

NCHS International Statistics Programs

Washington Group on Disability Statistics

About NCHS

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data to identify and address health issues. NCHS compiles statistical information to help guide public health and health policy decisions.

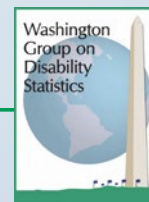
Collaborating with other public and private health partners, NCHS uses a variety of data collection mechanisms to obtain accurate information from multiple sources. This process provides a broad perspective on the population's health, influences on health, and health outcomes.

International activities at NCHS

NCHS collaborates with countries around the world and participates in a wide range of international initiatives. These programs consist of cooperative ventures on analytical and methodological issues, technical assistance, consultation, training, information exchange, and liaison with multinational agencies. Additionally, NCHS sponsors and hosts international meetings and symposia to foster the sharing of scientific information. Through these efforts, NCHS seeks to improve the availability and advance the quality and comparability of health data in the United States and other countries.

Three fact sheets describe international statistics activities at NCHS. In addition to this fact sheet on the Washington Group, fact sheets on "Collaborations With the United Nations and Other International Organizations" and "Bilateral and Multilateral Collaborations" are available from the NCHS website.

United Nations Statistical Commission



The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) was created as a "city group" by the United Nations Statistical Commission to address the need for population-based measures of disability, and to develop principles and standard forms for the new generation of internationally comparable global indicators of disability.

NCHS hosted the first meeting of WG in 2002 and serves as secretariat for the group. NCHS has also chaired the WG steering committee since its launch. WG is a cooperative effort among national statistical offices of developed and developing countries, international statistical organizations, development agencies and organizations, and international organizations representing persons with disabilities. The group works to develop internationally comparable disability measures for censuses and national surveys.

Other goals include improving the collection and interpretation of information on disability, enhancing comparability with other national and international data collections, and providing the detailed information needed to fully understand the complexities of disability. WG has developed a short set of questions for use on censuses and surveys that can be used to monitor progress in meeting the goals of the United Nations (U.N.) Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities, and to separate the outcome measures (e.g., employment and education) by disability status for monitoring Sustainable Development Goals. WG has also developed an extended set of functioning questions across a broader range of domains that can be used as a disability module on existing surveys (e.g., health, living standard, or labor force surveys, among others), or as the core of a targeted disability survey.



WG has provided training and technical support to national statistical offices, U.N. agencies, development ministries, nongovernmental organizations involved in disability and development, and organizations for disabled persons, guiding the measurement of disability and implementation of WG questions in projects and programs.

In addition to promoting use of the WG short set of questions to monitor inclusion of persons with disabilities in its programs, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for example, has provided WG with financial support to conduct regional workshops and provide technical assistance and capacity building. These activities are leading to global standardization of disability measurement in routine data collections.



United Nations Children's Fund

In collaboration with WG, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recognized the need for a module to produce internationally comparable data on child functioning and disability. In response, UNICEF and WG developed and tested a module for children aged 2–17 years with questions in the domains of seeing, hearing, walking, self-care, dexterity, communication, learning, remembering, emotions, behavior, focusing attention, coping with change, relationships, and playing.

UNICEF and WG have also begun developing a survey module that will focus on environmental factors and on measuring facilitators and barriers to school participation (i.e., inclusive education). The domains identified for further development include attitudes, getting to school, accessibility (physical, informational, communication, and curricular), and affordability—with an additional subsection on the reasons that a child may be out of school. Cognitive testing in the United States and at several international sites is being conducted under the guidance of the Collaborating Center for Questionnaire Design and Evaluation Research (CCQDER) at NCHS, with field-testing to follow.



International Labor Organization

WG is also collaborating with the International Labor Organization (ILO) on developing a disability module for use in labor force surveys. The module is being cognitively tested at CCQDER at NCHS.

