

More Older Adults with Disabilities

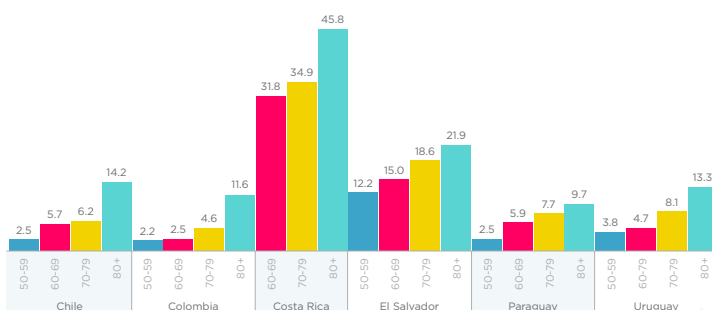
As the population ages, the share of persons with disabilities increases.

On the one hand, the life expectancy of people with congenital disabilities derived from an illness or an accident has increased. On the other hand, the normal aging process and the high prevalence of chronic conditions can trigger a disability situation. In this scenario, disability is understood as the presence of long-term deficiencies (physical, mental, intellectual, or sensorial) that, when interacting with various barriers, can impede full and effective participation in society, under equal conditions (United Nation 2006). In line with this definition, to estimate the percentage of the population with disabilities, surveys identify limitations or difficulties to perform activities that involve movement (such as walking and using the arms), sensory activities (such as seeing and hearing), and cognitive activities (such as concentration and communication).

In Uruguay, for example, data from the Longitudinal Survey of Social Protection (Encuesta Longitudinal de Protección Social – ELPS) show that half of individuals over 60 years of age with some type of limitation attribute this limitation to the existence of a disease, while a third says that it is due simply to advanced age. The ELPS of Paraguay, on the other hand, places these figures at 36 percent and 46 percent, respectively.

The following graphs show that the existence of limitations increases considerably with advanced age, particularly after age 80. In some countries, the

Presence of Decreased Visual Acuity (percentage of the population by age and gender)



Note: Costa Rican survey participants were asked to rate their distance vision and near vision from 1 to 7; respondents are categorized as having difficulty seeing if they assign a value less than or equal to 4 in at least one of the two (distance or near vision). In Costa Rica, no data were reported for the population 50 to 59 years old.

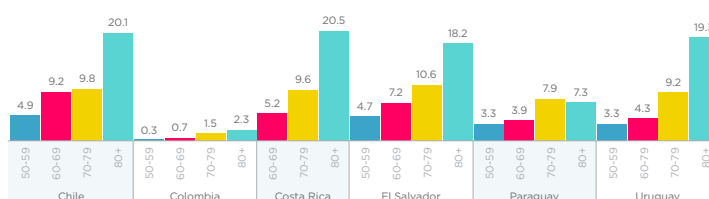
Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Encuesta Longitudinal de Protección Social in: Chile (2015), Colombia (2012), Paraguay (2015), El Salvador (2014), and Uruguay (2013); and the Estudio de Longevidad y Envejecimiento Saludable, Costa Rica (2009).

The limitations in the older adult population are related to the existence of chronic diseases.

proportion of people with limitations doubles or nearly doubles among this age group (for example, in Chile and Colombia in the case of decreased visual acuity, and in Chile, El Salvador, and Uruguay for limitations of motor skills).

The limitations in the older adult population are related to the existence of chronic diseases. In Chile, for example, 17 percent of people over 60 who were diagnosed with at least one chronic disease also had at least a motor, sensory, or cognitive limitation. In contrast, the percentage of people with limitations falls to 7 percent among those who do not suffer from any disease.

Presence of Limitations in the Use of Arms and Legs (percentage of the population by age and gender)



Note: In Costa Rica, no data were reported for the population aged 50 to 59 years old.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the Encuesta Longitudinal de Protección Social in [Chile \(2015\)](#), [Colombia \(2012\)](#), [Paraguay \(2015\)](#), El Salvador (2014), and [Uruguay \(2013\)](#); and the [Estudio de Longevidad y Envejecimiento Saludable, Costa Rica \(2009\)](#).

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