

Exploring Housing Experiences of People with Spinal Cord Injury/Dysfunction in Ontario: A Qualitative Study

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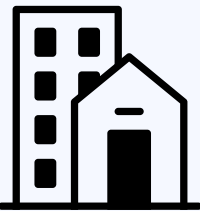
Background & Objective

- There are more than 86,000 individuals living with spinal cord injury/dysfunction (SCI/D) in Canada [1]. Many individuals reflect on what their life post-SCI/D may look like, with housing noted as a high concern [2].
- Appropriate & affordable housing is a human right & is critical for promoting health, dignity, safety, inclusion & community participation [3].
- Unfortunately, finding a suitable home is challenging for people with SCI/D & housing satisfaction post-SCI/D is often low due to accessibility issues [4].
- There are significant gaps in knowledge regarding housing post-SCI/D, which hampers the ability to make evidence-based decisions regarding accessible housing practices & policies.
- The objective of the present qualitative study was to explore the experiences of navigating housing services & supports among individuals with SCI/D.

Methodology

Study Design Qualitative descriptive design.

Theoretical Frameworks Theory of Access (TOA) & Ecological Systems Theory (EST) informed interview guides [5, 6].

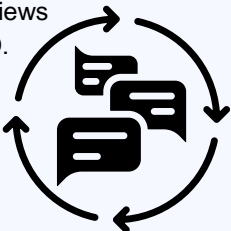


Recruitment Referrals at rehabilitation hospitals, provincial SCI/D associations & flyers; Email outreach to professionals.

Inclusion Criteria English- or French-speaking adults with lived experience of SCI/D, their family caregivers, or accessible housing professionals from across Ontario.

Data Collection 45-to-60-minute semi-structured interviews about housing experiences post-SCI/D.

Analysis Interviews were transcribed & analyzed using inductive thematic analysis.



Preliminary Results

Preliminary Themes

- 1** Accessibility is an ongoing process for individuals with SCI/D.
- 2** Attitudinal barriers from others may exacerbate housing inequities.
- 3** There is a need for peer support to access information about home accessibility.



"I have a carport, and I **used to be able to** park underneath the carport and manually transfer into the car, **now I need a van with a ramp**, to wheel into the van..." - Person with SCI/D



"I think housing is a very precarious thing in Canada, especially for disabled folks, and so I feel like I want to recognize the privilege I have in having the home I do. And when I say appropriate, I just think about **my partner and I built this house with my needs in mind**, and so it suits the way that I move about and do activities. And then, comfortable, I know what it's like to be in spaces when I don't feel like I can move about as I want to, and at home I can. And so it's a really, yes, comfortable, safe place to me to just be myself." - Person with SCI/D



"I felt that I learned a lot just by seeing what other people had done with their homes...just between us, circle of friends, and whatever, I know this person, this person knows this person, and so speaking to friends' friends to get ideas from them about what they did, what they recommend. **But I think that the peer input is really valuable.**" - Person with SCI/D

Level of Injury

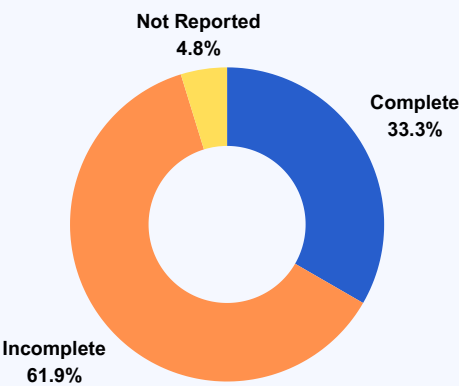


Figure 1. Injury level of participants with SCI/D (N = 21).

Housing Type of Individuals Living with SCI/D

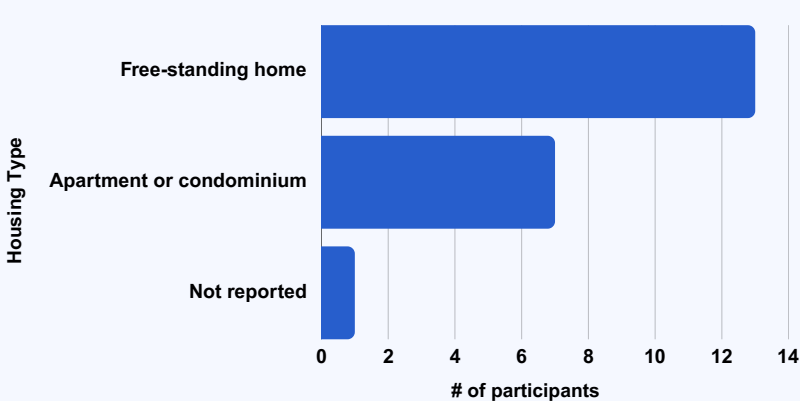


Figure 2. Housing type of participants with SCI/D (N = 21).

Household Income of Individuals Living with SCI/D

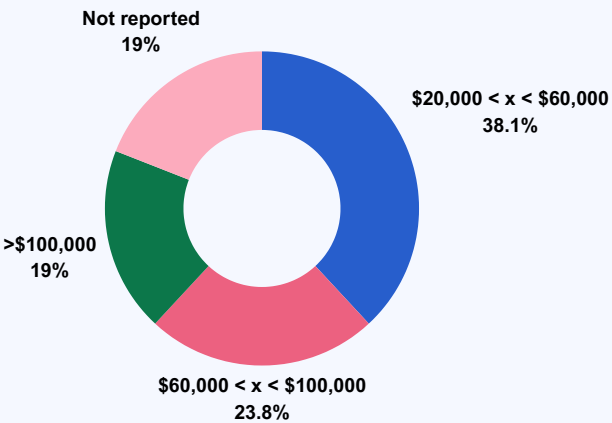


Figure 3. Income of participants with SCI/D (N = 21).

Significance & Conclusions

Results are anticipated to provide insight on the impacts of inaccessible housing for people with SCI/D residing in Ontario. Understanding the housing needs of this population may improve future research as well as enhance policies for housing availability and accessibility.

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REFERENCES

