

Comparing Measures of Functional Difficulty with Self-Identified Disability: Implications for Health Policy

Abstract

The government wanted to know more about people with disabilities to help them get the right healthcare and support. They made rules for surveys to ask questions about disabilities. But different surveys ask different questions.

We looked at two sets of questions used in surveys. One set, called ACS-6, is used in most US surveys. The other set, called WG-SS, is used in surveys around the world. We also used other questions from a US survey called NSHD.

Here's what was found:

1. The ACS-6 questions and WG-SS questions didn't identify some people with disabilities. ACS-6 missed 20% of them, while WG-SS missed 43% (but a broader version of WG-SS missed only 4.4%).
2. These questions were especially bad at finding people with mental disabilities or long-lasting health problems.

So, we need to make better questions to find out how many people have disabilities. This will help us understand their health problems and plan better services for them, because there are many people with different types of disabilities, and we want to make sure they get the help they need.

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