

New Research Reveals Older Women in Canada Face Greater Financial Insecurity, Loneliness and Ageism as They Age

TORONTO, July 9, 2026 — Older women in Canada are living longer than men, but many are ageing with greater financial insecurity, loneliness and exposure to ageism, according to a new report released today by the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) in partnership with the International Longevity Centre Canada (ILC Canada).

Supported by Women and Gender Equality Canada, [Experiences of Older Women in Canada: Findings from the NIA's 2025 Ageing in Canada Survey](#) is the first report in a three-part research series examining how gender shapes the experience of ageing in Canada. Drawing on responses from more than 6,000 Canadians aged 50 and older, the report identifies where current systems are supporting older women effectively and, more importantly, where they are failing those facing overlapping inequalities. The findings also demonstrate that experiences of ageing are not universal, with income and race influencing outcomes.

“Gender profoundly impacts the experience of ageing,” said Talia Bronstein, Director of Policy, of the National Institute on Ageing. “Older Canadian women, especially those with inadequate incomes and those who are racialized, face systemic barriers that demand targeted, cross-cutting and evidence-based policy responses.”

Among the report's key findings:

- **Women face a lifelong gender income gap.** Older women were more likely than older men to report having inadequate income (24% vs. 19%), more likely to have less than \$5,000 saved for retirement (26% vs. 19%) and more likely to experience material deprivation (23% vs. 16%). These differences point to systemic inequities such as gender pay gaps, gender pension gaps and unpaid caregiving.
- **Women are at risk of loneliness.** Older women were more likely to report experiencing loneliness than older men (61% vs. 54%). Social isolation and loneliness are associated with higher rates of chronic disease, mental health challenges and premature mortality.
- **Inadequate income leads to poorer outcomes for older women.** Older women with inadequate income were more likely to report experiencing social isolation (53% vs. 37%), poor health, and poor mental health compared to older women with adequate income.
- **Racialized older women face distinct barriers to social engagement and access to health care.** They were less likely than non-racialized older women to have a regular primary care provider (64% vs. 71%), to access health care services when needed, and were less likely to participate in regular social activities.
- **Ageism and sexism intersect.** Older women were more likely than men to have experienced multiple forms of everyday ageism (33% vs. 28%).

“Understanding where and how inequities exist is essential to designing policies that improve outcomes for older women,” said Alyssa Brierley, Executive Director of the National Institute on Ageing. “Experiences of ageing differ across communities and demographic groups. If we want better outcomes for older women, we need an intersectional approach to understand where inequities exist so we can address them.”

As Canada is now a super-aged society, the report calls for greater attention to policies that improve retirement income security, support caregivers, reduce social isolation, improve access to health care and community supports and address the intersecting impacts of ageism and sexism.

“Ageing is not a gender-neutral experience,” said Margaret Gillis, Founder and President of ILC Canada. “The findings in this report make it clear that many older women continue to face persistent inequities rooted in a lifetime of unequal opportunities and systemic barriers. If we want to improve the wellbeing of older Canadians, we must ensure that policies reflect the realities of older women’s lives.”

“Too often, older women are overlooked in public policy discussions despite representing one of the fastest-growing segments of Canada’s population,” said Kahir Lalji, Incoming President of ILC Canada. “This report is a call to action. When we support older women, we strengthen communities and families across generations.”

About The National Institute on Ageing

Founded in 2016, the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) is celebrating a decade of impact in our mission to improve the lives of older adults and the systems that support them. Over the past 10 years, the NIA has become Canada’s leading voice on ageing policy — convening stakeholders, conducting research, advancing policy solutions and practice innovations, sharing information and shifting attitudes. Our vision remains clear: a Canada where older adults feel valued, included, supported and better prepared to age with confidence.

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