



# Unequal burden: High rates of activity limitations in transgender and gender-diverse populations

Antony Chum, Yihong Bai, Peiya Cao, Kristine Ienciu, Inthuja Selvaratnam, Alex Abramovich, Brittany Jakubiec

## Datasets used

Canadian Population Census

## Policy areas this research can inform

Health

Population and demography

Society and community

## Context

This study fills a critical knowledge gap by using Canada's 2021 Census—the first national census to collect gender identity data—to compare specific types of activity limitations (e.g., mental, cognitive, mobility) across cisgender, transgender, and non-binary individuals. Prior research has typically used non-representative samples or aggregated gender-diverse populations, limiting visibility of disparities. By disaggregating both gender identity and types of limitations, this study provides a comprehensive and nationally representative understanding of health inequities in Canada. These findings can inform targeted policies and inclusive program planning for gender-diverse populations.

## Key finding

Due to systemic barriers, non-binary and transgender individuals in Canada face significantly higher rates of activity limitations—especially in mental, cognitive, and mobility domains—compared to cisgender individuals, with non-binary people assigned female at birth reporting the highest predicted probability (76.1%), followed by non-binary individuals assigned male at birth (61.6%), transgender men (44.7%), and transgender women (34.4%), while cisgender women (22.0%) and cisgender men (19.3%) reported the lowest.

## Policy implications

This study highlights the urgent need for more inclusive and equitable healthcare systems that recognize and address the unique barriers faced by transgender and gender diverse individuals. Policymakers can use these findings to support training for healthcare providers in culturally competent, gender-affirming care, and to improve access to mental health services and disability supports tailored to gender-diverse populations. Simple yet meaningful changes – such as updating intake forms to reflect transgender and gender diverse identities and routinely screening for activity limitations – can enhance care experiences and outcomes. Addressing these disparities requires a coordinated effort to make healthcare environments more inclusive, affirming, and responsive to the needs of all Canadians.

## Read the full article here

Bai, Y., Cao, P., Kim, C., Ienciu, K., Selvaratnam, I., Abramovich, A., Jakubiec, B., Brennan, D. J., & Chum, A. (2025). Gender identity and activity limitations: A national study on transgender and non-binary Canadians. *Preventive Medicine*, 192, 108224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2025.108224>

## Citation

Chum, A., Bai, Y., Cao, P., Ienciu, K., Selvaratnam, I., Abramovich, A., & Jakubiec, B. (2025). Unequal burden: High rates of activity limitations in transgender and gender-diverse populations. *CRDCN Research-Policy Snapshot Digest*, 4(2), 3.

