

Does Who Responds Matter?: Exploring Potential Proxy Response Bias in the Washington Group Short Set Disability Estimates

Summary

Many surveys in the United States use the Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS) questions to count how many people have disabilities. Sometimes, a person answers the questions for themselves. Other times, someone else answers for them (this is called a *proxy*).

We wanted to know if it makes a difference who answers the questions.

What we found:

- People were more likely to be counted as having a disability when someone else answered the questions for them.

Why it matters:

Who answers the survey can change the results. If proxies report more disabilities than people who answer for themselves, the total count could be wrong. When that happens, programs and policies that use these numbers to plan services or funding may not match people's real needs.

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