

High Emergency Department Users: Older Adults with Diabetes and Health Care Use | Ontario

What is the Issue?

There are over 513,000 older adults living with diabetes in Ontario. The majority live with other health conditions and use a range of health care services. The most frequent users of the emergency department within this population represent a unique subgroup with particularly complex needs that are evident from their higher use of many other health care services.

Key Features of this Study:

Using health data from Ontario, two groups of community-living older adults with diabetes were identified:

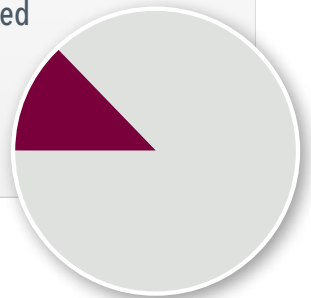
- 1) High-Emergency Department User Group:** Those in the top 10% for number of emergency department visits within a year.
- 2) Population-Based Group:** A random sample of community-living older adults living with diabetes.



Did you know?

13%

of those in the High-Emergency Department User Group died each year compared to 4% in the Population-Based Group.



We looked at how often people in the **High-Emergency Department User Group** and the **Population-Based Group** used different kinds of health care services within the previous year. Here is what we found:

	High-Emergency Department User Group	Population-Based Group	High-Emergency Department User Group	Population-Based Group
Doctor's Visits	97% vs. 94%	94% vs. 97%	FOR AN AVERAGE OF 12 vs. 8 VISITS PER YEAR	8 vs. 12 VISITS PER YEAR
Specialist's Visit	95% vs. 88%	88% vs. 95%	FOR AN AVERAGE OF 18 vs. 10 VISITS PER YEAR	10 vs. 18 VISITS PER YEAR
Emergency Department Visits	67% vs. 33%	33% vs. 67%	FOR AN AVERAGE OF 3 vs. 2 VISITS PER YEAR	2 vs. 3 VISITS PER YEAR
Hospital Stays	34% vs. 15%	15% vs. 34%	SPENT AN AVERAGE OF 15 vs. 12 DAYS IN HOSPITAL IN THE YEAR	12 vs. 15 DAYS IN HOSPITAL IN THE YEAR
Homecare Use	50% vs. 18%	18% vs. 50%	WITH AN AVERAGE OF 9 vs. 8 VISITS PER MONTH	8 vs. 9 VISITS PER MONTH

Overall, we can see that older adults with diabetes use a considerable amount of health care. Both groups saw a family doctor with similar frequency over the year, but there were much bigger differences when we looked at any type of care.

Key Messages: Implications for Clinical Practice and Policy Considerations

- Older adults with diabetes are frequent health care users, and those identified in the High-Emergency Department User Group had more than twice the number of emergency department visits, hospital stays, and home care use.
- Strategies to ensure that older people with diabetes, especially those with frequent emergency department use, receive the right care at the right time and in the right setting need to be developed and implemented.

A comprehensive long-term strategy needs to be developed that focuses on all of these factors.

This infographic was developed on behalf of the ACHRU-CPP Research Team in collaboration with Lynne Mansell (patient/caregiver public partner) and Paige Blainey (ACHRU trainee). References available upon request. | achru.mcmaster.ca