The Commonwealth Fund 1999
International Health Policy Survey of
the Elderly in Five Nations

Accompanics May/June 2000
*Health Affairs* article

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Symposium on Health Care Policy
Experiences with Health Care: Access and Quality
Access to Needed Medical Care

Percent of the elderly who felt it was “extremely,” “very,” or “somewhat” difficult to get needed medical care

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percent of the Elderly with No Doctor’s Visit in the Past Year

- Australia: 2%
- Canada: 9%
- New Zealand: 16%
- United Kingdom: 13%
- United States: 10%
Access to Specialists

Percent of the elderly who felt it was “extremely,” “very,” or “somewhat” difficult to see a specialist when needed

Australia: 10%
Canada: 23%
New Zealand: 13%
United Kingdom: 23%
United States: 14%
Long Waits for Nonemergency Surgery

Percent of the elderly who needed nonemergency surgery and waited five weeks or more

- Australia: 19%
- Canada: 40%
- New Zealand: 34%
- United Kingdom: 51%
- United States: 7%
Long Waits for Surgery Can Be a Serious Problem

Percent of the elderly who needed non-emergency surgery and said waiting a long time was a serious problem

- Australia: 9%
- Canada: 11%
- New Zealand: 16%
- United Kingdom: 13%
- United States: 4%

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Quality of Care Ratings

Percent of the elderly who rated the medical care they received in the past year as “excellent”

- Australia: 36%
- Canada: 27%
- New Zealand: 39%
- United Kingdom: 25%
- United States: 32%
Quality of Care at Doctor’s Visits

Percent of the elderly who rated the care received at their most recent doctor’s visit as “excellent”

- Australia: 44%
- Canada: 38%
- New Zealand: 51%
- United Kingdom: 31%
- United States: 40%
Percent Hospitalized

Percent of the elderly hospitalized in the past year

- Australia: 29%
- Canada: 22%
- New Zealand: 29%
- United Kingdom: 21%
- United States: 28%
Quality of Care at the Hospital

Percent of the elderly who were hospitalized in the past two years and rated their overall hospital experience as “excellent”

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</tr>
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Availability of Nurses at the Hospital

Percent of the elderly who were hospitalized in the past two years and rated the availability of nurses at the hospital as “excellent”

- Australia: 35%
- Canada: 21%
- New Zealand: 44%
- United Kingdom: 29%
- United States: 34%
Influence of the Elderly on Their Care During Hospitalization

Percent of the elderly who were hospitalized in the past two years and said they did not have enough input or say about their treatment during hospitalization.
Length of Hospital Stay

Percent of the elderly who were hospitalized in the past two years and said their hospital stay was too short

- Australia: 9%
- Canada: 13%
- New Zealand: 10%
- United Kingdom: 9%
- United States: 9%
Receipt of Extra Help After Hospitalization

Percent of the elderly who were hospitalized in the past two years said they did not receive the help they needed when they arrived home from the hospital.

- Australia: 3%
- Canada: 10%
- New Zealand: 11%
- United Kingdom: 14%
- United States: 4%
Prescription Drugs
Reliance on Prescription Medications

Percent of the elderly who have a medical condition that requires them to take a prescription medication on a regular basis

- **Australia**: 78%
- **Canada**: 72%
- **New Zealand**: 72%
- **United Kingdom**: 70%
- **United States**: 77%

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*Elderly Adults*
Lack of Coverage for Prescription Medication

Percent of the elderly who say they have no public or private coverage for the cost of prescription medications

- Australia: 8%
- Canada: 10%
- New Zealand: 16%
- United Kingdom: 1%
- United States: 32%

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Elderly Adults
Out-of-Pocket Spending on Prescription Medicines

Per month out-of-pocket expenditures for prescription medicine by the elderly

Nothing

More than $100

AUS | CAN | NZ | UK | US
---|---|---|---|---
10% | 24% | 16% | 92% | 0%
0% | 4% | 2% | 0% | 16%
Home Health Care
Perceived Health Status

Percent of the elderly who rated their health as “fair” or “poor”

- Australia: 21%
- Canada: 21%
- New Zealand: 18%
- United Kingdom: 26%
- United States: 23%

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Disabilities and Health Conditions

Percent of the elderly who have a disability or health condition limiting full participation in daily activities

Australia: 26%
Canada: 28%
New Zealand: 31%
United Kingdom: 30%
United States: 29%

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Elderly Adults
### Need for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living

Percent of the elderly who needed home health or personal care services to help with eating, dressing, bathing, or other needs in the past two years.

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*Elderly Adults*
Caregiving Experience of the Elderly

Percent of the elderly who are currently caring or have in the past two years cared for someone who is frail, sick, or disabled

Australia: 21%
Canada: 25%
New Zealand: 25%
United Kingdom: 19%
United States: 27%
Caregivers’ Unmet Need for Assistance

Percent of elderly caregivers who needed home health care assistance for the person they cared for in the past two years and couldn’t get it

- Australia: 15%
- Canada: 19%
- New Zealand: 20%
- United Kingdom: 32%
- United States: 10%

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Elderly Adults
Caregivers’ Ability to Get Additional Help

Percent of elderly caregivers reporting they used paid home health care in addition to informal care

- Australia: 44%
- Canada: 53%
- New Zealand: 48%
- United Kingdom: 46%
- United States: 58%

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Elderly Adults
The Elderly’s Ability to Get Additional Help

Percent of the elderly in need of care in the home who received some paid home health care

- Australia: 67%
- Canada: 72%
- New Zealand: 78%
- United Kingdom: 63%
- United States: 83%

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Public or Government Program Assistance with Paid Home Health Care

Percent of elderly caregivers reporting paid home care assistance who said a government program or public insurance (rather than family) paid for care

- Australia: 62%
- Canada: 71%
- New Zealand: 80%
- United Kingdom: 67%
- United States: 80%
Many Elderly Receive Health Assistance from Their Children

Percent of the elderly with children who “often” receive help from them when they are ill

- Australia: 31%
- Canada: 26%
- New Zealand: 37%
- United Kingdom: 30%
- United States: 32%

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Elderly Adults
The Elderly Receive Financial Assistance from Their Children

Percent of the elderly with children who “often” or “sometimes” receive financial support from their children

- Australia: 12%
- Canada: 12%
- New Zealand: 14%
- United Kingdom: 18%
- United States: 13%

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Children Are a Major Source of Assistance and Caregiving for Their Parents

Percent of the elderly with children who said there was a time they needed help from their children and didn’t get it.
Concerns About Costs and Future Health Care Needs
Difficulties Meeting Regular Expenses

Percent of the elderly who say it is “extremely” or “somewhat” difficult to meet regular expenses

- Australia: 20%
- Canada: 15%
- New Zealand: 26%
- United Kingdom: 26%
- United States: 21%
Difficulties Paying Medical Bills

Percent of the elderly who had problems paying medical bills in the past year

- Australia: 4%
- Canada: 3%
- New Zealand: 5%
- United Kingdom: 1%
- United States: 6%
Difficulties Affording Prescription Medications

Percent of the elderly who did not fill a prescription for financial reasons

Australia: 1%
Canada: 4%
New Zealand: 2%
United Kingdom: 3%
United States: 7%

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey

Elderly Adults
Concerns About the Impact of Health Problems

Percent of the elderly who are “very concerned” they will have to leave the place they are living now because of health problems

- Australia: 10%
- Canada: 13%
- New Zealand: 19%
- United Kingdom: 11%
- United States: 16%

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey
Concerns About Becoming a Burden on Family

Percent of the elderly who are “very concerned” they will become a burden on their family

- Australia: 13%
- Canada: 13%
- New Zealand: 25%
- United Kingdom: 13%
- United States: 19%

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey
Concerns About the Cost of Long-Term Care

Percent of the elderly who are “very concerned” they will not have enough money or insurance to pay for the long-term care services they will need

Australia: 12%
Canada: 14%
New Zealand: 24%
United Kingdom: 12%
United States: 22%
Concerns About Paying for Needed Care

Percent of the elderly who are “very concerned” they will not be able to pay for the medical care they need

- Australia: 11%
- Canada: 14%
- New Zealand: 25%
- United Kingdom: 10%
- United States: 21%

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey

Elderly Adults
Disadvantaged Groups: The Poor Elderly
Difficulty Meeting Regular Expenses

Percent of the elderly with difficulty meeting regular expenses

- Below Average Income
- At or Above Average Income

Australia: 24% (9%)
Canada: 23% (5%)
New Zealand: 31% (6%)
United Kingdom: 38% (15%)
United States: 32% (9%)
Ability to Afford Health Care

Percent of the elderly who had problems paying their medical bills in the past year

- Below Average Income
- At or Above Average Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Below Average Income</th>
<th>At or Above Average Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceived Quality of Care

Percent of the elderly who rated the medical care they received in the past year as “excellent”

- Australia: 35%
- Canada: 21%
- New Zealand: 37%
- United Kingdom: 28%
- United States: 30%

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey

Elderly Adults
Ratings of Hospital Experience

Percent of the elderly who had been hospitalized in the past two years and rated the overall experience as “excellent”

- Below Average Income
- At or Above Average Income

Australia
Canada
New Zealand
United Kingdom
United States

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey
Ability to Afford Prescription Medications

Percent of the elderly who could not afford to fill a prescription in the past year

- **Australia**: Below Average Income: 1%, At or Above Average Income: <1%
- **Canada**: Below Average Income: 5%, At or Above Average Income: <1%
- **New Zealand**: Below Average Income: 2%, At or Above Average Income: 1%
- **United Kingdom**: Below Average Income: 2%, At or Above Average Income: 2%
- **United States**: Below Average Income: 10%, At or Above Average Income: 1%
Receipt of Home Health Services

Percent of the elderly who have needed and received home health services

■ Below Average Income
□ At or Above Average Income

Australia: 73% (44% below average income)
Canada: 63% (44% below average income)
New Zealand: 78% (64% below average income)
United Kingdom: 65% (64% below average income)
United States: 80% (90% below average income)
Caregivers Who Receive Additional Help

Percent of elderly caregivers whose care recipient received paid home health care

- Below Average Income
- At or Above Average Income

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Below Average Income</th>
<th>At or Above Average Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
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The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey

Elderly Adults
Concern About the Affordability of Long-Term Care

Percent of the elderly who are “very concerned” that they will need long-term care and will be unable to pay for it

- Below Average Income
- At or Above Average Income

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<tr>
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<th>Below Average Income</th>
<th>At or Above Average Income</th>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey Elderly Adults
Concern About Being Unable to Pay for Needed Care

Percent of the elderly who are “very concerned” that they will have large medical expenses and will be unable to pay for needed care

- Below Average Income
- At or Above Average Income

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<td>15%</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey

Elderly Adults
Views of the System
## The Elderly’s View of Their Health Care System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System works well—only minor changes needed</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some good things but fundamental change is needed</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System has so much wrong it needs complete rebuilding</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Percent of the Elderly Population Saying Their Health Care System Needs to Be Completely Rebuilt

- **Australia**: 39% (1998), 24% (1999)
- **Canada**: 27% (1998), 18% (1999)
- **New Zealand**: 41% (1998), 31% (1999)
- **United Kingdom**: 12% (1998), 15% (1999)
- **United States**: 27% (1998), 26% (1999)
Perceptions of Recent Changes in the Quality of Medical Care for the Elderly

Percent of the elderly saying that medical care for the elderly is better/worse compared with five years ago

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey
Comparisons of Care Experiences for the Under and Over Age 65 Populations in Five Nations
Difficulty Getting Needed Care

Percent who felt it was “extremely,” “very,” or “somewhat” difficult to get needed medical care

* The age break in New Zealand is “under age 70” and “age 70 and over.”

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey
Worries About Not Being Able to Afford Needed Care

Percent who are “very worried” that if they become seriously ill, they will not be able to get the medical care they need because they cannot afford it

- **Under Age 65**
- **Age 65 and Over**

* The age break in New Zealand is “under age 70” and “age 70 and over.”

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey

**Elderly Adults**
Views of the Health Care System

Percent who think their health care system has so much wrong with it that it needs to be completely rebuilt

* The age break in New Zealand is “under age 70” and “age 70 and over.”

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey

Elderly Adults
Methodology

The Commonwealth Fund 1999 International Health Policy Survey of the Elderly consisted of telephone interviews with 3,515 adults age 65 or older regarding their health care experiences and related concerns in five countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Sample sizes in each country were 701, 700, 700, 714 and 700 respectively. The survey was commissioned by The Commonwealth Fund and conducted by Harris Interactive, Inc. and their international affiliates from April to June 1999.

Researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health, Harris Interactive and the Commonwealth Fund collaborated in the design of the common survey instrument that was administered in all countries. Several measures were taken or adapted from prior instruments developed for prior international health surveys. Instruments were reviewed by health care experts in all nations and presented in each nation. The average length of survey administration was 12 minutes in each of the five nations.