

**SENIORS OF THE
CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT**

**PROVINCE OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Summer, 1998

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Introduction	v
Map of Vancouver Island and the Capital Regional District	vii
Baseline Study Methodology	viii
I Seniors Population of the Capital Regional District	1
Population Size and Growth	1
Senior Age Distribution	1
Gender	2
II Geographic Distribution and Mobility	4
Communities	4
Country of Birth	5
Reasons for Moving to the CRD	6
Prior Residency	7
III Housing and Living Arrangements	9
Type of Housing	9
Home Sweet Home	10
Who We Live With	11
IV Social Networks and Support	14
Marital Status	14
Children	15
Other Family and Friends	15
Spending Time Together	16
Geographic Proximity and Feelings of Closeness	20
Somebody to Count On	22
Getting Help	25
Seniors as Caregivers	26

TABLES

Table 1: Age Cohorts of Seniors in the Capital Regional District	2
Table 2: Seniors as a Percentage of Total Population by Community	5
Table 3: Number of People Living in the Household	12
Table 4: Marital Status of Seniors in the Capital Regional District	14
Table 5: Number of Daughters and Sons	15
Table 6: Number of Sisters and Brothers	16
Table 7: Who Not Married Seniors See Most Often	19
Table 8: Number of People Seniors Count on For Help in Times of Need	23
Table 9: Who Seniors Count on For Help in Times of Need	24
Table 10: How Close Seniors Are to Person They Count on in Times of Need	25
Table 11: Annual Household Income	31
Table 12: Current Physical Health	32
Table 13: Number of Chronic Illnesses Experienced	34
Table 14: Number of Days Spent Sick at Home (During a 6 Month Period)	35
Table 15: Prevalence Rates of Chronic Illnesses by Gender	36

INTRODUCTION

The Capital Regional District (CRD)

The Capital Regional District was created in 1966. The provincial government felt that many services would be better delivered on a regional basis. Services, such as health and solid waste disposal, affect all communities in the area. From a regional perspective, local governments would be able to eliminate duplication of services while taking advantage of economies of scale.

The Capital Regional District covers approximately 2,400 square kilometers (947 square miles) on the south end of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The Gulf Islands include Salt Spring, Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna. It is made up of 12 incorporated municipalities and four electoral regions. The municipalities are as follows: Central Saanich, Colwood, Esquimalt, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, North Saanich, Oak Bay, Saanich, Sidney, Victoria and View Royal. Victoria is the capital of British Columbia.

The CRD is divided into four subregions. They are the Urban Core, the Saanich Peninsula, the Western Communities, and the Gulf Islands. The Urban Core is comprised of Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt and Saanich. The Saanich Peninsula encompasses Central Saanich, North Saanich and Sidney. The Western Communities is made up of Colwood, the District of Langford, Metchosin, View Royal and the Highlands, along with the Langford Electoral Area and the Sooke Electoral Area. The Gulf Islands includes Galiano, Mayne, Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna.

Seniors in the CRD

The CRD is recognised throughout Canada and the world as a beautiful place to live. The mild climate and natural environment attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists every year. Also, the area attracts many seniors from across Canada who have decided to retire in the CRD.

Yet, little is known about seniors in the CRD. What does the population of the region look like? How do seniors in the CRD compare with seniors in the province of British Columbia and with seniors in Canada as a whole? This report, therefore, attempts to answer these questions. It describes the population of seniors in the region with a focus on their demographic characteristics, geographic distribution, housing, education, economic characteristics, health, lifestyles and quality of life.

Information concerning seniors in the Capital Regional District (CRD) that is highlighted in this report was drawn from the Baseline Survey of Seniors in the Capital Regional District Project. This study was conducted in 1995 by the Centre on Aging, University of Victoria. Interviews were conducted with people aged 65 and older and living in the community. Those in hospitals

**Map of Vancouver Island
and the Capital Regional District**



Yellow area indicates the Capital Regional District

BASELINE STUDY METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the Baseline Study was to compile information on seniors (65 years and older) in the Capital Regional District. The resulting profile would provide researchers with an overview of the seniors population in the CRD.

In order to facilitate generalizability, 2 percent of seniors in the CRD were interviewed. Since the estimated size of the seniors population in the CRD was 60,000, interviewing two percent of this population would result in 1200 completed interviews--(60,000 X .02).

In November of 1994, the Centre on Aging received a listing containing information on all seniors living in the CRD. This list came from British Columbia's Department of Vital Statistics. A series of random draws were then made from the list of names until at least 1,200 interviews were completed. Overall, 2,800 people were contacted. Of these, 1,278 were completed interviews. In addition, 1,168 were ineligible for various reasons and a further 354 (12.6%) refused to take part in the study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Below are some facts and figures from the Baseline Study conducted by the Centre on Aging. The Centre wishes to thank all the seniors who so graciously gave of their time. For further analyses or information regarding this study, please contact:

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- ▶ The majority of seniors in the CRD (59%) are female
- ▶ Of the CRD communities, Sidney has the largest percentage of seniors -- 33%
- ▶ 67% of seniors were born in Canada
- ▶ 51% of seniors moved to the CRD from another province
- ▶ 44% of seniors in the CRD moved here for the climate and the environment
- ▶ 58% of seniors live in single, detached housing
- ▶ 96% of seniors in detached housing own their homes
- ▶ 33% of seniors in the CRD live alone
- ▶ Of seniors living alone, 78% are female
- ▶ 79% of males are married compared to only 48% of females
- ▶ 11% of seniors in the CRD have no children
- ▶ Of seniors with children, 79% feel very close to their children
- ▶ Emotional support (63%) is the most common type of support given to seniors

I. THE SENIOR POPULATION OF THE CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

The seniors population of Canada will continue to increase in size relative to the rest of the population. And this trend will also continue in the CRD. At present, seniors represent almost one-fifth of the population of the CRD. The growth of this segment of the population will place an increasing emphasis on our need to have a greater understanding of the demographic structure of the CRD, especially seniors and their needs.

Population Size and Growth

Seniors represent a significant and growing segment of the population in the region. In 1996, there were 57,470 people aged 65 and older living in the Capital Regional District (CRD). The total population of the region was 317,990. Therefore, seniors represented 18.1% of the total population in this area. In comparison, people aged 65 and older represented 12.8% of the provincial population and 12.2% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population).

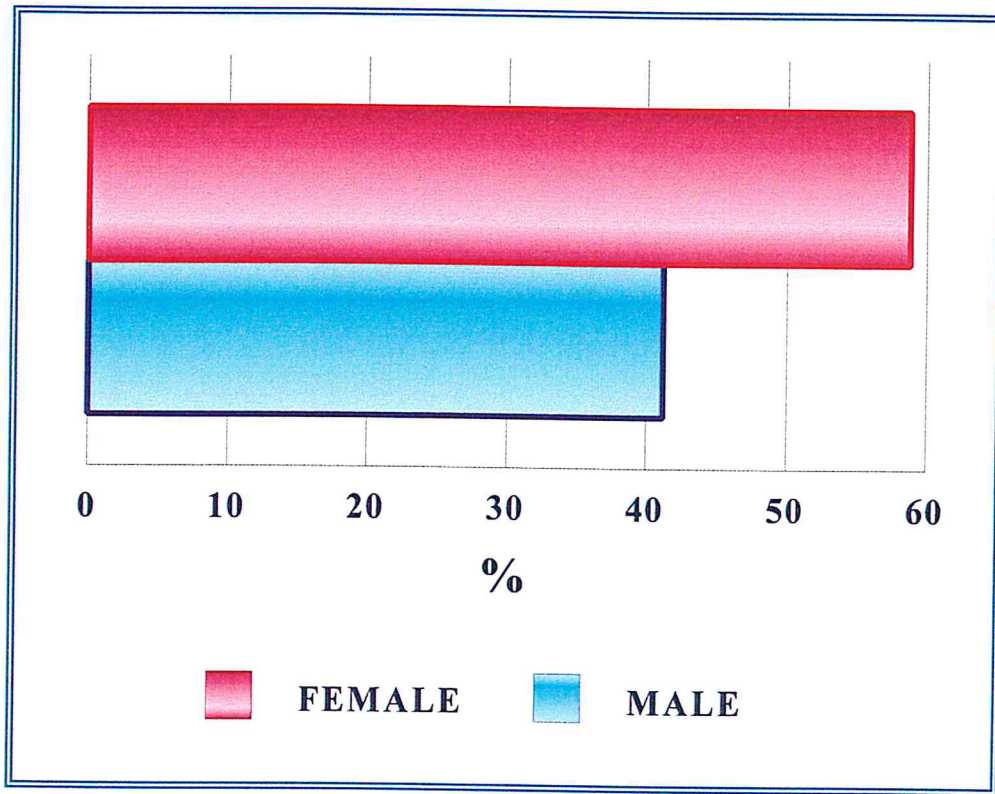
The percentage of seniors in the region remained rather stable from 1991 to 1996, declining slightly from 18.8% to 18.1% (Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population). Similarly, the percentage of children under the age of 15 declined slightly from 16.9% in 1991 to 16.6% in 1996. In 1996, people aged 15 and under represented 19.7% of British Columbia's total population and 20.5% of the overall Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population).

The *CRD Regional Planning Services* has estimated that by the year 2016, 18.8% of those in the CRD will be aged 65 and older. This compares to estimates of 15.9% for British Columbia (Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population) as well as for Canada as a whole (Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 89-519-XPE, *A Portrait of Seniors in Canada*).

Senior Age Distribution

The age distribution for the seniors population in the CRD is shown in Table 1. Over one-quarter of the seniors population (27%) is between 65 and 69 years of age. One-third (33%) of the seniors are between 70 and 74 years of age. Just over one-fifth (21%) of the population is 80 years of age or older. Only 7% of the population is 85 years of age or older.

Chart 1: Gender Distribution of Seniors in the Capital Regional District



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Table 2: Seniors as a Percentage of Total Population by Community

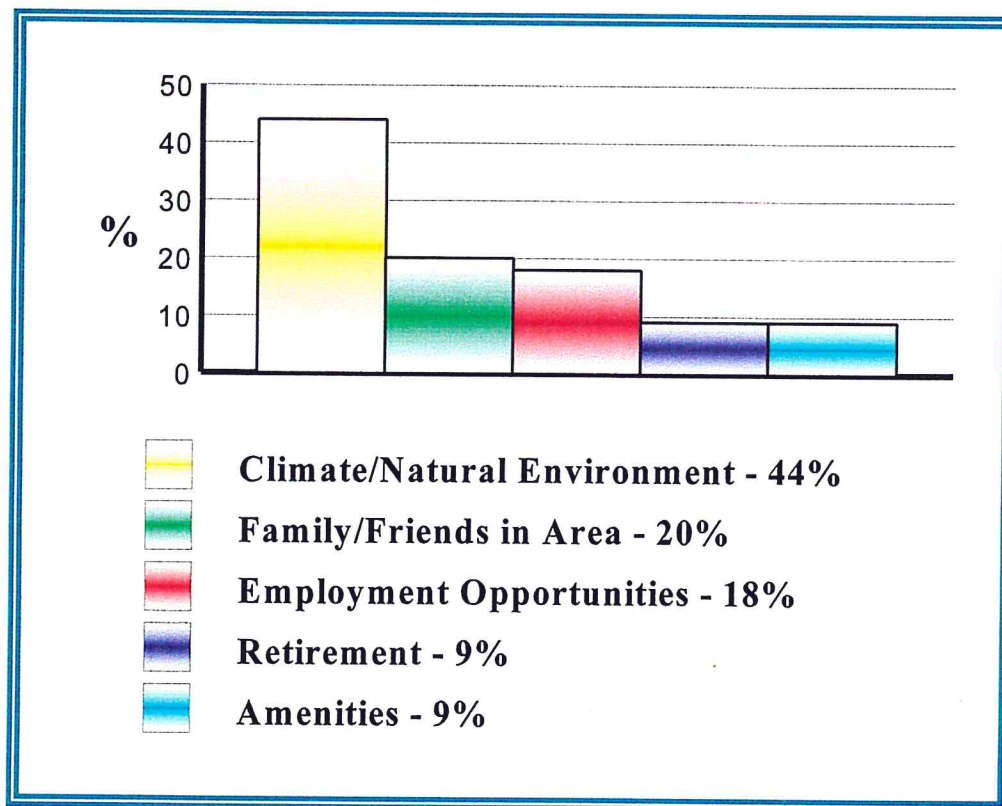
Community	Percentage 65 or Older
Sidney	33
Oak Bay	28
Gulf Islands	23
Victoria	21
North Saanich	18
Central Saanich	18
Saanich	17
Esquimalt	16
Sooke	12
View Royal	11
Langford	9
Colwood	9
Metchosin	9

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population

Country of Birth

Two-thirds (67%) of seniors currently living in the CRD were born in Canada. However, approximately one-fifth (19%) of seniors in the CRD were born in Britain (see Chart 2). Only 8% of seniors were born in other European countries. A further 7% were born elsewhere.

Chart 3: Reason For Moving to Capital Regional District



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Prior Residency

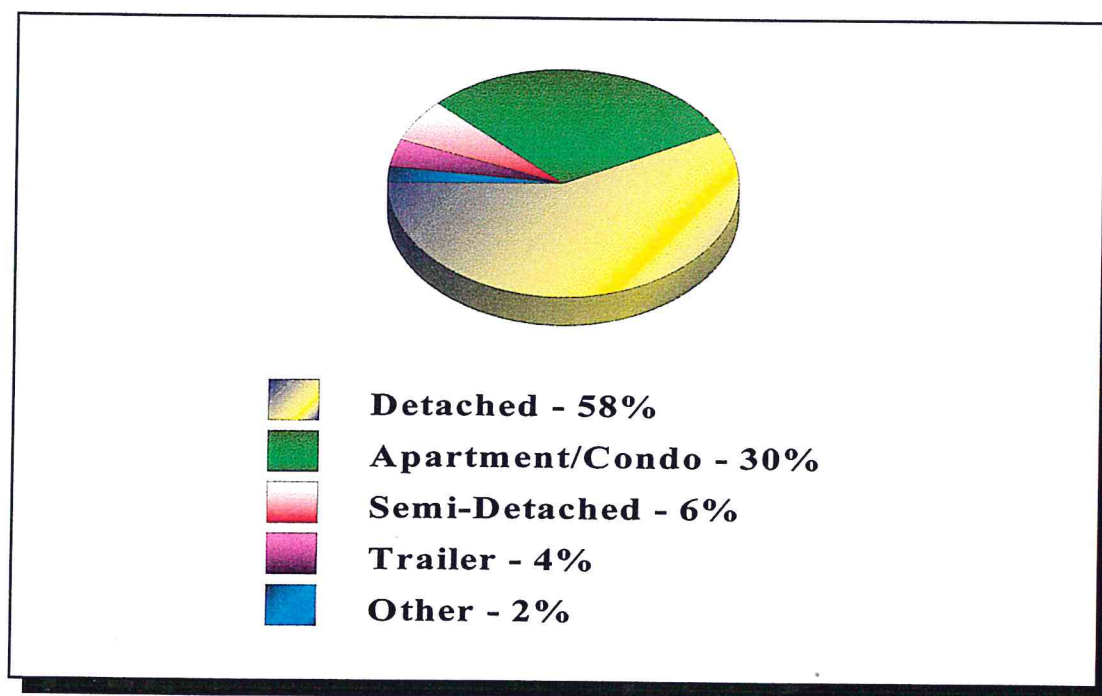
The majority (51%) of seniors who moved to the CRD came from another Canadian province (see Chart 4). About one-third came from other parts of British Columbia while eleven percent arrived from another country.

III HOUSING AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Housing is a major concern for people of all ages, including seniors. Issues such as affordability and access to stores and other services may become increasingly important with age. Feelings of security within a home may also be important. These types of issues were explored in the Centre on Aging (1995) Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD and are reported below.

Type of Housing

Chart 5: Housing Arrangements of Seniors in the CRD

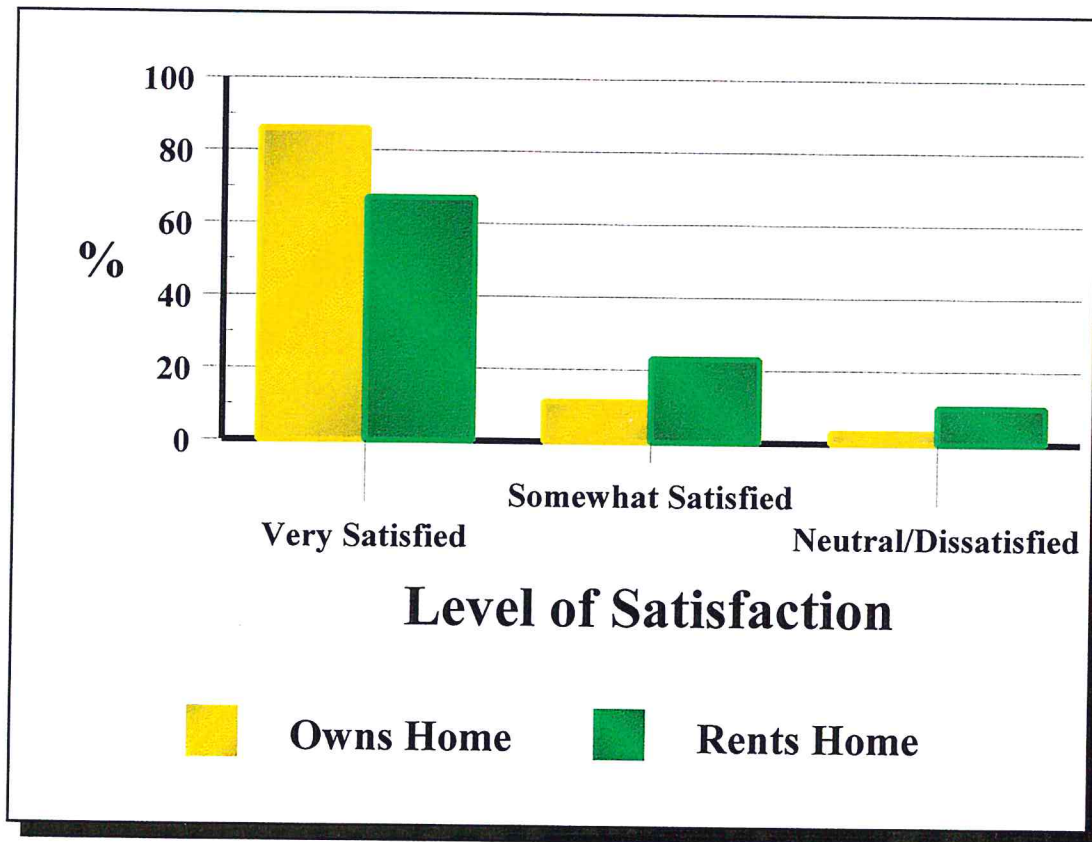


Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Within the CRD, 58% of seniors are living in single, detached housing (see Chart 5). Most (96%) of these seniors own their own homes. A further 30% of seniors live in an apartment or condominium. Of these seniors, 51% own their apartments or condominiums. Six percent of seniors live in semi-detached housing and 4% live in trailers. Of the seniors living in semi-detached housing, 78% own their homes.

The majority of seniors are also very content with current housing situation as it pertains to accessibility to stores and other services, as well as personal safety and security. Over three-quarters (78%) of seniors living in the CRD feel their homes meet their needs for accessibility to stores and services very well. The vast majority of seniors also feel their homes meet their safety needs (79%) and address their security concerns (74%). Also, 79% of seniors feel that their homes match their current levels of mobility and/or physical ability.

Chart 7: Level of Satisfaction With Housing for Owners and Renters

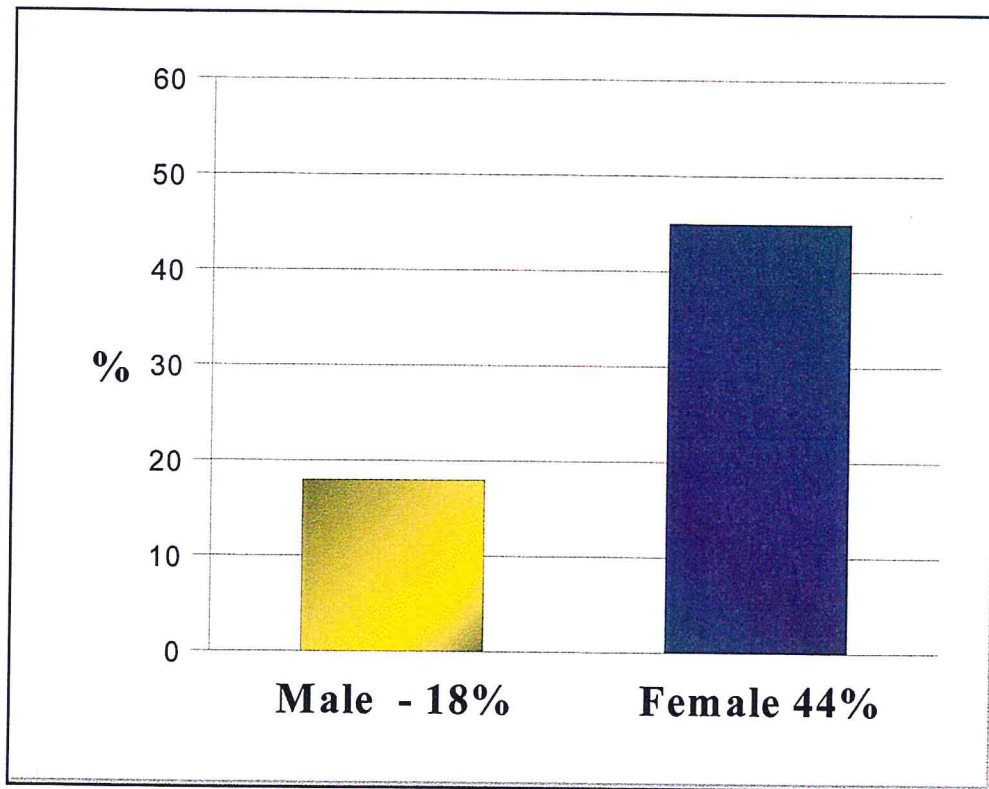


Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD.

Who We Live With

Approximately, one-third (33%) of seniors in the CRD live alone (see Table 3). The majority live with one other person (59%) and that person is most likely their spouse (see Chart 8). Only 8% live with more than one other person (see Table 3).

Chart 9: Seniors Living Alone by Gender



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD.

Children

The average number of children reported by seniors in the CRD is 2.7. Most seniors report at least one daughter (69%) and at least one son (70%) in their families (see Table 5). Overall, 11% of seniors report having no children.

Almost one-third (31%) of seniors in the CRD have no daughters. Overall just over one-third (37%) have only one daughter and a further one-third (32%) have 2 or more daughters. The pattern is similar for sons: Just under one-third (30%) of seniors have no sons, another one-third (35%) have one son, with 35% of seniors having 2 or more sons.

Table 5: Number of Daughters and Sons

DAUGHTERS		SONS	
NONE	31%	NONE	30%
ONE	37%	ONE	35%
TWO	20%	TWO	23%
THREE OR MORE	12%	THREE OR MORE	12%

Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD.

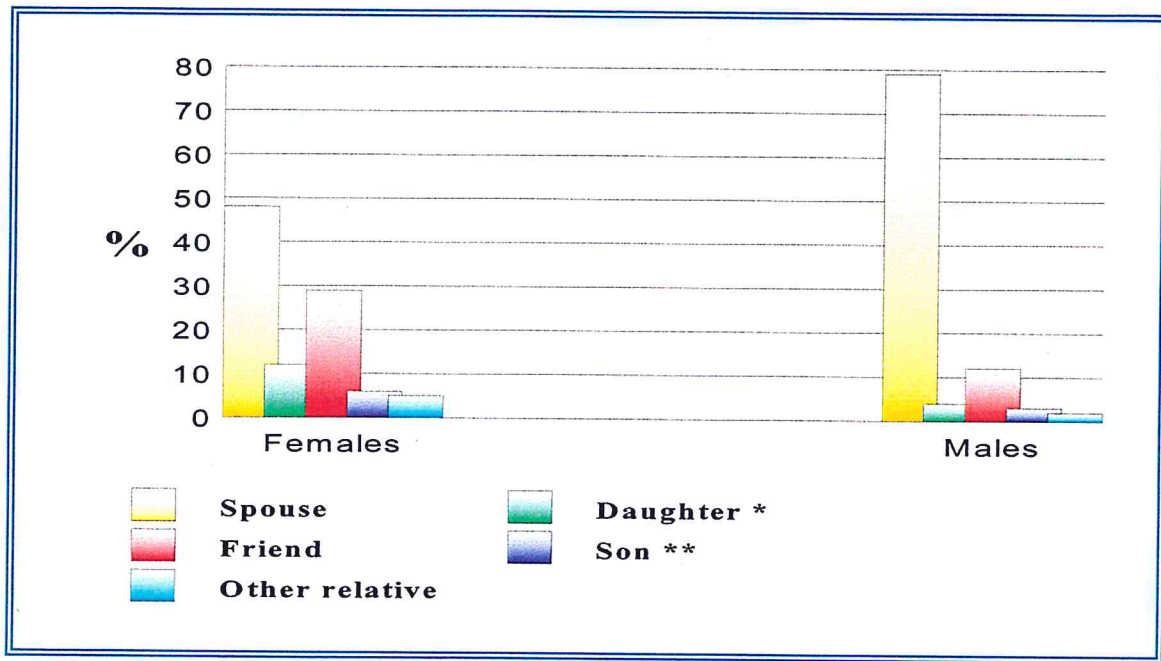
Other Family and Friends

Only 4% of seniors in the CRD have at least one parent still living. Almost one-quarter (22%) have no living siblings. However, over one-half (60%) of seniors have at least one living sister and one-half (51%) have at least one living brother (see Table 6).

Of those seniors with a living sister, approximately one-quarter (22%) have at least one sister living in the same city as themselves. Of those seniors with a living brother, one-fifth (19%) have at least one living in the same city.

The majority of seniors (80%) have at least one grandchild. Furthermore, over one-third (38%) have five or more grandchildren. The average number of grandchildren is 2.53.

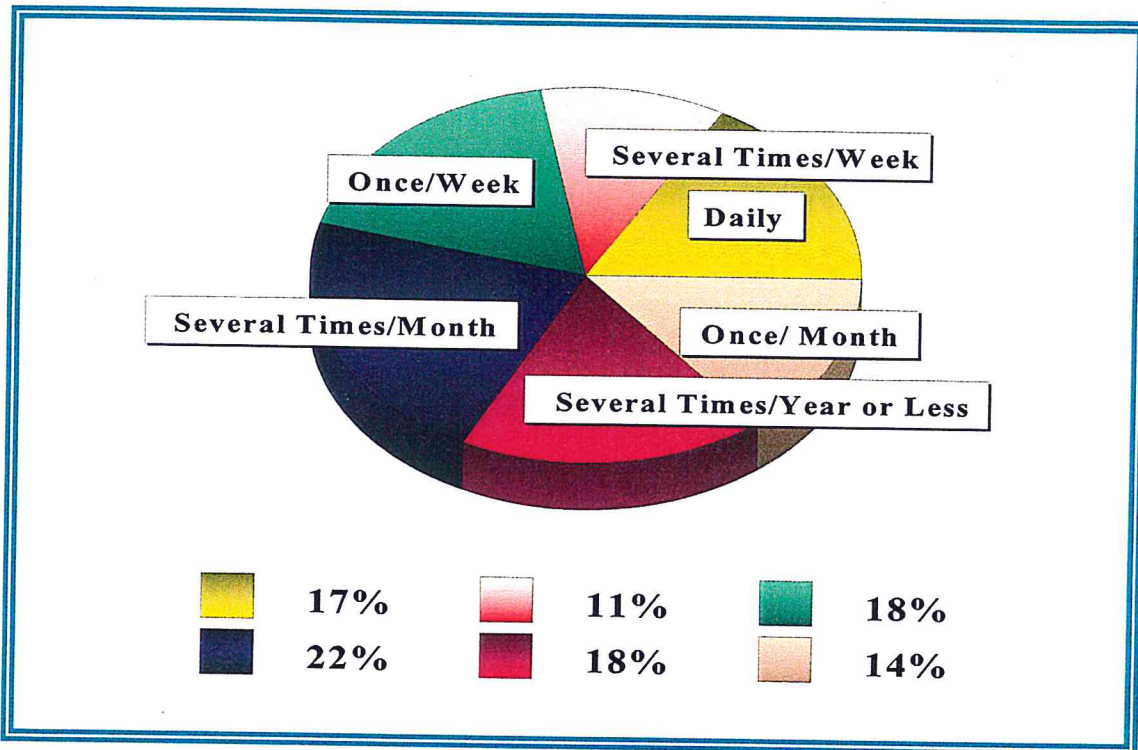
Chart 10: Person Seen Most Often



Note: * Includes Daughter-in-law **Includes Son-in-law

Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Chart 13: How Often Seniors Share a Meal with Family and/or Friends



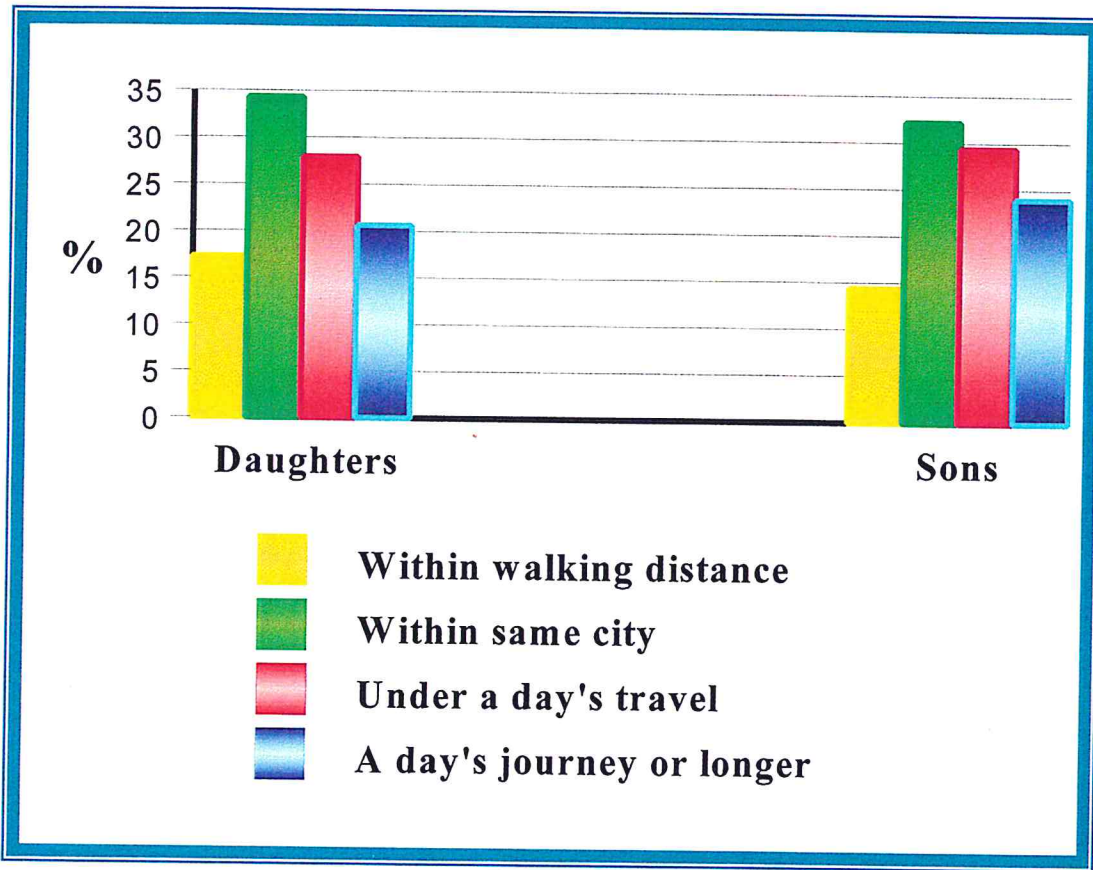
Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD.

Table 7: Who Not Married Seniors See Most Often

NOT MARRIED FEMALES		NOT MARRIED MALES	
Friend/Non-relative	57%	Friend/Non-relative	49%
Daughter	23%	Daughter	23%
Son	10%	Son	15%
Other relative	10%	Other relative	13%

Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Chart 14: Geographic Proximity of Sons and Daughters



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD.

Research findings suggest that seniors have strong, positive links to their immediate families, across the generations. More than three-quarters (79%) of seniors in the CRD say they feel very close to their children. Two-thirds (68%) state that they feel very close to their grandchildren.

The clear majority of seniors in the CRD (70%) are closer to the person they rely on for help in times of need than to any other person (see Table 10). However, women (61%) are less likely than men (81%) to say they are closer to the person who gives aid than to anybody else.

Table 8: Number of People Seniors Count on For Help in Times of Need

Category	All Seniors (%)	All Females (%)	Not Married Females (%)	All Males (%)	Not Married Males (%)
None	3	4	6	1	4
1-2	25	27	28	22	30
3-4	29	30	31	27	28
5-6	23	21	22	25	21
7 or more	20	18	13	25	17

Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD.

Table 10: How Close Seniors Are to Person They Count on in Times of Need

Category	All Seniors (%)	All Females (%)	Not Married Females (%)	All Males (%)	Not Married Males (%)
Closer than anyone	70	62	46	81	56
1-2 others closer	18	22	30	12	25
3-6 others closer	7	10	14	4	10
Many others closer	3	4	6	2	5
Don't know	2	2	4	1	4

Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD.

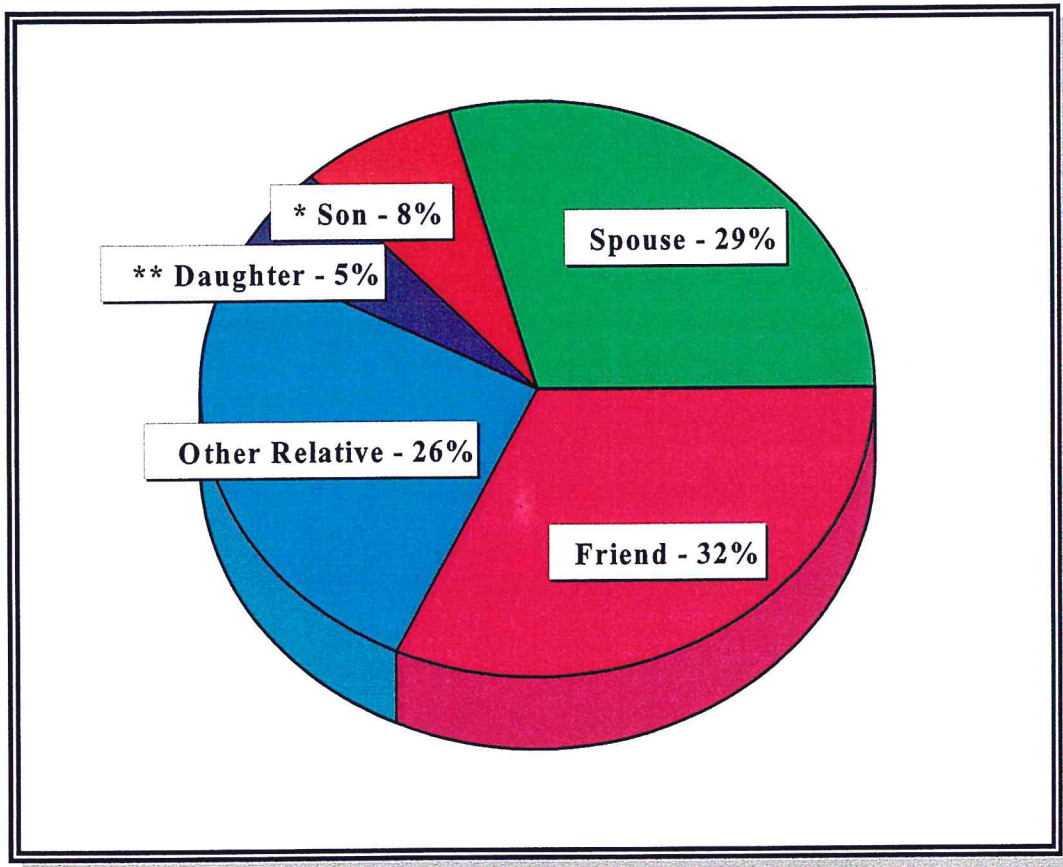
Getting Help

Emotional support is the most common type of support given to the majority (63%) of seniors (see Chart 16). For most, the individual who provides in this area is usually the spouse.

Almost one-half of seniors in the CRD (47%) also receive help with housework. In addition, 42% of seniors receive help with transportation needs. Only 2% of the seniors receive help with personal care tasks such as dressing, bathing and so on.

For those seniors who are not married a daughter is most likely to provide assistance in these areas. Almost one-half of non-married seniors (48%) receive a daughter's help with housework, with transportation (40%), or with emotional support (41%). Sons are less likely to provide assistance with housework (22%), transportation (17%) or emotional support (18%). However, financial support is just as likely to be provided by sons (30%) as by daughters (31%).

Chart 17: Who Senior Caregivers Are Caring For

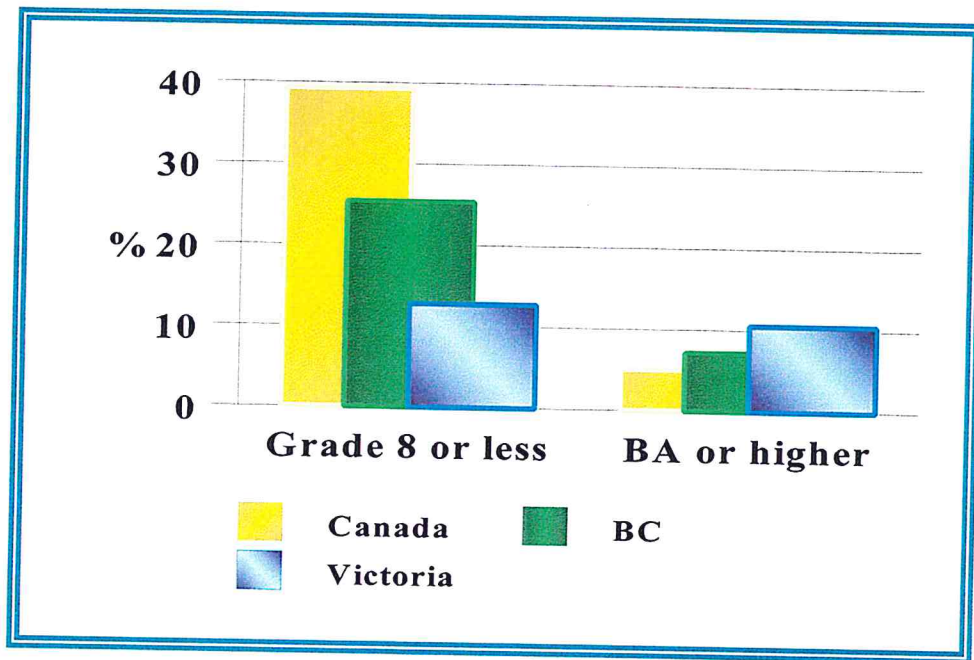


* Includes son-in-law

** Includes daughter-in-law

Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Chart 18a: Education Levels for Seniors in Canada, BC and the CRD



Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census of Population

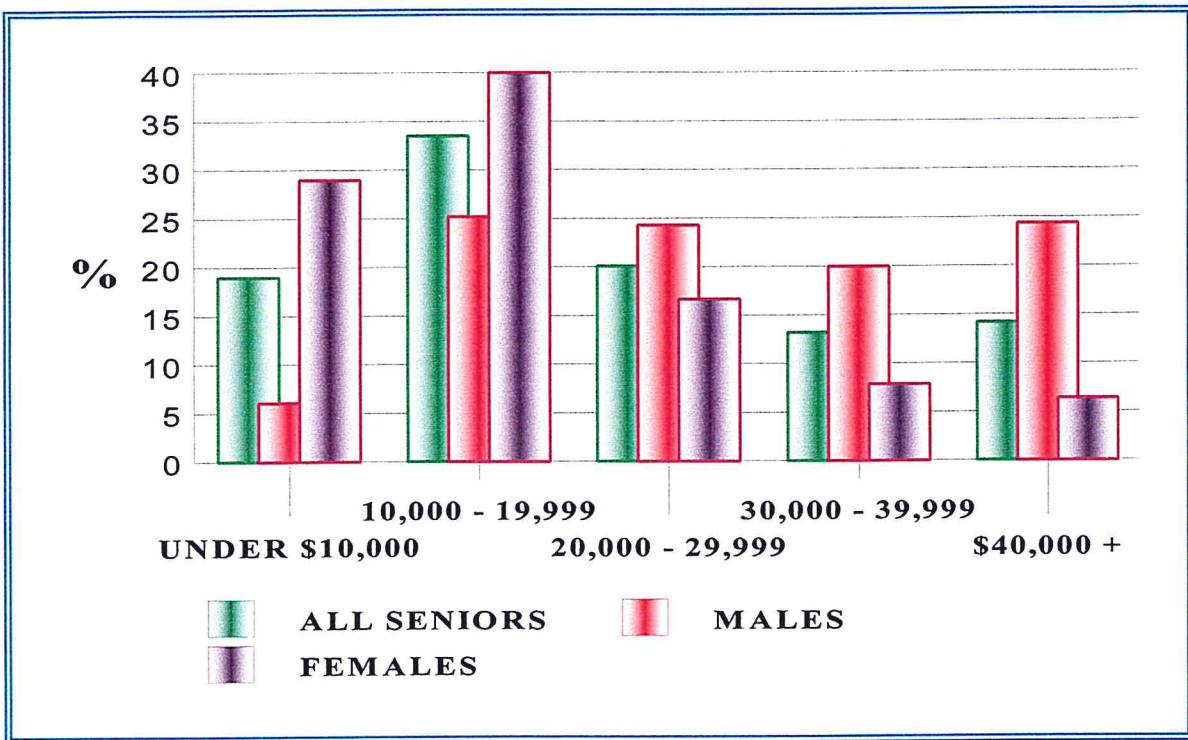
There are some noticeable differences in education levels for seniors in the Victoria¹ compared to both British Columbia and Canada (see Chart 18a). For example, seniors in the CRD (10.6%) are more likely to have a BA or higher compared to both BC (7.2%) and Canada as a whole (5.1%).

At the other end of the spectrum, seniors in the CRD (12.8%) were less likely to have less than a Grade 8 education compared to BC (25.4%) and Canada as a whole (39.3%).

The percentage of seniors with trade certificates or other types of diplomas is similar for the CRD (9.8%), BC (9.7%), and Canada as a whole (7.1%).

¹ Data were generated from Statistics Canada 1991 Census data. We selected out the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) to make comparisons on education levels for seniors.

Chart 19: Gross Annual Individual Income



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

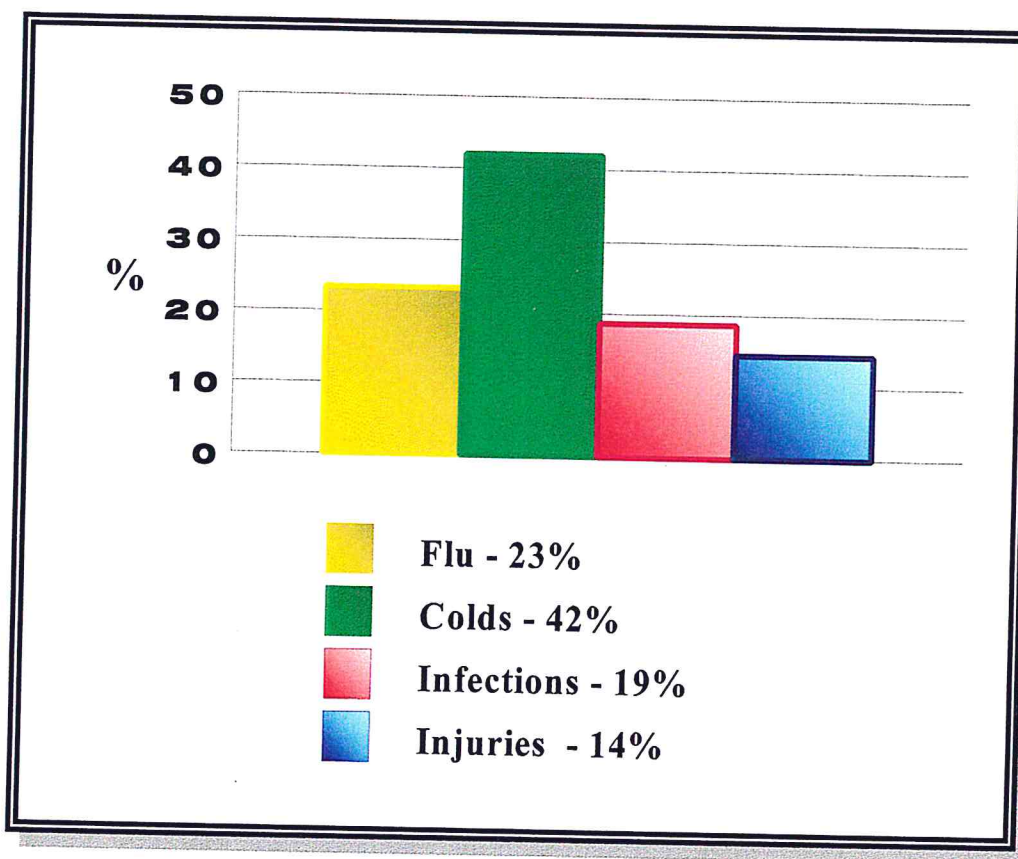
Table 11: Annual Household Income

Income Category	\$20,000 or less	\$20,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 or more
Percentage	15%	19%	23%	43%

Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Many of the short-term health problems that seniors face are illnesses that may be typical of other age cohorts. For example, 42% of seniors reported experiencing colds during the past year. Also, 22% had the flu and 18% had an infection of some sort while 15% of seniors suffered an injury as the result of an accident during the past year (see Chart 20).

Chart 20: Health Problems Experienced by Seniors in the CRD



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Daily Activities That Help Maintain Health

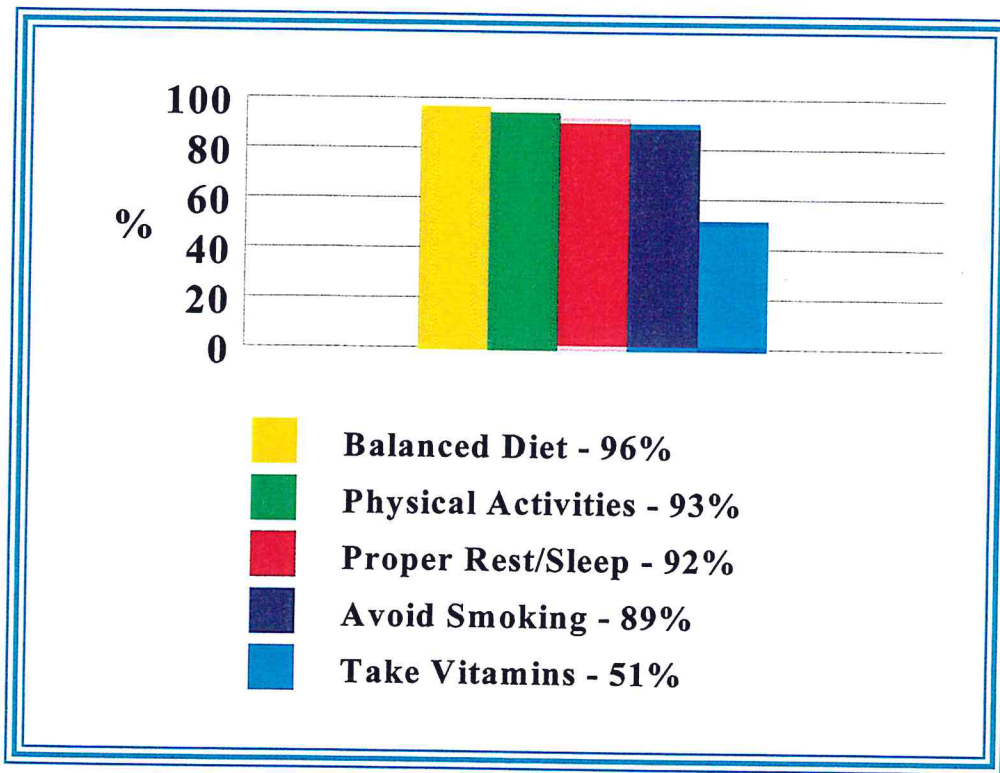
Table 14: Number of Days Spent Sick at Home (During a 6 Month Period)

Number of Days	All Seniors (%)	Males Only (%)	Females Only (%)
No days	63	71	57
1 to 5 days	20	15	24
6 to 10 days	8	7	8
11 or more days	9	7	11
Average Number Of Days Sick	4.9	4.0	5.5

Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Seniors in the Capital Regional District (CRD) undertake various activities to maintain their health. For example, about 90% or more of seniors attempt to maintain their health through each of the following activities: maintaining a balanced diet, doing physical activities, getting proper rest and sleep, and avoiding smoking (see Chart 21).

Chart 21: Activities Undertaken to Stay Healthy



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

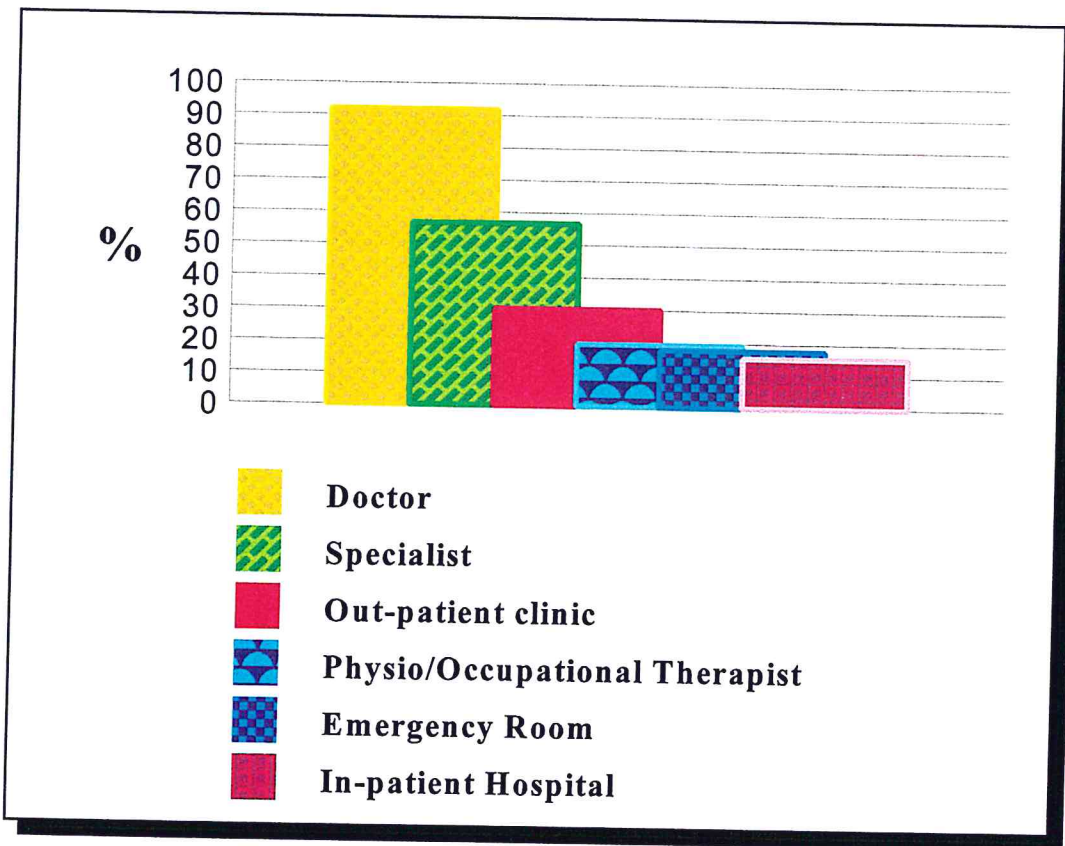
Mental Health

Mental health is as important as physical health. The majority of seniors in the Capital Regional District (CRD) are **not** depressed, lonely people. In fact, their mental attitudes and feelings reflect a positive outlook on life (see Chart 22). The vast majority of seniors (96%) describe themselves as happy or very happy. The majority of seniors (87%) are not fearful. Furthermore, they are not lonely (78%) and they are not depressed (73%). However, women are more likely than men to feel sad (41% vs 25%) and lonely (26% vs 15%). Finally, women (16%) are significantly more likely to feel fearful compared to men (9%).

weeks. However, the median² was only 5 days, indicating that a relatively small proportion of seniors accounted for a large proportion of the days spent in the hospital.

During the same time period, 18% of the seniors had been to an emergency ward and 30% had been an out-patient at a clinic. Almost one-fifth (19%) of seniors in the CRD had been involved in rehabilitation with either a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist.

Chart 23: Percentage of Seniors Using Various Formal Services



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

² The median is a measure of central tendency which divides the distribution of scores in half. It is the point that divides the upper 50% of scores from the bottom 50% of scores.

Seniors' informal social networks (i.e. family, friends, neighbours) are their major sources of support and assistance. However, situations arise which require the resources of formal services. These services may be supplied by government agencies, community organizations, churches, other voluntary associations, as well as private business. The cost of some of these services is partially, if not fully, covered by government programs. However, other services require that the senior bear the full cost.

For example, within the CRD 22% of seniors make use homemaker services (see Chart 25). Of those seniors using this service, 72% pay the full cost of the service. Only 19% of seniors use the service at no cost to themselves. Grocery shopping services, such as Sendial, are used by only 5% of seniors in the CRD. However, the trend for payment is quite different for this service. The majority of seniors (80%) make no payment for this service and a further 16% pay the full cost. The Sendial service is free for a purchase order over \$25.00. The fee for a purchase order under \$25.00 is \$2.00

Less than one-fifth (15%) of seniors use the services offered by a senior activity centre, such as Silver Threads. A majority of seniors (83%) pay the full cost of the service being offered by the activity centre. Only 7% had no cost levied against them.

Eight percent of seniors use financial management services--this may be for the completion of income tax returns, financial investment advice and so on. Of those seniors utilizing these services, 17% did so at no cost to themselves, while a further 74% paid the full cost. Finally, only 4% of seniors utilize the services offered by various support groups. Of those seniors accessing this type of service, 58% make no payment, while a further 35% pay the full cost of the service.

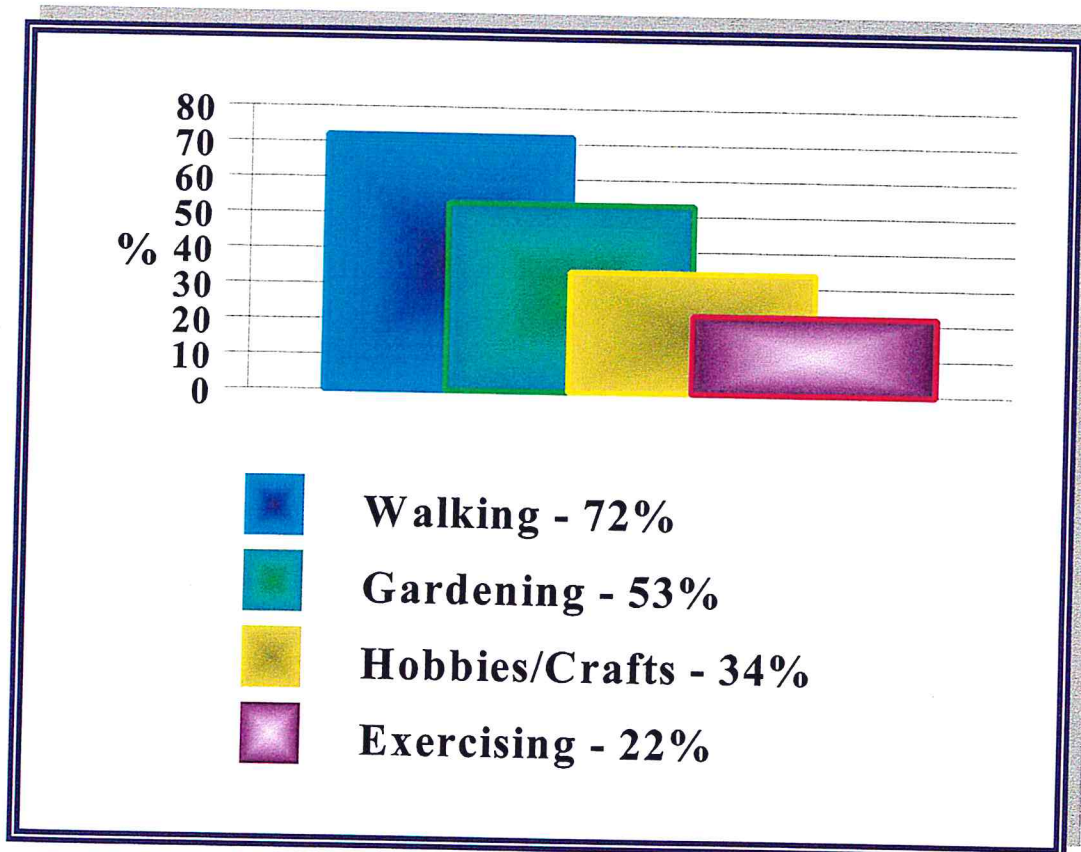
VII: LIFESTYLES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Our lifestyle has an impact on both physical and mental health outcomes. Within the health care system, greater emphasis is being placed on proactive regimes. There is a recognition that individuals can, through changes in lifestyle, bring about changes in the quality of life they are living.

Seniors and Their Activities

On the whole, seniors in the CRD are fairly active and involved in different types of physical, social and leisure activities. For example, 72% of seniors go for a walk several times a week or more. Also, 53% do gardening several times a week or more. Also, 34% of seniors are actively involved in a hobby or craft and 22% engage in other forms of exercise besides walking at least several times a week (see Chart 26).

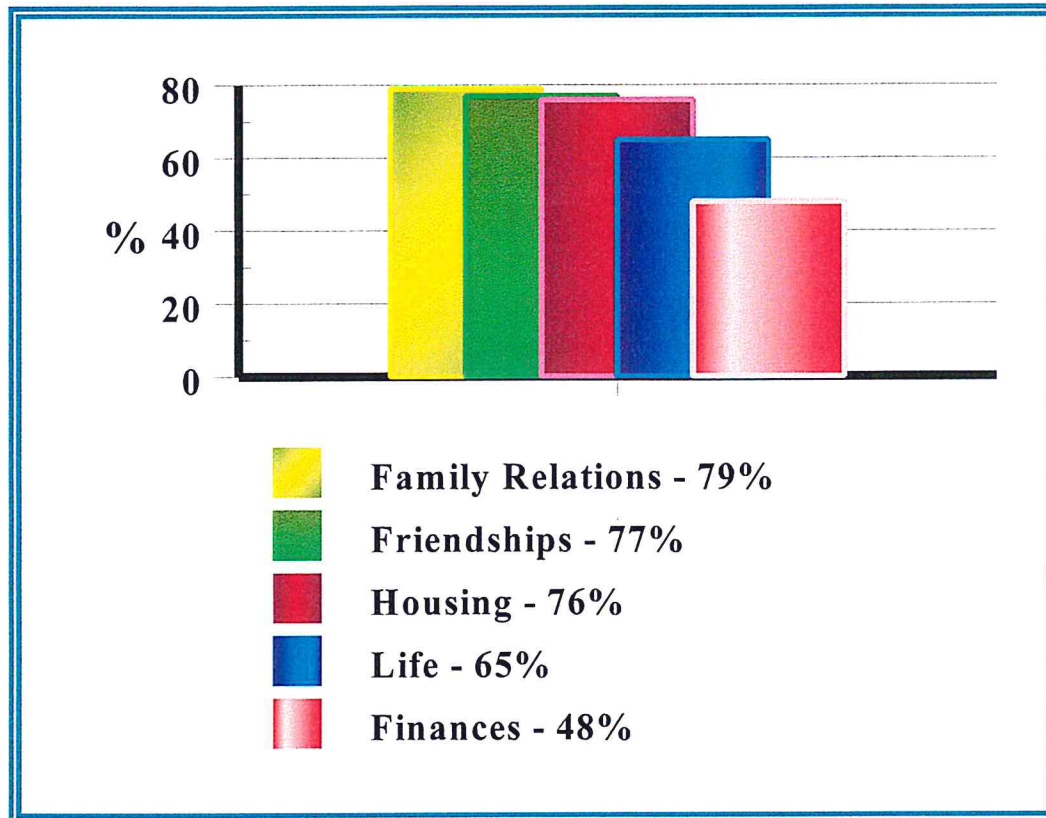
Chart 26: Physical Activities Done At Least Several Times a Week



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Life Satisfaction

Chart 28: Aspects of Everyday Life That Seniors Are Very Satisfied With



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

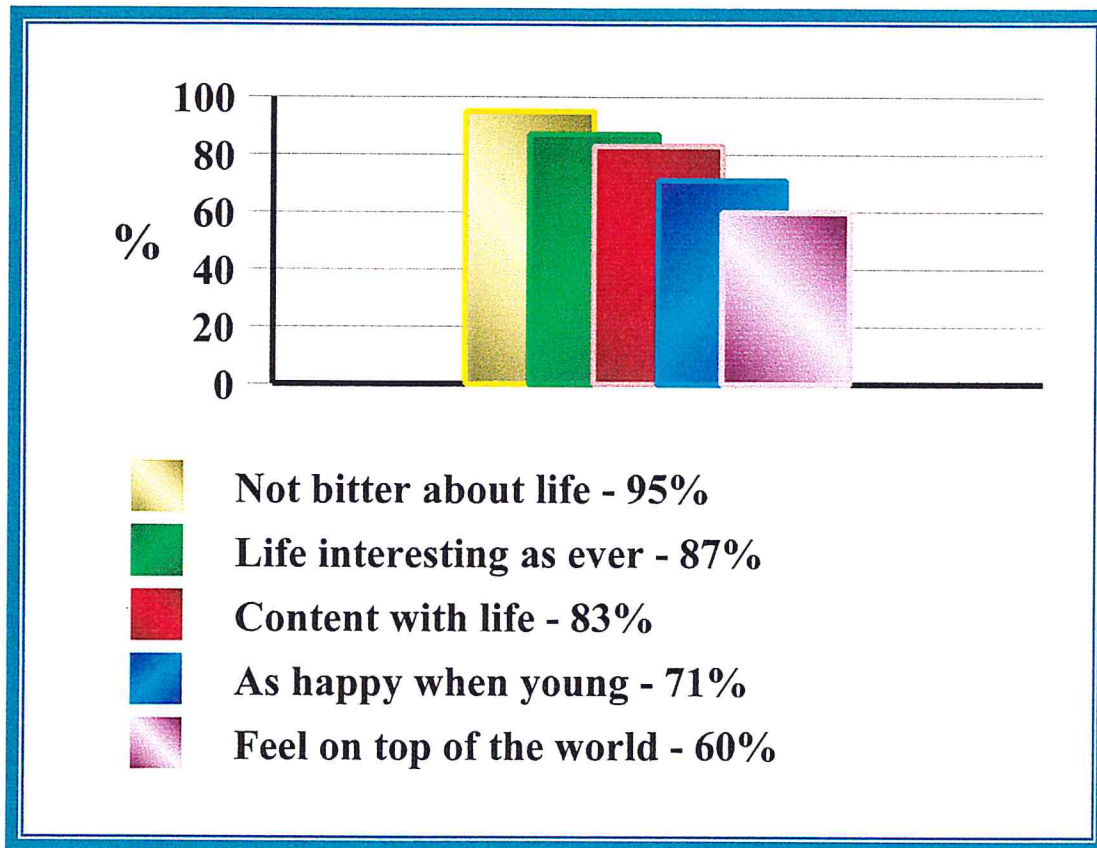
A satisfied and content person is more likely to enjoy life's offerings. For the most part, seniors in the CRD are satisfied with many aspects of their lives.

For example, 88% are satisfied with their major daily activities and 79% of seniors are satisfied with their health.

Moreover, 79% of seniors are **very satisfied** with their family relations and 77% are **very satisfied** with their friendships (see Chart 28). Also, seniors are very satisfied with their housing(76%) and with their life as a whole (65%).

Interestingly, most seniors (90%) are also satisfied with their finances. In fact, almost one-half (48%) are **very satisfied** with their financial situation.

Chart 30: Seniors' Feelings Regarding Various Aspects of Life



Source: Centre on Aging (1995) University of Victoria, Baseline Study of Seniors in the CRD

Seniors and Self-Esteem

A positive sense of self-esteem is a fundamental building block for the enjoyment of a good quality of life. The overwhelming majority of seniors in the CRD have a strong and positive sense of self-esteem. Almost every senior (99%) feel that they have a number of good qualities (see Chart 31). Moreover, 95% take a positive attitude towards themselves and 90% of seniors feel they do things as well as most other people.

VIII CONCLUSION

The most important function this booklet can serve is to shed light on the lives of seniors in the CRD. In turn, this may dispel some of the more negative stereotypes of seniors held by many people.

For the most part, seniors in the CRD are happy and content with their lives. They are satisfied with their daily activities and their overall health. They maintain strong ties with family and friends through a variety of social activities. Moreover, seniors are involved in hobbies, such as gardening. They read books, listen to radio programs and visit art museums. In short, they are active members of the community.

While most seniors are happy and content, it is recognised that they do suffer from chronic conditions. Conditions such as high blood pressure and arthritis, become more prevalent as we age. However, only 16% of seniors spent time in the hospital. Of those seniors who spent time in the hospital, their median stay was only five days. Furthermore, the majority of seniors (63%) did not spend a day at home due to illness during a six month period. The frail, sickly senior is not typical. Indeed, such an archetype is greatly exaggerated and is representative of small proportion of older seniors.

While seniors do make use of various formal services, the informal social network of family and friends is the major source of support and assistance. Looking at health care services, 92% of seniors had been to see a doctor at least once during the year and 57% had been to see a specialist during the same period. The main formal home support services that are used by seniors are homemaker services and grocery shopping services.

It is important to remember that most seniors are involved in reciprocal caring relationships. They are caregiving for family members and friends. As can be expected, many seniors (29%) are caring for a spouse. However, it is worth noting that 13% of seniors are providing care for one of their children. Furthermore, these social relations are built around a variety of social activities. At least several times a week, seniors are engaged in recreational outings and are sharing meals with family and friends.

It is recognised that a small proportion of seniors are living alone and have few people to call upon for help. Also, some do not have an adequate income and are in need of the help that can be given through formal services and voluntary agencies. There is a great need to identify these seniors and to provide the necessary assistance to them. However, it is also imperative to move beyond society's negative stereotypes of seniors and recognise that the majority of seniors in the CRD are people who have lived satisfying and rewarding lives, as contributing members of the community--and they continue to do so.

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