 70 percent relative sampling error cut-off point).

Notes:

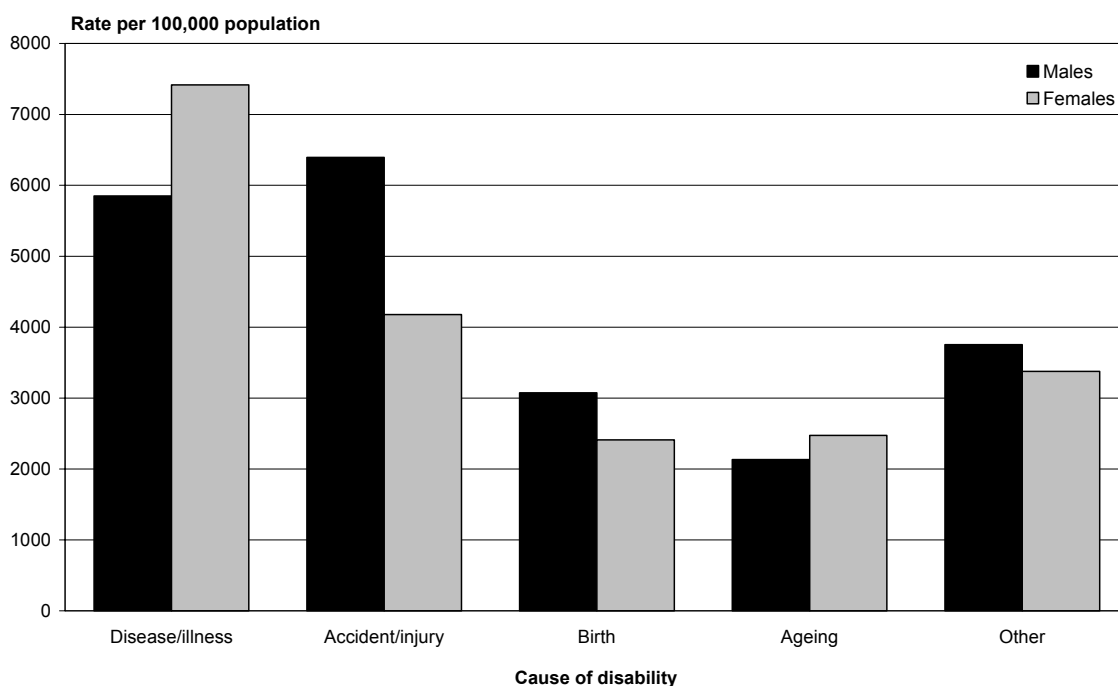
- Data in Appendix Table 2.21.
- If individuals reported more than one disability type, they were counted in each applicable cause group.

Similarly, older children had a higher prevalence of disability resulting from birth conditions than younger children (5000 per 100,000 compared with 2800 per 100,000).

Cause of disability by sex

Disability cause data can also be compared using age-standardised rates. This indicates that females (7400 per 100,000) were more likely than males (5900 per 100,000) to have disabilities caused by disease/illness. They were also more likely than males to have disabilities caused by ageing (2500 per 100,000 compared with 2100 per 100,000) (Figure 2.19).

Figure 2.19: Age-standardised rates for the causes of disability in people (adults and children) living in households, by sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Calculated from data in Appendix Tables 2.20 and 2.21.
- If individuals person reported more than one disability type, they were counted in each applicable cause group.
- Age-standardised to WHO World Standard Population.

On the other hand, males were more likely than females to have disabilities caused by accident/injury. Indeed, the male age-standardised rate for disabilities caused by accident/injury was almost 50 percent higher than the female rate (6400 per 100,000 compared with 4200 per 100,000).

Males were also more likely than females to have disabilities caused by conditions existing at birth (3100 per 100,000 compared with 2400 per 100,000).

Causes of different types of disability

Table 2.6 shows which disability causes were the most common for each type of disability experienced by adults and children. In adults, for example, disease/illness was the cause of 40 percent of mobility disabilities and 13 percent of hearing disabilities. In children, disease/illness was the cause of 30 percent of hearing disabilities and 13 percent of intellectual disabilities.

Table 2.6: Causes of the different types of disability in adults and children, 2001

Adults	Disability cause (%)						
	Disease/illness	Birth	Accident/injury	Ageing	Other	Not specified	Total
Disability type							
Hearing	13	7	25	19	21	15	100
Seeing	23	8	10	27	11	22	100
Speaking	30	19	16	5	12	18	100
Mobility	40	4	29	14	10	10	100
Agility	33	4	36	15	10	11	100
Intellectual	27	32	14	2	4	21	100
Psychiatric/psychological	34	9	13	1	26	19	100
Learning	30	28	13	5	8	15	100
Remembering	31	8	14	19	12	16	100
Other	48	7	23	4	10	10	100

Children	Disability cause (%)					
	Disease/illness	Birth	Accident/injury	Other	Not specified	Total
Disability type						
Hearing	30	32	–	14	25	100
Seeing	9	49	–	12	27	100
Technical equipment	17	56	–	–	17	100
Intellectual	13	56	–	13	15	100
Psychiatric/psychological	15	32	3	29	21	100
Chronic health problem	50	37	–	7	11	100
Other	16	44	3	18	22	100

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

– Percentages too small to report (estimated frequencies outside the 70 percent relative sampling error cut-off point).

Notes:

- The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.
- The adult 'Other' disability type includes other types of long-term conditions or health problems that cause people ongoing difficulty with, or stops them from doing, everyday activities that people their age can usually do.
- The child 'Other' disability type includes use of special education, speaking disability and other types of long-term conditions or health problems that limit a child's participation at school, play, or other activities considered usual for a child of their age. Disability cause data are available separately for special education and learning disability in chapter 4.

Disability caused by accident/injury

This section examines disability caused by accident/injury.

Adults

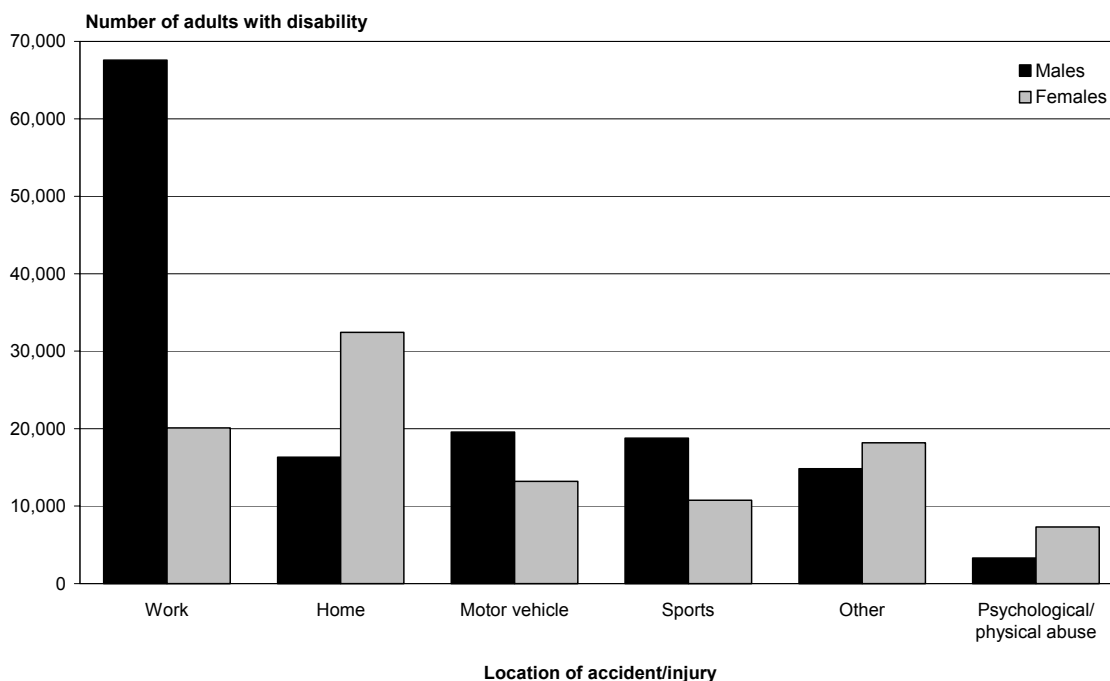
In the 2001 Household Disability Survey, adults with disability caused by accident/injury were asked to identify where or in what situation the accident/injury occurred (accident/injury location). The options given were:

- accident/injury at home
- motor vehicle accident
- accident/injury at work
- sports accident/injury
- another type of accident/injury.

When people indicated the accident/injury occurred at home or that it was 'another' type of accident/injury they were also asked if the accident/injury was caused by psychological or physical abuse.

The results of these questions indicate that, of the estimated 214,200 adults with disability caused by accident/injury living in households, an estimated 87,700 (41 percent) were disabled as a result of work-related accidents/injuries (Figure 2.20).

Figure 2.20: Number of adults living in households experiencing accident/injury disability, by accident/injury location and sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Data in Appendix Table 2.23.

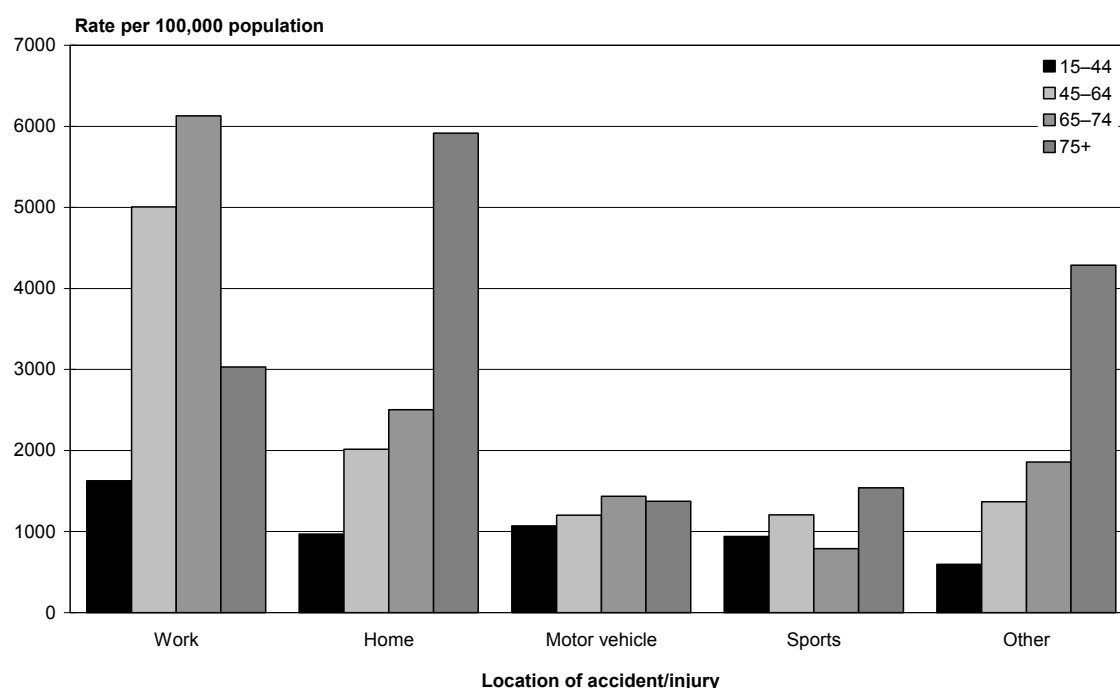
- If individuals reported more than one disability type, they were counted in each applicable cause group.

A further 48,700 (23 percent) were disabled by accident/injury occurring at home, 32,800 (15 percent) were disabled by motor vehicle accident/injury and 29,500 (14 percent) were disabled by sports injury. An estimated 10,600 adults were disabled because of psychological or physical abuse.

More than three times as many men (67,600) as women (20,100) were estimated to have disabilities resulting from work-related accident/injury. More men were also disabled from motor vehicle accidents and sports injuries. However, twice as many women (32,400) as men (16,300) had disabilities from accident/injury occurring at home. The same was the case for disabilities resulting from psychological or physical abuse (7300 women compared with 3300 men).

The prevalence of disability caused by accident/injury occurring at home increased with age, from 1000 per 100,000 in the 15–44 age group to 5900 per 100,000 in the 75 and over age group (Figure 2.21).

Figure 2.21: Rates of disability caused by accident/injury, in adults living in households, by accident/injury location and age, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

- Data in Appendix Table 2.24.
- If individuals reported more than one disability type, they were counted in each applicable cause group.

The prevalence of disability caused by work-related accidents and injuries also rose with age, from 1600 per 100,000 in the 15–44 age group to 6100 per 100,000 in the 65–74 age group. However, in the 75 and over age group, the rate of disability caused by work-related accident/injury (3000 per 100,000) was half the rate in the 65–74 age group.

Rates of disability from sports and motor vehicle injuries varied little with age, ranging from 800 per 100,000 in the 65–74 age group to 1500 per 100,000 in the 75 and over age group.

Children

Parents and caregivers of children living in households were asked if their child's disability was caused by:

- an accident/injury at home or school
- a motor vehicle accident
- a sports accident/injury.

They were not asked about other types of accident/injury situations or locations.

Of the 2400 children with disabilities caused by accident/injury, an estimated 1500 were disabled from accidents or injuries received at home or school, while a further 700 had sports injury related disabilities.¹⁸

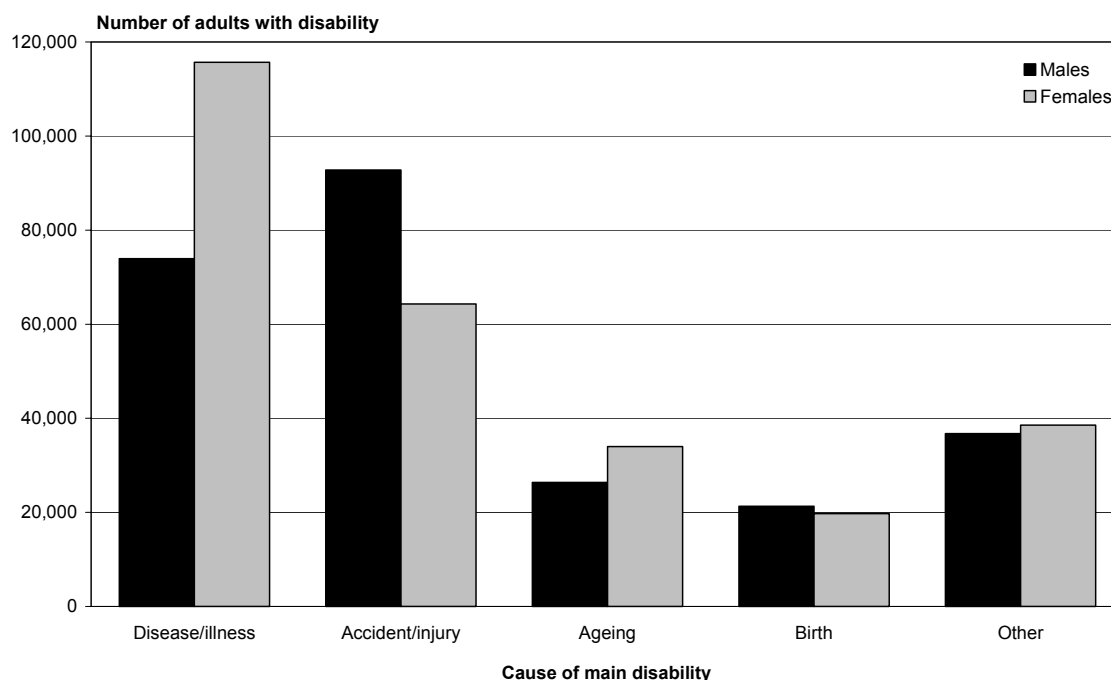
Cause of main disability in adults

The 2001 Household Disability Survey asked adults to indicate the cause of their main disability. The person's main disability was the disability they considered most limited their activities.

The most common cause of the main disabilities experienced by adults living in households was disease/illness, with 30 percent of all main disabilities caused in this way. An estimated 189,600 adults, 7 percent of all adults living in households, had a main disability caused by disease/illness (Figure 2.22).

¹⁸ It is not possible to report further details on the causes of accident/injury related disabilities in children because of the small numbers that make the data unreliable.

Figure 2.22: Number of adults living in households experiencing different causes of main disability, by sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.26.

Accident/injury was the second most common cause, producing 25 percent of main disabilities. An estimated 157,100 adults had a main disability caused by accident/injury.

Ten percent of all main disabilities were caused by ageing, with an estimated 60,400 adults having their main disability caused in this way.

Conditions existing or occurring at birth caused 7 percent of main disabilities, affecting an estimated 41,000 adults.

Twelve percent of main disabilities were attributed to ‘other’ causes, with these causes affecting an estimated 75,200 adults.

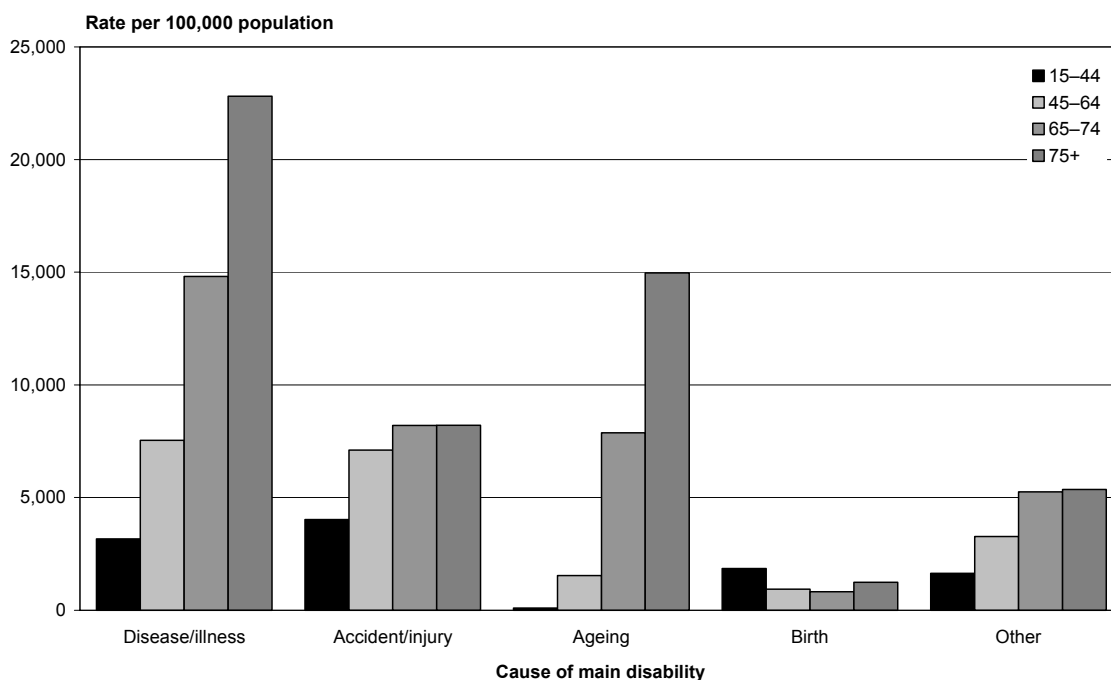
More women (115,700 or 35 percent) than men (73,900 or 25 percent) had main disabilities caused by disease/illness. Women (34,000 or 10 percent) were also slightly more likely than men (26,400 or 9 percent) to have main disabilities caused by ageing.

Conversely, more men (92,800 or 31 percent) than women (64,300 or 19 percent) had main disabilities caused by accident/injury.

Cause of main disability at different ages

Age-specific rates for main disabilities caused by the ageing process ranged from 100 per 100,000 in the 15–44 age group to 15,000 per 100,000 in the 75 and over age group. In the 65–74 age group, the rate was 7900 per 100,000 (Figure 2.23).

Figure 2.23: Rates of different causes of main disability in adults living in households, by age, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.27.

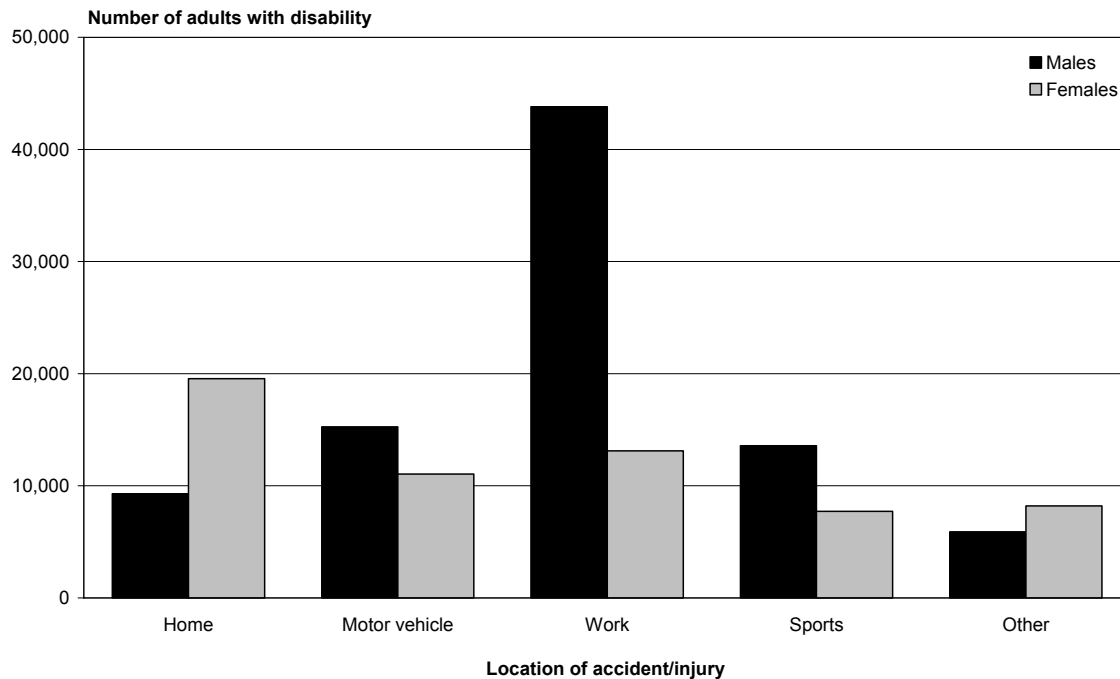
Rates for main disabilities caused by disease/illness also increased with age, from 3200 per 100,000 in the 15–44 age group, to highs of 14,800 per 100,000 in the 65–74 age group and 22,800 per 100,000 in the 75 and over age group.

The rate of main disabilities caused by accident/injury also increased with age, although not as sharply as for ageing or disease/illness. The rates ranged from 4000 per 100,000 in the 15–44 age group to 8200 per 100,000 in both the 65–74 and 75 and over age groups.

Main disabilities caused by accident/injury

In 2001, an estimated 157,100 adults living in households had main disabilities caused by accident/injury. For 56,900 (36 percent) of these adults, the cause of their main disability was an accident/injury at work. For a further 28,900 (18 percent) it was an accident or injury at home, while for 26,300 (17 percent) it was a motor vehicle crash (Figure 2.24).

Figure 2.24: Number of adults living in households with main disability caused by accident/injury, by accident/injury location and sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.28.

More than twice as many women (19,600) as men (9,300) had main disabilities caused by accident/injury at home.

Conversely, more than three times as many men (43,800) as women (13,100) had main disabilities caused by work accident/injury, and almost twice as many men (13,600) as women (7,700) had main disabilities caused by sports injuries. As well, more men (15,300) than women (11,100) had main disabilities caused by motor vehicle crashes.

Severity of disability

The severity of a person's disability influences the kinds of everyday activity they can do and the levels of support and equipment they need.

Defining severity levels

The 2001 Household Disability Survey and the 2001 Disability Survey of Residential Facilities used a three-level definition to classify how severely people were affected by disability:

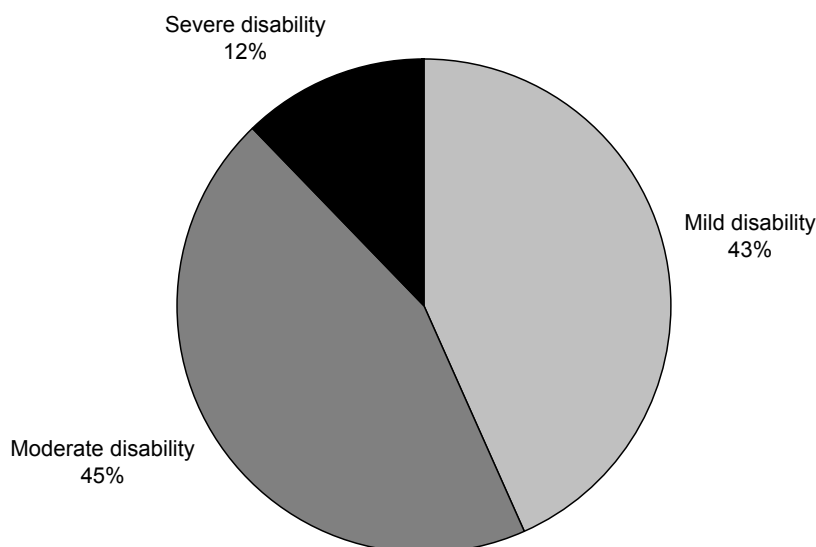
- People with *severe* disabilities received or needed daily help with activities such as preparing meals, shopping, everyday housework, bathing or dressing.
- People with *moderate* disabilities used or needed 'some type of assistive device, aid or equipment' and/or help with certain heavier or more difficult household tasks.

- People with *mild* disabilities had some kind of disability, but did not require regular help from other people or technical aids.¹⁹

Prevalence of mild, moderate and severe disability

In 2001, an estimated 88,100 (12 percent) of the 716,500 adults and children with disability living in households had severe disability, necessitating daily assistance from someone else (Figure 2.25).²⁰

Figure 2.25: Severity of disability in people (adults and children) living in households, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.29.

Given that a further 22,600 people with severe disability were living in residential facilities (see chapter 10), this means close to four out of five people with severe disability were living in households rather than in residential facilities.²¹

An estimated 317,000 adults and children had moderate disability requiring a lower level of assistance. This was 44 percent of all people with disability in households.

A further 311,500 adults and children, 43 percent of all people with disability in households, had mild disability.

¹⁹ The classification of severity was derived from a slightly different set of questions for adults and children, because adults and children were not asked identical questions about the assistance they received or the equipment they used.

²⁰ The estimate of 88,100 is equivalent to 2 percent of the total household population.

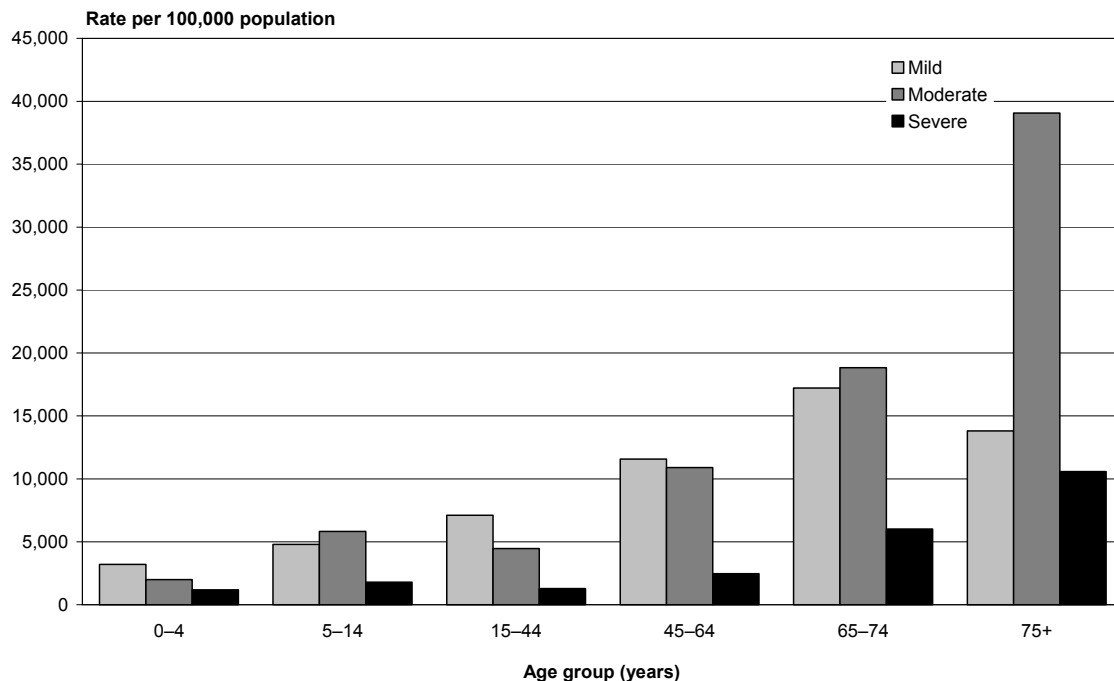
²¹ This estimate does not include children with disability living in residential facilities, as the 2001 Disability Survey of Residential Facilities included only people aged 15 years and over.

Severity of disability at different ages

As might be expected, age-specific rates for severe and moderate disability were highest in the older age groups and lowest in the younger age groups (Figure 2.26).

In the 75 and over age group, the rate of severe disability (10,600 per 100,000) was nearly double the rate in the next youngest age group (6000 per 100,000). As well, the rate of moderate disability in the 75 and over age group (at 39,100 per 100,000) was more than twice as high as in the next youngest age group (18,800 per 100,000).

Figure 2.26: Rates of disability severity in people (adults and children) living in households, by age, 2001



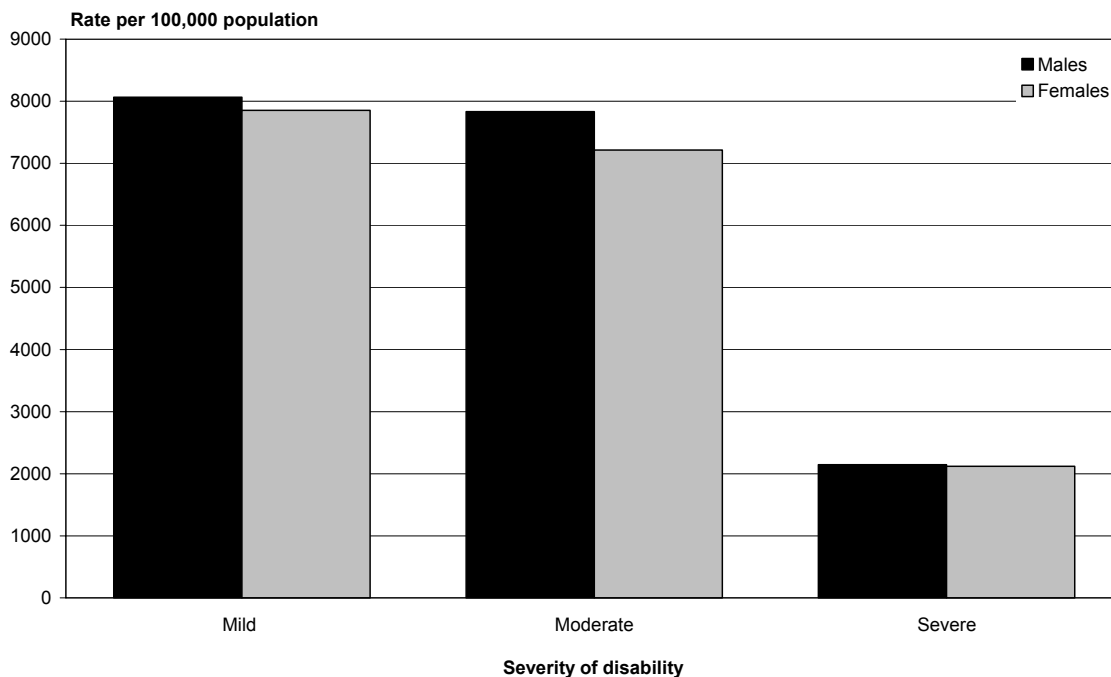
Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.30.

Severity of disability in males and females

In 2001, females outnumbered males in each of the mild, moderate and severe categories of disability. However, after adjusting for the different age profiles of the two sexes by calculating age-standardised rates, males had similar rates of mild disability to females (8100 per 100,000 compared with 7900 per 100,000). They also had similar rates of moderate disability (7800 per 100,000 compared with 7200 per 100,000) (Figure 2.27).

Figure 2.27: Age-standardised rates of disability severity in people (adults and children) living in households, by sex, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Notes:

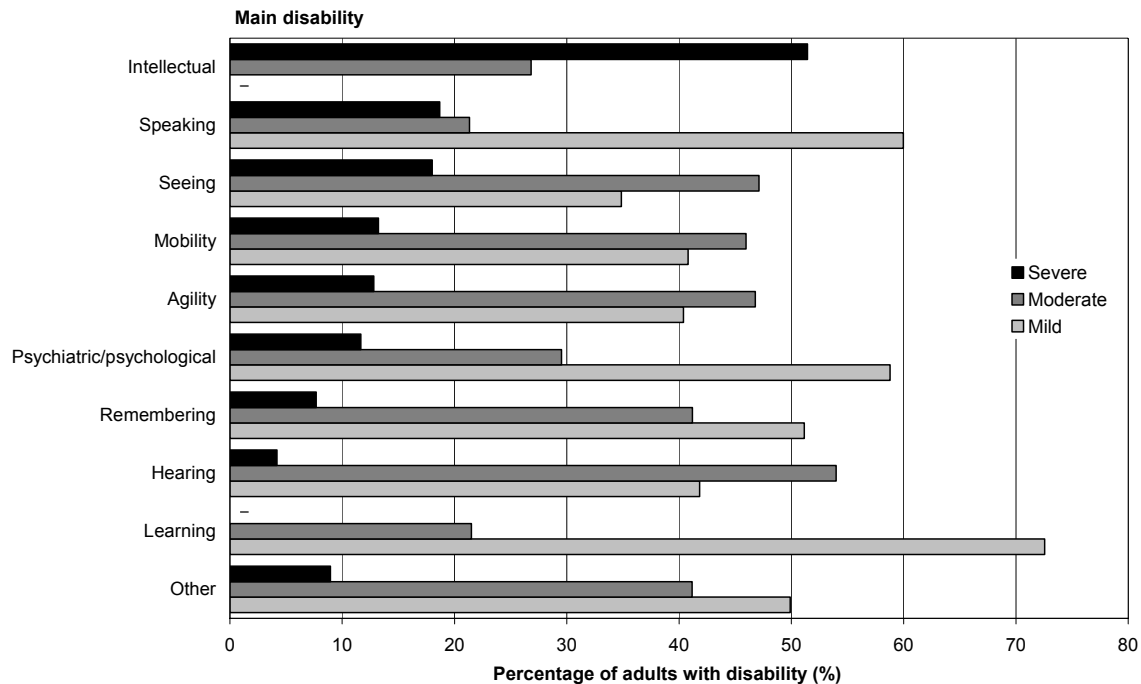
- Calculated from data in Appendix Tables 2.29 and 2.30.
- Age-standardised to WHO World Standard Population.

Males and females had the same age-standardised rate of severe disability (at 2100 per 100,000).

Severity of main disability

Adults with a main disability that was a speaking, learning, remembering or psychiatric/psychological disability were most likely to be defined as mildly disabled (Figure 2.28). Seventy-three percent of adults with a learning main disability were mildly disabled, as were 60 percent of people with a speaking main disability and 59 percent of people with a psychiatric/psychological main disability.

Figure 2.28: Percentage of adults living in households, by disability severity and main disability, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

– Percentages too small to report (estimated frequencies outside the 70 percent relative sampling error cut-off point).

Notes:

- Data in Appendix Table 2.31.
- The 'Other' category includes other types of long-term conditions or health problems that cause people ongoing difficulty with, or stops them from doing, everyday activities which people their age can usually do.

Adults with a main disability that was a hearing, seeing, agility or mobility disability were most likely to be defined as being moderately disabled. Fifty-four percent of adults with a hearing main disability were moderately disabled, as were 47 percent of adults with a seeing main disability, 47 percent of adults with an agility main disability and 46 percent of adults with a mobility main disability.

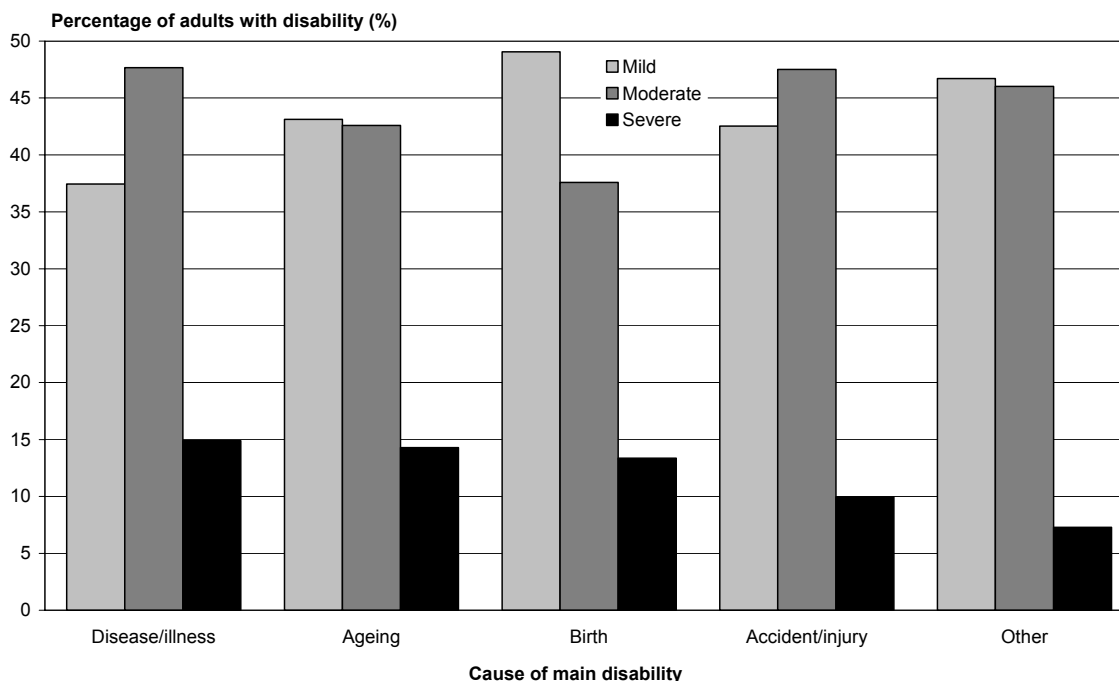
Just over half (51 percent) the adults whose main disability was an intellectual disability were categorised as severely disabled.

By contrast, the prevalence of severe disability was comparatively low in adults with a hearing main disability (4 percent) or a remembering main disability (8 percent).

Severity of disability and cause of main disability

Figure 2.29 shows the different causes of the main disabilities experienced by adults, matched against disability severity levels.

Figure 2.29: Percentage of adults living in households, by disability severity and cause of main disability, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey.

Note: Data in Appendix Table 2.32.

Severe disability was almost as prevalent in adults with a main disability caused by disease/illness (15 percent) as in adults with a main disability caused by ageing (14 percent), conditions present at birth (13 percent) or accident/injury (10 percent).

Moderate disability was not as common in adults with a main disability caused by conditions present at birth (38 percent) as it was in adults with a main disability caused by accident/injury (48 percent) or by disease/illness (48 percent).

Mild disability was most common in adults with a main disability caused by a condition present at birth (49 percent). It was least common in adults with a main disability caused by disease/illness (37 percent).

Age at onset of first disability

Adults participating in the 2001 Household Disability Survey were asked how old they were when they started to experience disability. If they currently had more than one type of disability, they were asked how old they were when each disability started.

Caregivers of children with disability were asked what age their child was when they started to experience disability.

Table 2.7 indicates the age when people's first disability started, matched against their age at the time of the 2001 Household Disability Survey.

Just over a third (36 percent) of people aged 75 and over at the time of the survey had developed their first disability after turning 75. Three-quarters of people with disability aged 75 and over had developed their first disability when they were in their middle years or older (that is, at age 45 and over). Only 7 percent had developed their first disability before age 25 and only 2 percent before they turned 5.

In contrast, more than half of people aged 25–44 with disability (57 percent) had developed their first disability before the age of 25, including 16 percent who developed their first disability before age 5.

Table 2.7: Age of onset of first disability in people (adults and children) with disability living in households, by current age, 2001

Age of onset of first disability	Current age (years)							
	0–4 (%) (n=15,900)	5–14 (%) (n=74,100)	15–24 (%) (n=44,400)	25–44 (%) (n=157,500)	45–64 (%) (n=209,100)	65–74 (%) (n=101,400)	75+ (%) (n=114,200)	Total (%) (n=716,500)
0–4	98	66	27	16	6	3	2	17
5–14	N/A	33	38	17	5	–	1	11
15–24	N/A	N/A	35	24	6	3	4	10
25–44	N/A	N/A	N/A	43	38	12	7	23
45–64	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	43	53	20	23
65–74	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	27	29	8
75+	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	36	6
Not reported	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

N/A: Not applicable to this age group.

Note: The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.

– Percentages too small to report (estimated frequencies outside the 70 percent relative sampling error cut-off point).

n = Estimated number of people with disability in this age group in the household population.

Similarly, 66 percent of people aged 5–14 with disability developed their first disability before age 5.

These results suggest that younger people with disability are more likely to have experienced a disability condition for a substantial part of their lives (often from birth). They also suggest that older people with disability are more likely to have been disability-free for a good portion of their lives.²²

Duration of disability

Longest-lasting disability

Table 2.8 indicates how many years people had been living with a disability, based on the duration of their longest-lasting disability.

Table 2.8: Duration of longest-lasting disability in people (adults and children) with disability living in households, by age, 2001

Duration of longest lasting disability)	Current age (years)						Total (%)
	0–4 (%)	5–14 (%)	15–44 (%)	45–64 (%)	65–74 (%)	75 and over (%)	
Less than 1 year	12	4	5	4	3	3	4
1–14 years	86	95	51	54	56	58	59
15+ years	N/A	N/A	44	41	40	39	36
Unknown	2	1	0	1	1	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

N/A: Not applicable to this age group.

Notes:

- The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.
- 0–4 and 5–14 could not have disabilities lasting for longer than 14 years.

It was uncommon for people of any age to have had a disability for less than a year. In all age groups from 5–14, less than 6 percent of people with disability had had a disability for less than a year. Even in the youngest age group (0–4), only 12 percent had had a disability for less than a year.

In each of the adult age groups, 39–44 percent of people had had a disability for 15 years or longer.

²² Note, however, that the 2001 Household Disability Survey was a snapshot of the general population at a particular point, rather than a longitudinal study where individuals (and the course of their disabilities) are followed over several years. The survey collected information only on existing disabilities that had already lasted, or were expected to last, six months. Information was not collected about other disabilities people may have had in the past but which had resolved before the survey.

Duration of main disability

Duration patterns were similar for the main disabilities experienced by adults.²³ In all the adult age groups, only 5–6 percent of people with disability had experienced their main disability for less than a year. In the 15–44, 45–64 and 65–74 age groups, between a quarter and a third of people had experienced their main disability for 15 years or more (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9: Duration of main disability in adults with disability living in households, by current age, 2001

Duration of main disability	Current age (years)				
	15–44 (%)	45–64 (%)	65–74 (%)	75+ (%)	Total (%)
Less than 1 year	6	5	6	6	6
1–14 years	55	58	62	64	59
15+ years	33	27	25	21	28
Unknown	6	9	7	9	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: The sum of the values for each category may differ from the total due to rounding.

Comparing 2001 and 1996

Number of people with disability

In 2001, an estimated 716,500 people with disability were living in New Zealand households. This was a 6 percent increase from the 1996 estimate of 674,400.

The increase in 2001 was entirely the result of an increase in the number of adults (rather than children) with disability. In 2001, an estimated 626,500 adults with disability were living in households, an 8 percent increase from the 1996 estimate of 580,000.

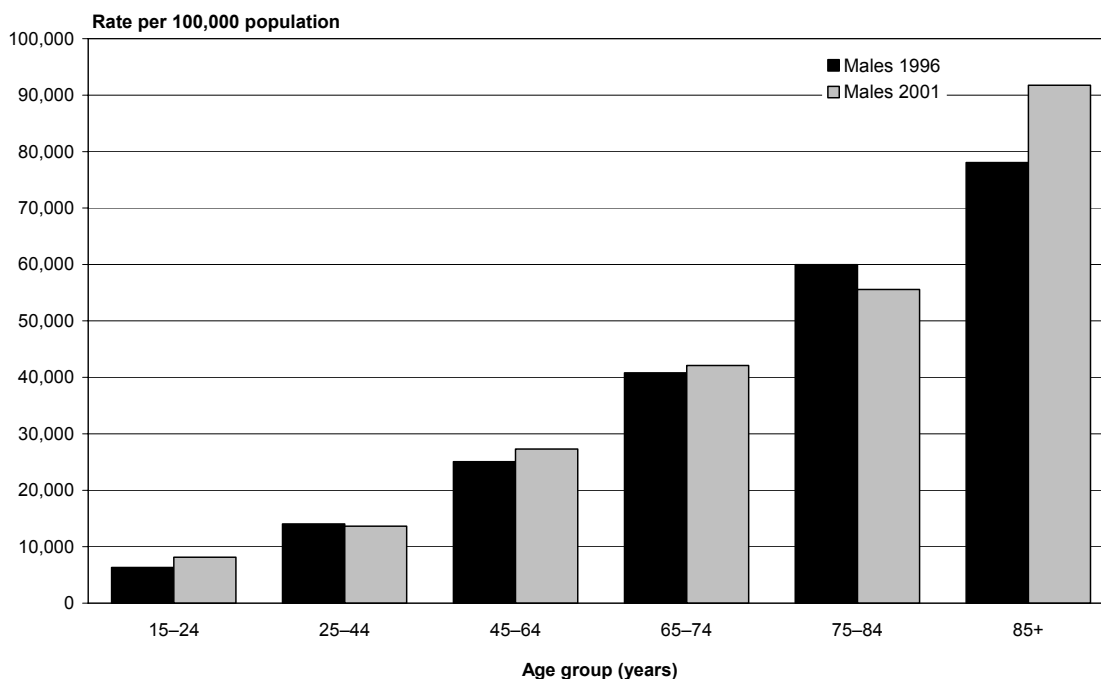
By contrast, the number of children with disability was lower in 2001 compared with 1996. In 1996, an estimated 93,900 children with disability were living in households. The corresponding estimate for 2001 was 90,000, a 4 percent reduction.

²³ Parents or caregivers of children were not asked to identify their child's main disability.

Disability in adults living in households

Figure 2.30 compares the age-specific rates of disability for adult males in 1996 and 2001. Rates were generally similar in the younger age groups. However, in the 75–84 age group, the 2001 rate was slightly lower than the 1996 rate. The situation was reversed in the 85 and over age group, with the 2001 rate being higher than the 1996 rate.

Figure 2.30: Rates of disability in adult males living in households, by age, 1996 and 2001

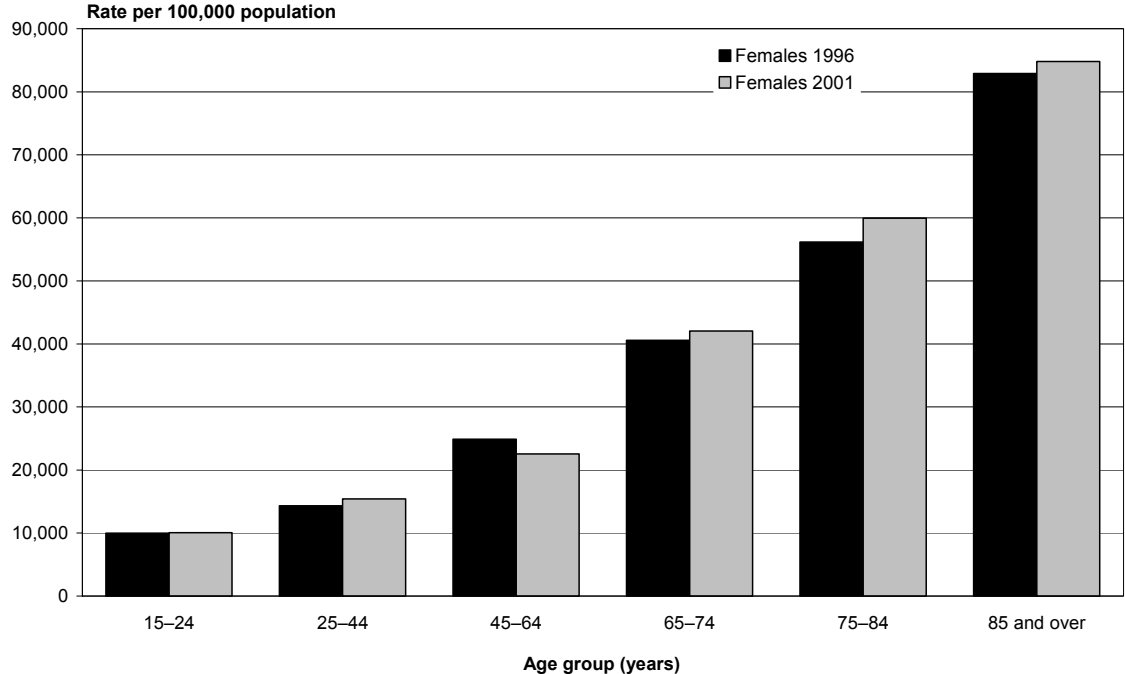


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 1996 Household Disability Survey & 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Tables 2.2 and 2.37.

Figure 2.31 compares the 1996 and 2001 age-specific disability prevalence rates for adult females. Rates were slightly higher in 2001 compared with 1996 in all age groups except the 15–24 and 45–64 age groups.

Figure 2.31: Rates of disability in adult females living in households, by age, 1996 and 2001

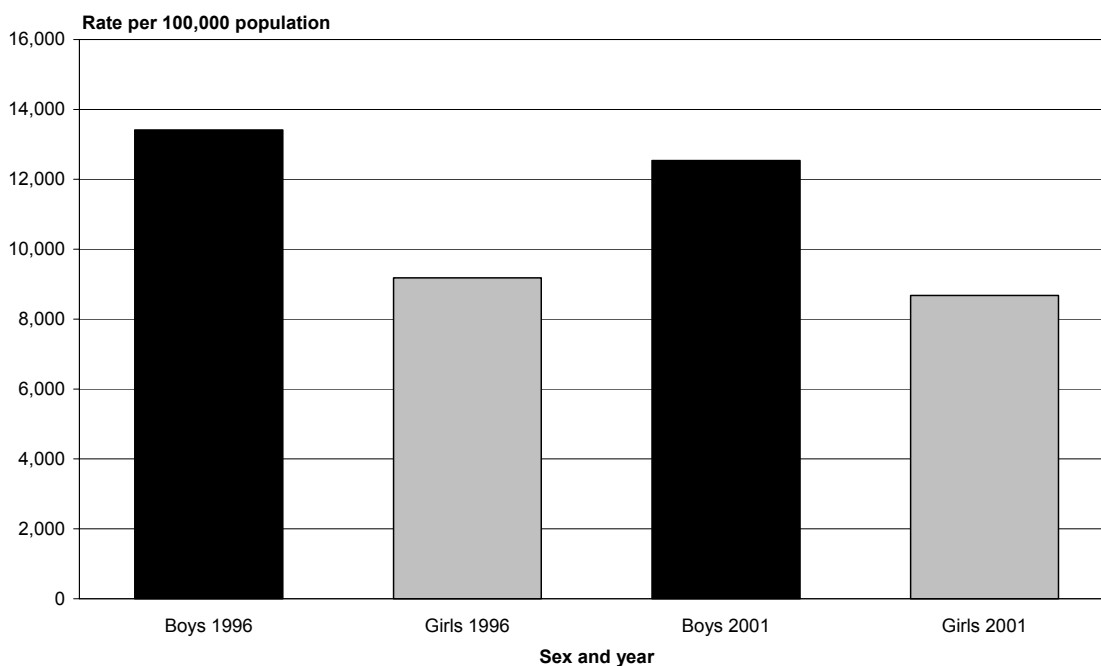


Source: Statistics New Zealand, 1996 Household Disability Survey and 2001 Household Disability Survey
 Note: Data in Appendix Tables 2.2 and 2.37.

Disability in children living in households

The disability prevalence rate for boys was slightly lower in 2001 than in 1996 (12,500 per 100,000 compared with 13,400 per 100,000). The same was the case for girls, with a disability prevalence rate of 8700 per 100,000 in 2001 compared with 9200 per 100,000 in 1996 (Figure 2.32).

Figure 2.32: Rates of disability in children living in households, by sex, 1996 and 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 1996 Household Disability Survey and 2001 Household Disability Survey

Note: Data in Appendix Tables 2.2 and 2.39.

In both the 1996 and 2001 Household Disability Surveys, boys had a higher prevalence of disability than girls.

Other survey findings

Table 2.10 compares other selected results from the 1996 and 2001 Household Disability Surveys.

Table 2.10: Selected results from the 1996 and 2001 Household Disability Surveys

	Estimated number of people		Percentage of New Zealand population living in households (%)	
	1996 survey	2001 survey	1996 survey	2001 survey
All people living in households (with or without disability)				
Adults	2,712,800	2,826,200	100	100
Children	825,900	844,300	100	100
Total	3,538,600	3,670,500	100	100
People with disability				
Adults	580,400	626,500	21	22
Children	93,900	90,000	11	11
Total	674,400	716,500	19	20
Single/multiple disability				
Single	283,600	308,500	8	8
Multiple	390,800	408,000	11	11
Disability type – adults				
Hearing	204,700	212,500	8	8
Seeing	70,500	69,300	3	2
Mobility	328,600	346,300	12	12
Agility	280,100	270,900	10	10
Intellectual	18,500	28,900	1	1
Psychiatric/psychological	77,600	94,800	3	3
Disability type – children				
Hearing	22,000	18,300	3	2
Seeing	10,000	13,200	1	2
Use of technical equipment	7,700	4,600	1	1
Intellectual	11,300	13,000	1	2
Psychiatric/psychological	20,600	22,200	2	3
Chronic health problem	31,000	30,200	4	4
Disability cause*				
Disease/illness	266,700	281,000	8	8
Birth	91,700	98,000	3	3
Ageing	130,400	115,100	4	3
Severity of disability				
Mild	296,800	311,500	8	8
Moderate	289,900	317,000	8	9
Severe	87,700	88,100	2	2

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 1996 and 2001 Household Disability Surveys

* Accident/injury not included in this table because the category changed between surveys.