



**STRATHCONA
COUNTY**

2020 Seniors Wellness Survey



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Communications

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I. Introduction and Purpose of the Study

In June 2020, Strathcona County conducted the first of a series of online survey of seniors in order to obtain perceptions toward a variety of topics that potentially could impact seniors either now or in the future. This purpose of this survey was to gain an assessment of the health of seniors.

Obtaining primary data directly from residents provides Strathcona County departments with information and enables County officials to make decisions that accurately reflect the perspectives and attitudes of residents. This report provides a comprehensive review of all steps undertaken in the development and implementation of the survey, as well as a detailed summary of the results.

A review of the methodology associated in the development and implementation of the survey can be found in the next section of this report.

II. Methodology

A. The questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was newly created specifically for this study. In addition to demographics, a series of questions were asked in this survey pertaining to:

- Assessment of general health and physical activity;
- Recreation facility and program use (pre-COVID);
- Strathcona County health care facilities and related programs;
- Leaving the residence to visit others, shop, etc.;
- Getting assistance for accessing various services (pre-COVID);
- Access to Volunteer Strathcona; and
- Interest in additional information.

B. Sampling design and data collection procedure

The survey was made available through the Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel (SCOOP). It was tailored specifically to be answered by residents aged 55 or older (age 55 was established as the benchmark for identifying seniors in Strathcona County).

The online survey ran between June 9 and June 28, 2020, during which 346 people took part in the survey. Although poll based data is based on people who decide to participate and were not randomly selected, and have access to the online poll, the margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is $\pm 5.2\%$, 19 times out of 20. The data was analyzed by Strathcona County's Communications using SPSS for Windows.

III. RESULTS

This section of the report presents a summary of the results associated with the perceptions and awareness of residents. Socio-demographic comparisons, where significant, will also be highlighted.

A. Demographic overview

This section of the report presents an overview of the type of seniors who completed the survey. In terms of gender, 39.8% were male (♂) and 57.1% were female (♀). The remaining 3.2% either preferred to self-identify or didn't provide an answer.

A breakdown by age is as follows:

- 40.5% were in the 55 – 64 age group;
- 43.9% were in the 65-74 age group;
- 14.7% were in the 75-84 age group; and
- 0.9% were 85 or older.

The final urban/rural split was fairly close to the actual proportions, with 74.6% of the respondents being from Sherwood Park, 24.2% living in

rural Strathcona County and the remaining 1.2% residing outside of the County (but working here).

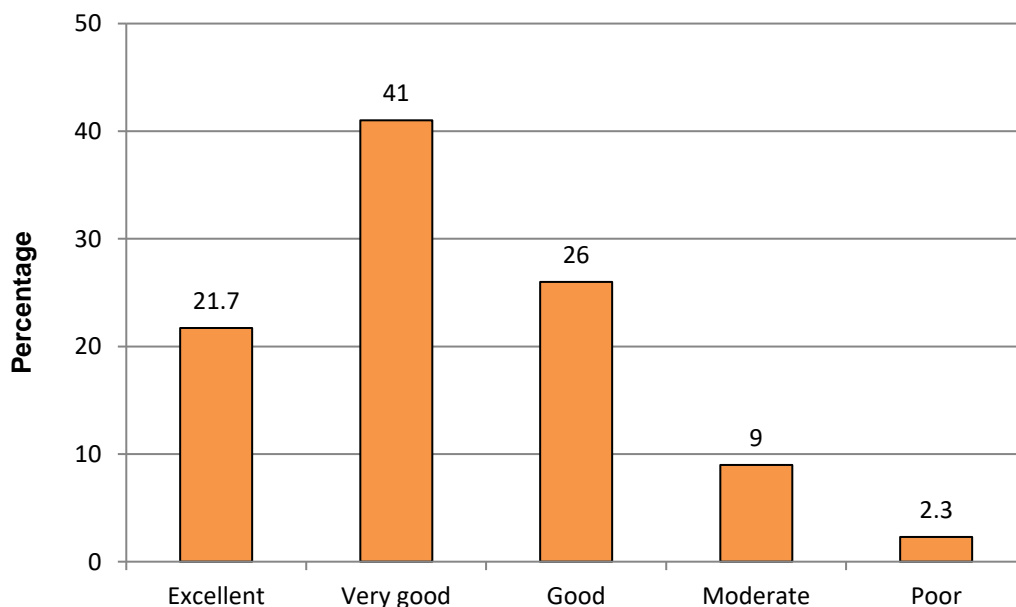
With respect to how long respondents have lived in the County, the breakdown is as follows:

- 0.9% have lived in the County for less than one year;
- 2.9% have lived in the County for 1-4 years;
- 5.2% have lived in the County for 5-9 years;
- 15% have lived in the County for 10-19 years; and
- 76% have lived in the County for 20 or more years.

B. Health assessment

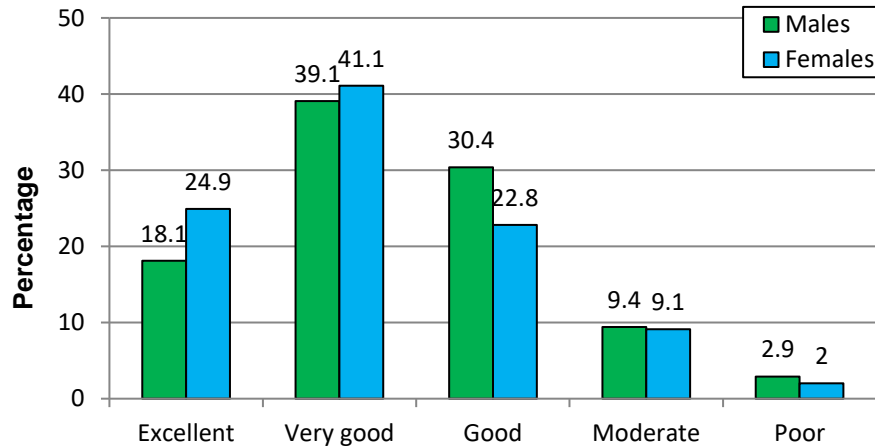
The initial question asked respondents to indicate their current state of general health. The overall results are shown in Figure 1. It can be seen that the majority of respondents perceive that they are in good (or better) health at the present time. A further examination revealed that there was no significant variations in perceptions of general health based on where they lived in the County.

FIGURE 1
Overall perceptions of general health



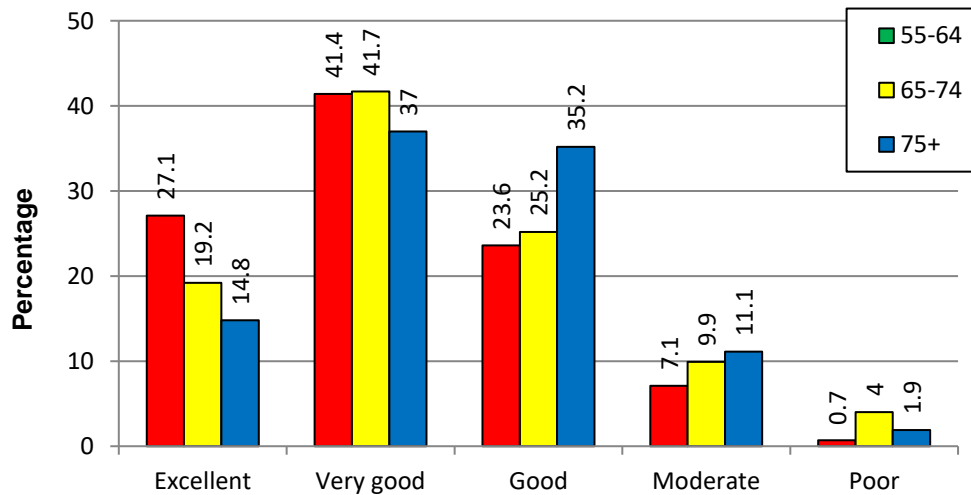
Health assessment based on gender is shown in Figure 2. It can be seen that a slightly higher percentage of females perceived that they are in excellent health compared to males. Other than that, there were only minor variations in health perceptions.

FIGURE 2
Overall perceptions of general health by gender



Health assessment based on age is shown in Figure 3. It can be seen that perceptions of excellent health decrease as age increases.

FIGURE 3
Overall perceptions of general health by age

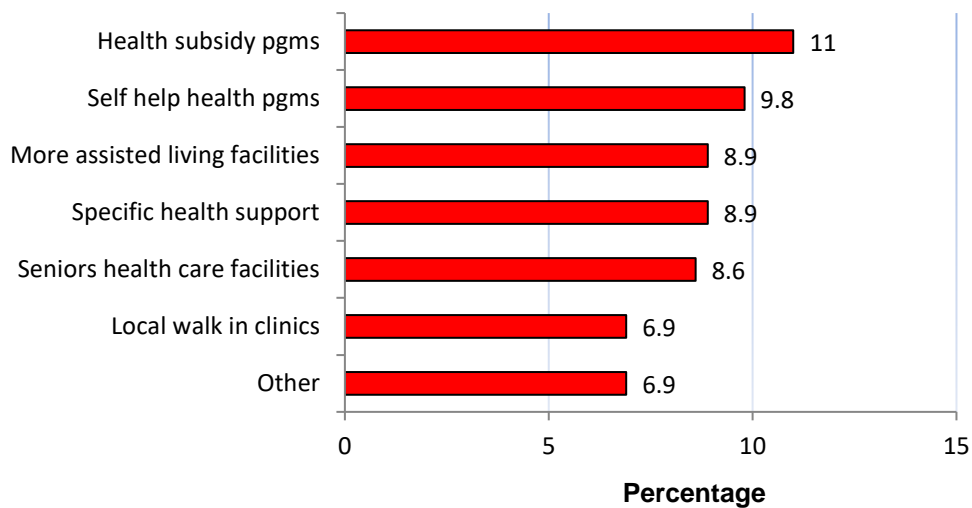


Respondents were also asked to report on their level of weekly physical activity. Overall, the majority of respondents were physically active 4-7 days a week (56.1%) or 2-3 days a week (26.6%), with 9.1% being active once a week. A small percentage of respondents (7%) were less active than that. There was no significant variation in this pattern between men and women or between age groups.

When asked about existing County healthcare facilities/related support programs, of those who made use of them,¹ 67.3% indicated that these met their current needs. Overall, 12.3% thought these did not, while the remaining 20.4% were not sure.

A depiction of the percentage of people who indicated which additional programs would help meet seniors' needs is shown in Figure 4 below. Improved health subsidy programs from government topped the list, followed closely by programs on how seniors could improve their own health. Having more assisted living facilities and specific health support (such as in-home support) were also noted.

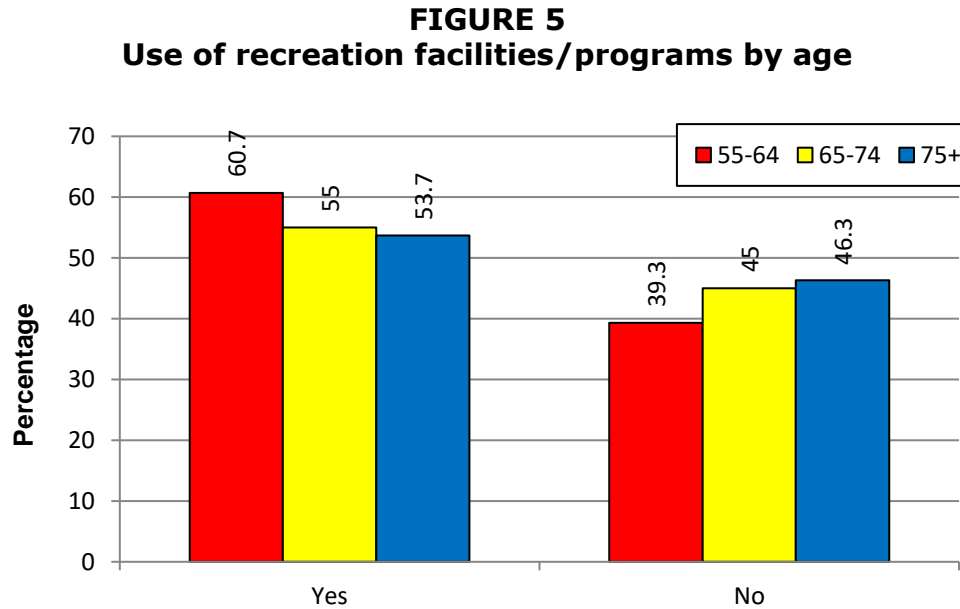
FIGURE 4
Other ways to help meet recreation needs for seniors.



¹ 23.9% of the respondents did not use any County health care facilities or programs.

C. Recreation assessment

Overall, it was found that prior to COVID-19, the majority of respondents (57.2%) had made use of one or more of the County run recreation facilities. There were no differences seen between men and women, but it can be seen in Figure 5 that use decreased as the age of the respondent increased.

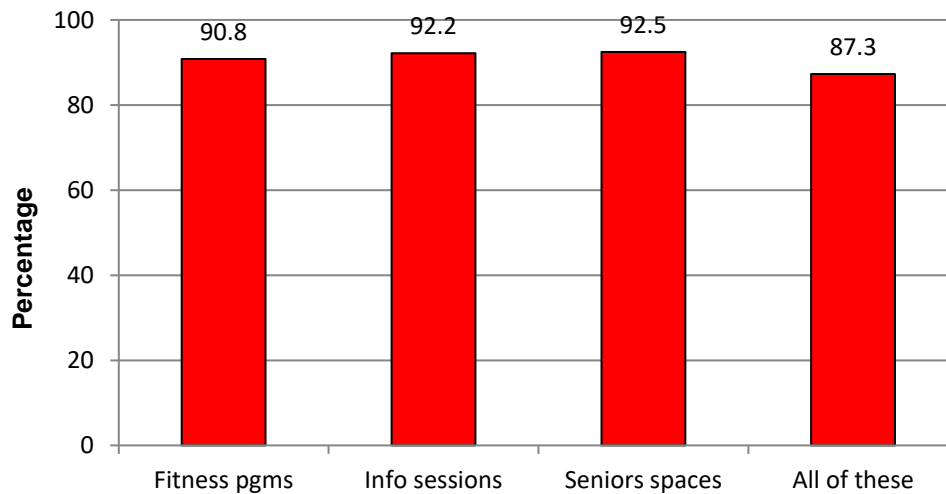


A follow up question asked whether the existing County run recreation facilities and programs met the respondents' current needs. Of the ones who currently used the facilities, the majority (68.8%) said their current needs were met. Of the remaining participants, 14.3% said their needs were not met, while the remaining 16.9% were not sure.

Males (72.4%) were more satisfied than females (65.8%). Similar percentages spreads were seen by age, as those aged 55-64 were more satisfied (72.3%) than older seniors (65.5% of those aged 65-74 and 67.5% of those 75 or older).

Various suggestions were put forward for other forms of recreation opportunities and are shown in Figure 6. All of the suggestions were positively received.

FIGURE 6
Other ways to help meet recreation needs for seniors



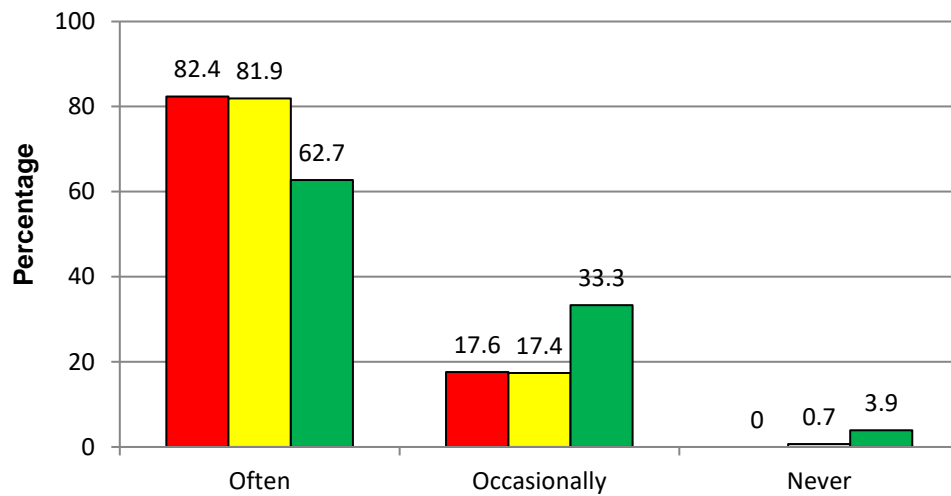
D. Other aspects of seniors well-being

Overall, it was found that prior to COVID-19, when asked how often they left their home to engage with others, such as visiting friends/family, going shopping, etc., it was found that:

- 79.2% did this often (more than twice a week).
- 19.9% did this occasionally (such as once or twice a week); and
- 0.9% never did this.

In terms of age, a drop from “often” to “occasionally” occurred with the 75 or older age group (as seen in Figure 7). No differences in participation were seen between males and females.

FIGURE 7
Leaving home to engage with others (by age groups)



In addition, virtually none of the seniors who completed this survey required assistance to access basic services such as getting help with groceries, getting to medical appointments, etc. Only 4% either always or sometimes required assistance.

Overall, 40.9% of respondents were aware that one can call Volunteer Strathcona to get assistance accessing services for seniors. The remaining 59.1% were not aware. A further analysis no differences in perception on this with respect to gender. In terms of age, awareness of this option increased as the age of the respondent increased.