

Overview of the special APHA session on the measurement of child disability

From the 139th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association

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National Center for Health Statistics/
Washington Group on Disability Statistics

A Panel Discussion

Currently there is renewed interest in developing a short set of questions to measure child functioning and disability in censuses and population-based surveys.

Efforts to identify a measure of child functioning and disability include the work of the WG, Healthy People 2020, selected federal agencies and non-governmental investigators that conduct surveys of children and adolescents.

A Panel Discussion

The presentations covered descriptions of various measures of child function and disability, and proposals of how to continue and coordinate the effort to develop standardized measures of child disability and functioning in population-based surveys.

The need to monitor trends and disparities in child functioning and development is critical for understanding the health care and educational needs of children and adolescents.

Session Objectives:

Identify various measures of child disability and functioning currently in use in population-based surveys.

Discuss the need for - and means to - develop standardized measures of child disability and functioning.

Program:

Claudia Cappa, UNICEF

Measuring Child Disability in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Challenges and Findings

- discussed the main challenges associated with the collection of data on child disability, and provided an assessment of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) program and the Ten Questions Screen (TQ) for childhood disability.

Program:

Andrew Zukerberg, U.S. Department of Education (DoE)

[Measuring disability in education surveys](#)

- presented an overview of the Institute for Education Sciences' National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) programs that collect disability data: the National Household Education Surveys (NHES), Early Childhood Longitudinal Surveys (ECLS), High School Longitudinal Survey (HSLs) and The National Post Secondary Student Aid Survey (NPSAS). NCES collects disability data on infants, toddlers, school age children and adults.
- highlighted recent studies that incorporate functional limitation criteria into the traditional specific diagnoses based items.

Program:

Stephen J. Blumberg and Christina Bethell, NCHS

[Taking stock of the CSHCN Screener: Key findings, applications, and methods issues](#)

- Presented the Children with special health care needs (CSHCN) screener used as a standardized survey-based assessment tool.
- Demonstrated its ability to differentiate subgroups of CSHCN defined by their complexity of health care needs.
- Concluded that the CSHCN Screener provides an efficient and highly discriminating method for identifying this policy-relevant subgroup of children.

Program:

Gloria L. Krahn, CDC

[CDC Use of child functioning and disability measures in surveys and surveillance](#)

- Identified requirements and challenges for developing a short set of questions to measure child functioning and disability in population-based surveys.
- Outlined the need to understand methods for evaluating the performance of identifying question sets.
- Appropriate for different ages (across the life-course)
- Sensitive to development
- Reflect gains or losses in functioning

Program:

Mitchell Loeb, NCHS

Work of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics as it relates to international measures of child disability

- Presented an overview of methodological approaches to the measurement of child disability
- Highlighted the challenges inherent in measuring disability among children and youth.
- 1. Explain the role of the WG in the development of internationally comparably disability measures.
- 2. Define disability as operationalized by the WG.
- 3. Discuss the need for internationally comparable measures for child disability and functioning.