

Using the Washington Group Tools to Assess the Impact of COVID-19 on Persons with Disability



The Washington Group
on Disability Statistics

Webinar
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Webinar Summary

Introductions and Webinar Logistics

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Importance of Collecting Data on Covid-19 and Disability

Elizabeth Lockwood

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Jennifer Madans

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Discussion and Questions

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The Importance of Collecting Data on COVID-19 and Disability

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The Washington Group Tools Design and Disaggregation

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The Washington Group Tools: Purpose

To ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities consistent with, and to aid in achieving, the goals of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Agenda for Humanity and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.

To provide data disaggregation tools based on common definitions, concepts, standards and methodologies in the production of statistics about persons with and without disabilities.

The WG Tools and the UN COVID-19 Policy Brief

UN SG Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response To Covid-19

May 2020

“The global crisis of COVID-19 is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing the extent of exclusion and highlighting that work on disability inclusion is imperative.”

“To understand the different ways in which people with disabilities experience the impact of COVID-19, and to monitor their inclusion in all phases of the response and recovery, ensuring the collection and availability of disaggregated data by disability is essential. To that end, data should be collected using internationally recognized methods, such as the Washington Group tools.”

Using the WG Tools during COVID-19

Disaggregation

Compare those *with* disability versus those *without* disability:

- Standard participation outcomes (employment, education – especially exclusion due to COVID-19)
- Risk factors (underlying health conditions, behavioral risks such as smoking and obesity)
- Medical care and support systems
- COVID-19 specific outcomes (testing, care access and utilization, recovery and death rates)

Monitoring

- Prevalence and trends for persons with disability
 - Effectiveness and inclusion of programs and policies
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The WG Disaggregation Tools

Tools used for the purpose of disaggregation:

- Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS)
 - Washington Group Extended Set (WG-ES)
 - WG Short Set Enhanced (WG-SS Enhanced)
 - WG/UNICEF Child Functioning Module (CFM)
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- ✓ Conform to the ICF functional approach.
 - ✓ Designed to be internationally comparable.
 - ✓ Widely tested using accepted methodology.
 - ✓ May be added to any data collection.
 - ✓ Allow for the identification of persons with disability.
 - ✓ Allow for monitoring the situation of persons with disability compared to those without disability.
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Which Disaggregation Tool to Use?

- Short Set (WG-SS)
6 questions / comparable response categories
VIS-HEAR-MOB-COG-SC-COM
 - Extended Set (WG-ES)
20 questions
VIS-HEAR-MOB-COG-SC-COM-UB-ANX-DEP-P-F
 - Short Set Enhanced (WG-SS Enhanced)
12 questions
VIS-HEAR-MOB-COG-SC-COM-UB-ANX-DEP
 - Child Functioning Module (CFM) 2-4 years old
12 questions
VIS-HEAR-MOB-DEX-COM/COMP-LEARN-BEHAV-PLAY
 - Child Functioning Module (CFM) 5-17 years old
19 questions
VIS-HEAR-MOB-DEX-COM/COMP-SC-LEARN-COG-ANX-DEP-BEHAV-COPE-RELATIONS
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Primary Disaggregation Tool: WG-SS

1. Do you have difficulty **seeing** even if wearing glasses?
2. Do you have difficulty **hearing** even if using a hearing aid?
3. Do you have difficulty **walking** or **climbing** steps?
4. Do you have difficulty **remembering** or **concentrating**?
5. Do you have difficulty with (**self-care** such as) washing all over or dressing?
6. Using your usual language, do you have difficulty **communicating** (for example understanding or being understood by others)?

Response categories:

No difficulty / Some difficulty / A lot of difficulty / Cannot do at all

Creating the WG Disability Dichotomy

Responses to the six questions range from:

1. No - no difficulty
2. Yes - some difficulty
3. Yes - a lot of difficulty
4. Cannot do at all

- If responses to *all* six questions are 1 or 2 (i.e. the person has no difficulty or only some difficulty over the 6 domains), then the individual is considered as *without disability*.
 - If any one (or more) of the six domain responses is either 3 (a lot of difficulty) or 4 (cannot do at all), then the person is considered as *with disability*.
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Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Persons with Disability

Disaggregation can provide critical information on:

- During-pandemic situation
 - Pre-pandemic versus during-pandemic changes
 - Persons with disability in general
 - Persons with specific types or combinations of disability (communication, cognition, mobility, anxiety/depression)
 - Intersectionality of risk factors (age, gender, race/ethnicity)
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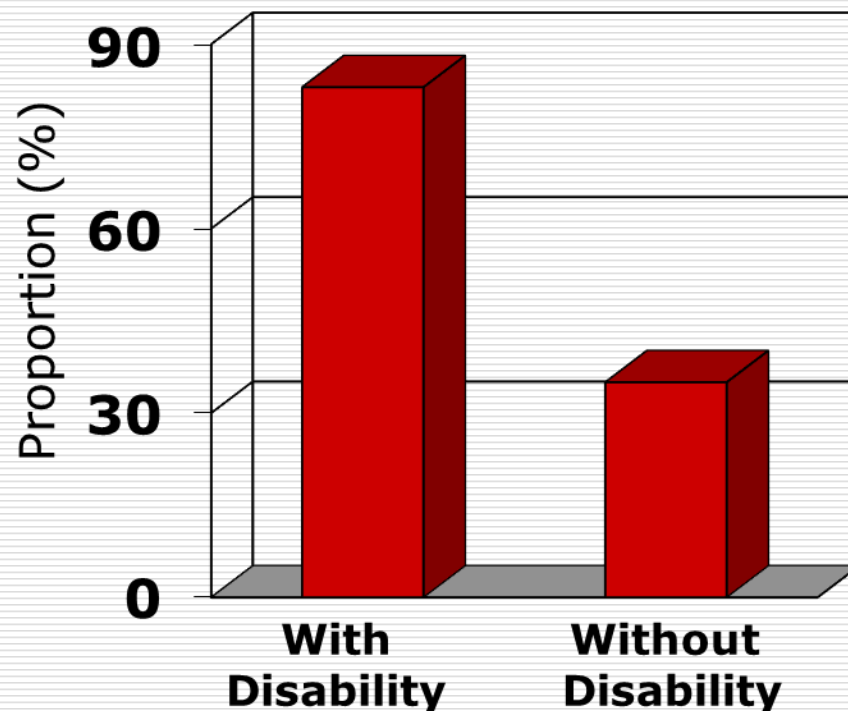
Information to Collect during COVID-19

- Access to care and unmet need for care
 - Medical, dental, doctor visits, procedures
 - Telehealth by video or phone
 - Prescriptions and therapies
 - Supports and services
 - Access to testing and participation in contact tracing
 - Employment, loss of employment and health insurance
 - Experiences during pandemic
 - Physical, mental and social health
 - Financial well-being, receipt of program assistance
 - Food security
 - Behaviors, attitudes and beliefs
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Example: Employment Disaggregated by Disability Status

- Disability used as a **disaggregation variable**.
- Compare **employment status** among PWD and non-PWD.
- Examine **loss of employment due to COVID-19**.
- Time 1: Describe employment status during the pandemic.
- Time 1 vs. 2: Compare differences in employment before and during pandemic.

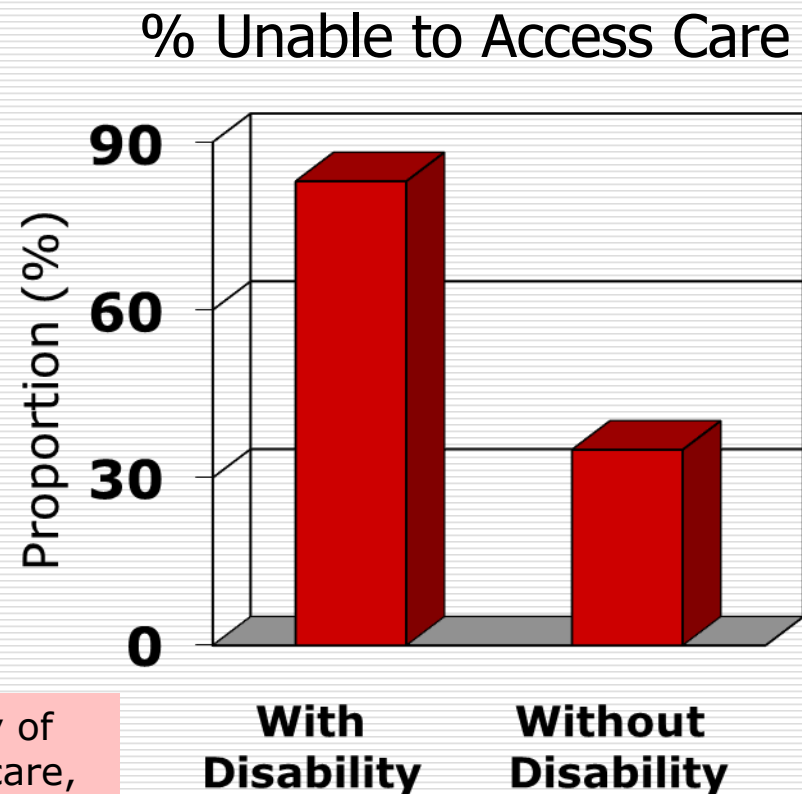
% Unable to Work Due to COVID-19



Were you unable to work because you or a family member was sick with the coronavirus?

Example: Medical Care Access Disaggregated by Disability Status

- Compare access to or receipt of medical care among PWD and non-PWD.
- Disability used as a disaggregation variable.
- Overall disability *or* specific domains.
- Time 1 only *or* Time 1 vs. 2 comparisons



In the last two months, were you unable to get any of the following types of care for any reason: urgent care, surgical procedure, diagnostic or medical screening test, treatment for an ongoing condition, regular check-up, prescription drugs or medications, dental care, vision care, or hearing care?

Review

- Inclusion of persons with disability in the COVID-19 response and recovery is vitally important.
 - The collection of data on persons with disability and disaggregation by disability status is essential.
 - The WG tools were designed to ensure inclusion and for the purposes of disaggregation.
 - Assessing the situation of persons with disability, including outcomes of importance during the COVID-19 pandemic, is made possible using the WG tools.
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Special Data Collection Considerations Related to COVID-19

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Impact on Data Collection Modes

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many data collections using in-person interviewing have been impacted.
 - Many activities have been suspended or transitioned to other data collection modes:
 - Telephone interviews
 - Web-based interviewing
 - The WG has received requests for guidance on special considerations relating to the use of the WG question sets in alternative administration modes.
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Advantages of Adopting Alternative Administration Modes

- Provides the opportunity for data collections to continue during quarantine and social distancing restrictions.
 - Minimizes the risk of exposure for both interviewers and respondents.
 - May help mitigate a decline in response rates, given respondents' reluctance to communicate face to face with people outside of their household during the health crisis.
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Data Collection Mode Considerations

The WG tools have been thoroughly tested, but not specifically tested for telephone or web surveys.

However, generalizable experience with implementing these modalities and reports from other organizations indicate that the use of WG questions using these modalities is feasible.

Things to consider....

- Sample bias
 - General considerations for telephone/internet surveys
 - Specific considerations:
 - Hearing/communication – telephone surveys
 - Vision/cognition – internet surveys
 - Translation issues
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Sample Bias

- Not everyone has a telephone or uses the web
 - In some countries people with disability have less access to telephones and to the internet
 - Evidence from disability surveys in Vietnam and Thailand indicate that households with a person with disability are:
 - less likely to have a telephone or the internet, and
 - within households with telephone and internet, the person with a disability often has limited access (e.g. no screen reader or other software)
 - Stigma
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General Considerations for Telephone/Internet Surveys

- Simple, straightforward questions work well in telephone or internet surveys.
 - The WG questions were designed to be simple and easily understood. Testing evidence for this.
 - The WG-SS, WG-ES and CFM have been used by others in both web and internet surveys with no reported administrative issues.
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Telephone Survey Considerations

Hearing and Communication

- May be challenging to interview people with hearing and/or communication difficulties over the telephone
 - Bias introduced if excluded
 - A proxy, sign interpreter or assistive device may be required for effective communication
 - Interviewers may feel uncomfortable asking a question if they believe they already know the answer
 - Standard techniques include informing respondent that *ALL* questions/response options must be read
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Internet Survey Considerations

Vision and Cognition

- Internet interviews may present a challenge for people with vision and/or cognition difficulties
 - Bias introduced if excluded
 - Procedures must be developed to create accessible web-based surveys
 - Assistive devices that accommodate vision and other difficulties in using a computer
 - Proxies and interpreters
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Translation

- The WG has developed an implementation guide for translation of the question sets to ensure:
 - Cultural appropriateness
 - Question constructs are adequately captured
 - Proper translation into local languages:
 - Reduces differences in question interpretation
 - Increases reliability and validity of data collected
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Translation

- However, in certain circumstances, such as humanitarian response or a pandemic, timeliness is of utmost importance.
 - Under these circumstances, it may not be possible to follow guidelines as written
 - **IMPORTANT:** Translation by the interviewer at the time of the interview (e.g., “on the fly”) should be avoided
 - Translations should be available prior to data collection
 - Agreement among team of interviewers and supervisor prior to interviews for consistency
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Contacts

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