Use of Censuses to Collect Data on Disability

Jean-Michel Durr
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census round</th>
<th>Number of countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>103</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>120*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Based on questionnaires available to UNSD</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2010 census questions on disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of countries reviewed</th>
<th>Question on topic of disability</th>
<th>Use of Washington Group Questions</th>
<th>Other questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total countries</strong></td>
<td>148</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Africa</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>America, North</strong></td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>America, South</strong></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asia</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Europe</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oceania</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Domains of WG questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Essential domains</th>
<th>Additional domains</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>Seeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All regions (countries)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>America, North</td>
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<tr>
<td>America, South</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
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<td>Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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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EGM on Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics - New York

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