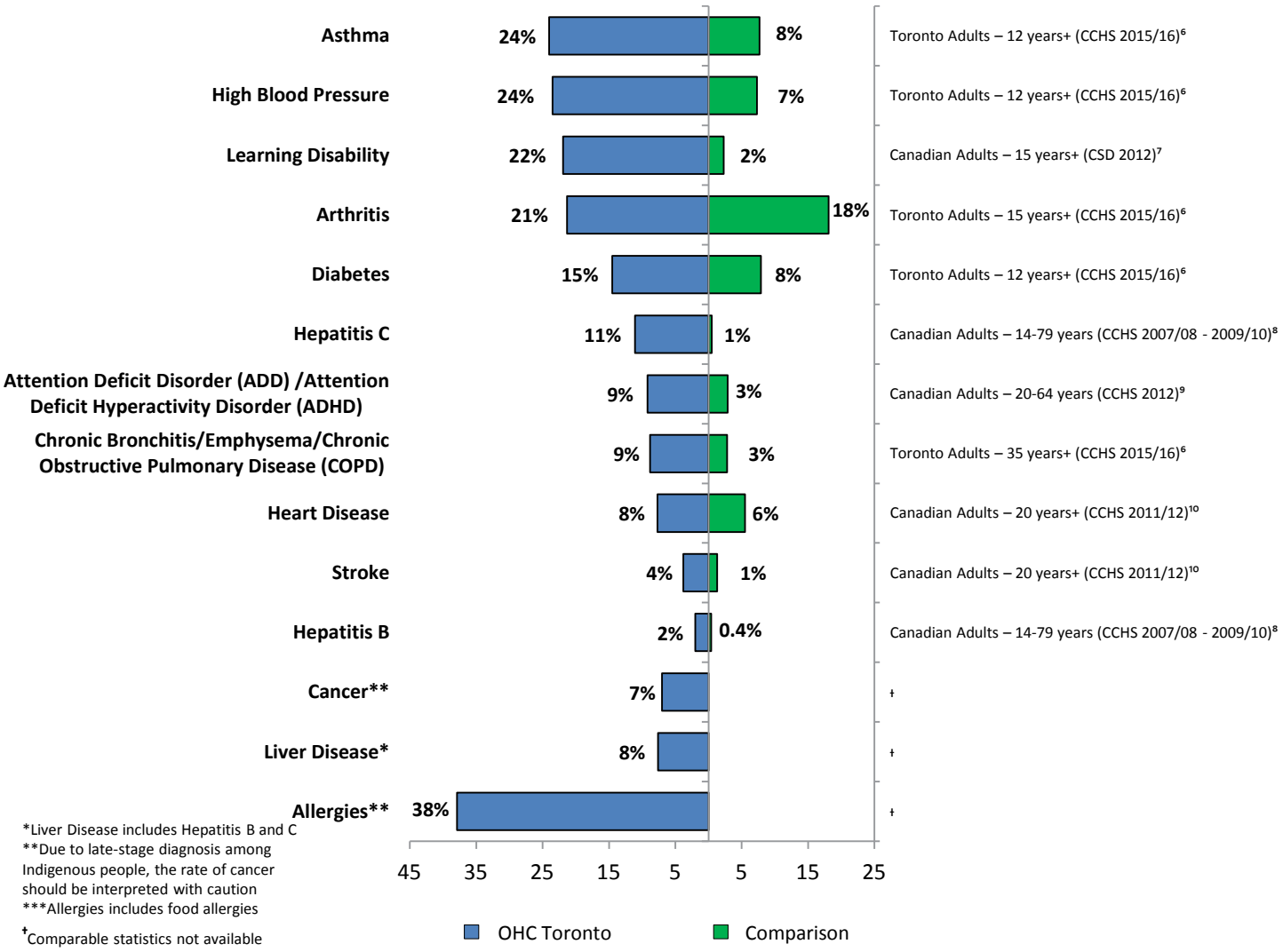
Our Health Counts Toronto

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Toronto

Adult Chronic Health Conditions

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission states that "the current state of [Indigenous] health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian governmental policies, including residential schools".[1] Among urban Indigenous adults, rates of chronic health conditions have been demonstrated to be between 2 to 10 times higher than the general population in Canada.[2] The high prevalence of health conditions has been linked to a disproportionate burden of poverty, adverse living conditions, and racism.[3,4] Culturally based health care and health promotion initiatives have the potential to increase treatment uptake and health literacy, thus improving overall health and wellbeing of Indigenous people experiencing chronic health conditions.[5]



*Liver Disease includes Hepatitis B and C
**Due to late-stage diagnosis among Indigenous people, the rate of cancer should be interpreted with caution
***Allergies includes food allergies
ǂComparable statistics not available

The rate of learning disabilities was **11x higher** among Indigenous adults in Toronto than the overall Canadian population[7]

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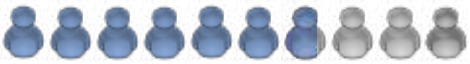
65% of Indigenous adults in Toronto reported having one or more chronic condition



38% of Indigenous adults (20 years +) in Toronto were experiencing multimorbidity (two or more chronic health conditions),‡ compared to **15%** of adults in Canada (CCHS 2011/12)[11]

‡OHC Toronto multimorbidity estimate does not include Alzheimer's or other dementia

15% of Indigenous adults in Toronto were diagnosed with diabetes by their healthcare provider.

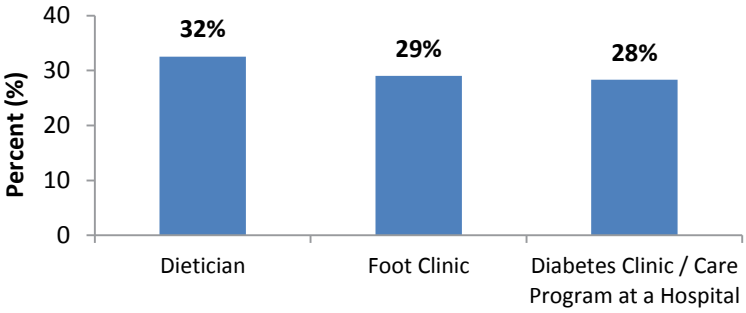
This is close to **DOUBLE** the diabetes rate (**8%**) of the **general adult** population in **Toronto** (CCHS 2015/16).[6]

74% of Indigenous adults with diabetes took pills in the past month to control their blood sugar.

22% of adults with diabetes take insulin.

Diabetes

In the past 12 months, Indigenous adults with diabetes have accessed these programs/services to manage their diabetes:



Indigenous adults with diabetes were as likely to experience food insecurity as those without diabetes.

16% of Indigenous adults with diabetes **did not use any services or programs** to help manage their diabetes.

Tests for Diabetes Care

Indigenous adults in Toronto diagnosed with diabetes in the past 12 months…

77% have been tested for haemoglobin "A1C".
63% have had their feet checked for sores or irritations.
75% have had their urine tested for protein.
49% have had an eye exam to screen for retinal damage or visual impairment.

Clinical practice guidelines12 indicate that…

- ✓ Haemoglobin "A1C" should be tested in diabetic individuals (Type 1 and 2) approximately every 3 months
- ✓ Feet should be checked at least once a year
- ✓ Urine tests should be conducted at least once a year
- ✓ Eye exams should be conducted:
  - •Type 1 diabetes - At least once a year
  - •Type 2 diabetes - Every 1-2 years

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Adult Chronic Health Conditions

Policy Implications

Implement TRC Call to Action 19:	We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Indigenous peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as chronic diseases and the availability of appropriate health services.
Implement TRC Call to Action 21:	We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Indigenous healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms.
Additional Recommendations:	City of Toronto, provincial and federal policy makers work in partnership with urban Indigenous peoples and organizations to: • Address barriers in accessing programs and services, including culturally relevant public health and health promotion programs to address modifiable chronic disease risk factors. For example reducing commercial (non-traditional) tobacco use, improving nutrition such as access to traditional foods, and increasing safe environments for physical activity. • Provide funding to undertake longitudinal research to better understand chronic health conditions among the Indigenous communities

Definitions

Indigenous adults: persons 15 years or older self-identifying as Indigenous, such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit or other Indigenous nations, living or using services in the City of Toronto; Indigenous children: persons 1 to 14 years self-identified as Indigenous by their parent or guardian, such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit or other Indigenous nations, living or using services in the City of Toronto; Traditional foods: traditionally hunted, gathered or grown country foods.

Population based estimates created using respondent-driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet)

Sources

1. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015); 2. Smylie et al. (2011); 3. Paradies (2006); 4. Allan & Smylie (2015); 5. Smylie et al. (in press); 6. Statistics Canada (2015/2016); 7. Bizier et al. (2014); 8. Rotermann et al. (2013); 9. Hesson & Fowler (2015); 10. Roberts et al. (2015); 11. PHAC (2014); 12. Diabetes Canada (2017).

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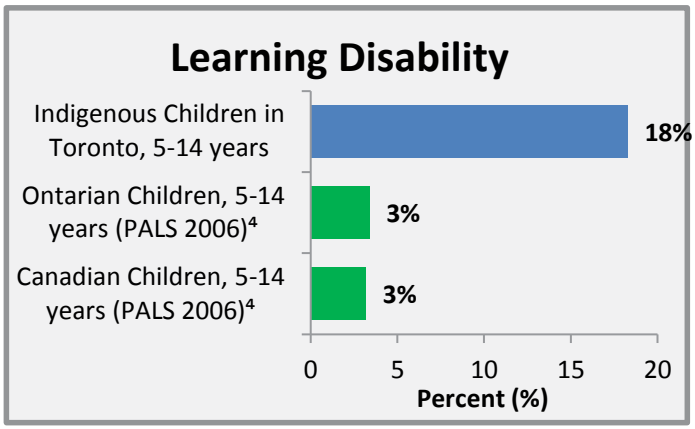
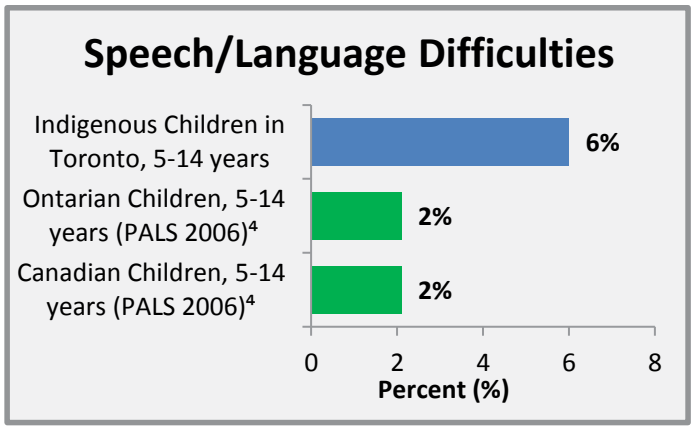
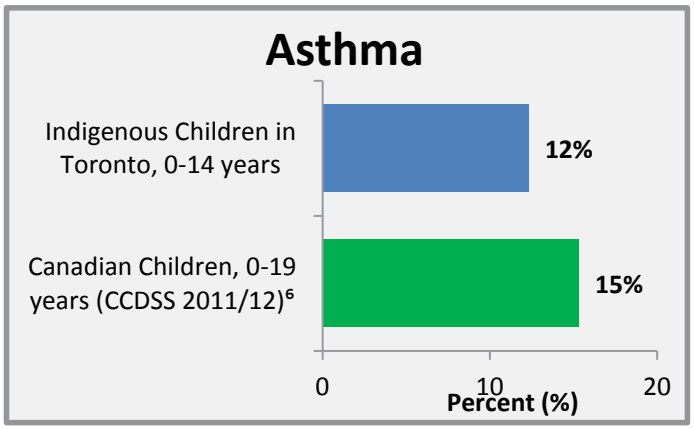
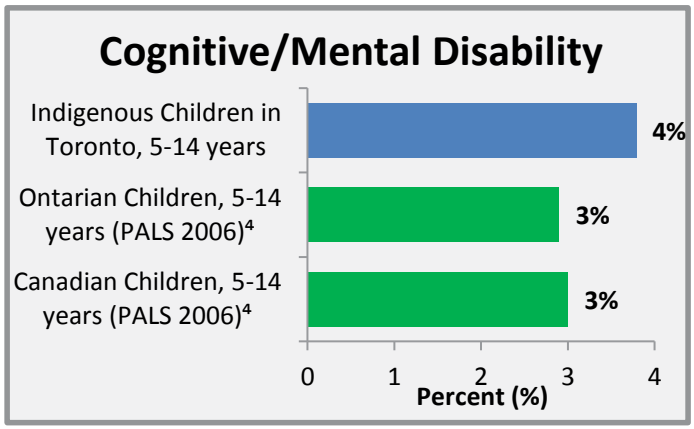
Child Chronic Health Conditions

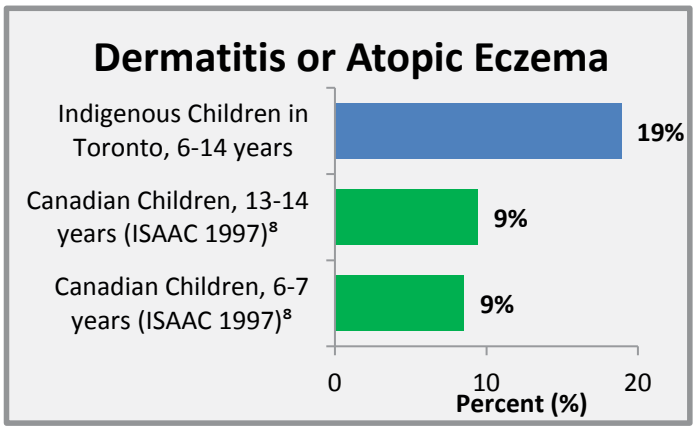
Similar to Indigenous adults, Indigenous children are more likely to experience chronic health conditions than non-Indigenous children. Diagnosis of a chronic health condition at a young age increases the likelihood of having multiple health conditions in adulthood.[1] Determinants of health, such as diet, discrimination, and environmental pollution, tend to exacerbate the prevalence of chronic diseases.[2] Indigenous children are more likely to experiences these factors due to inequities in access to health/social services and barriers faced by families to meet optimal healthy living environments. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission highlights the importance of addressing the health inequities by regularly collecting health outcome data for Indigenous adults and children.[3]

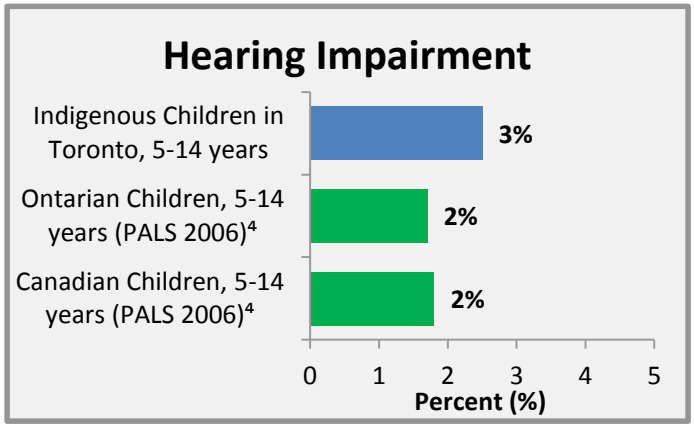












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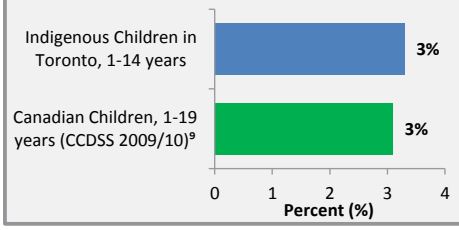
Child Chronic Health Conditions

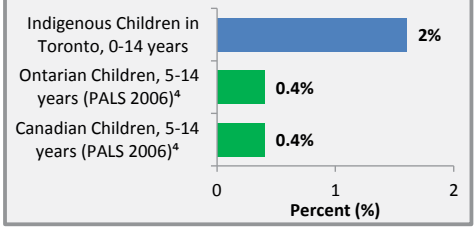
Allergies

7% of Indigenous children in Toronto, aged 0-14 years, were reported to suffer from allergies, including food allergies.

Anxiety and Depression



Blindness/Serious Vision Difficulties



Heart Condition

4% of Indigenous children in Toronto, aged 0-14 years, were reported having a heart condition.

Of Indigenous children (0-14 years) in Toronto:

20% had at least one chronic health condition

18% had two or more chronic health conditions

Of children with chronic health conditions over **1 in 3** were prevented or limited from participating in school and/or other activities as a result of their conditions or health problems.

Policy Implications

Implement TRC Call to Action 19:

We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Indigenous peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as chronic diseases, poverty, food security, housing and availability and access to appropriate health services.

Additional Recommendations:

• City of Toronto, provincial and federal policy makers work in partnership with urban Indigenous peoples and organizations to provide funding to undertake longitudinal research to better understand chronic health conditions among the Indigenous community, including Indigenous children.

Definitions

Indigenous children: persons self-identifying as Indigenous such as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit aged 0-14 years living or using services in the City of Toronto. Multiple chronic conditions included asthma, blindness, anxiety/depression, speech/language difficulties, cognitive/mental disability, dermatitis and atopic eczema, chronic bronchitis, heart conditions, physical disability, allergies, ADD/ADHD, learning disability, FASD/FAS/FAE, and cancer

Population based estimates were created using respondent driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet for more details)

Sources

1. Pavela & Latham (2016); 2. Cockerham et al. (2017); 3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015); 4. Statistics Canada (2007); 5. Brault & Lacourse (2012); 6. PHAC (2014); 7. Evans & Yue (2009); 2010/2011); 8. Williams et al. (1999); 9. PHAC (2016).

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Adult Chronic Conditions Health Reference

Our Health Counts Toronto is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Toronto and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada. Participants were selected using respondent-driven sampling, a statistical method which uses social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the city.

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
Have you been told by a healthcare provider that you have any of the following chronic health conditions (conditions expected to last or have already lasted 6 months or more and that have been diagnosed by a healthcare provider)…	
Asthma	24.1% (17.3, 30.9)
Arthritis	21.3% (16.2, 26.5)
Heart Disease (adults aged 20 years and older)	7.7% (4.6, 10.8)
Stroke	4.3% (1.5, 7.1)
Liver Disease	14.5% (9.2, 19.9)
High Blood Pressure	23.7% (17.3, 30.0)
Hepatitis B (adults aged 15 to 79 years)	2.0% (0.7, 3.3)
Hepatitis C	11.2% (6.0, 16.4)
Allergies (including food allergies)	38.1% (30.5, 45.7)
Chronic Bronchitis, Emphysema, or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	8.8% (4.0, 13.7)
Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder	9.2% (5.6, 12.7)
Learning Disability	22.0% (14.2, 29.7)
Cancer	7.1% (1.9, 12.2)
Multimorbidity among Indigenous adults (adults aged 15 years and older)	
One or more chronic health conditions	64.7% (57.2, 72.2)
None	35.3% (27.8, 42.8)
Multimorbidity among Indigenous adults (adults aged 20 years and older)	
Two or more chronic health conditions	38.4% (30.7, 46.1)
One chronic health condition	27.9% (21.1, 34.7)
No chronic health conditions	33.8% (26.5, 41.0)
Do you have diabetes as diagnosed by a healthcare provider?	
Completely up-to-date	94.1% (89.5, 98.7)
Somewhat or not at all up-to-date	5.9% (1.3, 10.5)
Has your child ever received any immunizations?	
Yes	92.6% (85.6, 99.5)
No	7.4% (0.5, 14.4)
Within the past year, did any health care provider discuss your child's immunizations with you?	
Yes	14.9% (9.3, 20.4)
No	85.2% (79.6, 90.7)
In the last month, did you take pills to control your blood sugar?	
Yes	74.3% (57.6, 91.0)
No	25.7% (9.0, 42.4)
Do you currently take insulin for your diabetes?	
Yes	22.1% (9.7, 34.5)
No	77.9% (65.5, 90.3)
In the past 12 months, have you used any of the following services or programs to help manage your diabetes?	
Dietician	32.5% (8.9, 56.1)*
Foot clinic	29.0% (4.7, 53.3)*
Diabetes clinic or care program through a hospital	28.3% (4.1, 52.5)*
Did not use any services or programs to help manage diabetes	15.6% (5.4, 25.7)
Had diabetes by food security	
Always or most of the time you and others had enough of the kinds of food you wanted to eat	72.1% (58.1, 86.2)
Sometimes or often you or others did not have enough to eat	27.9% (13.8, 41.9)

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Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
Did not have diabetes by food security	
Always or most of the time you and others had enough of the kinds of food you wanted to eat	73.8% (67.6, 80.1)
Sometimes or often you or others did not have enough to eat	26.2% (19.9, 32.4)
In the past 12 months, has a health care professional tested you for hemoglobin A1C?	
Yes	76.8% (60.2, 93.5)
No	23.2% (6.6, 39.8)
In the past 12 months, has a healthcare professional checked your feet for any sores or irritations?	
Yes	63.2% (44.9, 81.5)
No	36.8% (18.5, 55.1)
In the past 12 months, has a healthcare professional tested your urine for protein (i.e. microalbumin)	
Yes	74.8% (58.1, 91.4)
No	25.3% (8.6, 41.9)
Did you have an eye exam to screen for retinal damage or visual impairment?	
Less than one year ago	48.7% (28.0, 69.5)*
A year ago or more	20.2% (7.9, 32.5)
Never	31.1% (13.7, 48.4)

Have you ever been told by a health care professional or teaching/child care professional that your child has any of the following health conditions?	
Learning disability	18.3% (6.2, 30.4)
Speech/language difficulties	6.0% (1.9, 10.1)
Cognitive or mental disability	3.8% (0.3, 7.3)
Asthma	12.3% (4.3, 20.3)
Dermatitis, atopic eczema	18.9% (3.5, 34.3)
Hearing impairment	2.5% (0.0, 5.1)
Allergies	6.9% (2.5, 11.3)
Anxiety/Depression	3.3% (0.9, 5.8)
Blindness or serious vision problems	1.7% (0.0, 3.4)
Heart condition	3.7% (0.2, 7.1)
Multimorbidity among Indigenous children	
Two or more chronic health conditions	17.7% (9.0, 26.3)
One chronic health condition	19.8% (9.1, 30.5)
None	62.5% (50.9, 74.2)
Does this/do these condition(s) or health problem(s) prevent or limit your child's participation in school, at play or any other activity for a child their age?	
Yes	35.9% (17.5, 54.3)
No	64.1% (45.7, 82.5)

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