Health E-Stat 105: Chronic Conditions in Adults Age 85 and Older: United States, 2022–2023

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In 2023, the number of American adults age 85 and older was 6.1 million (1). By 2040, the number of adults age 85 and older is projected to be 13.7 million, more than double the number in 2023 (1,2). In the United States, chronic diseases are leading causes of illness, disability, and death (3). Adults generally report more chronic conditions as they age, but studies often lack detailed information on chronic conditions for the 85 and older population (4). This report presents estimates of 11 selected chronic conditions in noninstitutionalized U.S. adults age 85 and older overall and by sex. Estimates for the prevalence of multiple chronic conditions also are presented.

Among civilian noninstitutionalized adults age 85 and older, the most common of the selected chronic conditions reported were hypertension (66.9%), arthritis (55.9%), and high cholesterol (46.5%) (Table). Hypertension was the most common chronic condition reported for both women and men, with women (68.9%) having a higher prevalence than men (63.7%). The prevalence of arthritis also was higher for women (63.2%) than men (44.2%). However, men had a higher prevalence than women of high cholesterol (50.5% and 44.0%, respectively), cancer (39.8% and 28.6%), heart disease (31.5% and 26.3%), and diabetes (19.3% and 14.5%) (Figure, Table).

Among adults age 85 and older, 7.4% reported none of the selected chronic conditions, 12.1% reported one condition, 20.8% reported two conditions, 22.3% reported three conditions, and 37.3% reported four or more conditions. No significant differences were seen between men and women in the distribution of number of chronic conditions for the 11 chronic conditions described in this report (Table).

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Data source and methods

Data from the 2022 and 2023 National Health Interview Survey, a survey of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population, were used to present estimates of the percentage of adults age 85 and older with 11 selected chronic conditions. These conditions are included in a list of 20 chronic conditions identified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as part of an effort to foster a consistent and standardized approach to measuring chronic conditions (5). The questions on these 11 selected chronic conditions were asked consistently in the 2022 and 2023 NHIS. Adults were asked if they had ever been told by a doctor or healthcare professional that they had hypertension; arthritis; high cholesterol; cancer; coronary heart disease, angina, or heart attack; diabetes; dementia; depression; stroke; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, or chronic bronchitis; and asthma (6,7). Estimates are shown for all adults age 85 and older and by sex. Differences between percentages were evaluated using two-sided significance tests at the 0.05 level. All estimates were evaluated using National Center for Health Statistics presentation standards for proportions (8).
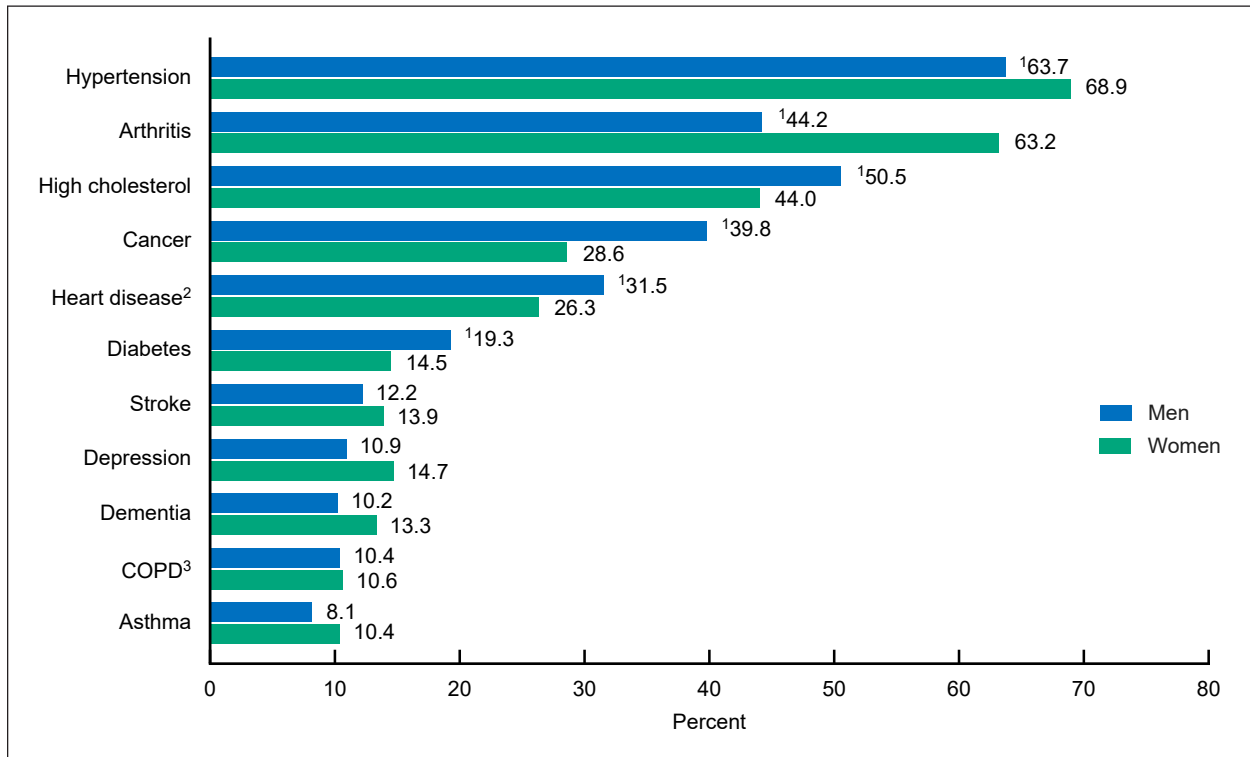
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Suggested citation

Figure. Percentage of adults age 85 and older with selected chronic conditions, by sex: United States, 2022–2023

[1]Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).
[2]Includes coronary heart disease, angina, and heart attack.
[3]Includes chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, and chronic bronchitis.
NOTES: Chronic condition is based on a "yes" response to the question of ever having been told by a doctor or other health professional that they had one or more of the selected conditions. Estimates are based on household interviews of a sample of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population.
SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2022–2023.

Table. Percentage of adults age 85 and older with selected chronic conditions, by sex: United States, 2022–2023

Chronic condition	Total	Men	Women
	Percent (95% confidence interval)		
Hypertension	66.9 (64.4–69.4)	[1]63.7 (59.6–67.7)	68.9 (65.8–72.0)
Arthritis	55.9 (53.3–58.5)	[1]44.2 (40.2–48.3)	63.2 (59.9–66.5)
High cholesterol	46.5 (44.0–49.1)	[1]50.5 (46.4–54.7)	44.0 (40.8–47.3)
Cancer	32.9 (30.6–35.3)	[1]39.8 (35.8–43.9)	28.6 (25.9–31.4)
Heart disease[2]	28.3 (26.0–30.7)	[1]31.5 (27.7–35.5)	26.3 (23.4–29.4)
Diabetes	16.3 (14.4–18.4)	[1]19.3 (15.9–23.1)	14.5 (12.2–17.0)
Stroke	13.3 (11.4–15.3)	12.2 (9.3–15.7)	13.9 (11.4–16.6)
Depression	13.2 (11.4–15.2)	10.9 (8.1–14.4)	14.7 (12.4–17.2)
Dementia	12.1 (10.6–13.7)	10.2 (7.9–12.9)	13.3 (11.3–15.4)
COPD[3]	10.6 (9.0–12.2)	10.4 (7.8–13.5)	10.6 (8.7–12.8)
Asthma	9.5 (8.1–11.2)	8.1 (6.0–10.5)	10.4 (8.5–12.6)
Number of chronic conditions			
None	7.4 (6.1–9.0)	9.0 (6.6–11.9)	6.5 (4.9–8.4)
One	12.1 (10.5–13.9)	12.5 (10.1–15.4)	11.9 (10.0–14.0)
Two	20.8 (18.9–22.8)	20.4 (17.3–23.8)	21.0 (18.5–23.7)
Three	22.3 (20.2–24.5)	20.4 (17.2–24.0)	23.5 (20.8–26.4)
Four or more	37.3 (35.0–39.8)	37.7 (33.7–41.8)	37.1 (34.2–40.2)

[1]Significantly different from women ($p < 0.05$).
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SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 2022–2023.