



## **Development of an Internationally Comparable Disability Measure for Censuses: Challenges and Opportunities**

Jennifer Madans  
National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)  
Hyattsville, Maryland, USA  
[Jhm4@cdc.gov](mailto:Jhm4@cdc.gov)

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG), a City Group under the UN Statistical Commission, was founded in 2001 to improve the quality and international comparability of disability measures. Through the promotion of international co-operation to improve health statistics with a focus on disability, the WG has developed a short set of disability questions, suitable for use in censuses, sample-based national surveys, or other statistical formats. The questions are the result of extensive deliberations by WG members and a rigorous testing process. In order to develop the questions, it was necessary to clarify which aspects of disability were most relevant to country policy needs and to operationalize these concepts into questions that would be applicable in vastly different environments. When the question set is included in censuses and surveys, needed information on disability, which is comparable throughout the world, will be available to support policy and program development and evaluation aimed at equalizing opportunities for people with disabilities. The WG has also developed an extended set of survey items on functioning to be used as components of population surveys or as supplements to specialty surveys and a module on child functioning and disability. The WG selected questions that reflect a functional approach to operationalizing disability; identifying basic activity or functioning domains where respondents may experience difficulty functioning in their environments that places them at greater risk than the general population of experiencing limited or restricted participation in society.

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