

# Nearly half of Australians are living with a chronic condition

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Chronic health conditions are the leading cause of poor health and mortality in Australia but they also have a major impact on other parts of people's lives. A new report from the Australian Institute of Health and

Welfare (AIHW) brings together data on the wellbeing of working-age Australians with chronic conditions.

The report, Life and work experiences of Australians with [chronic conditions](#), looks at how people with chronic conditions aged 15–64 were faring prior to 2020, providing baseline information for further research. It also takes an in-depth look at factors that were associated with [poor health](#) among mature working-age Australians (aged 45–64) living with chronic conditions.

"About 47% of Australians are estimated to have at least one chronic [health](#) condition, such as arthritis, asthma, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and mental and behavioral conditions," said AIHW spokesperson Katherine Faulks.

Data from the [Australian Bureau of Statistics National Health Survey](#) show that in 2017–18, working-age Australians (15–64 years) living with chronic conditions when compared to those without chronic conditions were:

- less likely to be employed either [full-time](#) or part-time, 71% compared with 80%
- more likely to receive a government pension or allowance, 18% compared with 7%
- more likely to live outside major city areas, 29% compared with 23%.

"More than a quarter (26%) of 45- to 64-year-olds with chronic conditions self-assessed their health as poor, compared to 16% of those aged 15–44," Ms. Faulks said.

"Among mature working-age Australians with chronic conditions, individual-based measures of socioeconomic position such as family

composition of household, [home ownership](#), and education were found to be important factors in their likelihood of reporting poor self-assessed health.

"Mature working-age Australians with chronic conditions were more likely to report poor health if they had any of the following characteristics: three or more types of chronic conditions; any activity limitations or a disability; were male; were renters; were living alone; had no tertiary qualifications."

The pandemic has affected the lives of all Australians but many people with chronic conditions have faced some particular challenges. For example, people with chronic conditions are at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19 than those without chronic conditions.

As Australians with chronic conditions are more likely to live on their own, many may have been at increased risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness when lockdowns and other measures which limited social interaction were in place. More research is needed to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on labor force participation among mature working-age people with chronic conditions.

Future research into the experiences of working-age Australians with chronic conditions could also look at specific groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander [people](#) with chronic conditions.

**More information:** Life and work experiences of Australians with chronic conditions. [www.aihw.gov.au/reports/chroni...c-conditions/summary](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/chroni...c-conditions/summary)

Provided by Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)

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