

OLDER WOMEN

In 2006, there were 37.2 million adults aged 65 and older in the United States, representing 12.4 percent of the total population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the older population is expected to grow to 72 million by 2030, representing approximately 20 percent of the population, due to the aging of the baby boom generation. In 2006, older women composed 7.2 percent of the total population while men accounted for 5.2 percent. Women represented a

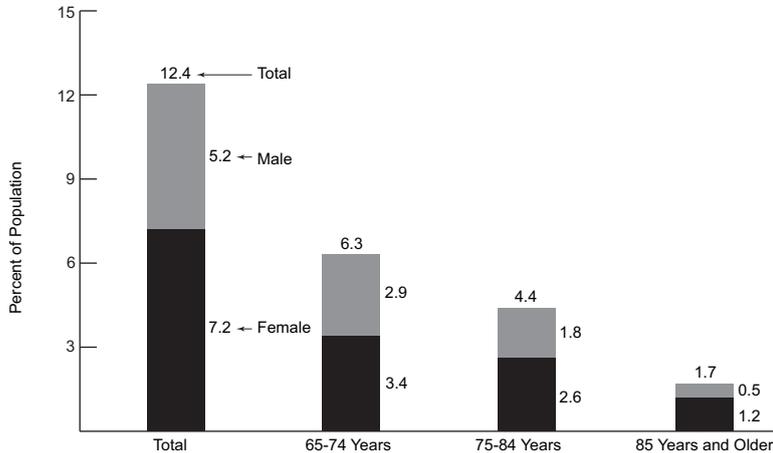
larger proportion of the elderly population than men within every age group.

More than 40 percent of women aged 65 or older were married and living with a spouse in 2006, while another 38.4 percent lived alone. Research has suggested that older adults who live alone are more likely to live in poverty, which has numerous health implications. Another 8.8 percent of older women were heads of their household (with no spouse present), while 8.6 percent were living with relatives.

Employment plays a significant role in the lives of many older Americans. In 2006, more than 2.2 million women aged 65 years and older were working, accounting for 10.3 percent of women in this age group. Nearly 18 percent of women aged 65–74 years were employed during 2006, while only 3.5 percent of women aged 75 and older were employed. Less than 0.5 percent of women aged 65 and older were unemployed and looking for work (data not shown).

Representation of Adults Aged 65 and Older in the U.S. Population,* by Age and Sex, 2006

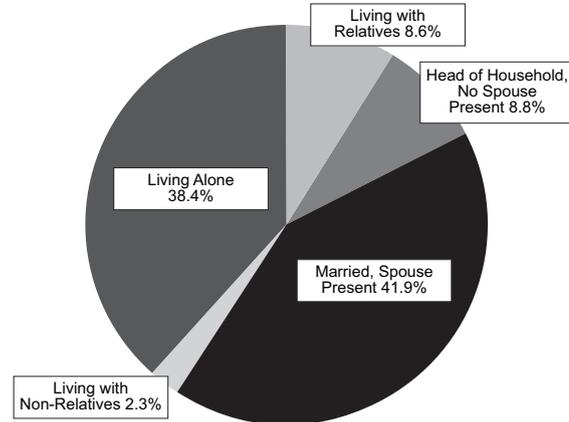
Source I.1: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



*Civilian, non-institutionalized population.

Women Aged 65 and Older,* by Household Composition, 2006

Source I.2: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey



*Civilian, non-institutionalized population.

RURAL AND URBAN WOMEN

In 2005, more than 48 million people, or 16.6 percent of the population, lived in areas considered to be non-metropolitan. The number of areas defined as metropolitan changes frequently as the population grows and people move. Residents of non-metropolitan areas tend to be older, complete fewer years of education, have public insurance or no health insurance, and live farther from health care resources than their metropolitan counterparts.

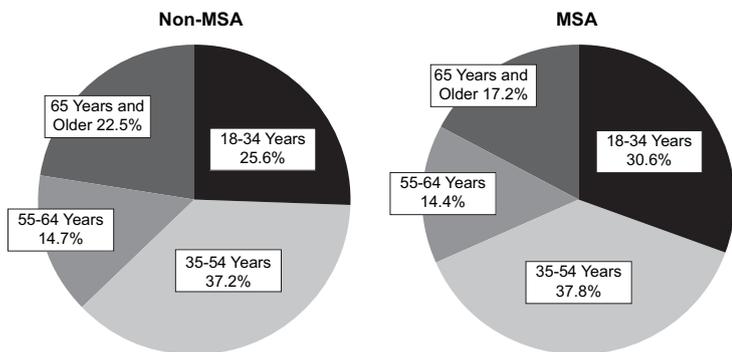
In 2005, 22.5 percent of women in non-metropolitan areas were aged 65 years and older, while only 17.2 percent of women in metropolitan areas were in the same age group. Fewer than 26 percent of women in non-metropolitan areas were aged 18–34 years, compared to 30.6 percent in metropolitan areas. Women aged 35–54 years and 55–64 years accounted for approximately the same percentage of the female population in non-metropolitan and metropolitan areas.

In 2004–2006, the percentage of women experiencing activity limitations due to a chronic

condition was higher in non-metropolitan areas (17.0 percent) than in metropolitan areas (13.4 percent), regardless of age. For instance, 30.2 percent of women aged 65–74 years living in non-metropolitan areas had an activity limitation due to a chronic condition, compared to 25.0 percent of women of the same age group in metropolitan areas. As age increases, however, the discrepancy narrows; among women aged 85 years and older, 63.3 percent in non-metropolitan areas experienced an activity limitation, as did 61.9 percent in metropolitan areas.

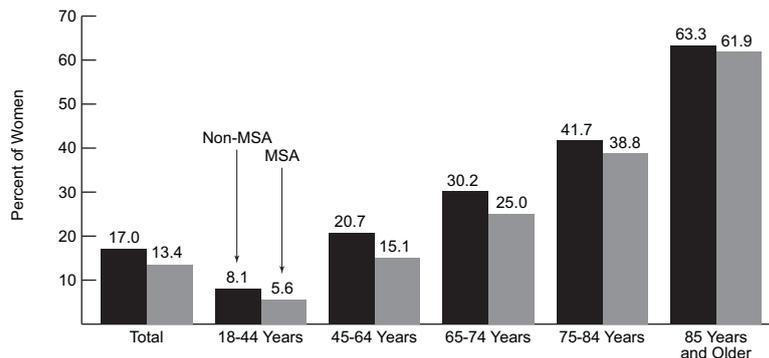
Women Aged 18 and Older, by Area of Residence* and Age, 2005

Source II.26: U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Medical Expenditure Panel Survey



Activity Limitations Due to a Chronic Condition Among Women Aged 18 and Older, by Age and Area of Residence,* 2004–2006

Source II.27: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey



*A metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is defined as a core area containing a large population nucleus together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core. All counties within a metropolitan statistical area are classified as metropolitan. Counties not within a metropolitan statistical area are considered non-metropolitan.