



Use of Censuses to Collect Data on Disability

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Collection of data on disability by census round

- National efforts to collect data on disability in both developed and developing countries have continuously increased over time

Countries that asked question on disability in census

Census round	Number of countries
1970	19
1980	36
1990	80
2000	103
2010	120*

* Based on questionnaires available to UNSD

2010 census questions on disability

	Total number of countries reviewed	Question on topic of disability	Use of Washington Group Questions	Other questions
Total countries	148	120	55	65
Africa	36	32	8	24
America, North	25	25	15	10
America, South	7	6	3	3
Asia	32	28	12	16
Europe	26	14	8	6
Oceania	22	15	9	6





Domains of WG questions

	WG Questions	Essential domains				Additional domains			
		Walking	Seeing	Hearing	Cognition	Self care	Communication	Upper body functioning	Psychological functioning
All regions (countries)	51	50	49	50	48	29	29	15	7
Africa	8	8	8	8	8	5	6	1	1
America, North	15	15	15	15	15	13	13	10	5
America, South	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	1
Asia	12	11	11	11	9	4	4	1	0
Europe	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	0	0
Oceania	9	9	8	9	9	3	1	1	0



Use of Census to Collect Data on Disability

Advantages

- Data can be tabulated for small, local areas.
- Prevalence rates can be calculated for small geographical areas
- Cross tabulation with individual and household characteristics
- Use for sampling

Disadvantages

- Limited number of questions
- Large number of enumerators > issue of selection and training
- Frequently one respondent for the household
- Issue of non response for a sensitive subject
- Costly to ask question that concerns only a small percentage of the population



Planning for the Inclusion of Disability Questions in the Census



Consult with users, but don't overcommit

- Consult with ministries and NGOs in charge of disability in the country
- The census will not provide everything on disability. The information that results from the use of these questions is expected to:
 - Represent the majority, but not all disabled persons with limitations in basic activities;
 - Represent the most commonly occurring disability domains in any country;
 - Capture persons with similar problems across countries.
- Can be completed by specific surveys



Questionnaire design

- Formulation must fit the national context
- Position in the interview is important: too early can block respondents
- Translation in different languages spoken in the country: make sure that the meaning is the same



Testing

- Cognitive test:
 - Find out if the questions work in the national context (e.g. hearing aid if there is no in the country). Cognition difficult to ask in some countries
 - Check translations in national languages
 - Identify potential response errors related to question design
 - Identify socio-cultural factors that might influence question response.
 - Involve in-depth, face to face interviews with a small sample of respondents representing the group of interest.
- Field test: of the complete questionnaire, to identify difficulties in the interview protocol, from both interviewer and respondent sides
 - Identify risks of non-response
 - Include institutions



Training

- Difficult to include extensive training on disability in the enumerators' training
- But training is essential for enumerators to:
 - Understand the intention of the questions
 - Understand the logic of the interview protocol
 - Strictly respect the wording of the questions
 - Not interfere in the person's answer



Dealing with proxy respondents

- Frequently one respondent per household.
- For questions on disability, try to request to ask the question personally. For example: *"Now I will ask more personal questions so I need to ask the household members if they are present"*.
- Organise the questionnaire (or application) to allow it
- If not, ask to describe the difficulties the person faces, but the risk is to underestimate



Communication

- Disability is a sensitive question that can lead to non-response, but also to over-estimation if people expect some benefits
- Therefore, communication is key
- Emphasize the use of data and the confidentiality of the responses collected
- Liaise with organisations dealing with disability to tune the messages
- Census in institutions: specific communication to get right answers



Follow-up surveys

- Use the census to develop a sampling frame for these surveys and include a screening instrument to identify persons who will be interviewed subsequently.
- Be the most inclusive as possible in order to identify the largest group of people who could be further studied.
- The screening question should be designed so that false negatives are minimized, while false positives should be less of a concern.



Thank you

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