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Profile & projections of the 60+  
population : Mercer County, Ohio

Shahla Mehdizadeh  
Miami University, [commons@lib.muohio.edu](mailto:commons@lib.muohio.edu)

# PROFILE & PROJECTIONS OF THE 60+ POPULATION

MERCER COUNTY  
OHIO

## PROJECT TEAM:

**Shahla A. Mehdizadeh, Ph.D.**

*Principal Investigator*

Disability Projections

Data Analysis

**Sarah Poff Roman, MGS**

Primary Author

Report Design/Layout

**Valerie Wellin**

Data Management

Graphic Design

Online Project Management

**P. Neal Ritchey, Ph.D.**

*Department of Sociology  
University of Cincinnati*

Population Projections

**Suzanne Kunkel, Ph.D.**

Project Consultant



MIAMI  
UNIVERSITY  
OXFORD OHIO

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All county reports as well as a state report are downloadable at:  
<http://www.scripps.muohio.edu/scripps/research/countyreports.html>

# FAST FACTS

ABOUT

## Mercer County and its 60+ Population



[WWW.SCRIPPS.MUOHIO.EDU](http://WWW.SCRIPPS.MUOHIO.EDU)

- Over 18% of Mercer County's population is age 60+ (or 7,478 individuals)
- By 2020, there will be 10,500 individuals age 60+ in Mercer County (This is a 40% increase in the 60+ population)
- More than 7 in 10 individuals age 85+ are female
- Disability increases with age: Only 3% of 60-69 year olds have a severe disability, compared to 43% of those 90+
- Nearly 30% of individuals age 60+ have at least one disability
- By 2020, almost 800 individuals age 60+ with a severe disability will reside in Mercer County
- Almost 11% of the age 60+ population live in poverty
- Only 1% of individuals age 60+ are racial or ethnic minorities
- Of men age 60+, 81% are married, compared to only 54% of women
- More than 8 in 10 individuals age 60+ have 12 or fewer years of education
- Of women age 60+, 38% live alone, compared to 17% of men



396 UPHAM HALL  
MIAMI UNIVERSITY  
OXFORD, OH 45056  
PHONE: (513) 529-2914



MIAMI  
UNIVERSITY  
OXFORD OHIO





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## Preface

During the next 20 years, the national population, as well as the population in Ohio, will grow older. In anticipation of this impending change, we have created this series of reports to help Ohio area agencies on aging, service providers, and other organizations that are not directly involved in aging services to better plan for the needs of the aging population.

The purpose of these reports is to present the unique profile of the **older population (60+)** in each of Ohio's 88 counties and to project the number of older people and the prevalence of disability among this population. Trends and projections are provided for ages 60 and above, because this is the eligibility age for some state and local home care programs. Specific topics explored include disability, poverty, marital status, living alone, and educational attainment among the older population. Throughout the reports, trends are compared according to gender and age group for each county. To provide a better understanding of the county's standing in relation to the rest of the state, population characteristics from each county are compared with corresponding measures of Ohio's older population. In order to provide insight into the direction the county is moving some population trends are also presented.

In preparing this report, we used data from the Census short form, which is available for all residents within each county, and the Census long-form, which is available for a representative sample of county residents. The actual Census count from the Census short-form and the weighted sample counts from the long-form may be slightly different. To preserve privacy and confidentiality of the respondents, the census long-form data is available for geographic units with a minimum population of 100,000. In some cases a large county encompasses several such geographic units while in other cases a few neighboring counties are bundled together to form a geographic unit with 100,000 population. In large counties, the data for education, poverty threshold, living arrangement, marital status and disability rates are for the county alone, while smaller neighboring counties will show identical data, for the above indicators of need for assistance, for the bundled counties. **The data in this report combine Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties.**

Sources used to create all tables and figures are specified.





## PROFILE & PROJECTIONS OF THE 60+ POPULATION: MERCER COUNTY, OHIO

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### Background

This report illustrates the demographic changes that occurred in Mercer County between 1990 and 2000, and presents projections of the older population and the number of older adults with disabilities based on these trends. The report also covers other population characteristics that have been shown to be associated with the need for long-term care services among older adults, such as the prevalence of poverty, disability, living alone, lack of education, and being unmarried. County-level data are compared to data on Ohio as a whole in order to show differences or similarities in population characteristics. By examining both demographic patterns and informed projections, counties will be better prepared to address the needs of their aging and disabled populations.

### County Overview

Mercer County is located in the west-central portion of Ohio, encompassing the city of Celina. In 2000, the County population was 40,924. Mercer County is relatively rural, with 60.6% of the population living in rural areas in 2000, compared to 64.5% in 1990. This represents a decrease of 2.7% in rural population over the ten-year period. With 7,478 individuals age 60 and over, Mercer County has the 57<sup>th</sup> largest 60+ population in the state, yet it ranks 36<sup>th</sup> in proportion of total population that is 60+ (out of 88 counties in Ohio). As shown in the Summary Table, the 60+ population represents 18.3% of the total population in Mercer County.

**Summary Table**  
**Mercer County, 2000**

Total Population Age 60+	7,478
% Population Age 60+	18.3
Population Age 40+	17,898
% Population Age 40+	43.7
% Population 60+ at or Below Poverty Level*	10.5
% Population Age 60+ with Self-Care Disabilities*	8.1
% Population Age 60+ with at Least one Physical, Mental, Sensory or Self-Care Disability*	29.1
% Population 60+ who are White	99.0
% Population Age 60+ who are Married*	66.0
% Population Age 60+ who are Living Alone*	28.5
% Population Age 60+ who Have Less Than a High School Diploma*	29.7

\*These data categories reflect combined data from Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties.



In some instances in this report, data is presented for the population age 40+. This cohort is important to consider when developing projections, because the population age 40+ in 2000 will be age 60+ in 2020. The population that is currently 40+ is also significant because it contains the baby boom generation. As shown in the summary table, 43.7% of the population in Mercer County is currently over the age of 40.

In the remainder of this report, we explore variables (touched on in the Summary Table) that are related to long-term care needs. Factors related to one's need for long-term care include disability, income, race and ethnicity, marital and educational status, and living arrangements. The following sections provide detailed analyses of these risk factors according to gender, age group, county/state standing, and ten-year trends.

## Population Profile

The total population of Mercer County increased by 3.8% between 1990 (39,443 residents) and 2000 (40,924 residents). The entire population of Ohio increased 4.7% in the same time. In 2000, 18.3% of the county population was 60+. Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the older population in Mercer County in 2000 by age group and gender.

**Table 1**  
**Population Age 60+, by Gender and Age Group**  
**Mercer County, 2000**

Age Group	Men		Women		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
<b>60-64</b>	733	47.5	809	52.5	1,542
<b>65-69</b>	690	45.2	837	54.8	1,527
<b>70-74</b>	711	45.5	851	54.5	1,562
<b>75-79</b>	547	42.2	749	57.8	1,296
<b>80-84</b>	352	39.7	534	60.3	886
<b>85-89</b>	141	30.4	323	69.6	464
<b>90-94</b>	48	28.4	121	71.6	169
<b>95+</b>	6	18.8	26	81.3	32
<b>Total 60+</b>	3,228	43.2	4,250	56.8	7,478
<b>Ohio 60+</b>	823,200	41.9	1,140,289	58.1	1,963,489

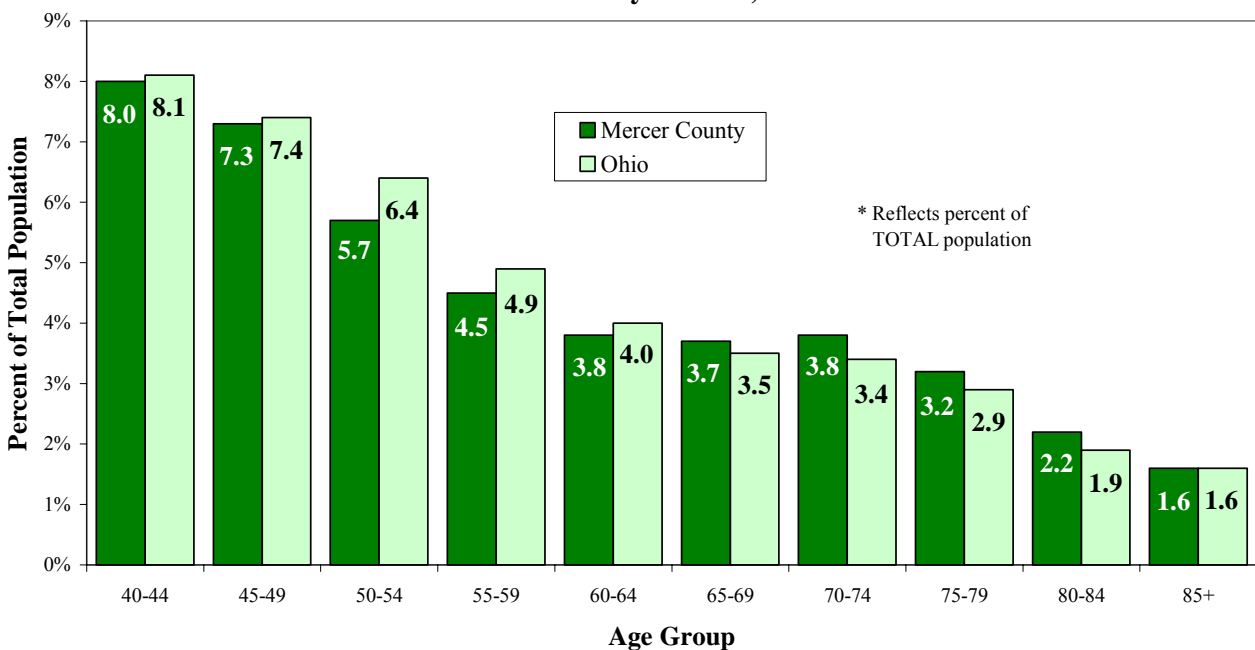
*Source:* U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population: Table P12. SEX BY AGE [49] -

Universe: Total Population

**Gender Distribution** - The gender distribution of the older population in Mercer County is similar to that of the state of Ohio. Of the entire county population age 60+, women comprise 56.8% (compared to 58.1% in the state). As shown in Table 1, women outnumber men at all ages over 60; a disparity that increases with each advancing age group. Of particular interest is the gender ratio among the oldest age group. Of the population over the age of 84 in Mercer County, 70.7% are women. The higher proportion of women among the oldest age group suggests that the population potentially eligible for, and in need of, long-term care services is largely female.

**Growth in the Older Population** - As shown in Figure 1, there are only slight differences in the population distribution across age groups in the county compared to the state. Although the majority of Ohioans are under the age of 60, the proportion of older adults in Mercer County (and Ohio) will grow substantially over the next several decades. This growth in the older population is largely a result of the aging baby boomers. Currently ranging from 40 to 59 years of age, this cohort will dramatically impact the age distribution of the older population as they age. The influence of the baby boomers on both county and state populations is evident in Figure 1.

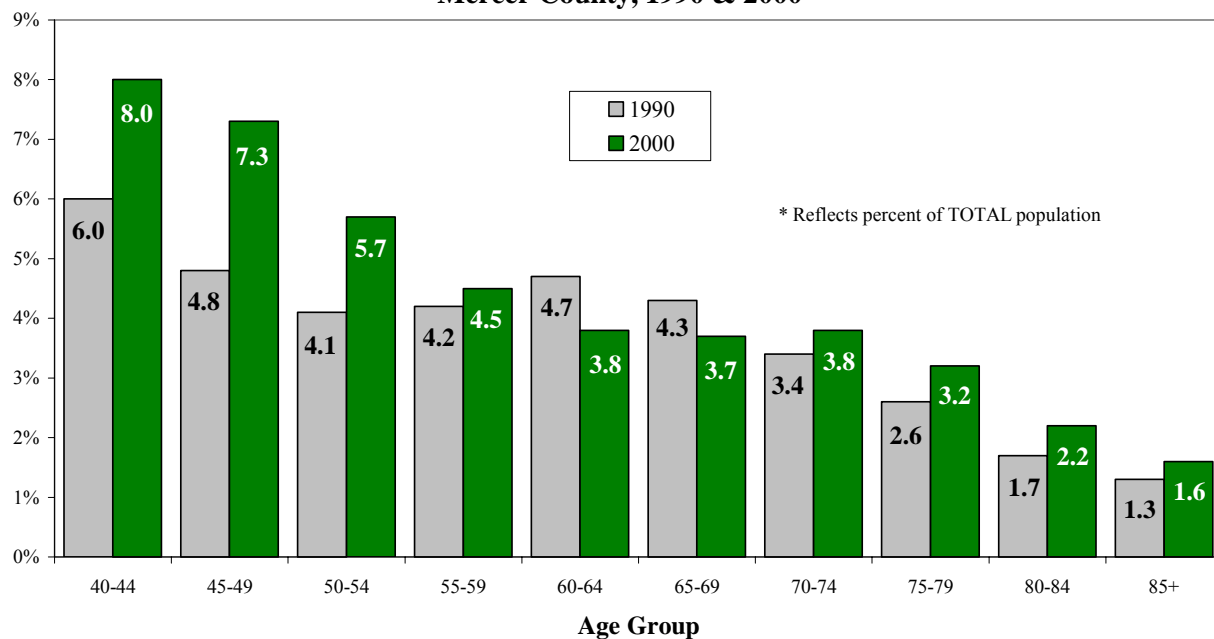
**Figure 1**  
**Population Distribution\* by Age Group (40-85+)**  
**Mercer County & Ohio, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population: P12. SEX BY AGE [49].

The impact of the baby boomers on the age distribution of the 40+ population is also evident when population data from 2000 are compared to data from 1990. As shown in Figure 2, 25.5% of the county population was age 40-59 in 2000, compared to 19.1% in 1990. Also noteworthy is the increase in the population over the age of 85. In Mercer County, this age group comprised 1.6% of the population in 2000 compared to 1.3% in 1990 (a 23.1% increase in the 85+ population). In Ohio, 1.6% of the population was over the age of 85, compared to 1.3% in 1990 (a 22.8% increase in the 85+ population).

**Figure 2**  
**Population Distribution\* by Age Group (40-85+)**  
**Mercer County, 1990 & 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) P011 & 2000 Census of Population: P12. SEX BY AGE [49].

Another indication that the population in Mercer County is aging is the increase in median age<sup>1</sup>. Between 1990 and 2000, median age increased from 31 years (1990) to 36 years (2000). This increase closely reflects that of the state, where the median age rose from 33 to 36 years in the same period. An increase in median age suggests that the proportion of older adults in Mercer County is growing. As these segments of the county population reach advanced age, the need for long-term care services may increase.

<sup>1</sup> The **median age** of a population is that age that divides a population into two groups of the same size, such that half the total population is younger, and the other half is older.

## Population Projections

This section of the report focuses on the expected growth of the overall older population, and on the growth of the older population who will experience some limitation in their ability to perform basic *activities of daily living* (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing, and preparing meals.

To project the size of the population age 60 and older for the years 2005 to 2020, we began with the population (already born) that has reached at least the age of 40. Using the *cohort component* methodology of population projection (Shryock & Siegel, 1996), we made the following assumptions about both survival and migration rates:

*Survival Rate:* Ohio's survival rates are based on national projected survival rates. These rates include improvements in national mortality rates, while maintaining deviation from the national rates observed in Ohio in the 2000 Vital Statistics.

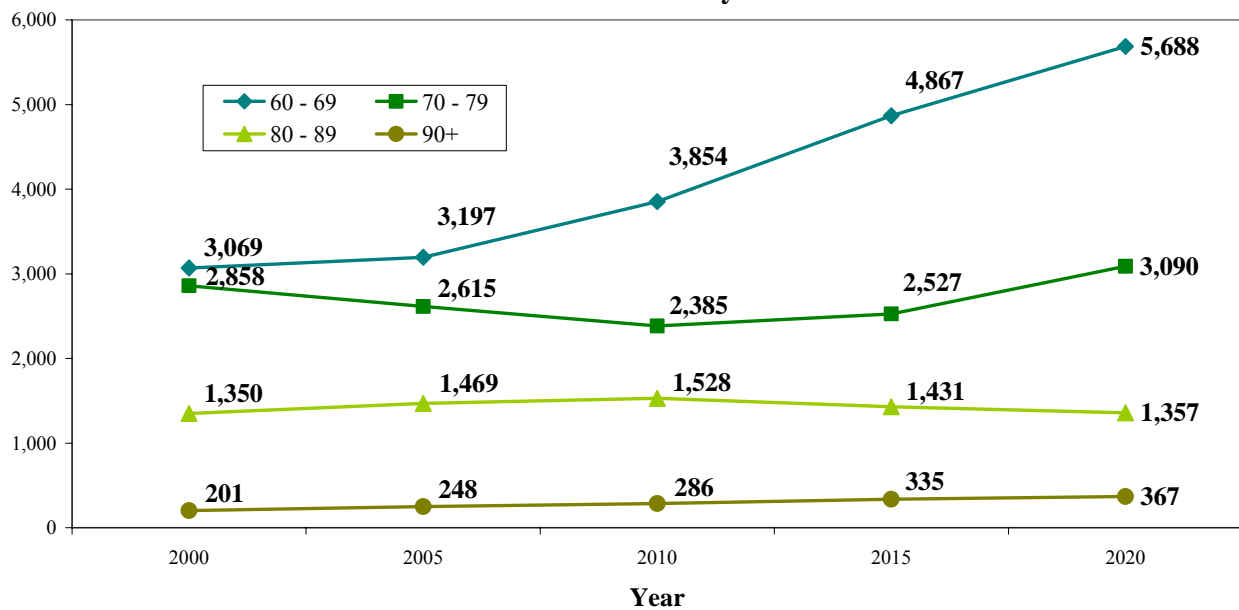
*Migration Rate:* The 10-year net migration rates were estimated using age-sex counts of each county's population in the 1990 and 2000 Censuses adjusted for the deaths occurring to the age-sex group from April 1, 1990 through March 31, 2000. Of course, in calculating the deaths occurring to an age group, adjustment was made for the group's aging during the decade. The age-sex specific rates of net migration for each county during 1995-2000 are assumed to hold for that county during the period 2000-2005 and 2005-2020. For a more detailed explanation of the procedures used for determining survival or migration rates see the Methodology section.

A beneficial feature of these population projections is the detailed presentation of the 85-89, 90-94, and 95+ age groups (when possible) for the following reasons:

- 1.) The high rate of growth of the population 85 years and over;
- 2.) Rates of disability vary considerably among these age groups;
- 3.) The Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics now recommends that data be presented for ages 85-89, 90-94, and 95+ (<http://www.agingstats.gov/chartbook2000/dataneeds.html>).

The number of Mercer County residents age 60 and over is expected to increase from a total of 7,478 in 2000 to a projected 10,502 in 2020. As Figure 3 (and Table 1a in the Appendix) illustrates, the greatest increase is expected among the 60-69 year age group (those currently age 40-49). In 2000, there were 3,069 older adults age 60-69 in Mercer County. By the year 2020, when the bulk of the baby boomers move into this age group, it is expected that there will be approximately 5,700 individuals age 60-69 in Mercer County. This projection suggests an 85.3% increase in the County population in this age group. The 90+ age group is also expected to increase, from 201 in 2000, to 367 in 2020 (an increase of 82.6%).

**Figure 3**  
**Projections of Population Age 60+, by Year\* and Age Group,**  
**Mercer County**



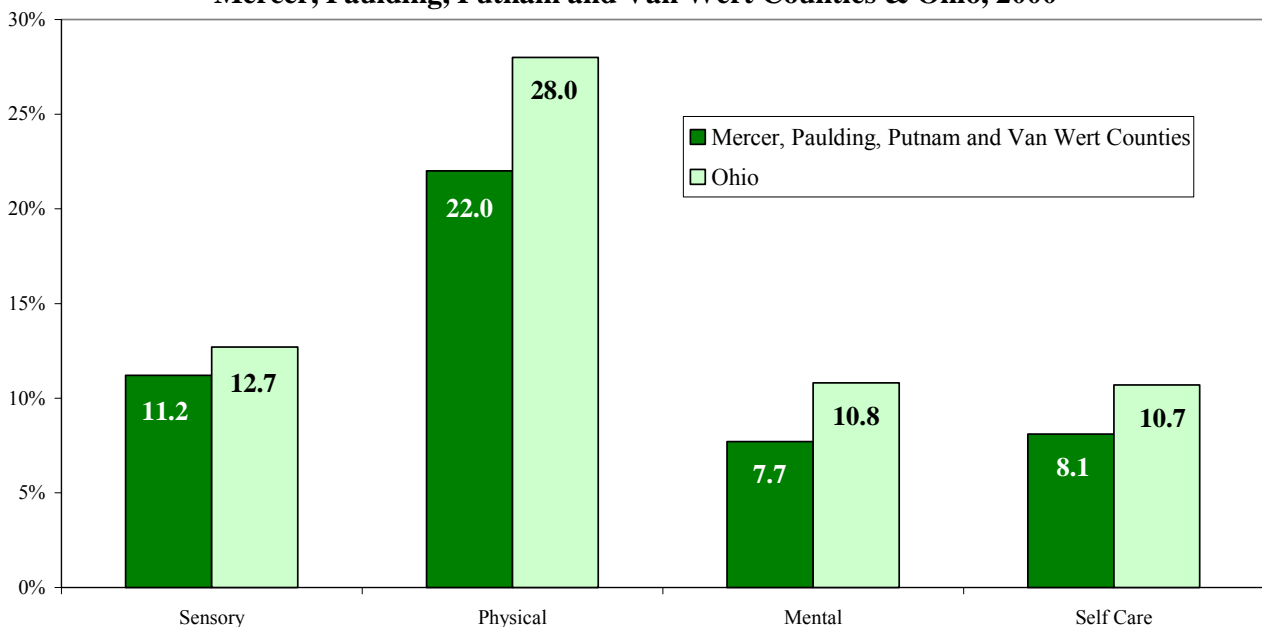
Source: Authors' projections.

\*Year 2000 data are actual population counts.

## Prevalence of Disability among the 60+ Population

The rate of disability among the 60+ population in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties<sup>2</sup> closely mirrors the state of Ohio. In 2000, the most common type of disability reported was physical, followed by sensory, self-care, and mental impairments, respectively (see Figure 4). According to the Census, a physical impairment is defined as a long-lasting condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying. Sensory impairments include blindness, deafness, or any severe and long-lasting vision or hearing impairment. Mental health impairment is defined as having difficulty learning, remembering or concentrating because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition that lasts 6 months or more. Self-care impairments include difficulty dressing, bathing, or getting around the house as a result of a long-lasting condition (6 months or more). It should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive. Respondents could have multiple impairments, which may span more than one disability category. In 2000, 29.1% of the 60+ population in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties had at least one disability.

**Figure 4**  
**Proportion of Population Age 60+, with Sensory,**  
**Physical, Mental and Self-Care Disabilities,**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties & Ohio, 2000**

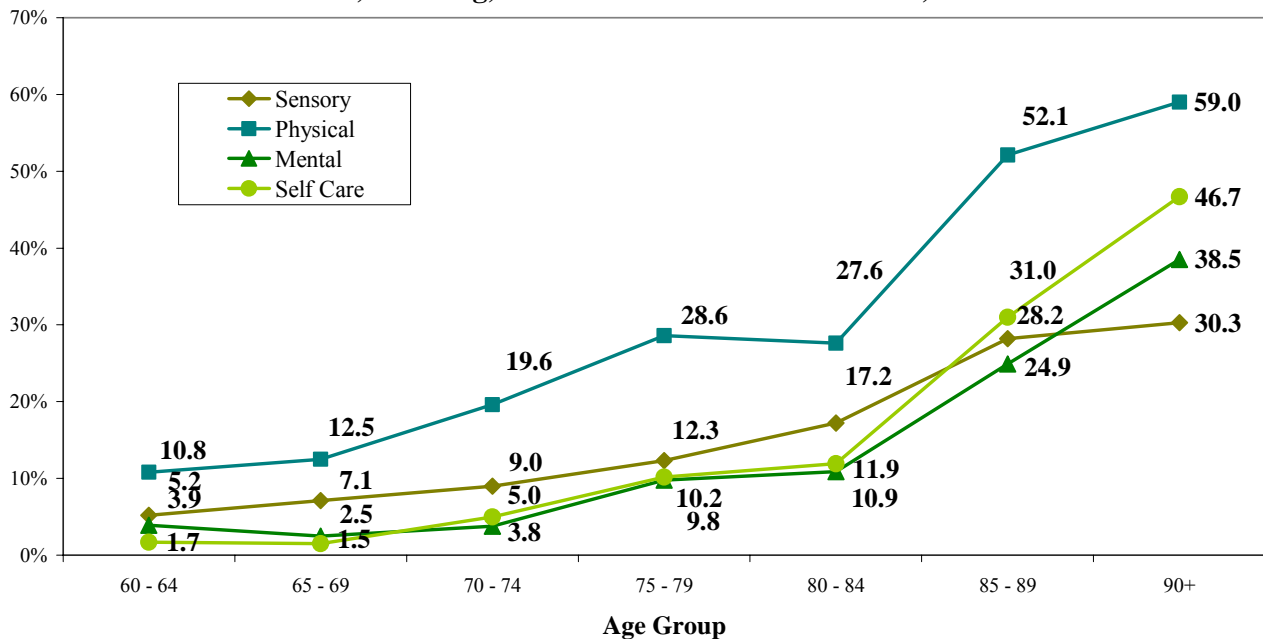


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

<sup>2</sup> As explained in the Preface, Figures 4-6, 9-12, & 14-20 present data for Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties.

As illustrated in Figure 5, the percentage of individuals reporting sensory, physical, mental and self-care disabilities in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties steadily increases with age, not surprisingly, with the oldest age group reporting the highest levels in all four types of disability. For example, the proportion of people with physical disabilities increases from 10.8% of the population age 60-64, to 59.0% of the population age 90+.

**Figure 5**  
**Disability Among Population Age 60+**  
**by Type of Disability and Age Group,**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties, 2000**



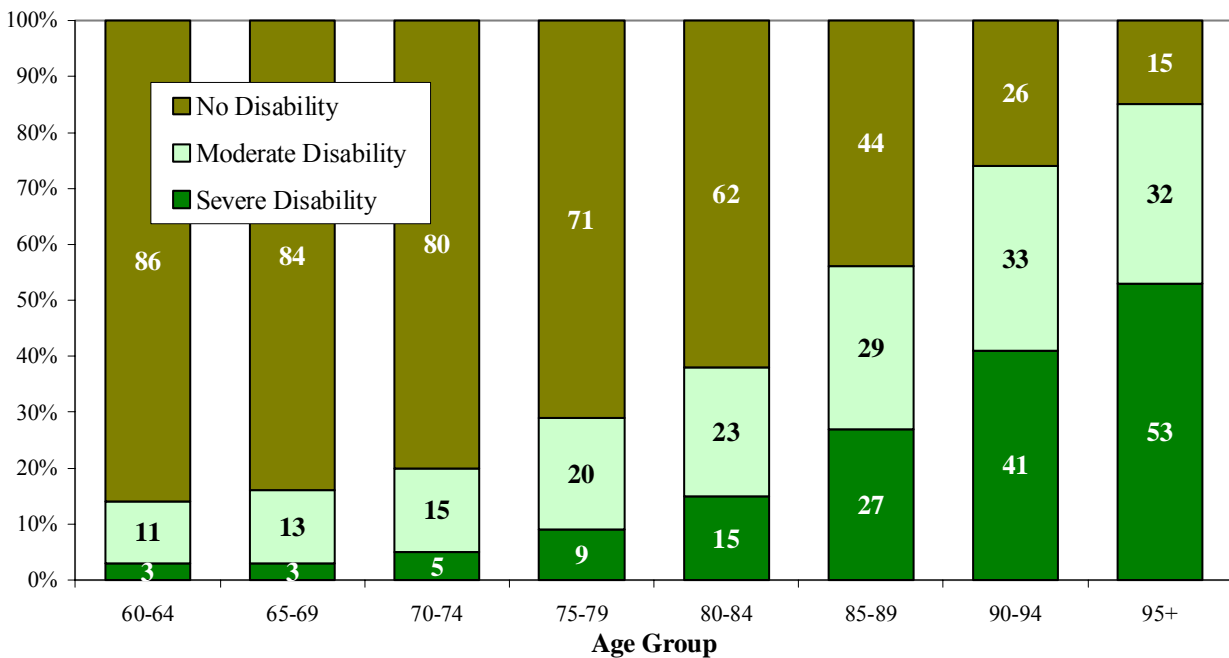
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

## Projections of Population with Disability

In this study, disability is defined as a measure of impairment in Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs). Three levels are assigned to this measure: Severe Disability, Moderate Disability, and Little or No Disability. Individuals are classified as moderately disabled if they received assistance in one of the following ADLs: eating, transferring in or out of bed or chair, getting to the toilet, dressing, bathing, or remaining continent; or in at least one of the following instrumental tasks of daily living: walking, shopping, meal preparation, housekeeping, or using transportation or telephone. Severe disability refers to receiving assistance in at least two of the following ADLs: eating, bathing, transferring in or out of bed or chair, getting to the toilet, dressing, or remaining continent, or to having cognitive impairment. The disability rates by sex and age group are assumed to remain the same from 2000 to 2020 as they were in 1995.

The prevalence of disability increases with age. As Figure 6 shows, only 3% of the population age 60-64 have a severe disability, compared to more than half (53%) of the people age 95 and older. Women experience higher rates of severe and moderate disability at every age compared to men of the same age. For more information on the prevalence of disability among men and women by age group, see the Methodology section.

**Figure 6**  
Estimated Percentage Distribution of Total Population  
by Disability Status and Age Group, 1995



Source: Mehdizadeh, S.A., Kunkel, S.R., Ritchey, P.N. (2001). *Projections of Ohio's Older Disabled Population: 2015 to 2050*. Oxford, OH: Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University.



Since the rate of disability by gender and age group was held constant throughout the timeline (see the Methodology section for a more detailed explanation), any fluctuations in the number of persons with disabilities across time are attributed to projected changes in the number of people in each age-gender group. As was discussed in the population projections section (see Figure 3), the greatest increases in the 60+ population are expected in the 60-69 and 90+ age groups, while more modest increases are expected in the 70-79 and 80-89 age groups. Because increases are expected in all segments of the 60+ population, the projected number of persons with disabilities is expected to increase from 2000-2020 in Mercer County (see Table 2 below, and Table 1a in the Appendix). When broken down by age group, projections suggest the greatest increases in both moderate and severe disability among the 60-69 and 90+ age groups because of projected increases in these populations. Table 1a in the Appendix provides a breakdown of the projected number of disabled persons for each age group for Mercer County.

**Table 2**  
**Projections of Disability Among Population Age 60+**  
**Mercer County, 2000\*-2020**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>No Disability</b>	<b>Moderate Disability</b>	<b>Severe Disability</b>
<b>2000</b>	7,478	5,586	1,257	635
<b>2005</b>	7,529	5,589	1,274	666
<b>2010</b>	8,053	6,015	1,338	700
<b>2015</b>	9,160	6,955	1,465	740
<b>2020</b>	10,502	8,061	1,643	798

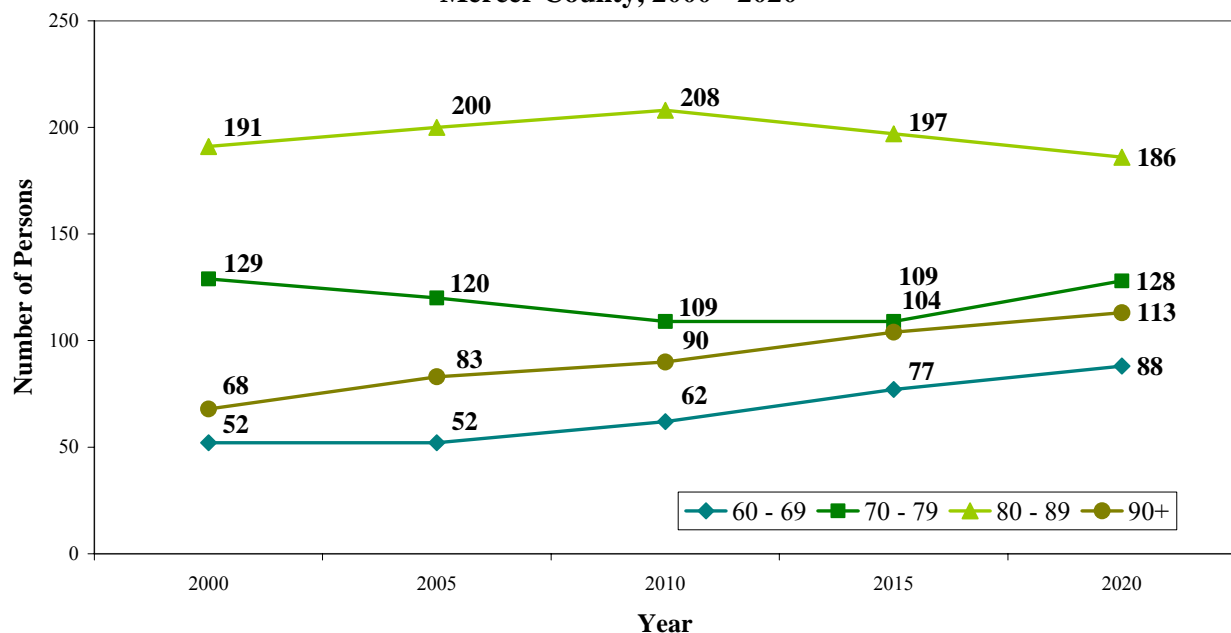
**Source:** Authors' Projections

\* Year 2000 data are actual disability counts, years 2005-2020 are projections.

Figures 7 and 8 (and Tables 2a and 3a in the Appendix) show the projected number of disabled women and men (respectively) in Mercer County according to age group. Because the rates of disability are assumed to be constant over the future time horizon, projected changes in the number of people with disabilities reflect changes in population composition.

With regard to the older female population, 440 were severely disabled in 2000, compared to a projected 515 in 2020. Changes in the number of disabled older adults are expected only in age groups where population changes are expected. Figure 7 shows that between 2000 and 2020, a decline is expected in the number of severely disabled women age 70-79 and 80-89 (as the total number of women age 70-89 is expected to decrease). An increase in numbers of severely disabled women is expected among the 60-69 and 90+ age groups in Mercer County, as these populations are expected to increase.

**Figure 7**  
**Projections of the Number of Women Age 60+**  
**with Severe Disability, by Age Group,**  
**Mercer County, 2000\*-2020**

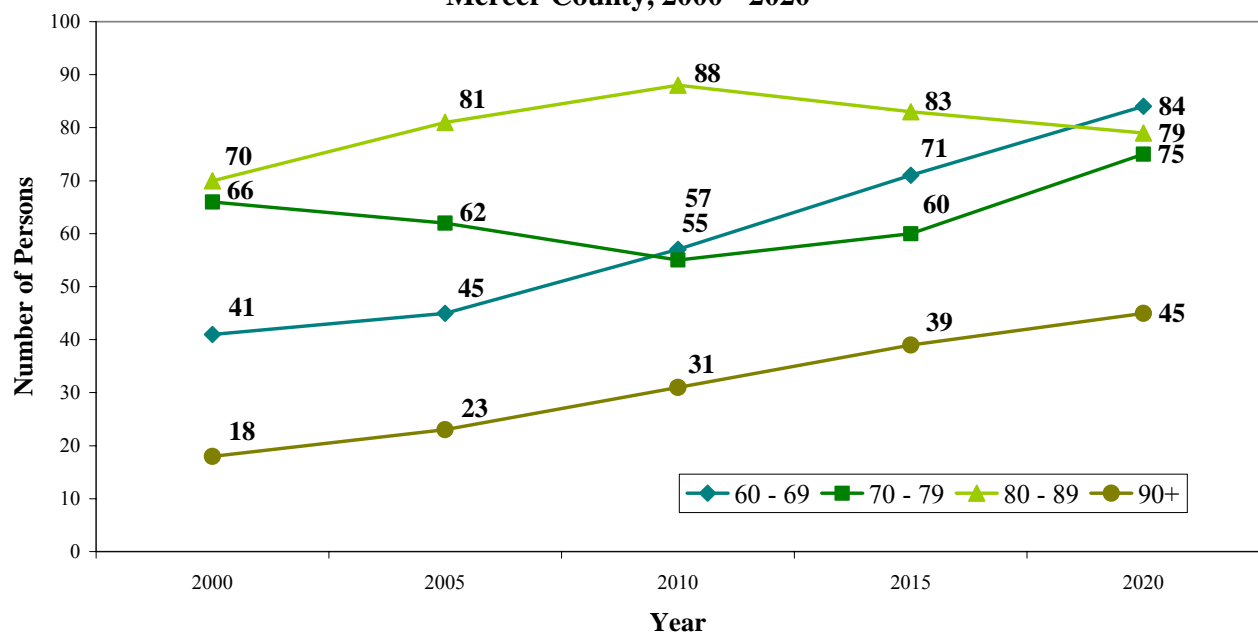


Source: Authors' projections.

\*Year 2000 data are actual disability counts.

The population with severe disabilities in Mercer County is largely female. In 2000, a total of 195 males age 60 and over were severely disabled (compared to 440 females). By the year 2020, it is expected that the number of disabled older men will increase to 283 (compared to 515 older women). Figure 8 shows that the largest increase in the number of severely disabled men is expected among the 60-69 age group. Smaller increases in the number of severely disabled men are expected among the 70-79, 80-89, and 90+ age groups in Mercer County.

**Figure 8**  
**Projections of the Number of Men Age 60+**  
**with Severe Disability, by Age Group,**  
**Mercer County, 2000\*-2020**



Source: Authors' projections.

\*Year 2000 data are actual disability counts.

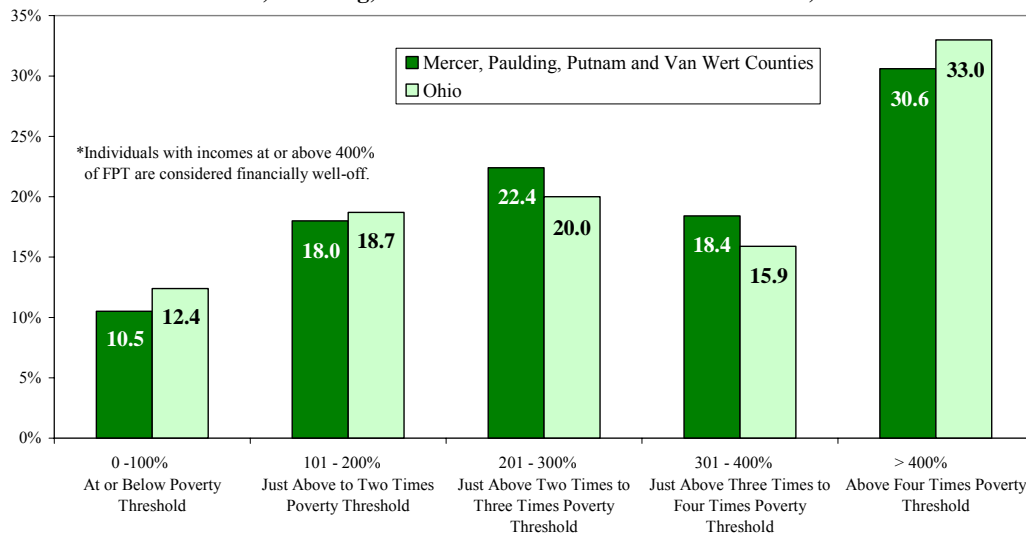
## Population Characteristics that Could Affect Need for Care

Several variables have been found to be related to the prevalence of disability and the need for long-term care services as one ages. These variables include poverty, racial and ethnic background, marital status, living alone, and educational attainment

([http://www.aoa.gov/prof/statistics/future\\_growth/aging21/Program.asp](http://www.aoa.gov/prof/statistics/future_growth/aging21/Program.asp)). In the following sections, these issues are explored in the context of the older population in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties.

**Poverty** - Standards for gauging poverty levels are set by the Federal Poverty Threshold<sup>3</sup>, which delineates income levels (or thresholds) that vary by family size, age of householder, and number of related children under 18 years of age. Rates of poverty are typically discussed as percentages of the Federal Poverty Threshold (FPT), for which those with incomes below 100% of the FPT are the most impoverished, and those with incomes above 400% of the FPT are the most economically advantaged. In the following discussion, data regarding individuals with incomes greater than 400% of the poverty level are included for comparison, although these individuals are not considered impoverished. As shown in Figure 9, a significant number of older adults in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties are potential candidates for state and federal assistance based on income eligibility. In 2000, 50.9% of the 60+ population had incomes below 300% of the federal poverty level. Of this population, 10.5% were living at or below 100% of the poverty level.

**Figure 9**  
**Proportion of Population Age 60+ by Poverty Threshold Ratio,**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties & Ohio, 2000**

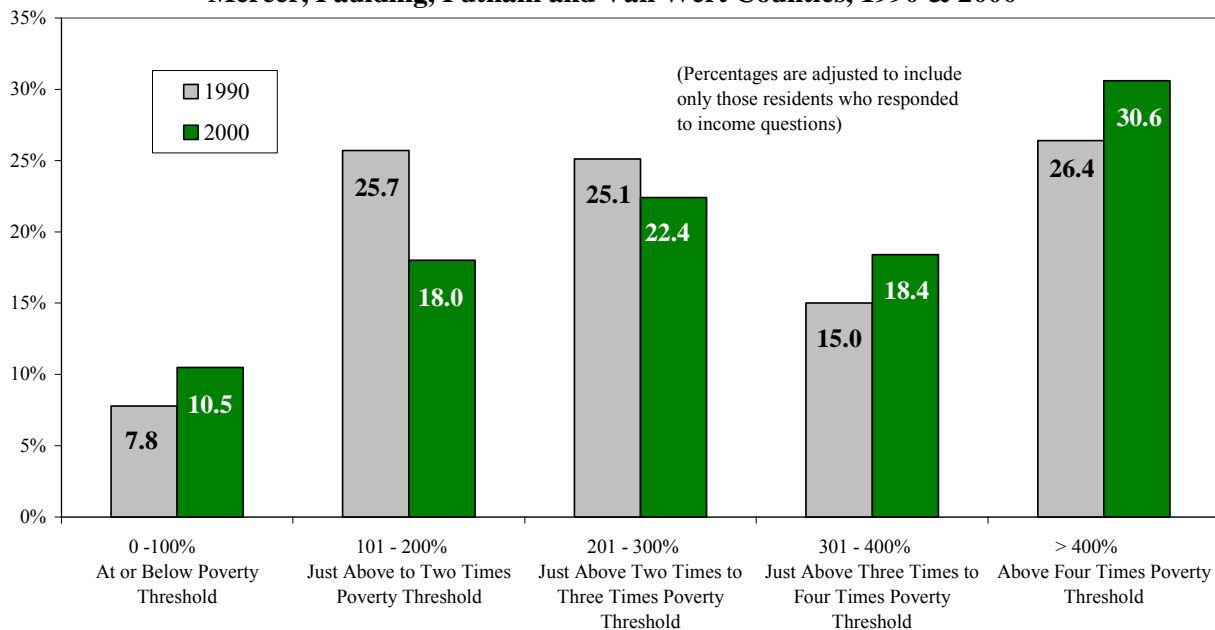


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

<sup>3</sup> **Federal Poverty Threshold** - In 2000, the poverty level was \$8,959 for one person under the age of 65, and \$8,259 for an individual over 65. For two person households, the poverty level was \$11,590 if the householder was under 65 and \$10,419 when the householder was 65+. In 1990, the poverty threshold was \$6,800 (annual income) for one person under the age of 65, and \$6,268 for an individual over 65. For two person households, where the householder was under the age of 65, the poverty threshold was \$8,794, and \$7,905 when the householder was 65+. For more information about poverty thresholds, see: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/threshld.html>

Compared to 1990, there were a higher percentage of older adults at both ends of the poverty scale in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties in 2000. The greatest change occurred among the older population with incomes below 100% of the FPT. Figure 10 shows that the percent of adults 60+ living below the poverty level increased from 7.8% in 1990 to 10.5% in 2000. At the other end of the scale, the percent of older adults with incomes over 400% of the poverty level (the most economically advantaged) also increased in this period, from 26.4% in 1990, to 30.6% in 2000. A considerable number of people did not complete income related questions properly in the 1990 Census. As a result, the wide gap in the percentage of people at or below poverty from 1990 to 2000 may be partially due to this responding pattern.

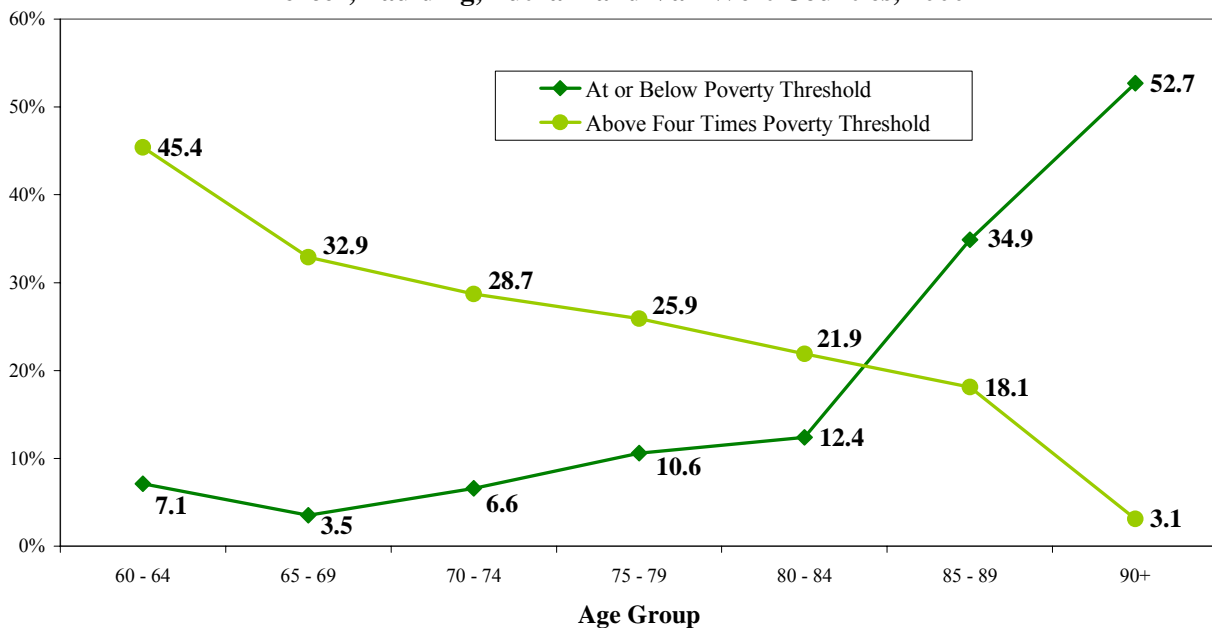
**Figure 10**  
**Proportion of Population Age 60+ by Poverty Threshold Ratio,**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties, 1990 & 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

A closer examination of poverty rates in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties reveals striking trends in relation to age. As shown in Figure 11, the percentage of people at or below the poverty level increases dramatically with advancing age. To illustrate, nearly one-half (45.4%) of 60-64 year olds reported incomes above four times the poverty threshold (the highest income category), compared to only 3.1% of those in the oldest age group (90+). In contrast, 7.1% of 60-64 year olds fall in the lowest income category, while 52.7% of the 90+ population reported incomes at or below the poverty threshold.

**Figure 11**  
**Proportion of 60+ Population in Poverty Compared to Those with Incomes**  
**Above Four Times Poverty Threshold, by Age Group,**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties, 2000**



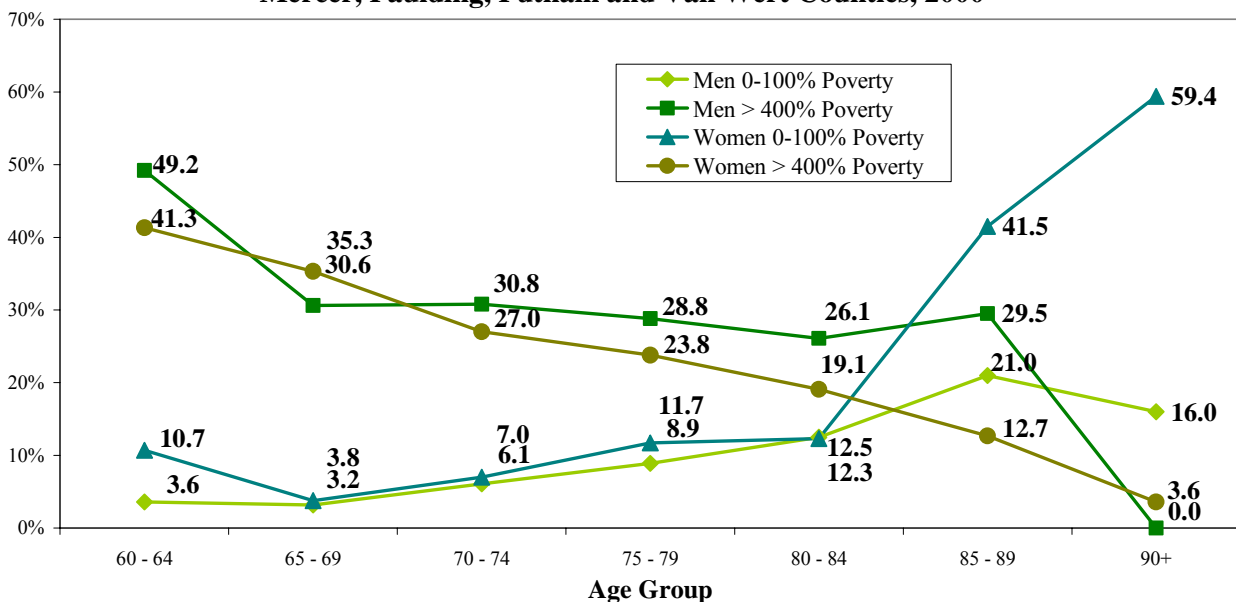
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

Figure 12 shows a comparison of the most economically disadvantaged income category ( $\leq 100\%$  FPT) and the most economically advantaged income category ( $> 400\%$  FPT) by gender and age group. In order to show the contrast between the lowest and the highest income groups, the middle income categories have been intentionally left out.

In 2000, 49.2% of men age 60-64 were in the highest income category, while 0% of men 90+ had this level of income. In contrast, only 3.6% of men age 60-64 were in the lowest income category, compared to 16.0% of men age 90+. Figure 12 shows that a fairly stable percentage of older men were classified as having incomes at or below 100% of the FPT from ages 60-84, with a sharp increase in the proportion of men in this income category as they approach the 90+ age group. It appears that age 85-89 is a pivotal point for men, where average incomes drop sharply as they near the 90+ age group.

The pattern of income distribution among older women in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties is similar to that of older men. One important distinction is that there is a higher proportion of women in the lowest income category ( $\leq 100\%$  FPT), and a lower proportion of women in the highest income category ( $>400\%$  FPT) at nearly all ages.

**Figure 12**  
Proportion of Population Age 60+,  
by Poverty Threshold Ratio\*, Age Group, and Gender,  
Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties, 2000



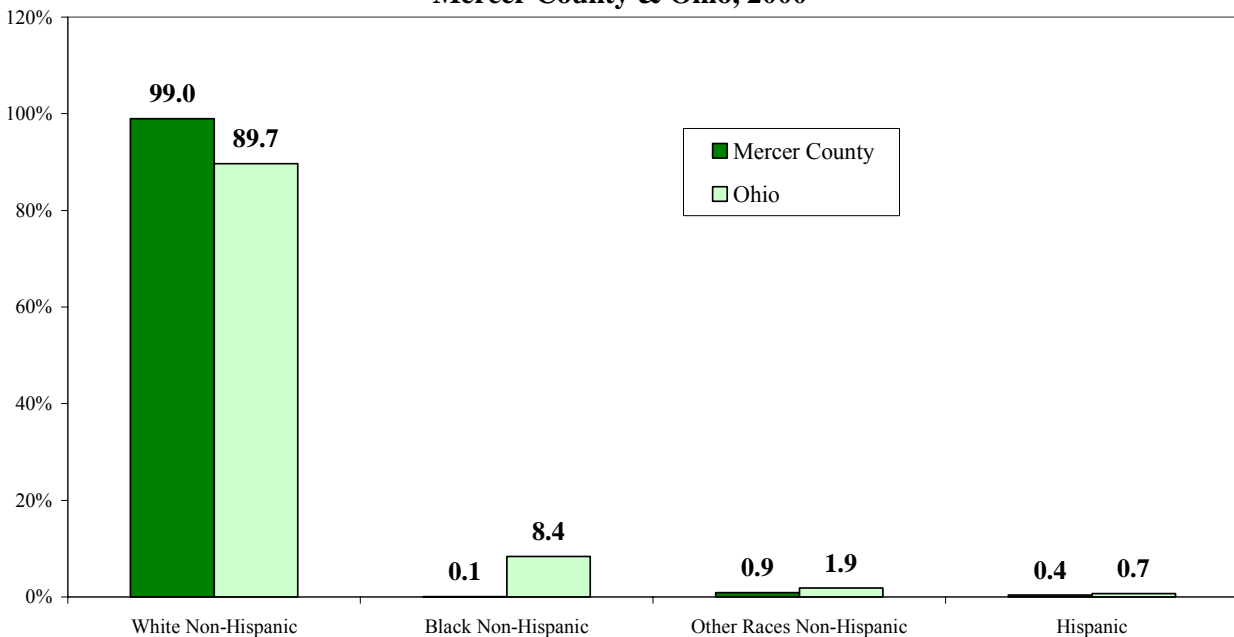
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

\*Middle income groups have been removed in order to show the contrast between the lowest and highest income groups.

## Race and Ethnicity

Mercer County's older population is less racially and ethnically diverse than the older population in Ohio as a whole. Figure 13 shows that in 2000, 99.0% of the county population (60+) identified themselves as white non-Hispanic, compared to 89.7% of the state population. In the same year, 0.1% of the county population self-identified as black non-Hispanic, compared to 8.4% of the state population.

**Figure 13**  
**Race and Ethnic Distribution Among Population Age 60+,**  
**Mercer County & Ohio, 2000**



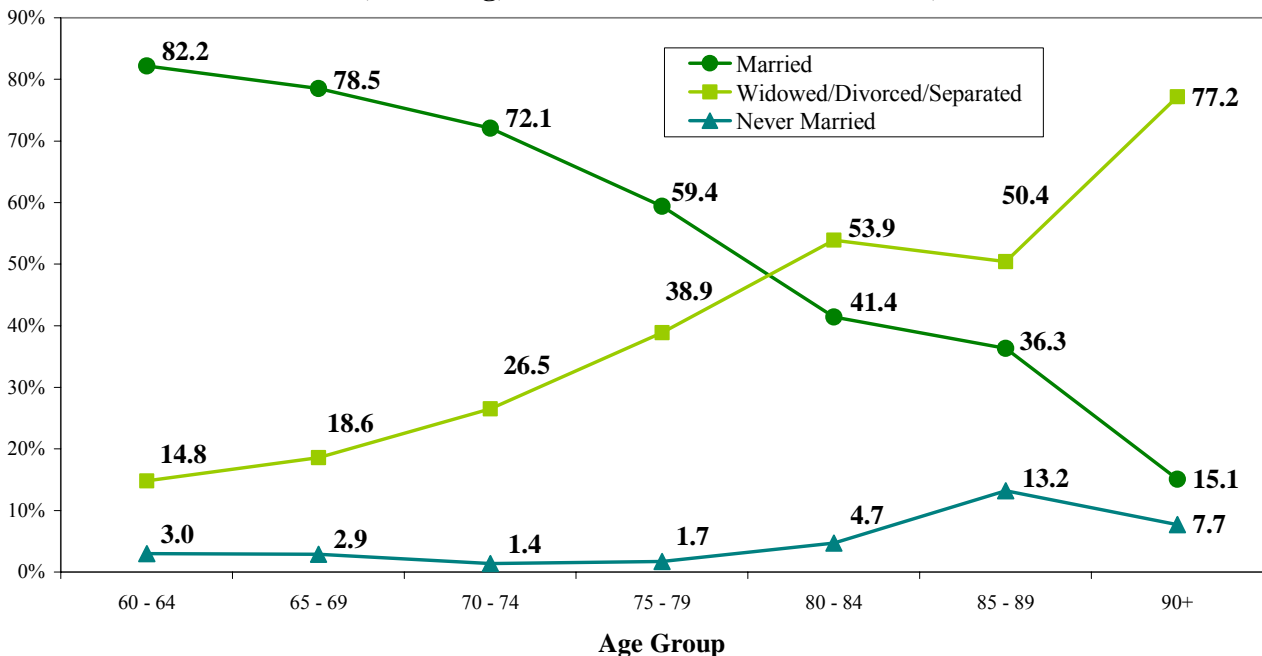
**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population: PCT12I, PCT12J, & PCT12H SEX BY AGE.



## Marital Status

According to Census data, the percentage of married older adults decreases steadily after age 60. As illustrated in Figure 14, the majority (82.2%) of 60-64 year olds were married in 2000, while 17.8% were single (defined as widowed, divorced, separated or never married). In contrast to 60-64 year olds, the marital status of the 90+ population is nearly the inverse. Among this age group, 84.9% were single in 2000, while 15.1% were married.

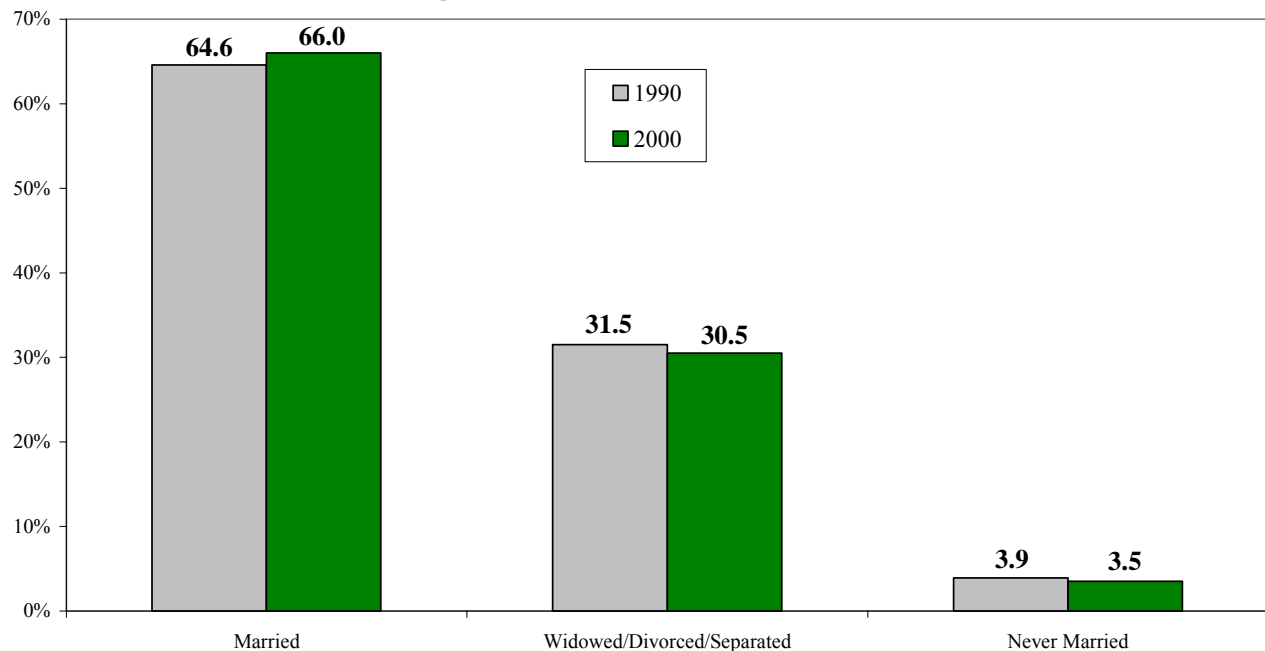
**Figure 14**  
**Marital Status of Population Age 60+, by Age Group**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of married older adults (60+) in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties remained fairly stable. In 2000, 66.0% of older residents were married compared to 64.6% in 1990. Similarly, no major changes occurred among the single population (people who were widowed, divorced, separated, or never married). In 2000, 34.0% of the 60+ population was single, compared to 35.4% in 1990 (see Figure 15).

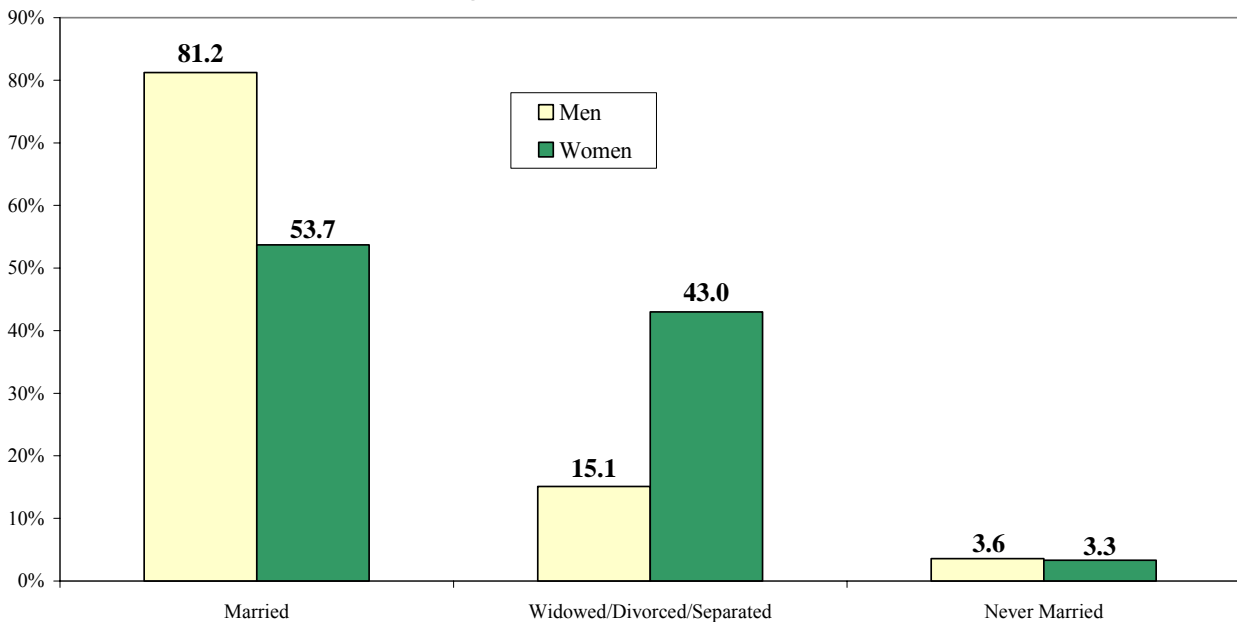
**Figure 15**  
**Marital Status Among Population Age 60+,**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties, 1990 & 2000**



**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

Women above the age of 60 are more likely to be widowed, divorced, or separated than men. Figure 16 shows that 81.2% of men age 60+ in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties were married in 2000, compared to only 53.7% of women. Because single older adults are more likely than married couples to need outside help or institutional care, the population in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties that is potentially in need of such assistance is largely female.

**Figure 16**  
**Marital Status Among Population Age 60+, by Gender**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties, 2000**



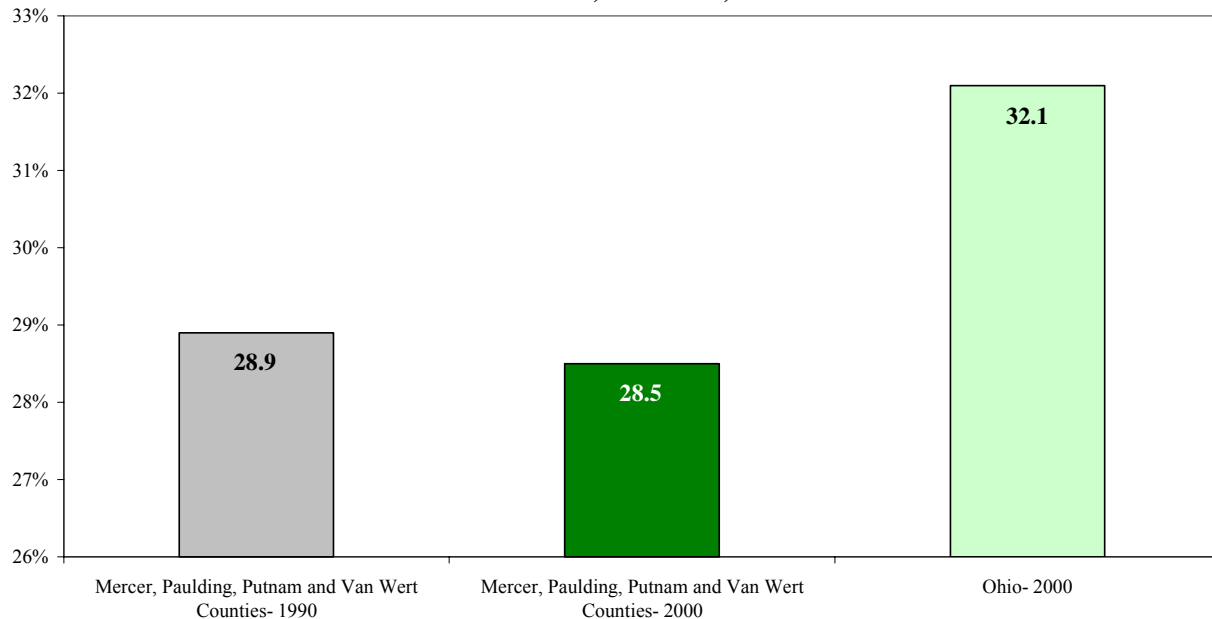
**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

## Living Alone

Figure 17 compares the proportion of Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert County residents age 60+ who were living alone in 2000 to Ohio, and illustrates the changes that occurred in the county population (60+) living alone between 1990 and 2000.

In 2000, 28.5% of Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert County residents age 60+ were living alone, compared to 32.1% of the state population age 60+. The percentage of older adults living alone in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties has decreased since 1990, from 28.9% of the 60+ population to 28.5% in 2000.

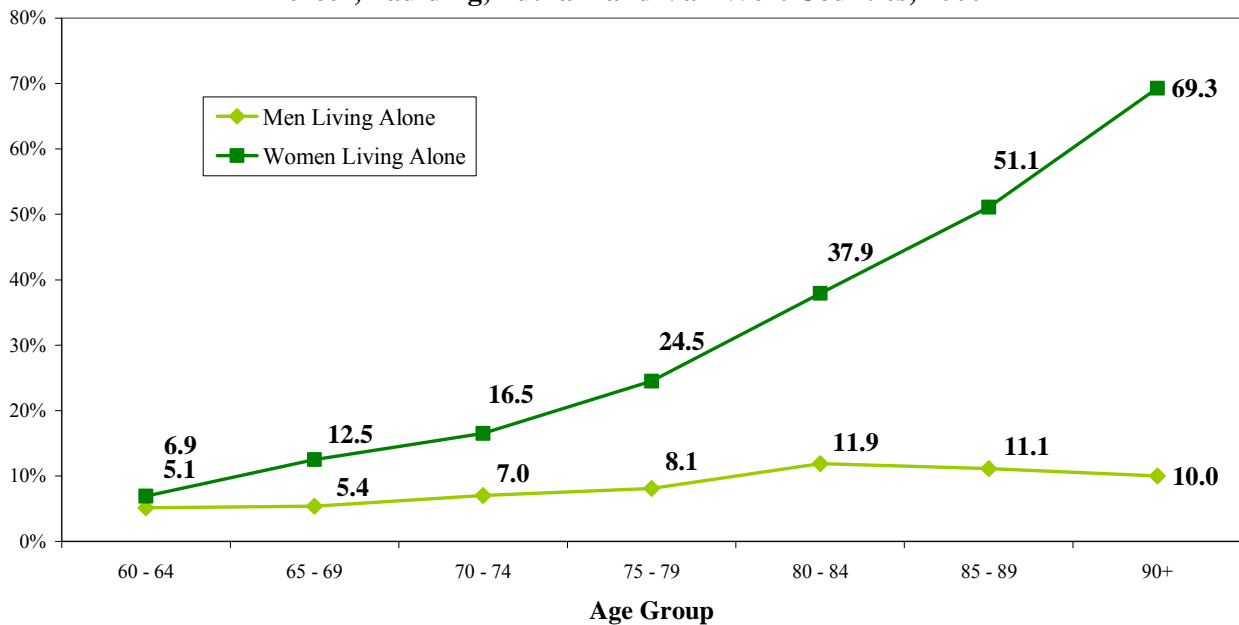
**Figure 17**  
**Proportion of Population Age 60+ Living Alone,**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties,**  
**1990 & 2000, and Ohio, 2000**



**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

Older women are more likely than older men to be living alone in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties. Figure 18 shows that a higher percentage of women than men are living alone at all ages above 60. While the percentage of men living alone increases only slightly with age, the percent of women living alone increases dramatically with age. Among the 60-64 year age group in 2000, 6.9% of women were living alone, compared to 5.1% of men. Among the oldest age group (90+), 69.3% of women were living alone, compared to only 10.0% of their male counterparts.

**Figure 18**  
**Proportion of Population Age 60+ Living Alone,**  
**by Gender, and Age Group,**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties, 2000**

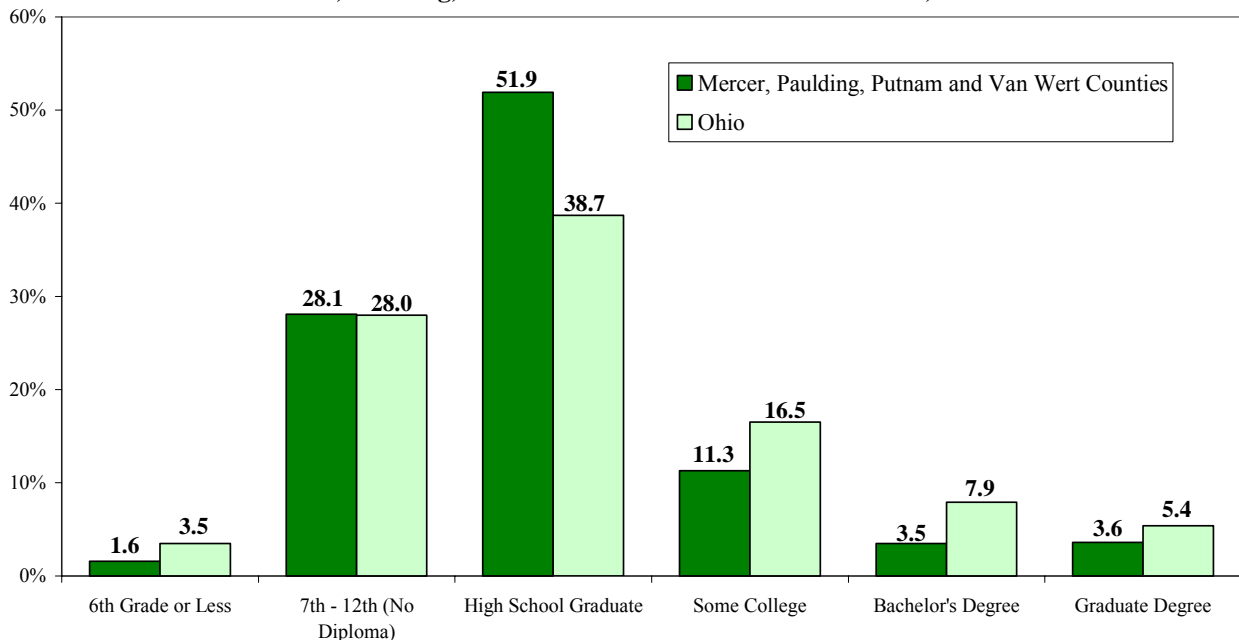


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

## Education

Studies suggest that there is a strong relationship between educational attainment and the prevalence of poverty and disability in old age. Figure 19 shows that the majority of older adults (60+) in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties have completed 12 or fewer years of school. Over one half (51.9%) of older adults have completed high school, and 29.7% have completed less than 12 years. This suggests that a significant proportion of the older population may be economically vulnerable.

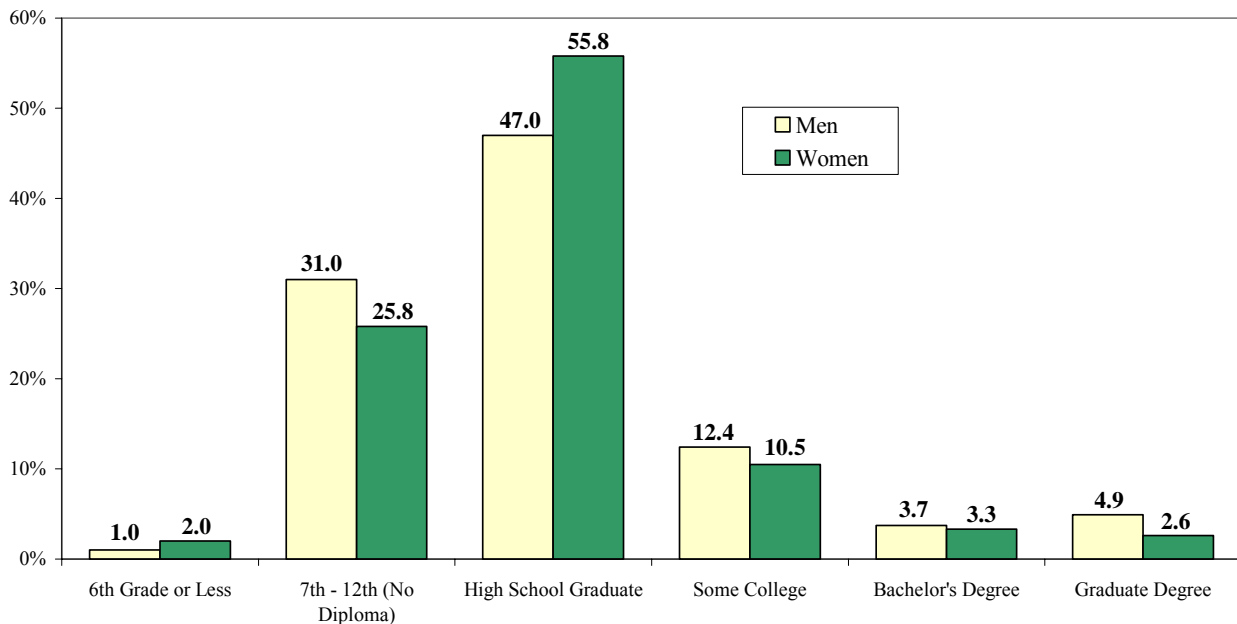
**Figure 19**  
**Highest Level of Educational Attainment**  
**Among Population Age 60+**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties & Ohio, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

Figure 20 contrasts the educational attainment of older adults in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties by gender. Older women are more likely to have only completed high school, while older men are more likely to have pursued and obtained higher degrees. As a whole, the older female population in Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties is less educated than the older male population.

**Figure 20**  
**Highest Level of Educational Attainment**  
**Among Population Age 60+, by Gender**  
**Mercer, Paulding, Putnam and Van Wert Counties, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

## Summary

This analysis of population trends and projections in Mercer County, Ohio reveals several important issues with regard to the prevalence of poverty and disability among the older population. Primarily, it is evident that the County population is aging, and the population age 60+ will continue to grow over the next twenty years. More specifically, the so-called "oldest old" (85+) are the fastest growing age group in the County (as well as the state of Ohio). The unprecedented growth in the older population will present the County (and the state) with a number of challenges in the coming years. Among the older population in Mercer County, levels of disability and poverty increase with age, with the oldest old experiencing the highest rates of both. Also of concern is the preponderance of older women among the oldest age groups, who comprise a majority of the impoverished, disabled and single populations. These women, who are highly economically vulnerable, and are potentially in need of significant personal care assistance, are frequently living alone; a trend that is expected to become increasingly common over the next several decades.

## Methodology

Projections of the disabled older population in Mercer County were calculated in three steps. We developed projections of the county's older population by gender and age groups from 2000 to 2020. We also made estimates of disability rates for the older population by gender and age groups. And, we applied these disability rates to the projected population to project the number of persons with a disability in Mercer County.

**Projection Method** - We developed population projections using the "cohort component method" (Shryock & Siegel, 1996). This method involves beginning with actual population counts in gender and age groups, and applying specific rates of change (births, deaths, and migration) to estimate the future population. We projected the population in cycles of 5-year periods through the year 2020. We applied projected survival rates to the beginning population in order to calculate the surviving population for a 5-year period (see following section for an explanation of survival rates). Next, we applied gender and age group specific migration rates to calculate the number of survivors leaving and joining the county population during the five years. The final projected population equals the survived population plus the difference between the number of migrants leaving and joining the county. The projected population at the end of each 5-year period becomes the beginning population for the next 5-year period, and the procedure is repeated over the desired time horizon. We used 5-year age groupings of men and women to make the projections. In order to project the population that will be 60+ in 2020, we began with the population that was 40+ in 2000 (these cohorts, of course, age as they are projected forward).

**Survival Rates** - To calculate survival rates for the older population in Ohio, we combined projected national mortality rates from the Census with actual mortality rates for the state to develop a trended set of survival rates for 2005-2020. All calculations were done for each gender in 5-year age groups. Using Census projected life tables for 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2020, we developed 5-year survival rates for the nation (for life tables, see <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/natdet.html>). Using Ohio counts of death and counts of population for 2000, we developed survival rates for Ohio for 2000. We then projected the County's survival rates to pattern the expected change for the Nation while maintaining the difference between the County and the Nation that occurred in 2000.

**Migration Rates** - We computed net migration estimates (i.e., the difference in the number of migrants joining and leaving the county) for the County for each gender in 5-year age groups (beginning with ages 40-44 years old, through 95+). We calculated migration estimates using Census data for 1990 and 2000 and counts of County death from Ohio public use mortality files (Ohio Department of Health, 1990-2000). We "survived" the 1990 County population of each gender and age group by subtracting the deaths from those residing in the county from April 1, 1990 through March 31, 2000. In calculating the deaths occurring to an age group, we adjusted for the group's getting older, or aging, during the decade. We calculated net migration by subtracting this survived population from the 2000 count of the age population (the age group that was 10 years older in 2000 than in 1990). Thus, net migration equals the actual 2000 count minus the survived population (or minus the number of people that would have been in the county had no migration taken place during the decade). The aforementioned set of assumptions, which guided our projection methodology, garnered specific results. If these assumptions were



changed, it would yield different results. In 2003, the Ohio Department of Development produced a series of population projections for each of Ohio's 88 counties. As their research was based on a different set of assumptions, their numbers differ from ours slightly (<http://www.odod.state.oh.us/research/>).

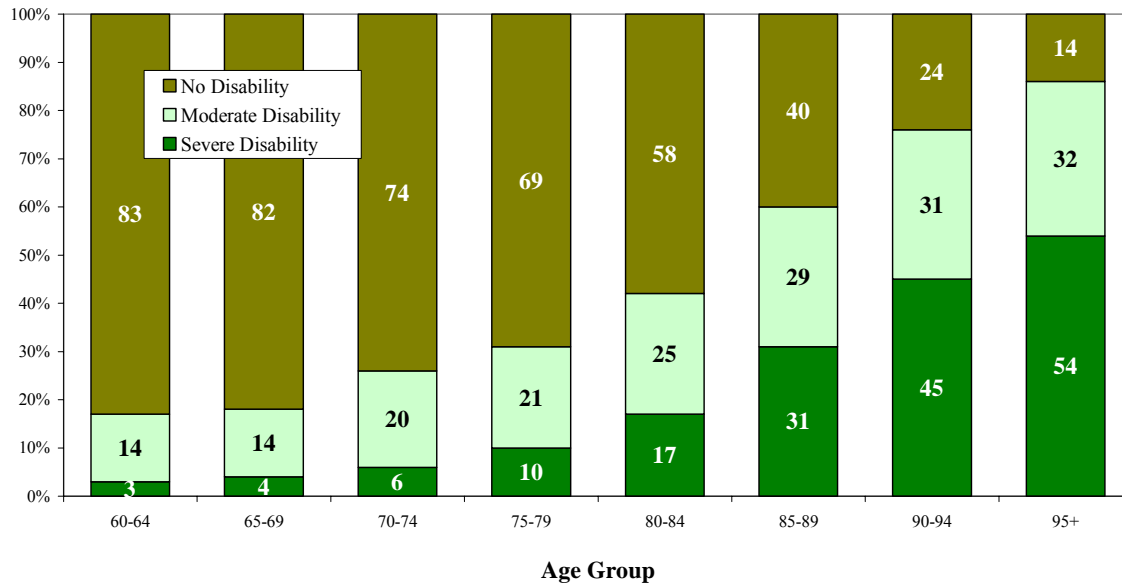
**Estimation of Age and Sex Specific Disability Rates for Gender and Age Groups -** Disability in this study is defined as a measure of impairment in activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL). Three levels were assigned to this measure: Severe Disability, Moderate Disability, and Little or No Disability. Disability rates for the institutionalized and community based older population were calculated separately, weighted by their respective proportions in the population, and then combined.

The community disability rates were calculated using the community portion of the 1994 National Long Term Care Survey (NLTCs). Institutional disability rates were calculated using the 1995 National Nursing Home Survey (NNHS). These surveys provided information to calculate the disability rate for the 65+ population. As we defined disability, we relied on individual ADL-IADL item scores. Sample participants were identified as either dependent in performing Activities of Daily Living or independent in order to assign disability status to each individual. Two criteria were used in selecting individual ADL or IADL items to include in the disability scale: 1) items must have similar wording, content, and time span in both surveys; and 2) the scale, and the items used in creating the scale, must be as similar as possible to the items used in calculating the disability measure that we created in our earlier studies of projecting disabled older population of Ohio.

We used 2000 Census data on self-care disabilities and the National Health Interview Survey on Disability, 1995: Phase II Adult Followback as a guide to extend the disability rates established for the 65+ population to the 60-64 age group. We are assuming that the proportion of the population that will become disabled in each gender and age group will remain constant from 1995 (the survey dates) to the year 2020. We acknowledge that there are studies that suggest it could be otherwise.

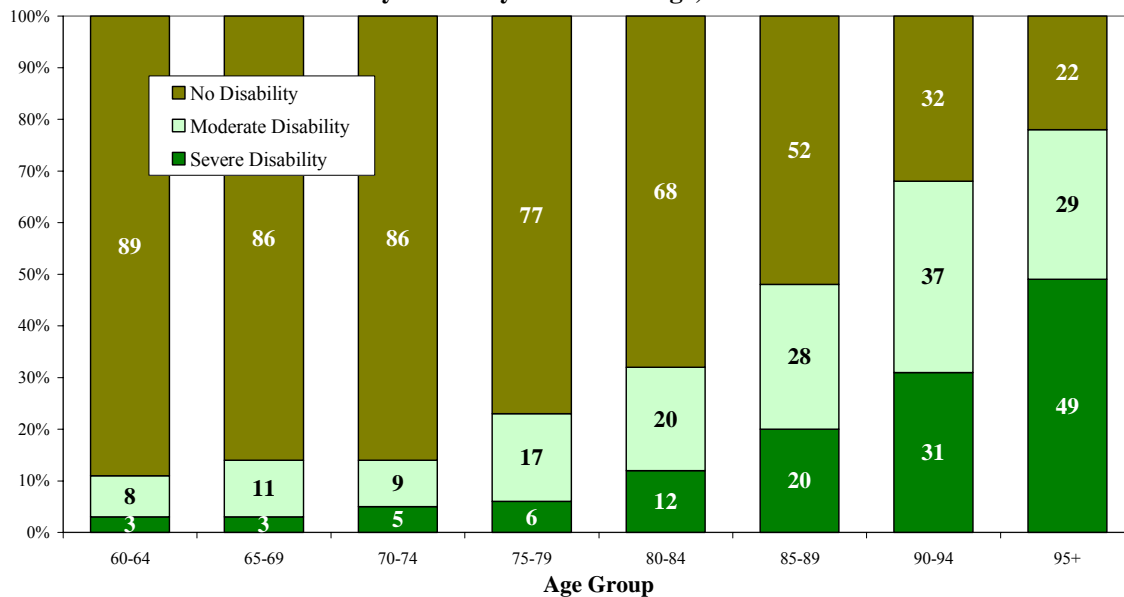
Figures 21 and 22 show the higher rates of severe disability among women of all ages, and the consistent increase in the prevalence of disability with advancing age for both men and women.

**Figure 21**  
Estimated Percentage Distribution of Women  
by Disability Status and Age, 1995



Source: Mehdizadeh, S.A., Kunkel, S.R., Ritchey, P.N. (2001). *Projections of Ohio's Older Disabled Population: 2015 to 2050*. Oxford, OH: Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University.

**Figure 22**  
Estimated Percentage Distribution of Men  
by Disability Status and Age, 1995



Source: Mehdizadeh, S.A., Kunkel, S.R., Ritchey, P.N. (2001). *Projections of Ohio's Older Disabled Population: 2015 to 2050*.

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# Appendix

**Table 1a**  
**Projections of Total Older Population by Age and Levels of Disability**  
**Mercer County, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>No Disability</b>	<b>Moderate Disability</b>	<b>Severe Disability</b>
<b>2000*</b>	<b>60 - 69</b>	3,069	2,608	368	93
	<b>70 - 79</b>	2,858	2,176	487	195
	<b>80 - 89</b>	1,350	753	336	261
	<b>90+</b>	201	49	66	86
	<b>Total Age 60+</b>	7,478	5,586	1,257	635
<b>2005</b>	<b>60 - 69</b>	3,197	2,722	378	97
	<b>70 - 79</b>	2,615	1,982	451	182
	<b>80 - 89</b>	1,469	824	364	281
	<b>90+</b>	248	61	81	106
	<b>Total Age 60+</b>	7,529	5,589	1,274	666
<b>2010</b>	<b>60 - 69</b>	3,854	3,282	453	119
	<b>70 - 79</b>	2,385	1,812	409	164
	<b>80 - 89</b>	1,528	851	381	296
	<b>90+</b>	286	70	95	121
	<b>Total Age 60+</b>	8,053	6,015	1,338	700
<b>2015</b>	<b>60 - 69</b>	4,867	4,148	571	148
	<b>70 - 79</b>	2,527	1,935	423	169
	<b>80 - 89</b>	1,431	790	361	280
	<b>90+</b>	335	82	110	143
	<b>Total Age 60+</b>	9,160	6,955	1,465	740
<b>2020</b>	<b>60 - 69</b>	5,688	4,845	671	172
	<b>70 - 79</b>	3,090	2,375	512	203
	<b>80 - 89</b>	1,357	752	340	265
	<b>90+</b>	367	89	120	158
	<b>Total Age 60+</b>	10,502	8,061	1,643	798

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2000: Public Use Microdata Sample: 5-Percent.

\* Year 2000 data are actual population counts, years 2005-2020 are projections.

**Table 2a**  
**Projections of the 60+ Female Population by Age Group and Level of Disability**  
**Mercer County**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Population with No Disability</u>	<u>Population with Disability</u>	
				Moderate <sup>a</sup>	Severe <sup>b</sup>
<b>2000</b>	<b>60-64</b>	809	672	115	22
	<b>65-69</b>	837	690	117	30
	<b>70-74</b>	851	634	166	51
	<b>75-79</b>	749	510	161	78
	<b>80-84</b>	534	308	133	93
	<b>85-89</b>	323	131	94	98
	<b>90 +</b>	147	33	46	68
	<b>Total</b>	4,250	2,978	832	440
<b>2005</b>	<b>60-64</b>	875	727	124	24
	<b>65-69</b>	774	638	108	28
	<b>70-74</b>	755	562	148	45
	<b>75-79</b>	715	487	153	75
	<b>80-84</b>	580	335	144	101
	<b>85-89</b>	322	130	93	99
	<b>90 +</b>	179	40	56	83
	<b>Total</b>	4,200	2,919	826	455
<b>2010</b>	<b>60-64</b>	1,107	919	157	31
	<b>65-69</b>	840	692	117	31
	<b>70-74</b>	703	523	137	43
	<b>75-79</b>	641	437	138	66
	<b>80-84</b>	563	325	140	98
	<b>85-89</b>	359	145	104	110
	<b>90 +</b>	195	43	62	90
	<b>Total</b>	4,408	3,084	855	469

**Table 2a Continued**  
**Projections of 60+ Female Population by Age Group and Level of Disability**  
**Mercer County**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Population with No Disability</u>	<u>Population with Disability</u>	
				Moderate <sup>a</sup>	Severe <sup>b</sup>
<b>2015</b>	<b>60-64</b>	1,353	1,123	192	38
	<b>65-69</b>	1,067	879	149	39
	<b>70-74</b>	767	571	150	46
	<b>75-79</b>	601	409	129	63
	<b>80-84</b>	512	296	128	88
	<b>85-89</b>	357	144	104	109
	<b>90 +</b>	224	50	70	104
	<b>Total</b>	4,881	3,472	922	487
<u>Year</u>	<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Population with No Disability</u>	<u>Population with Disability</u>	
				Moderate <sup>a</sup>	Severe <sup>b</sup>
<b>2020</b>	<b>60-64</b>	1,511	1,255	215	41
	<b>65-69</b>	1,308	1,078	183	47
	<b>70-74</b>	978	728	191	59
	<b>75-79</b>	662	451	142	69
	<b>80-84</b>	487	281	121	85
	<b>85-89</b>	333	135	97	101
	<b>90 +</b>	240	52	75	113
	<b>Total</b>	5,519	3,980	1,024	515

**Source:** Authors' projections.

<sup>a</sup> Moderate disability is defined as received help in at least one of the following activities of daily living: eating, transferring in or out of bed or chair, getting to the toilet, dressing, bathing, remaining continent; or in at least two of the following instrumental activities of daily living: walking, shopping, meal preparation, housekeeping, or using transportation.

<sup>b</sup> Severe disability is defined as received help in at least two of the following activities of daily living: eating, transferring in or out of bed or chair, getting to the toilet, dressing, remaining continent, or having cognitive impairment.

**Table 3a**  
**Projections of the 60+ Male Population by Age Group and Level of Disability**  
**Mercer County**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Population with No Disability</u>	<u>Population with Disability</u>	
				Moderate <sup>a</sup>	Severe <sup>b</sup>
<b>2000</b>	<b>60-64</b>	733	651	61	21
	<b>65-69</b>	690	595	75	20
	<b>70-74</b>	711	614	65	32
	<b>75-79</b>	547	418	95	34
	<b>80-84</b>	352	240	70	42
	<b>85-89</b>	141	74	39	28
	<b>90 +</b>	54	16	20	18
	<b>Total</b>	3,228	2,608	425	195
<b>2005</b>	<b>60-64</b>	880	781	73	26
	<b>65-69</b>	668	576	73	19
	<b>70-74</b>	589	508	54	27
	<b>75-79</b>	556	425	96	35
	<b>80-84</b>	389	266	78	45
	<b>85-89</b>	178	93	49	36
	<b>90 +</b>	69	21	25	23
	<b>Total</b>	3,329	2,670	448	211
<b>2010</b>	<b>60-64</b>	1,101	977	92	32
	<b>65-69</b>	806	694	87	25
	<b>70-74</b>	575	496	53	26
	<b>75-79</b>	466	356	81	29
	<b>80-84</b>	403	275	81	47
	<b>85-89</b>	203	106	56	41
	<b>90 +</b>	91	27	33	31
	<b>Total</b>	3,645	2,931	483	231



**Table 3a Continued**  
**Projections of 60+ Male Population by Age Group and Level of Disability**  
**Mercer County**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Population with No Disability</u>	<u>Population with Disability</u>	
				Moderate <sup>a</sup>	Severe <sup>b</sup>
<b>2015</b>	<b>60-64</b>	1,434	1,273	120	41
	<b>65-69</b>	1,013	873	110	30
	<b>70-74</b>	699	603	64	32
	<b>75-79</b>	460	352	80	28
	<b>80-84</b>	345	236	69	40
	<b>85-89</b>	217	114	60	43
	<b>90 +</b>	111	32	40	39
	<b>Total</b>	4,279	3,483	543	253
<b>2020</b>	<b>60-64</b>	1,545	1,371	129	45
	<b>65-69</b>	1,324	1,141	144	39
	<b>70-74</b>	884	763	81	40
	<b>75-79</b>	566	433	98	35
	<b>80-84</b>	346	236	69	41
	<b>85-89</b>	191	100	53	38
	<b>90 +</b>	127	37	45	45
	<b>Total</b>	4,983	4,081	619	283

**Source:** Authors' projections.

<sup>a</sup> Moderate disability is defined as received help in at least one of the following activities of daily living: eating, transferring in or out of bed or chair, getting to the toilet, dressing, bathing, remaining continent; or in at least two of the following instrumental activities of daily living: walking, shopping, meal preparation, housekeeping, or using transportation.

<sup>b</sup> Severe disability is defined as received help in at least two of the following activities of daily living: eating, transferring in or out of bed or chair, getting to the toilet, dressing, remaining continent, or having cognitive impairment.