Rapid Synthesis

Identifying Tax Benefits or Incentives to Reduce Poverty Among Older Adults

30 March 2018

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Rapid Synthesis:
Identifying Tax Benefits or Incentives to Reduce Poverty Among Older Adults

30-day response

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Forum+

The goal of Forum+ is to generate action on the pressing social-system issues of our time, based on the best available research evidence and systematically elicited citizen values and stakeholder insights. We aim to strengthen social systems – locally, nationally and internationally – and get the right programs, services and products to the people who need them. By social systems we mean the following government sectors and program areas: citizenship, children and youth services, community and social services, consumer protection, culture and gender, economic development and growth, education, employment, financial protection, food safety and security, government services, housing, infrastructure, public safety and justice, recreation, and transportation. With Forum+, we are building on McMaster's expertise in advancing human and societal health and well-being.

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Timeline

Rapid syntheses can be requested in a three-, 10-, or 30-business-day timeframe. This synthesis was prepared over a 30-business-day timeframe. An overview of what can be provided and what cannot be provided in each of the different timelines is provided on the Forum's Rapid Response program webpage (www.mcmasterforum.org/find-evidence/rapid-response).

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no professional or commercial interests relevant to the rapid synthesis. The funder played no role in the identification, selection, assessment, synthesis or presentation of the research evidence profiled in the rapid synthesis.

Merit review

The rapid synthesis was reviewed by a small number of policymakers, stakeholders and researchers in order to ensure its scientific rigour and system relevance.

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KEY MESSAGES

Questions
- How effective are tax benefits or incentives in reducing poverty among older adults?
- What types of tax benefits or incentives have been implemented in Canada and in select Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to address poverty among older adults?

Why the issue is important
- In Canada, while the prevalence of low income among older adults has declined since 1976, older adults are more likely to be towards the bottom of the income distribution.
- Living in poverty is of particular concern among older adult populations given the additional challenges that are often associated with aging (e.g., multimorbidity, reduced mobility and independence, and loss of community and social supports).(1)
- The average poverty rate for older adults is 3.2% in Denmark, 10.7% in Canada, 11.4% in Sweden and 13.8% in England and Scotland (the comparator jurisdictions were identified by the requestor).
- Tax-and-transfer systems are a commonly used policy lever for poverty alleviation, and most social systems in OECD countries offer income protections for older adults, as this population is less likely to be able to adapt to change in terms of finding alternate sources of income.
- Given the rates of poverty among older adults in Canada, it is important to understand the effectiveness of tax-and-transfer systems in reducing poverty in this population.

What we found
- We identified a total of 13 primary studies focused on the effects of tax benefits or incentives in reducing poverty among older adults.
- We note one main limitation with respect to the quality of the research evidence found, in that we do not have synthesized and pre-appraised evidence examining the effectiveness of tax benefits or incentives in reducing poverty among older adults.
- One primary study revealed that raising the age of eligibility for tax benefits from 65 to 67 years in Canada would have a negative effect on the health of low-income older adults and increase the percentage of individuals who are low income, with a particular effect on women.
- A second primary study revealed that, when comparing the impact of tax systems on poverty across five OECD countries (Canada, Germany, Sweden, U.K., U.S.), the tax burden was highest in both absolute and relative terms in Sweden and Germany, and is lowest in relative terms in Canada, the U.K. and the U.S.
- In addition, we undertook a scan of 15 comparator jurisdictions (the Canadian federal government, each Canadian province, Denmark, England and Scotland, and Sweden) to identify, where possible, what types of tax benefits or incentives are being used to reduce poverty among older adults.
- At the national level, the Canadian federal government provides a variety of tax benefits or incentives (e.g., private savings, employer-sponsored registered pension plans and pension income splitting).
- At the provincial level in Canada, the type and amount of tax benefits or incentives available to older adults varies, with tax benefits or incentives related to residential properties being among the most common (e.g., home renovation tax credits to improve access and mobility, tax deferrals on residential properties, and tax incentives for independent living and home-support services).
- Denmark has one of the lowest national poverty rates for older adults due to, in part, the 'flexicurity model', which consists of strong social protections (e.g., a full national public pension) and active labour market policies.
- In England and Scotland, the Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit) supports individuals whose income falls below a certain level, or supplements payments made towards retirement.
- The Guaranteed Pension Tax deductions in Sweden are available to eligible pensions as negotiated through the Swedish Tax Agency.

QUESTIONS

- How effective are tax benefits or incentives in reducing poverty among older adults?
- What types of tax benefits or incentives have been implemented in Canada and in select Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to address poverty among older adults?

WHY THE ISSUE IS IMPORTANT

Poverty reduction measures are an important approach to improving health and well-being.(2) A recent survey found that poverty among older adults was lower in 20 out of 35 OECD countries when compared to the population as a whole.(3) In Canada, while the prevalence of low income among older adults has declined since 1976, older adults are more likely to be towards the bottom of the income distribution.(2; 4) Living in poverty is of particular concern among older adult populations given the additional challenges that are often associated with aging (e.g., multimorbidity, reduced mobility and independence, and loss of community and social supports).(1)

A previous rapid synthesis identified income as the most frequently used indicator for poverty.(5) The primary reasons for its frequent use is that poverty is easily understood by the population and policymakers, and also because data are available and allow for measurement over time to determine whether efforts to alleviate poverty have been successful.(5; 6)

The way in which Statistics Canada measures low-income lines has evolved since the early 1990s.(7) The three main ways in which the poverty line is assessed, also captured in our previous rapid synthesis, are:

- low-income measures, which is a relative measure of poverty set at 50% of adjusted median household income after tax;
- low-income cut-off (before or after tax), which are income thresholds below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income (either after-tax or before-tax) on the necessities such as food, shelter and clothing than the average; and
- market-basket measure, which represents the cost of the basket compared to disposable income for each family, with the basket including a nutritious diet, clothing and footwear, shelter, transportation, and other necessary goods and services.(7; 8)

Box 1: Background to the rapid synthesis

This rapid synthesis mobilizes both global and local research evidence about a question submitted to the Forum's Rapid Response program. Whenever possible, the rapid synthesis summarizes research evidence drawn from systematic reviews of the research literature and occasionally from single research studies. A systematic review is a summary of studies addressing a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select and appraise research studies, and to synthesize data from the included studies. The rapid synthesis does not contain recommendations, which would have required the authors to make judgments based on their personal values and preferences.

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This rapid synthesis was prepared over a 30-business-day timeframe and involved four steps:

1) submission of a question from a policymaker or stakeholder (in this case, the British Columbia Ministry of Health);
2) identifying, selecting, appraising and synthesizing relevant research evidence about the question;
3) drafting the rapid synthesis in such a way as to present concisely and in accessible language the research evidence; and
4) finalizing the rapid synthesis based on the input of at least two merit reviewers.

In 2015, the poverty rate among older adults in Canada ranged from a low of 4.1% in Alberta to a high of 27.6% in Newfoundland and Labrador.(9) With the exception of British Columbia, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta, the poverty rate among older adults was higher across provinces than that of the total population.(9) The Statistics Canada data reported above for provinces was based on low-income measures (after-tax) to determine the poverty line.(9)

Turning our attention to international rates, the average poverty rate for older adults in OECD countries was 12.5% in 2015.(3) Canada ranks 12th among 26 OECD countries, with a national poverty rate (calculated as the ratio of the number of people whose income falls below the poverty line) of 10.7% among older adults.(10) Denmark has one of the lowest national poverty rates for older adults at 3.2%.(3) In England and Scotland, the poverty rate is 13.8%, and in Sweden it is 11.4%.(10)

It is important to note that the OECD uses a similar low-income measure to determine the poverty line as Statistics Canada (e.g., 50% of the adjusted median household income of the population), however, after-tax calculations take into consideration "social insurance contributions and other non-discretionary spending" as well as categorizing older adults as those who are 66 years old and above rather than 65.(5; 10; 11) The measurements used by both Canada and the OECD reflect relative income rather than absolute poverty or an absolute measure of an individual's resources.(5) As a result, caution must be used when drawing comparisons between countries, as they may not provide a true picture of the level of deprivation in a given jurisdiction.(5)

Box 2: Identification, selection and synthesis of research evidence

We identified research evidence (systematic reviews and primary studies) by searching in March 2018 three databases: Social Systems Evidence (www.socialsystemsevidence.org), PubMed and EconLit. In Social Systems Evidence we searched for [tax AND poverty AND (older adult* OR senior*)]. In PubMed we searched for (Aged[MeSH Major Topic]) AND (Poverty[MeSH Major Topic] AND (Taxes[MeSH Major Topic]). In EconLit, we searched for [tax AND poverty AND (older adult* OR senior*)]. In addition, we searched: 1) federal and provincial government websites in Canada; 2) governmental websites in Denmark, Sweden, and the United Kingdom; and 3) relevant publications of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The results from the searches were assessed by one reviewer for inclusion. A document was included if it fit within the scope of the questions posed for the rapid synthesis.

For each systematic review we included in the synthesis, we documented the focus of the review, key findings, last year the literature was searched (as an indicator of how recently it was conducted), methodological quality using the AMSTAR quality appraisal tool (see the Appendix for more detail), and the proportion of the included studies that were conducted in Canada. For primary research (if included), we documented the focus of the study, methods used, a description of the sample, the jurisdiction(s) studied, key features of the intervention, and key findings. We then used this extracted information to develop a synthesis of the key findings from the included reviews and primary studies.

Tax-and-transfer systems are a commonly used policy lever for poverty alleviation.(3; 12) Most jurisdictions offer income protections for older adults, as this population is less likely to be able to adapt to change in terms of finding alternate sources of income.(3) Canada's system aligns with the World Bank's 'three pillar' approach:

1) poverty alleviation based on current income;
2) retirement income for those who were employed; and
3) a mix of private savings and employment-related pensions.(13)

Given the rates of poverty among older adults in Canada, it is important to understand the effectiveness of tax-and-transfer systems in reducing poverty in this population. For the purposes of this rapid synthesis, we focus, where possible, on the effects of tax benefits and incentives on reducing poverty among older adults. However, we recognize that within the research evidence and jurisdictional scan it is sometimes challenging to separate these elements from other transfer systems (e.g., pensions and guaranteed annual income).

WHAT WE FOUND

We identified a total of 13 relevant documents by searching three databases (Social Systems Evidence, PubMed and EconLit), with the search strategy for these databases detailed in Box 2. As mentioned above, literature was included when it directly addressed one of the two questions posed for this rapid synthesis. Among the documents, we found 13 primary studies that were deemed relevant to this rapid synthesis. We provide more details about the primary studies in Appendix 1.

In addition, we undertook a scan of governmental and stakeholder websites from 15 comparator jurisdictions that were identified by the requestor. We purposefully selected a sample of jurisdictions to explore variations that emerged (e.g., Denmark has one of the lowest national poverty rates for older adults).(3) These included the Canadian federal government, each Canadian province, Denmark, England and Scotland, and Sweden. For these jurisdictions, we identified (where possible) what types of tax benefits or incentives are being used to address poverty among older adults.

One limitation we note is with respect to the quality of the research evidence found. We were unable to find synthesized and pre-appraised research evidence focused specifically on the effects of tax benefits or incentives in reducing poverty among older adults. We were, however, able to identify a range of primary studies addressing this question and we prioritized Canadian literature and primary studies that included the comparator jurisdictions.

In the jurisdictional scan, one main limitation is that while we provide an overview of tax benefits or incentives aimed at older adults in select jurisdictions, the intent of the tax benefits or incentives is not known. Although the majority of the tax benefits or incentives reviewed in the jurisdictional scan focused on low-income older adults, a more in-depth analysis would be needed to understand their underlying rationale(s).

How effective are tax benefits or incentives in reducing poverty among older adults?

In Canada, the main approaches used to offer income protections for older adults through the tax-and-transfer system include:

- cash transfers, which refer to transferring of income through the use of government programs, primarily pensions, that are funded through general federal tax revenues and are based on age and current income with examples including,(2; 14)
  - the Old Age Security which provides a monthly, taxable inflation-based benefit to all Canadians aged 65 and older,(13; 15)
  - the Guaranteed Income Supplement, which is based on an income test and provides a monthly, non-taxable benefit to eligible recipients (Canadians aged 65 and older, and income test uses most sources of income except for Old Age Security income),(13; 14)
  - the Allowance, which is a non-taxable benefit for low-income individuals (between 60-64 years) who are married to or living common law with a Guaranteed Income Supplement recipient,(13; 16) and
  - the Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan which are funded through employee-employer payroll tax, offer full retirement benefits that are available at age 65 or age 60 with a reduction, and up to age 70 with an increase (note that in 2019, the Canada Pension Plan is being enhanced to increase the disability benefit and the survivor's pensions, and there will also be changes to the contribution rate for employees from 2019 to 2023);(13; 17; 18)
- Registered Pensions Plans, which are employer-provided pensions (defined benefit and defined contribution) and Registered Retirement Savings Plans, which are tax exempt as long as the funds remain in the plan;(19)
- a guaranteed annual income, which provides a minimum cash benefit to the individual with some provinces having pilot initiatives aimed at low-income older adults (e.g., the Guaranteed Annual Income System in Ontario);(2; 20) and

- tax benefits and incentives, which often take the form of tax credits, deductions and exemptions that are intended to reduce taxpayer burden (e.g., tax credits for the cost of eligible public transit passes or home-renovation credits for older adults).(3)

The Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement are key components of poverty alleviation within the Canadian pension system.(13; 21)

We identified eight primary studies that examined the role of tax systems in Canada and the effects on low-income older adults. Four of the studies focused broadly on older adults in Canada and the role of pensions and found that:

- increasing income provided by federal pension benefits for low-income Canadians 65 and over coincided with a pronounced (50%) decrease in food insecurity prevalence, suggesting that raising the age of eligibility for benefits in Canada from 65 to 67 years would have a negative effect on the health of low-income older adults;(22)
- increasing the eligibility age for Old Age Security from 65 to 67 years old is expected to increase net revenues of the federal government by $7.1 billion dollars per year by 2030, but reduce net provincial revenues by $638 million dollars, (23)
  - the change is also expected to increase the percentage of individuals aged 65 and 66 years who are low income from 6% to 17% (approximately 100,000) and would be most harmful to low-income women;
- an automatic change in a registered pension plan (Canada Pension Plan or Quebec Pension Plan) significantly affected employers' generosity of registered pension plan;(24)
- many older adults face a regressive tax system in retirement and the less income they have from private taxable sources (Canada Pension Plan or Quebec Pension Plan), the higher the average marginal effective tax rate they face (and hence the claw back of other age-related income-based benefits),(25)
  - the marginal effective tax rates were generally greater than 50% across provinces for older adults with up to $17,000 of taxable pension income, and
  - they were highest for low-income older adults, with the low-income tax-rate peaks highest in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia; and
- between 1980 and 1995 the share of private pension income among Canadian older adults rose from 13% of disposable income to 25%, while the share of Canada Pension Plan/ Quebec Pension Plan income rose from 8% of disposable income to 20% of disposable income,(26) and
  - higher pension benefits favored lower-income households,
  - real incomes among older adults rose during this period, but most of the gains were at the lower end of the income distribution, while gains to other income groups could be offset by decreases in Guaranteed Income Supplement benefits (that are 'clawed back' as other income rises), and
  - despite the gains made between 1980 and 1996, projections based on the indexing provisions for Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement benefits indicate a substantial rise in low-income rates among older adults in the future.

Of the remaining primary studies focused on Canada, one examined the effect of marginal tax rates on taxable income due to tax reforms and found that the responsiveness of income to changes in taxes was much smaller in Canada as compared to a similar Act in the U.S.(27) Another study examined the population distribution of older adults in Canada with incomes below the low-income measure.(28) Out of 1,000 older adults, it was calculated that 59 would be below the low-income measure, with 11 of the 59 being immigrants.(28) Of the 48 older adults below the low-income measure who did not immigrate recently, 17 would be men and 31 would be women, and of these, 12 men and 26 women would not be partnered.(28) The last study examined the effects of public-pension policies (e.g., Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Canada Pension Plan and Registered Retirement Plan) on older adult women in Canada.(29) It was found that women rely more on public pensions in retirement when compared to men.(29) However, many older adult women who are low income are excluded from accessing tax subsidies.(29) For example, Registered Retirement Plans and Registered Retirement Savings Plans are available to those with higher incomes.(29) Another example is that many older women were not part of the formal labour force, excluding them from workplace pension plans.(29)

We identified five primary studies that consisted of comparative analyses of tax systems as it relates to low-income older adults. Three of the studies focused on describing different tax systems. The first study examined the variation in old-age income inequality, utilizing Luxembourg income study data.(30) The study found that Sweden had the highest level of government transfers and lowest level of old-age income inequality.(30) Israel and the U.S. had the lowest levels of dependency on government transfers and the highest levels of income inequality.(30) Canada was an exception, as income inequality in older adults was relatively low, yet public transfers represent only a moderate portion of older adults' income.(30) The second study compared the effect of tax systems on poverty across five OECD countries (Canada, Germany, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S.), finding that the tax burden was highest in both absolute and relative terms in Sweden and Germany, and is lowest in relative terms in Canada, the U.K. and the U.S.(31) The final study surveyed 15 countries' individual tax systems and focused on employees of working age and older adults drawing pensions.(32) The study found significant differences between countries in the pattern of tax concessions offered to older adults in personal-tax systems.(32) Australia, Canada, Finland and Sweden had the most highly targeted set of tax concessions, with the majority of benefits going towards low-income pensioners, and additional credits and allowances start to be withdrawn once the pensioner's income exceeds a certain level.(32)

The remaining two comparative analyses focused on the effects of tax systems and low-income older adults. The first study found that when compared to the U.S., the Canadian system (Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement) provided larger minimum retirement benefits and hence greater adequacy and protection for low-income older adults (by a ratio of 1.15).(33) The final study found that although a combination of tax incentives and income transfers in the U.S. significantly reduced the income disparity between households with and without older adults, tax incentives alone did not contribute very much to the change.(34) Public income transfers were found to be more powerful than taxes in equalizing the population's income distribution, particularly for older adults.(34)

What types of tax benefits or incentives have been implemented in Canada and in select OECD countries to address poverty among older adults?

We provide a summary of the results of the jurisdictional scan in Table 1 in terms of:

1) the types of tax benefits or incentives that are available to older adults;
2) how the tax benefits or incentives are delivered; and
3) fwho the tax benefits or incentives are available to.

Given that our scan consisted of a purposeful sampling of key websites in each jurisdiction (as described above), Table 1 may not provide a comprehensive overview of tax benefits or incentives for older adults, but rather a broad outline of the key tax benefits or incentives available.

<u>*Canada*</u>

At the federal level, the government provides a variety of tax benefits or incentives for private savings through sheltered accounts such as the Registered Retirement Savings Plan and the Tax-Free Savings Account.(35) Employer-sponsored registered pension plans also receive preferential tax treatment.(35) Pension income splitting is available to partnered older adults and allows them to split their pension income.(35; 36) Individuals with disabilities can also claim a tax credit in order to aid in expenses for severe and prolonged impairments in health.(35)

At the provincial level, the type and amount of tax benefits and incentives available to older adults varies. The most common broad category of tax benefits or incentives related to residential properties, which included:

- home renovation tax credits to improve access and mobility (British Columbia and New Brunswick);(37-39)
- tax deferrals on residential properties (British Columbia, Alberta and Prince Edward Island) or assistance in paying for property taxes (Ontario);(40-44) and
- independent living and home-support services (Quebec).(45)

The other broad type of tax benefits or incentive found across multiple provinces focused on tax credits for low-income older adults (Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador).(39; 46-48) Other less common benefits aimed at older adults include public transit (Ontario) and credits for residential school taxes (Manitoba and Ontario).(42; 43; 49)

Comparator jurisdictions

As highlighted in the introduction, Denmark has one of the lowest national poverty rates for older adults.(3) This is due to the Danish 'flexicurity model', which consists of strong social protections and active labour market policies.(50) The three pillars of the pension system in Denmark are made up of the National public pension (financed through taxes), labour market and company-based pension (voluntary), and individual pension plan (voluntary).(51) In order to be eligible for a full national public pension, individuals must: 1) have lived in Denmark for 40 years; and 2) must be 65 years of age or older (this will be increased to 67 years of age by 2024).

In England and Scotland the Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit) supports individuals whose income falls below a certain level, or supplements payments made towards retirement.(52; 53) Individuals receive up to $285 in Guarantee Credit and up to $23 in Savings Credit per week.(52; 53) The tax benefits are available to individuals who have reached Pension Credit qualifying age (65 for Savings Credit and 66 for Guarantee Credit).(52; 53)

The Guaranteed Pension Tax deductions in Sweden are available to eligible pensions as negotiated through the Swedish Tax Agency.(54) To receive a full guaranteed pension, individuals must have lived in Sweden for 40 years (full amount reduced by 1/40 for every year less).(54) Individuals must be 65 years of age and over, and have low or no earnings-related pension.(54)

Table 1: Jurisdictional scan of tax benefits or incentives that have been implemented in Canada and in select OECD countries to address poverty among older adults

Jurisdiction	What type of tax benefits or incentives?	How is it delivered?	For whom?
Canada			
Federal (35)	• Age Amount o Amount that can be claimed on annual tax return based on age and income of individual • Pension Income Amount o Amount that can be claimed on annual tax return based on eligible pension, superannuation, or annuity payments (35) • Pension income splitting o Eligible individuals may elect to jointly split pension income with spouse or common-law partner • Disability amount o Disability tax credit claimed in order to aid in expenses for severe and prolonged impairments in health (35) • Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) o Deductible RRSP contributions reduce tax paid annually	• Age Amount o Amount claimed on annual tax return o If income less than $36,430, individual can claim $7,225 o If income more than $36,430 but less than $84,597, individual can calculate claim • Pension Income Amount o Individuals can claim up to $2,000 on yearly income tax return • Pension income splitting o Transferring individual can claim $2,000 or the amount of eligible pension income (whichever amount is less) o Receiving individual can claim $2,000 or amount of pension that is eligible for pension income amount (whichever amount is less) • Disability amount o Claimed on annual tax return o Maximum claim amount of $8.113 • Registered retirement savings plan o Income earned in RRSP is exempt from tax if funds remain in the plan	• Age Amount o Available to individuals who: 1) are 65 years of age or older; and 2) have a net income of less than $84,597 • Pension Income Amount o Available to individuals who reported eligible annuity and/or pension income or payment • Pension income splitting o Available to individuals who are: 1) married or in a common-law relationship; 2) residents of Canada; and 3) receive pension or are 65 years of age or older and receive certain eligible amounts • Disability amount o Individuals must complete a Disability Tax Credit Certificate and have it certified by a medical practitioner in order to determine eligibility • Registered Retirement Savings Plan o Most individuals can set up an RRSP with advice from their respective financial institution
British Columbia (37; 38; 55)	• Personal income tax credits o Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities for renovation to primary residence, which includes improving access, mobility, or reducing the risks in home or on land (e.g., walk-in bathtubs, hand rails and ramps) o Regular Property Tax Deferment Program	• Personal income tax credits and deductions claimed on income tax return • Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities o The maximum amount is $1,000 per tax year (calculated as 10% of the qualifying renovation expense, with a maximum $10,000 in expenses) o A refundable tax credit and if the credit is higher than the taxes owed, the difference is refunded • Regular Property Tax Deferment Program o A low-interest loan that permits the deferral or all or a portion of property taxes	• Basic tax credits are available to everyone • Specific tax credits available for those who meet eligibility criteria • Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities o Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities is available to residents of B.C. who are; 1) older adults or a family member living with an older adult; or 2) individuals living with a disability or a family member living with a person with a disability • Regular Property Tax Deferment Program o Available to individuals who are: 1) 55 or older; 2) a surviving spouse of any age; 3) individuals living with a disability; 4) living in a residential property (class 1 and 9) and it is their principal residence; and 5) have a minimum of 25% equity in their home

Jurisdiction	What type of tax benefits or incentives?	How is it delivered?	For whom?

Alberta (40; 41)	• Seniors Financial Assistance programs are offered by the Government of Alberta
	  ○ Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program, which includes the government paying residential property taxes on behalf of the individual; the individual re-pays the loan when the house is sold, or earlier
		• Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program
		  ○ Individuals apply if interested
		  ○ Government pays residential property taxes directly to municipality; loan is repaid with 3.20% interest (40; 41)
			• Basic tax credits are available to everyone
			• Specific tax credits available for those who meet eligibility criteria
			• Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program
			  ○ Requires an individual to: 1) be 65 years or older; 2) be an Alberta resident; 3) own a residential property in Alberta; and 4) have a minimum of 25% equity in their home

Saskatchewan (46)	• The Seniors Income Plan provides senior citizens with financial assistance
	  ○ Monthly supplement is paid to low- or little-income seniors up to a certain taxable income level
	• Low-Income Tax Credit
	• Fully refundable and non-taxable benefit paid to help Saskatchewan residents with low and modest incomes
		• The Seniors Income Plan
		  ○ Maximum monthly benefit is up to $270 (calculated based on marital status and living situation of individual)
		  ○ Threshold annual taxable income level where the Seniors Income Plan becomes $0 varies based on individual
		• Low-Income Tax Credit
		  ○ Delivered quarterly by the Canada Revenue Agency with administration of federal Goods and Services Tax Credit
		  ○ Maximum basic adult component and spousal/equivalent $346 each
		  ○ Maximum of $272 per family for children
		  ○ Benefit claw-back rate is 2.75%
		  ○ Maximum annual benefit is $964 for families earning less than $32,643
			• Basic tax credits are available to everyone
			• Specific tax credits available for those who meet eligibility criteria
			• The Seniors Income Plan
			  ○ Available to Saskatchewan residents who are: 1) 65 years of age or older; 2) permanent residents of Saskatchewan; 3) citizens receiving full or partial Old Age Security pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement; and 4) annual income below a specified level
			• Low-Income Tax Credit
			  ○ Canada Revenue Agency determines eligibility when persons file income tax and benefit return

Manitoba (49)	• Seniors' School Tax Rebate
	  ○ Rebate based on total of residential school taxes assessed net of the Basic and Seniors Education Property Tax Credit received or receivable
		• Seniors' School Tax Rebate
		  ○ Maximum rebate is $470 for eligible seniors
		  ○ Rebate is reduced by 2.0% of net family income over $40,000
			• Basic tax credits are available to everyone
			• Specific tax credits available for those who meet eligibility criteria
			• Seniors' School Tax Rebate
			  ○ Eligible seniors below the $40,000 income-tested threshold may be eligible for full rebate depending on amount of school tax
			  ○ Senior households with income of $63,500 or higher are not eligible

Ontario (42; 43)	• Provincial Land Tax Deferral Program for Low-Income Seniors and Low-Income Persons with Disabilities
	  ○ Partial deferral of provincial land tax and education tax applying to
		• Provincial Land Tax Deferral Program for Low-Income Seniors and Low-Income Persons with Disabilities
		  ○ Individuals must apply annually in order to establish eligibility
		• Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit
			• Basic tax credits are available to everyone
			• Specific tax credits available for those who meet eligibility criteria
			• Provincial Land Tax Deferral Program for Low-Income Seniors and Low-Income Persons with Disabilities

Jurisdiction	What type of tax benefits or incentives?	How is it delivered?	For whom?
	the tax increase of the current year • Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit o Refundable tax credit to help seniors with public transit costs • Ontario Senior Homeowners' Property Tax Grant o Helps low-to-moderate income seniors with the cost of their property taxes (43)	o Eligible individuals can claim up to $3,000 in public transit expenses and receive up to $450 each year • Ontario Senior Homeowners' Property Tax Grant o Individuals can receive up to $500 each year depending on adjusted family net income	o Available to Ontario residents who: 1) owned a residential/farm property that was used as principal residence for at least one year before application; and are 2)low-income persons with disabilities who received a benefit paid under the Ontario disability support program; or 3) low-income seniors 65 years of age or older and received a benefit paid under the guaranteed income supplement • Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit o Available to individuals who: 1) are 65 years or older at the beginning of the year that they're claiming the credit; and 2) live in Ontario by the end of that year • Ontario Senior Homeowners' Property Tax Grant o Available to individuals and their spouses/common-law partners who: 1) paid Ontario property tax in the previous year; 2) were single/divorced/widowed and earned less than $50,000 in the previous year or were married/common-law and earned a combined income of less than $60,000; 3) owned and occupied a principal residence; 4) were 64 years of age or older; and 5) were a resident of Ontario
Quebec (45)	Tax Credits • Age Amount, Amount for a Person Living Alone and Amount for Retirement Income o Non-refundable tax credit based on age, living situation, and retirement income • Independent Living Tax Credit for Seniors o Refundable tax credit for senior residents of Quebec who incurred certain expenses • Non-Refundable Tax Credit for Medical Expenses • Tax Credit for Home-Support Services for Seniors o Refundable tax credit for home-support service expenses Tax Deductions • Deduction for a refund of unused Registered Retirement Savings Plan or pooled registered pension plans, and	Tax Credits • Age Amount, Amount for a Person Living Alone and Amount for Retirement Income o Claims are made on a yearly income tax return; claim amounts vary based on individual • Independent Living Tax Credit for Seniors o Credit given for 20% of the total of expenses incurred for eligible equipment expenses (with exception of the first $500) and expenses incurred for stays in a functional rehabilitation transition unit • Non-Refundable Tax Credit for Medical Expenses o Credit given if medical expenses exceeded 3% of individual's net income • Tax Credit for Home-Support Services for Seniors o Claim can be received by claiming credit on income tax return or by filing an application for advance payments Tax Deductions • Deduction for a Refund of Unused Registered Retirement Savings Plan Contributions o Claims are made on yearly income tax return;	• Basic tax credits are available to everyone Tax Credits • Age Amount, Amount for a Person Living Alone and Amount for Retirement Income o Available to individuals who: 1) are 65 years or older by the end of the year; 2) lived alone for the year, or only lived with one or more people under 18; and 3) received retirement income • Independent Living Tax Credit for Seniors o Available to individuals who: 1) are Quebec residents; and 2) are 70 years of age or older • Non-Refundable Tax Credit for Medical Expenses o Available to individuals, spouses, and dependents who: 1) paid for medical expenses over 12 consecutive months; and 2) meet eligibility for type of medical expense • Tax Credit for Home-Support Services for Seniors o Available to individuals who: 1) are 70 years of age or older; and 2) use eligible home-support services Tax Deductions

Jurisdiction	What type of tax benefits or incentives?	How is it delivered?	For whom?
	voluntary retirement saving plans contributions ○ Deductions can be claimed by individuals who received refunded amounts for unused contributions to Registered Retirement Savings Plan, pooled registered pension plans, and voluntary retirement saving plans • Deduction for amounts transferred to a Registered Pension Plan, a Registered Retirement Savings Plan, a Registered Retirement Income Fund or an annuity ○ Deductions can be claimed for amounts transferred during the year or the first 60 days of the following year • Deduction for an amount already included in income (Registered Retirement Savings Plan or Registered Retirement Income Fund) • Deduction for retirement income transferred to your spouse ○ Deduction on portion of retirement income that was transferred to spouse	individuals enter the amount refunded in order to receive a deduction • Deduction for Amounts Transferred to a Registered Pension Plan, a Registered Retirement Savings Plan, a Registered Retirement Income Fund or an annuity ○ Deductions are claimed on yearly income tax returns • Deduction for an Amount Already Included in Income (Registered Retirement Savings Plan or Registered Retirement Income Fund) ○ Individuals can deduct the amount included in income on yearly income tax return, as specified on return • Deduction for retirement income transferred to your spouse ○ Deduction claimed on yearly income tax return (45)	• Deduction for a Refund of Unused Registered Retirement Savings Plan Contributions ○ Available to individuals who received a refund for unused RRSP, PRPP or VRSP contributions • Deduction for Amounts Transferred to a Registered Pension Plan (RPP), a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), a Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) or an Annuity ○ Available to individuals who made an eligible payment from an RRSP or RRIF • Deduction for an Amount Already Included in Income (Registered Retirement Savings Plan or Registered Retirement Income Fund) ○ Available to individuals with eligible Registered Retirement Savings Plan or Registered Retirement Income Fund investments • Deduction for retirement income transferred to your spouse ○ Available to individuals who: 1) are 65 years of age or older; and 2) transferred portion of retirement income to a spouse
Nova Scotia (47; 48)	• Age Amount ○ Non-refundable tax credit claimed based on age and net income • Age Tax Credit ○ Reduces personal income taxes based on age and income of individual • Seniors Provincial Income Tax Refund ○ Tax-free refund of provincial income tax to seniors who receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement from the federal government	• Age Amount ○ Claimed on yearly income tax return • Age Tax Credit ○ Claimed on yearly income tax return ○ Reduces individual personal income taxes by $1,000 • Seniors Provincial Income Tax Refund ○ Seniors who receive Guaranteed Income Supplement and pay provincial income tax are automatically eligible for a refund ○ The minimum refund payment is $50 and the maximum payment is $10,000	• Basic tax credits are available to everyone • Age Amount ○ Available to individuals who: 1) are 65 years of age or older; and 2) who have an income of $30,828 or less or more than $30,828 but less than $58,435 • Age Tax Credit ○ Available to individuals who: 1) are Nova Scotia residents; 2) are 65 years of age or older; and 3) have a taxable income of less than $24,000 • Seniors Provincial Income Tax Refund ○ Available to individuals who: 1) receive Guaranteed Income Supplement; and 2) paid provincial income tax in Nova Scotia
New Brunswick (39)	• New Brunswick Low-Income Seniors' Benefit ○ Benefit aimed at assisting low-income seniors in New Brunswick	• New Brunswick Low-Income Seniors' Benefit ○ Individuals can qualify for an annual benefit up to $400 ○ Applications must be made to the Department of	• Basic tax credits are available to everyone • New Brunswick Low-Income Seniors' Benefit ○ Available to individuals who: 1) are at least 60 years of age or older; 2) are residents of New Brunswick;

Jurisdiction	What type of tax benefits or incentives?	How is it delivered?	For whom?

	• New Brunswick Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit
	  ○ Tax credit helping with the cost of home renovation
		Finance
		• New Brunswick Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit
		  ○ Individuals can claim up to $10,000 worth of home improvements on annual income tax return
		  ○ Credits are given in the amount of up to 10% of eligible expenses
			and 3) receive benefits under the Old Age Security Act
			• New Brunswick Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit
			  ○ Available to individuals who: 1) are residents of New Brunswick; and 2) are seniors or family members living with a senior

Prince Edward Island (44)	• Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program
	• Defers payment of property taxes on principal residence of eligible seniors (44)
		• Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program
		  ○ Eligible individuals must apply to Taxation and Property Records
		  ○ Upon acceptance, individuals are issued a deferred tax certificate and no longer have to pay annual property taxes
			• Basic tax credits are available to everyone
			• Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program
			  ○ Available to individuals who: 1) are 65 years of age or older; 2) have lived in their principal residence for at least 6 months; and 3) have an annual household income of less than $35,000 (44)

Newfoundland and Labrador (56)	• Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Benefit
	  ○ Refundable tax credit aimed at paying low-income seniors
		• Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Benefit
		  ○ Income claimed on annual income tax return
		  ○ Maximum benefit of $1,313 available to seniors with net household income of up to $29,402 (56)
			• Basic tax credits are available to everyone
			• Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Benefit
			  ○ Available to individuals who: 1) are 65 years of age or older; and 2) have net family income of less than $40,663

Denmark (51)	• Pension
	  ○ Three pillars of pension system in Denmark: National public pension (financed through taxes), labour market and company-based pension (voluntary) and individual pension plan (voluntary)
		• Pension
		  ○ Danish employees earn national pension money between ages of 15 and 65; full amount reduced by 1/40 for every year less than 40 years that a person has lived in Denmark
		  ○ Contributions to private plans are tax deductible
			• Pension
			  ○ To be eligible for a full national public pension, individuals must 1) have lived in Denmark for 40 years; and 2) must be 65 years of age or older (this will be increased to 67 years of age by 2024)
			  ○ Other pension entitlements depend on individual and employer contributions

England and Scotland (52; 53)	• Pension Credit
	  ○ Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit support individuals whose income falls below a certain level or supplements payments made towards retirement
		• Pension Credit
		  ○ All benefits are paid directly into an account
		  ○ Individuals receive up to $285 in Guarantee Credit and up to $23 in Savings Credit per week
			• Pension Credit
			  ○ Available to individuals who: 1) live in England, Scotland or Wales; and 2) have reached Pension Credit qualifying age (65 years of age for Savings Credit and 66 years of age for Guarantee Credit)

Sweden (54)	• Guaranteed Pension
	  ○ Tax deductions may be made on certain eligible pensions as negotiated through the Swedish Tax Agency
		• Guaranteed Pension
		  ○ Older workers receive larger job tax deductions
		  ○ To receive a full guaranteed pension, individuals must have lived in Sweden for 40 years (full amount reduced by 1/40 for every year less)
			• Guaranteed Pension
			  ○ Available to individuals who: 1) are over 65 years of age; and 2) have low or no earnings-related pension

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APPENDICES

The following tables provide detailed information about the systematic reviews and primary studies identified in the rapid synthesis. The ensuing information was extracted from the following sources:

- systematic reviews - the focus of the review, key findings, last year the literature was searched and the proportion of studies conducted in Canada; and
- primary studies - the focus of the study, methods used, study sample, jurisdiction studied, key features of the intervention and the study findings (based on the outcomes reported in the study).

For the appendix table providing details about the systematic reviews, the fourth column presents a rating of the overall quality of each review. The quality of each review has been assessed using AMSTAR (A MeaSurement Tool to Assess Reviews), which rates overall quality on a scale of 0 to 11, where 11/11 represents a review of the highest quality. It is important to note that the AMSTAR tool was developed to assess reviews focused on clinical interventions, so not all criteria apply to systematic reviews pertaining to delivery, financial or governance arrangements in health and social systems. Where the denominator is not 11, an aspect of the tool was considered not relevant by the raters. In comparing ratings, it is therefore important to keep both parts of the score (i.e., the numerator and denominator) in mind. For example, a review that scores 8/8 is generally of comparable quality to a review scoring 11/11; both ratings are considered "high scores." A high score signals that readers of the review can have a high level of confidence in its findings. A low score, on the other hand, does not mean that the review should be discarded, merely that less confidence can be placed in its findings and that the review needs to be examined closely to identify its limitations. (Lewin S, Oxman AD, Lavis JN, Fretheim A. SUPPORT Tools for evidence-informed health Policymaking (STP): 8. Deciding how much confidence to place in a systematic review. *Health Research Policy and Systems* 2009; 7 (Suppl1):S8).

All of the information provided in the appendix tables was taken into account by the authors in describing the findings in the rapid synthesis.

Appendix 1: Summary of findings from primary studies about tax benefits or incentives to address poverty among older adults

Focus of study	Study characteristics	Sample description	Key features of the intervention(s)	Key findings
Examining the effects of pension income on low-income older adults (22)	*Publication date:* 2013 *Jurisdiction studied:* Canada *Methods used:* Analysis of effects	Unattached low-income (<$20,000 CAD) persons aged 60-64 years versus older adults aged 65-69 years using public use data from the Canadian Community Health Survey Cycle 4.1 (2007-2008)	Increase in age eligibility for Canadian federally funded pension benefits	It was found that the increased income provided by federal pension benefits for low-income Canadians 65 and over coincided with a pronounced (50%) decrease in food insecurity prevalence. It was concluded that raising the age of eligibility for public pension older adults' benefits in Canada from 65 to 67 years will have a negative impact on low-income older adults' health.
Understanding the benefits and taxes on American household incomes (34)	*Publication date:* 1994 *Jurisdiction studied:* U.S. *Methods used:* Cross-sectional analysis	This study used population data in *Measuring the Effect of benefits and Taxes on Income and Poverty; 1990* (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991), which stratify American household income data based on various income definitions.	Tax incentives to decrease the income disparity in vulnerable populations	Although a combination of tax incentives and income transfers were found to significantly reduce the income disparity between aged and non-aged households, it was found that tax incentives alone did not contribute very much to this change. As such, public income transfers were found to be more powerful than taxes in equalizing the population's income distribution, particularly in the older adult demographic.
Comparing the impact of transfers, taxes and income sources across five OECD countries on poverty (31)	*Publication date:* 2008 *Jurisdictions studied:* Canada, Germany, Sweden, U.K., U.S. *Methods used:* Comparative analysis of OECD countries	This study uses data on five OECD countries drawn from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), each with a recent 1999-2000 LIS database.	Taxes analyzed in the study include income taxes, payroll taxes, and other direct taxes	It was found that tax burden is highest in both absolute and relative terms in Sweden and Germany, and is lowest in relative terms in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. Interestingly, no country differs markedly from the others in the final poverty outcome as countries with a higher tax burden tend to offset that burden with a more generous social transfer system, a higher market income, etc. Overall, the different taxes across countries do not seem to significantly worsen either the incidence or deficit of poverty. It is important to note that an understanding of the social benefits, costs, and inter-relationship of taxes and transfers is critical for the creation of sound public policy. Unfortunately, this understanding is not necessarily straightforward as taxes and transfers often interact simultaneously. This paper proposes a methodology for doing this, focussing on the poverty-alleviation effect of various income sources.
Surveying 15 countries' individual tax systems (32)	*Publication date:* 2003 *Jurisdictions studied:* Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, U.K., U.S.	This study compares two population demographics: employees of working age and older people drawing pensions. Incomes are set at given fractions of the earnings of the average production worker, as defined by the OECD.	Age-based tax allowances and tax credits which exceed those available to taxpayers of working age Canada employs an age credit of 16% to a maximum of over $3,600 CAD This is reduced at 15%	Results from the study show that there are significant differences between countries in the pattern of concessions for older people against income. Some countries offer highly targeted reliefs, which are withdrawn from older people with higher incomes. Others offer concessions that are substantial across the entire income range. Australia, Canada, Finland and Sweden have the most highly targeted set of concessions, with the majority benefits going towards lower-income pensioners. Additional credits and allowances start to be withdrawn once the pensioner's income exceeds a certain level.

Focus of study	Study characteristics	Sample description	Key features of the intervention(s)	Key findings
	Methods used: Comparative analysis		of income between approximately $27,000 CAD and $51,000 CAD	Two policy implications are presented in the study. The first questions whether older people should pay less tax than people of working age with the same income. The positive argument presented is that older adult pensioners face higher health and disability costs while the counter-argument is that this same population faces less costs of work stemming from commuting, clothing, etc. It is important for policymakers to also bear in mind the greater social ramifications of tax concessions for older adults. For example, the U.K. government forgoes £1.7 billion in income tax revenue due to its age allowance.
Assessing the role of pensions on retirement savings (24)	*Publication date:* 2015 *Jurisdiction studied:* Canada *Methods used:* Comparative analysis	1.8 million Canadian households, from 1991 to 2010, as drawn from the Longitudinal Administrative Databank	Automatic change in registered pension plans (RPP)	This paper investigated whether an automatic change in RPP contributions leads to higher total savings or simply induces a crowd-out response in registered retirement savings plans. The results of the paper demonstrated that Canada Pension Plan or Quebec Pension Plan contribution rates significantly affect employers' generosity of RPP provisions. In addition, RPPs partially crowd out contributions into registered retirement savings plans by approximately $0.50 per $1.00.
Examining marginal tax rates on taxable income in Canada (27)	*Publication date:* 2000 *Jurisdiction studied:* Canada *Methods used:* Analysis of effects	Canadian national population in 1988	1988 Canadian federal tax reform	The effect of marginal tax rates on taxable income due to tax reforms was investigated in this study. It was found that the responsiveness of income to changes in taxes was much smaller in Canada as compared to a similar Act in the United States. However, evidence was found demonstrating a much higher response in self-employment income, in the labour income of older adults, and from those with high incomes.
Understanding the low-income measure as it relates to older adults (28)	*Publication date:* 2008 *Jurisdiction studied:* Canada *Methods used:* Analysis of effects	Below-LIM Canadians over the age of 65, based on data from the Longitudinal Administrative Database	Income transfer and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments	This study outlined the population distribution of Canadian older adults with incomes below the low-income measure, based on data from 2004. Out of 1,000 people over the age of 65 residing in Canada, it was calculated that 59 would be below-LIM, with 11 being immigrants. Of the 48 below-LIM older adults who did not immigrate recently, 17 would be men and 31 would be women, and of these, 12 men and 26 women would be currently unmarried. Additionally, this study examined potential policy directions to reduce this statistic, including increasing income transfers to immigrants in the form of reduced GIS residency requirements, and to currently unmarried older adults in the form of increased GIS payments to single persons. Policy considerations delineated in the study include measurement, life-cycle issues, and the trade-off between economic inequality and economic inefficiency.
Examining transfers and income inequality in older adults (30)	*Publication date:* 2013 *Jurisdictions studied:*	Luxembourg income study data was drawn to assess disparities between each included country	Public pension transfers	This paper examined variation in old-age income inequality between industrialized nations with modern welfare systems. Luxembourg income study data demonstrated that cross-national variation in old-age income inequality is partly explained by differences in the percentage of older

Focus of study	Study characteristics	Sample description	Key features of the intervention(s)	Key findings
	Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, U.K., and U.S. *Methods used:* Comparison of effects			adults' total income derived from public-pension transfers. Sweden was found to have the highest level of government transfers and lowest level of old-age income inequality, while Israel and the United States have the lowest levels of dependency on government transfers and highest levels of income inequality. A notable exception is Canada, where public transfers represent only a moderate portion of older adults' income, yet old-age income inequality is relatively low.
Assessing the effects of reforms targeting older adults (23)	*Publication date:* 2014 *Jurisdiction studied:* Canada *Methods used:* Analysis of effects	Canadian older adults aged 65 and above	Increasing the age of eligibility for Old Age Security (OAS)	This paper found that increasing the eligibility age for OAS from 65 to 67 years old is expected to increase net revenues of the federal government by $7.1 billion per year by 2030, but reduce net provincial revenues by $638 million. This change is also expected to increase the percentage of individuals aged 65 and 66 years who are in the low-income group from 6% to 17% (approximately 100,000 low-income older adults) and would be most harmful to low-income older adults and women. It was postulated that alternative reforms to the Old Age Security could make it possible to achieve similar effects on public finances without having such large impacts on the low-income rate among older adults.
Examining the impacts of taxes and transfers on retirement (25)	*Publication date:* 2014 *Jurisdiction studied:* Canada *Methods used:* Analysis of effects	Canadian older adults age 65 and older	Taxation of income received in senior years – when Canadians become eligible for age-related benefit programs delivered through or alongside the tax system (e.g., federal Guaranteed Income Supplement, the Old Age Security pension, the GST/HST credit, and other similar programs at the provincial level)	Many older adults face a regressive tax system in retirement. The less income they have from private taxable sources (which includes Q/CPP), the higher the average marginal effective tax rate they face (and hence the claw back of other age-related income-based benefits). Marginal effective tax rates (METRs) are generally greater than 50% across provinces for older adults with up to $17,000 of taxable pension income. They are extremely high for low-income older adults, with the low-income tax-rate peaks highest in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia. The author suggests that the anticipated tax burden of income from discretionary pension sources in retirement may impact private savings behaviour while working – providing less incentive to save through an RRSP and more to saving in a TFSA. It may also affect decisions to take employment as high METRs reduce the returns from earning income in senior years.
Understanding the incomes of older adults in Canada (26)	*Publication date:* 2000 *Jurisdiction studied:* Canada *Methods used:* Analysis of effects	All persons who were 65 or older in the reference years	Data from the Survey of Consumer Finances economic family file for 1980, 1981, 1986, and 1988-1996 is used to review trends in the level and distribution of income among older adults	Between 1980 and 1995 the share of private pension income among Canadian older adults rose from 13% of disposable income to 25%, while the share of C/QPP income rose from 8% of disposable income to 20% of disposable income. Higher C/QPP benefits favoured lower income households. Real incomes among older adults rose during this period, but most of the gains went to older adults at the lower end of the income distribution, while gains to other income groups could be offset by decreases in GIS benefits (that are 'clawed back' as other income rises). Despite the gains made between 1980 and 1996, projections based on the indexing provisions for OAS and GIS benefits indicate a substantial rise in low-income rates among older adults in the future.

Focus of study	Study characteristics	Sample description	Key features of the intervention(s)	Key findings
Comparing social security in Canada and the United States (33)	*Publication date: 2000* *Jurisdictions studied:* Canada and the U.S. *Methods used:* Comparative analysis	In the model used for analysis, older adults collecting retirement benefits have worked for 40 years, from age 25 to 64, and retired at 65	Retirement benefits provided under social security systems in Canada and the U.S.	This paper compares the Canadian and U.S. social security systems in terms of adequacy, equity and progressiveness. In general, the Canadian system was found to provide larger minimum retirement benefits and hence greater adequacy and protection for poor retirees (by a ratio of 1.15) than the U.S. system. This is attributed firstly to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) having a greater impact than the Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and secondly to the 'flat' income-tested, income-dependent benefit provided by the Old Age Security (OAS) program in Canada compared to the 'skewed' Primary Insurance Amount (PIA) formula used to determine Old Age Survivors and Insurance (OASI) for the very poor in the U.S. In the U.S. system, total retirement benefits generally increase as contributions to the total system increase, while this is not always the case in Canada. The author suggests that the U.S. system emphasizes equity over adequacy. A social security system is said to be 'progressive' if workers with lower income pay less per dollar of actual benefit than those with higher income. Both the Canadian and U.S. systems were considered progressive in that benefits such as GIS, OAS, and SSI are not paid to high-income citizens, with the Canadian system being slightly more progressive than the U.S. system as contributions to programs such as Q/CPP rise as income rises (i.e., are a fixed percentage of income).
The gendered impact of the Canadian pension system (29)	*Publication date:* 2011 *Jurisdiction studied:* Canada *Methods used:* Analysis of effects	Senior citizens in Canada	Canadian Pension system	The Canadian pension system is divided into three tiers – the Old Age Security pension (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) making up the first tier; the CPP making up the second tier, and the registered pension plan (RPP) and Registered Retirement Saving Plans (RRSP) making up the third tier. This paper found that elderly women in Canada tend to be at a financial disadvantage compared to elderly men due in part to the way the Canadian pension system is set up. Demonstrating this, 7.6% of elderly women have incomes below the low income cut off (LICO) compared to only 3.6% of elderly men. The disparity can be largely attributable to the inequitable policies that govern the pension system. Although women rely more on public pensions such as the OAS for their economic security in retirement, the government devotes significantly less money to this pillar of the pension system compared to others, such as tax subsidies, which are only available to those who pay tax (generally higher-earning males). In addition, the tax subsidies for RPPs and RRSPs are designed in such a way that they contribute inequitably to savings of those with higher incomes (again, generally working males). Due to factors like these, the Canadian pension system is inadvertently neglecting a key demographic that needs to and deserves to be supported.

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