

6th International Conference on Disability & Development

15th March 2022



Agenda Day 2

12 – 12:55	Alberto Vasquez (Chair)
Plenary: The importance of disability-inclusive research during the pandemic	Mónica Pinilla-Roncancio Kirsty Smith Sophie Mitra
12:55 – 13:00	Break
13:00 – 14:00 Breakout Session 1	Socioeconomic impact of COVID-19
13:00 – 14:00 Breakout Session 2	Adapting research methods

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Disability information systems during the Covid-19
pandemic: An analysis of Latin America and the
Caribbean

Disability information systems during the Covid-19 pandemic: An analysis of Latin America and the Caribbean

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Outline

- Introduction
- Objective
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion

Introduction

- The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it different challenges for all LAC countries, which are associated with the provision of health services, education, the guarantee of employment and a minimum level of income that allows maintaining a standard of living.
- Nearly 15% of the population lives with some type of disability and an estimated 80% live in low- and middle-income countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) estimated that nearly 70 million people have some type of disability.

Objectives

- To analyse how countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have collected information on the possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the living conditions of people with disabilities.
- To identify the main measures implemented by the countries to reduce the economic and social impact of the pandemic on persons with disabilities.

Methodology (1)

Objective 1

- We reviewed the National Statistical Offices of all countries in LAC
- We selected 24 countries that have collected data during 2020 and 2021.
- We analysed three sources of data:
 - National Household Surveys
 - Socioeconomic Impact Assessment platform.
 - Other surveys collected by International organizations.

Methodology (2)

Objective 2

- We reviewed the most important policies in aspects related to health, education, employment and social protection.
- On those we searched for the explicit inclusion of the word disability or persons with disabilities, and if those documents have included specific actions for persons with disabilities.

Results (1)

- Of the 24 countries, only Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico included questions on disabilities in their households surveys
- No Socioeconomic Assessment Survey has included questions on disability
- Two countries have implemented specific studies to analyse the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities.
 - Argentina only collected information on persons who have been certificated (Estado de Situación de Personas con Discapacidad en la Pandemia COVID-19)
 - Dominican Republic conducted a specific study for persons with disabilities

Results (2)

- UNICEF was the institution that led the largest number of surveys related to disability during the pandemic of COVID-19 (4 surveys).
- Most countries (except Nicaragua) implemented unconditional cash transfers, which were not differentiated by disability status.

Results (3)

- 10 countries implemented specific health policies for persons with disabilities
- 12 countries implemented specific education policies for persons with disabilities
- Although countries have implemented social protection policies, in most cases persons with disabilities have not been explicitly mentioned, and there is not information on the number of beneficiaries of those policies

Conclusions

- The results revealed that in most of the countries questions related to disability have not been included in national households surveys, so it is not possible to know the possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this population.
- Some countries have implemented specific health, education and social protection for persons with disabilities.
- However, without statistical information it will not be possible to monitor compliance of these strategies.

[illegible]

Kirsty Smith
CBM UK

Coronavirus: My story



And so with that I think my physical health is one of the most difficult thing that I am facing right now.



Currently, people are facing problems due to Coronavirus pandemic



Persons with disabilities are most at risk in this disaster.



I live in Baliatoli of Kolapara sub district.

Coronavirus: My Story

Kirsty Smith, CEO, CBM UK



What really affected me during this outbreak of coronavirus is the provision as a shiatsu therapist, which has now completely stopped.



My experiences with regards to COVID-19 are basically the experiences of my constituents or the people that I work with.



The store is being closed for two months and my savings are finished also.



We cannot go out to do our shopping and everything. But the issue is we are also afraid also to go

Video Voice Methodology

- Qualitative research
- People self-identified, or were identified by 11 OPD partners across 7 countries
- Diverse experience
- Non-scripted, self-selected location and focus



1) Exacerbated existing exclusions

a) Lost livelihoods impacting on income

"Now I am sitting at home and cannot do anything. I'm facing lots of trouble, as there is no income. If the pandemic situation lasts much longer, I and my family may starve." Abu, Bangladesh

A woman with dark hair, a red bindi on her forehead, and a green face mask is shown from the chest up. She is wearing a yellow sari with a red and white striped border. She is standing in front of a wall made of dried thatch or straw. To the right, there is a white wall with a ladder leaning against it. The ground is dirt.

Provati, Bangladesh

My husband used to work in a wood factory, which has been closed down due to the coronavirus epidemic.

1) Exacerbated existing exclusions pt.3

- a) Lost livelihoods impacting on income
- b) Existing health conditions compounded

“We can’t afford to buy sun lotion, inflation all the time, when you cannot go outside to do your jobs so that you can get money, ... so the only solution is we could lock down ourselves so that we avoid the sun.”

Progress, Zimbabwe

1) Exacerbated existing exclusions pt.2

- a) Lost livelihoods impacting on income
- b) Existing health conditions compounded
- c) Social protection systems inadequate

“The government has very limited knowledge on people with complex disabilities, most members depend on their family members. So we are very highly left behind. Most members have not benefited from the government due to the fact that few activists try to include our names.”

Christine, Uganda

1) Exacerbated existing exclusions pt.4

- a) Lost livelihoods impacting on income
- b) Existing health conditions compounded
- c) Social protection systems inadequate
- d) Reduced self-sufficiency

“Before Corona, we ate fish, meat and eggs every week but now we are not able to... This is a flood prone area so we fight this disaster every year. We used to make some preparations in groups before dealing with disasters but now we have no income due to the crisis.”

Nazmul, Bangladesh

2) Communication barriers deepened

a) Inaccessible information

“They prioritised the use of sign language as a way to communicate to all of us. Many of us who are hard of hearing don't necessarily understand sign language.”

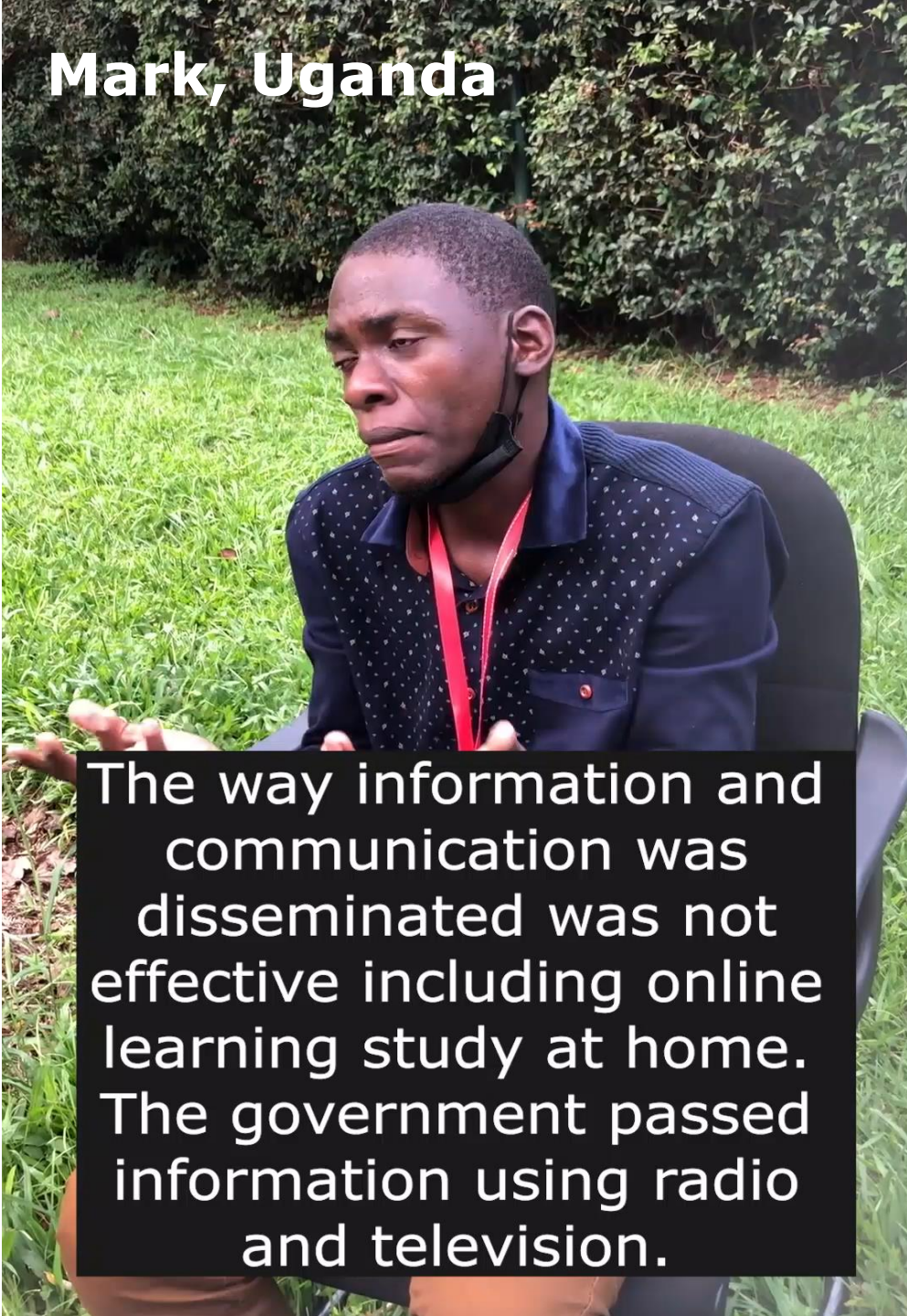
Moses, Uganda



2) Communication

b) Deafblind people particularly affected

Mark, Uganda



The way information and communication was disseminated was not effective including online learning study at home. The government passed information using radio and television.

2) Communication barriers deepened pt.2

- a) Inaccessible information
- b) Deafblind people particularly affected
- c) Inadequate dissemination

“We tried at a small basis to use community amplifiers – where someone goes in the public town and speaks on a microphone. But that is not effective, because some members have intellectual [disabilities] so you have to really be close to them, talk to them in a simple way they can understand.”

Christine, Uganda

2) Communication barriers deepened pt.3

d) Challenge of masks

“At times I tell the client to speak louder so they start nicknaming me some funny names. I miss out information, I end up losing customers because some of them are not patient enough.”

Brender, Uganda

“Many deaf blind persons wore face masks but didn’t know what COVID really means.”

Mark, Uganda

2) Communication barriers deepened pt.4

e) Increased disempowerment

“When information is not accessible, the individual becomes very disempowered and you can hardly make information from an informed position.” Salome, Kenya

2) Communication barriers deepened pt.5

f) Increased risk

“Some of the government procedures passed to the public were not mindful of persons with Down’s syndrome, so most of them during the lockdown moved out and faced a lot of violence from the security personnel who never took time to understand them, or the disability and the challenge that they face. And so most of them were beaten.”

Simon, Uganda

3) Reasonable accommodations impacted

a) Challenges of social distancing

"I need my support person, how can I keep social distance?" We need this close touch." Ronald, Uganda

3) Reasonable accommodations impacted

- a) Challenges of social distancing
- b) Breakdown of provision


“Before this lockdown, I used to go to hospital for regular physiotherapy but with lockdown I am not able to continue with that.” - Sinja, Nepal

3) Reasonable accommodations impacted cont.

- a) Challenges of social distancing
- b) Breakdown of provision
- c) Increased costs & scarcity of essential care items



Sinja, Nepal



people with autism, people with haemophilia, people with physical disability and during this time what I have also found that

4) OPD role pivoted

a) Lack of government support or understanding

“Unfortunately government never thought persons with disabilities were vulnerable so they were not focusing on them.”

Ronald, Uganda



4) OPD role pivoted

- a) Lack of government support or understanding
- b) OPDs filling role of dutybearers
- c) Pivoting from advocacy to basic services

“We used to get funding for activities but now the priority changed. It was about welfare, meeting the survival needs of communities, not about the advocacy needs, it was about saving lives.”

Ronald, Uganda

4) OPD role pivoted cont.

- a) Lack of government support or understanding
- b) OPDs filling gaps
- c) Pivoting from advocacy to basic services
- d) Reduced income but additional costs

“We are inundated with calls from the disabled population who are at the verge of starvation. The challenge is that we [DPOs] have to bring food, PPEs and work out some Covid-19 response mechanisms, so that persons with disabilities are best protected.”

Timothy, Zimbabwe

5) Invisible impacts

- a) Domestic tensions
- b) Isolation and mental health risk



Saputra, Indonesia

Due to social distancing and lockdown in Indonesia that we have to limit our physical contact and keep our distance apart.

5) Invisible impacts

- a) Violence against women
- b) Isolation and mental health risk
- c) Increase in stigma

Simon,
Uganda



So COVID-19 has
increased discrimination,

- **The clarion call of the CRPD - 'Nothing About us, without us'**
 - decisions & emphasis led by OPDs
 - persons with disabilities in control of their own messaging
- **Article 8 of the CRPD**
 - to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices
 - actions to promote positive perceptions & greater social awareness
- This methodology helps contribute to these measures.

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- Simon Peter Okwi, Uganda
- Sinja Raut, Nepal
- Timothy Mudarikwa, Zimbabwe

Sophie Mitra
Fordham University

Disability in COVID-19 High Frequency Phone
Surveys

Disability in COVID-19 High Frequency Phone Surveys

Sophie Mitra

With Emily Lewis and Sarah Macy

Fordham University, New York

Work in progress – do not cite or quote without contacting author

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International conference: Disability and COVID-19

March 2022

Problem and Motivation

The lack of internationally comparable data and statistics on disability is in part responsible for the lack of attention to disability related inequalities.

The pandemic is expected to have exacerbated existing inequalities (United Nations 2019).

Very little attention is being paid to how disability-related inequalities may be impacted by the pandemic or to how inclusive COVID-19 programs and policies are (Yap et al 2020).

Problem and Motivation (Cont.)

The COVID-19 crisis policymakers, academics and the general public rushed to look for data to understand the evolution and impact of the pandemic.

Many countries started phone surveys. The World Bank supported countries and now has a COVID-19 Household Monitoring Dashboard.

Although there are tools and recommendations to collect self-reported disability data (Loeb 2016, 2015; United Nations 2017), the lack of disability questions in surveys that was documented prior to the pandemic (Mitra et al 2022, 2021) may have continued during the pandemic and explain the lack of attention to the impact of the pandemic and of its policy responses on person with disabilities.

Aim

As part of the Disability Data Initiative (DDI), our aim is to analyze the disability questions in High Frequency Phone Surveys.

Analysis of High Frequency Phone Surveys: Method

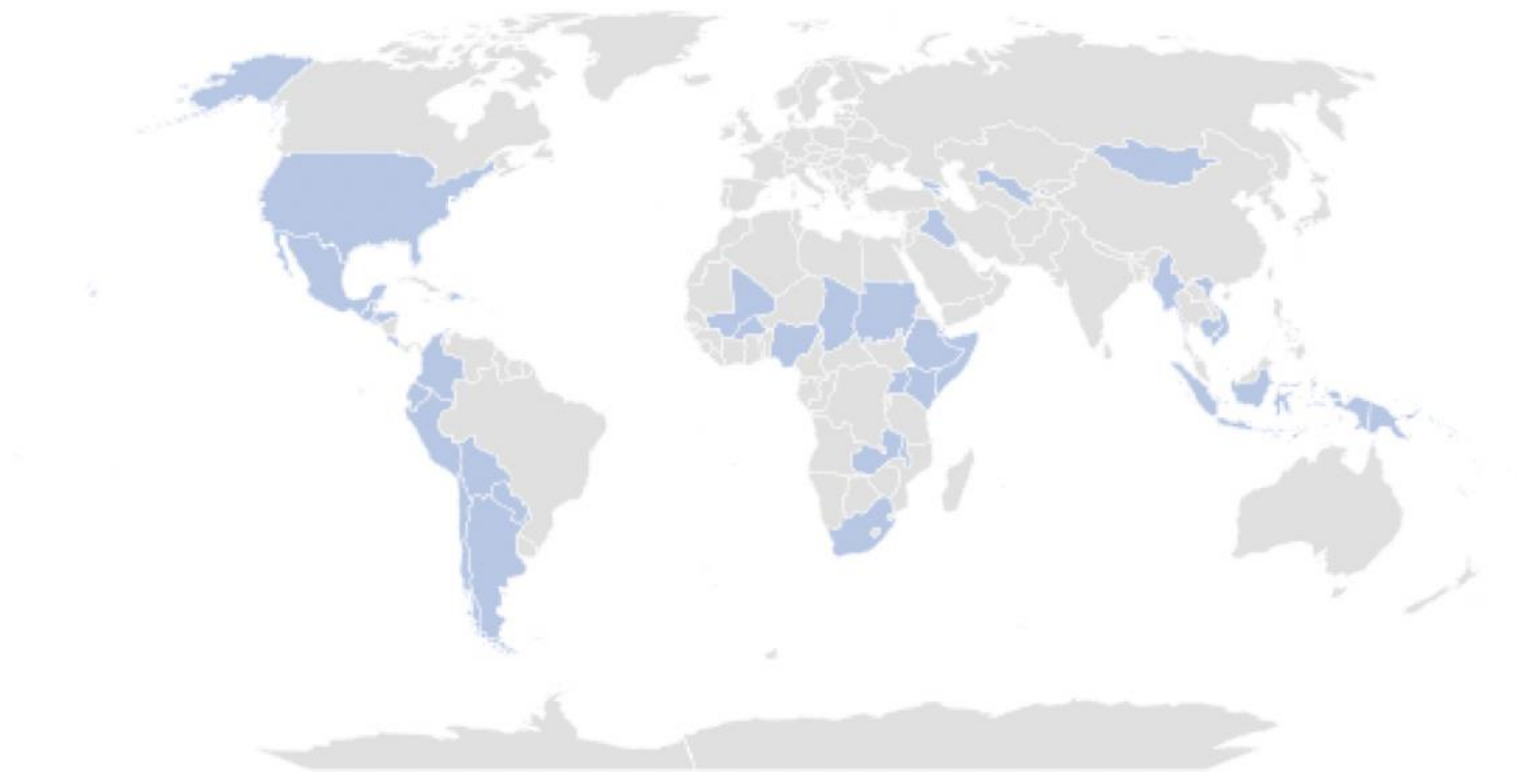
- Our data consist of the questionnaires from High Frequency Phone Surveys (HFPS) conducted in 2020 and 2021 in 40 countries.
- HFPS were searched in survey databases (World Bank Microdata, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Household Survey Network), and on national statistics offices' websites. Many come under the World Bank COVID-19 Household Monitoring Dashboard.
- A pool of 45 data sets and 190 data set-waves from 40 countries were screened for disability questions.

Analysis of High Frequency Phone Surveys: Method (Cont.)

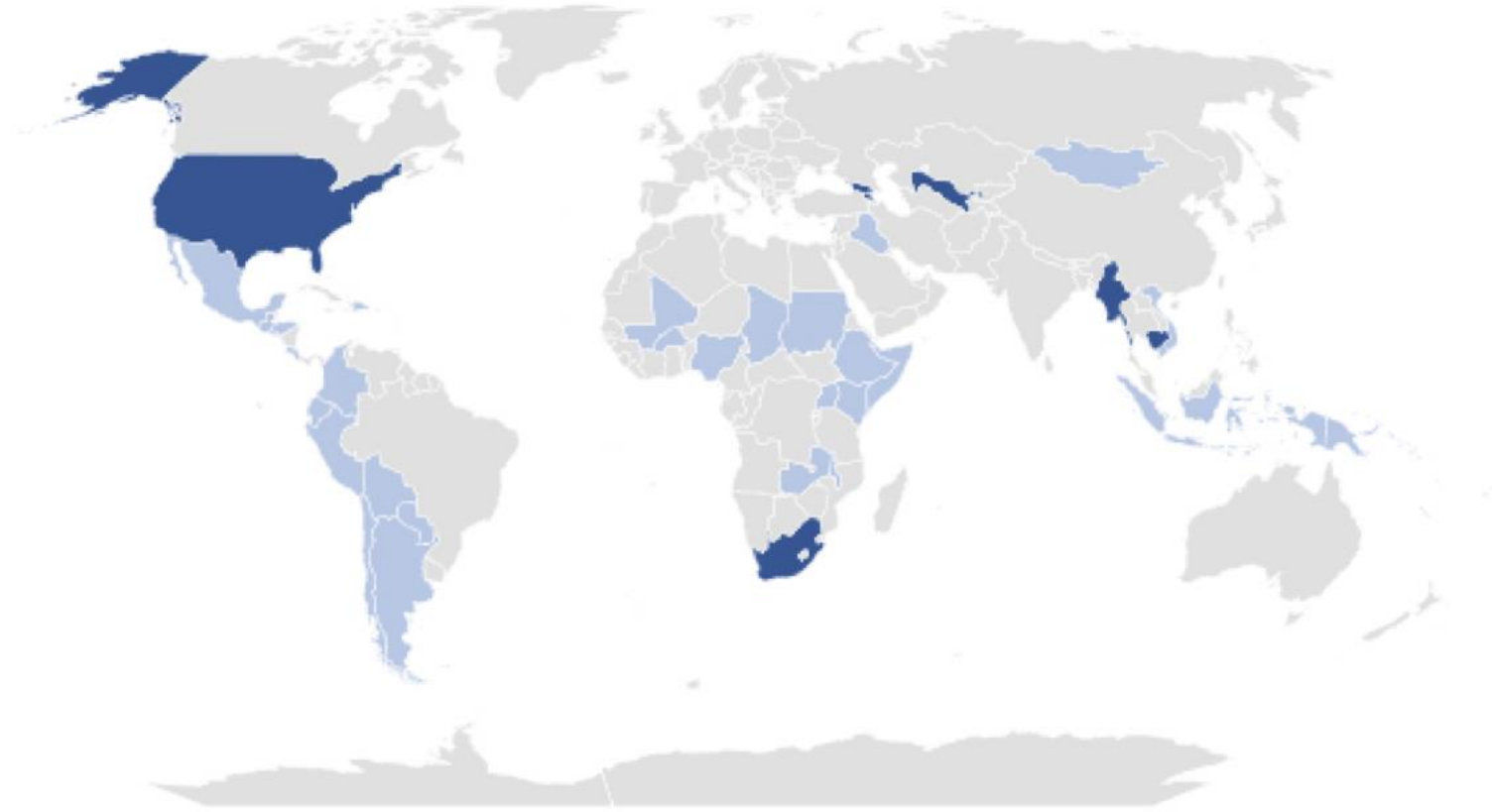
We categorized questions into the following:

- Washington Group Short Set of questions
- Other functional difficulty questions
- Activity of Daily Living questions (e.g. difficulty bending)
- Broad activity limitations (e.g. limited in the amount of work)
- General disability question: “Do you have a disability?”
- Other disability questions

Analysis of disability questions in HFPS: 40 countries



Analysis of disability questions in HFPS: 9 countries with at least a disability question



Analysis of disability questions HFPS: Results

Countries or datasets	Number of countries	Share of countries	Number of datasets	Share of datasets	Number of dataset-waves	Share of dataset-waves
Under review in the study	40	100%	45	100%	190	100%
With at least one disability question of any kind	9	23%	10	22%	23	12%
With functional difficulty questions	1	3%	1	2%	3	2%
- With the Washington Group Short Set (WGSS)	1	3%	1	2%	3	2%
- With other functional difficulty questions	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Source: Own calculations based on dataset review						

Conclusion: Main finding

Persons with disabilities are invisible in most COVID-19 High Frequency Phone Surveys (HFPS).

The onsets of disabilities that may result from the pandemic cannot be captured by HFPS (Spinney 2022).

The adoption in HFPS of internationally comparable disability questions such as the Washington Group Short Set is needed to monitor the impact of the pandemic and of policy responses on disability prevalence and on persons with disabilities.

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