

RESEARCH BRIEF



Seniors Living Alone in Canada: New Insights on Well-being from Time Use Data

SOURCE: Xiangnan Chai and Rachel Margolis, "Does Living Alone Mean Spending Time Differently? Time Use and Living Arrangements Among Older Canadians," *Canadian Studies in Population* 47(1-2) (February 4, 2020). Link: <https://bit.ly/39u1uv3>.

INSIGHTS

- General Social Survey data on Time Use show **older Canadians living alone are socially connected**, reporting *more* time than those living with others on socializing or communicating with others.
- Evidence did not show that living alone is detrimental to active aging**, with seniors living alone reporting similar amounts of time spent eating, drinking and engaging in physical activity compared with those who live with others.
- Analysis of self-reported (i.e. subjective) experiences with, and feelings *on*, their time use find that **older Canadians living alone were less likely to report feeling rushed than those living with others**.

INFORMATION

- 26%** Proportion of older Canadians (aged 65 and above) who **lived alone** in 2016 – living alone is more common among older Canadians than among all younger age groups
- 64 and 54 min.** Time spent per day by older Canadians who live alone and who live with others, respectively, on **social communication**
- 39%** Proportion of older Canadians living alone in 2015 who reported that they "**feel rushed** once a week or more" – lower than among those who lived with others

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Housing policies; strategies for poverty reduction; policies aimed at reducing isolation and increasing community engagement; media messaging relating to aging and living as a senior in Canada

INDICATORS

Time spent on self-care, providing care for others, housework, socializing/communicating, eating/drinking, active sports, active and passive leisure; subjective measures of time use

FUNDING

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR); Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

PRIMARY DATA SOURCES

2015 General Social Survey on Time Use; Census data

STAKEHOLDERS

Seniors organizations; government departments; elected officials and policy makers serving seniors; urban planners; residential developers; community developers and seniors advocates; families and adults thinking about and planning their seniorhood; gerontologists; demographers; family researchers; occupational therapists; recreation therapists

AUTHORS AND AFFILIATIONS

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RESEARCH PROJECT: Care, Retirement and Well-being of Older People Across Different Welfare Regimes (CREW)

ALIGNMENT WITH UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

