

Center on Community Accessibility

Oregon Office on Disability and Health

Disability in Oregon



2008 Annual Report on the Health of
Oregonians with Disabilities

Executive Summary

One in four adults in Oregon has a disability, according to 2006 data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

Compared to Oregonians without disabilities, people with disabilities

- Are much less likely to be employed
- Are much more likely to have low household incomes
- Are more likely to report dissatisfaction with their lives
- Generally rate their health more poorly

Nevertheless, more than half of people with disabilities describe their health as good, very good, or excellent. Most people with disabilities are satisfied or very satisfied with their lives.

With regard to specific health risks, people with disabilities are

- More likely to be obese
- Less likely to exercise
- More likely to smoke
- More likely to be unable to see a doctor due to cost
- Less likely to have received a recent Pap test for cervical cancer (women)
- Less likely to have been to a dentist recently
- More likely to say they could not see a dentist because of cost
- More likely to have had large numbers of teeth removed
- More likely to describe their tooth and gum health as fair, poor, or very poor

On the other hand, people with disabilities are

- Less likely to engage in binge drinking
- More likely to have had a recent checkup
- More likely to have a regular source of health care
- As likely as people without disabilities to have health care coverage
- As likely to have received a recent mammogram (women age 40 and older)
- More likely to have been screened for colorectal cancer (people age 50 and older)
- More likely to have been screened for prostate cancer (men age 40 and older)

Although there are some health areas in which people with disabilities are doing as well or better than people without disabilities, there are several ways in which people with disabilities appear to be at a disadvantage. Efforts are needed to continue promoting health and access to affordable health care for Oregonians with disabilities.

Acknowledgements

This publication was supported by Grant/Cooperative Agreement Number U59 DD000266 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.

This book was prepared by Willi Horner-Johnson, PhD, Epidemiologist in the Oregon Office on Disability and Health. The Oregon Office on Disability and Health (OODH) is a collaborative program of the Oregon Institute on Disability & Development's Center on Community Accessibility (CCA) at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) and the Public Health Division of the Oregon Department of Human Services. The mission of OODH is to promote the health and wellness of Oregonians with disabilities through public health surveillance, health promotion, training, education, community engagement activities, policy development, and dissemination of materials and information. Charles E. Drum, JD, PhD directs CCA and OODH and has overseen the development of this chartbook.

The chartbook was developed with input from OODH's Advisory Council, chaired by Grant Higginson, MD, MPH, Administrator, Office of Community Health & Health Planning, Oregon Public Health Division. Other Council members are:

Jan Campbell, Aging and Disability Services of Multnomah County; Chair, Oregon Statewide Independent Living Council
Emily Kathryn Holmes, Executive Board, OIDD Community Partners Council
Dacia Johnson, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Oregon Commission for the Blind
Tina Kitchin, MD, Medical Director, Seniors and People with Disabilities, Oregon Department of Human Services
Joan Guthrie Medlen, RD, LD, Project Director, Creating Solutions
Jerry Pattee, Vice-Chair, OIDD Community Partners Council; Board Secretary/Treasurer, United Cerebral Palsy of Oregon & Southwest Washington
Brian Rogers, MD, Director, Child Development and Rehabilitation Center, OHSU
Bud Thoun, Executive Director, United Cerebral Palsy of Oregon & Southwest Washington
Noelle Wiggins, MSPH, Manager, Community Capacitation Center, Multnomah County Health Department

Suggested Citation

Oregon Office on Disability and Health. (2008). *Disability in Oregon: 2008 Annual Report on the Health of Oregonians with Disabilities*. Portland, OR: Center on Community Accessibility, Oregon Institute on Disability & Development, Oregon Health & Science University.

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Introduction

More than 40 million Americans have a disability. Improving the health of this large segment of the population is a central concern for public health. This chartbook presents information about the health of adults with disabilities in Oregon. The information in this book can be used by people with disabilities, their family members, policy makers, health professionals, disability service providers, and others interested in the health and well-being of people with disabilities.

Data Source

The information in this book came from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The BRFSS is a telephone survey that asks about health, behaviors that affect health, and access to health care. The survey is random, meaning that any resident might be called. However, some groups of people are not included. Children under age 18 and people who are in an institution, such as a jail or nursing home, are not included in the survey. People who have no telephone or only have a cell phone are not included. Those who do not speak English or Spanish are not included. Some people who have a disability may not be included because they do not understand the questions, cannot get to the phone before it stops ringing, or use a special telephone that sounds to the caller like a fax machine. The BRFSS survey is done every year by each state or territory health department. The information used for this book was collected in Oregon in 2006.

What do we mean by “disability”?

In the BRFSS survey, people are considered to have a disability if they answer “Yes” to one or both of the following questions:

1. Are you limited in any way in any activities because of physical, mental, or emotional problems?
2. Do you now have any health problem that requires you to use special equipment, such as a cane, a wheelchair, a special bed, or a special telephone?

Good health is important for all people, including people with disabilities. However, it can be more difficult for a person with a disability to live a healthy life. Public health professionals and people with disabilities must work together to remove barriers to health.

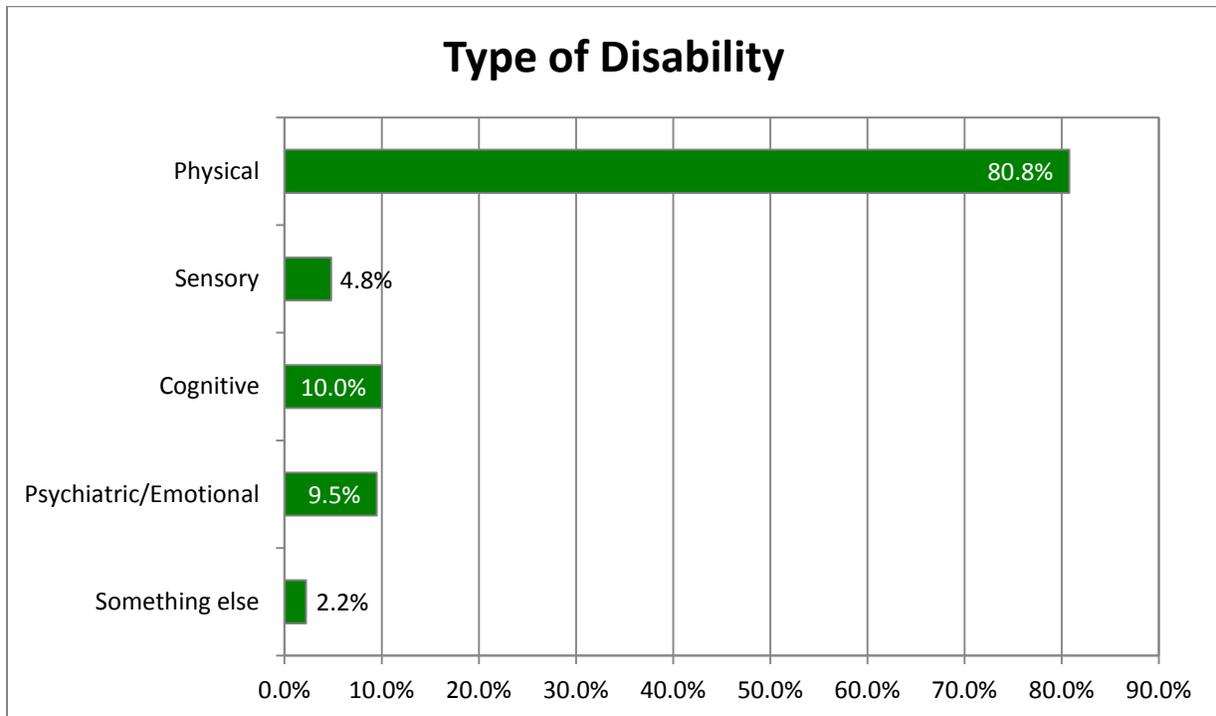
Disability in Oregon

How many people in Oregon have a disability?

About 708,475 Oregon adults age 18 and older have a disability. This is one quarter (25.4%) of the adult population of Oregon.

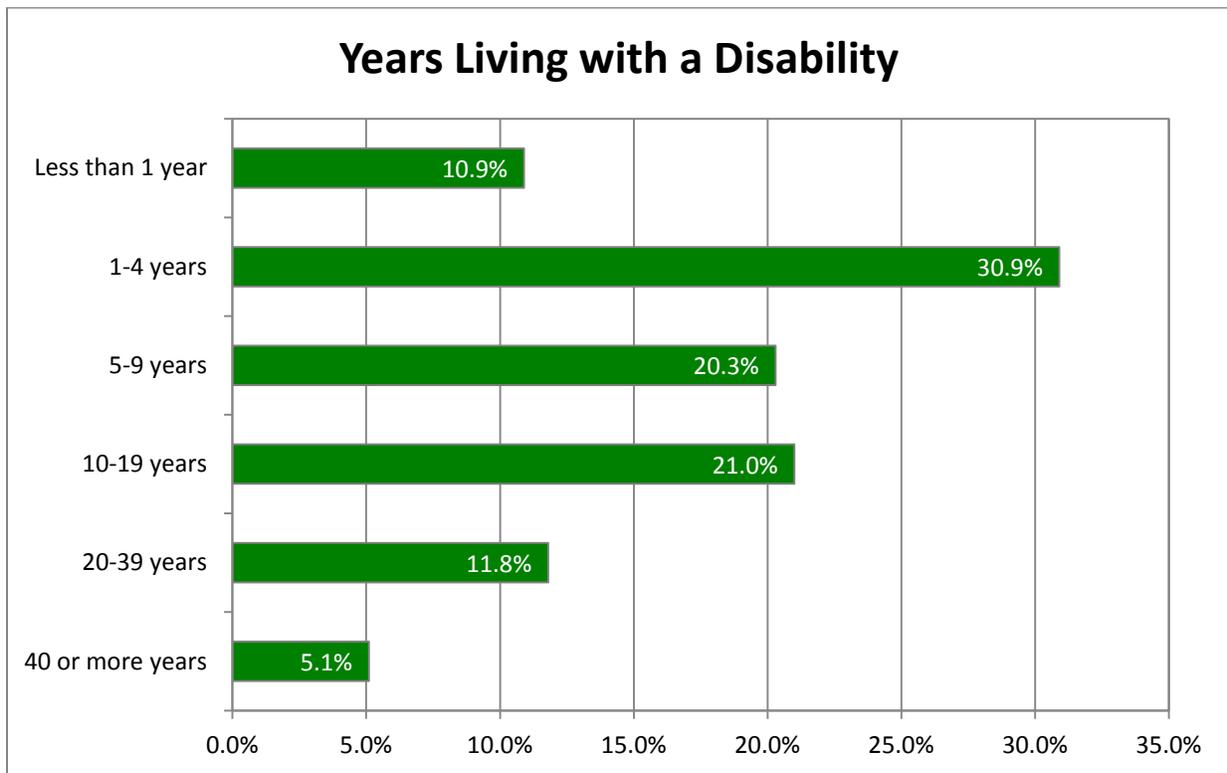
What types of disabilities do people have?

Among people with disabilities, 80.8% have a physical disability, 4.8% have a sensory disability (vision or hearing impairment), 10.0% have a cognitive disability, 9.5% have a psychiatric or emotional disability, and 2.2% have some other kind of disability. Survey respondents can have multiple types of disabilities, so the total equals more than 100%.



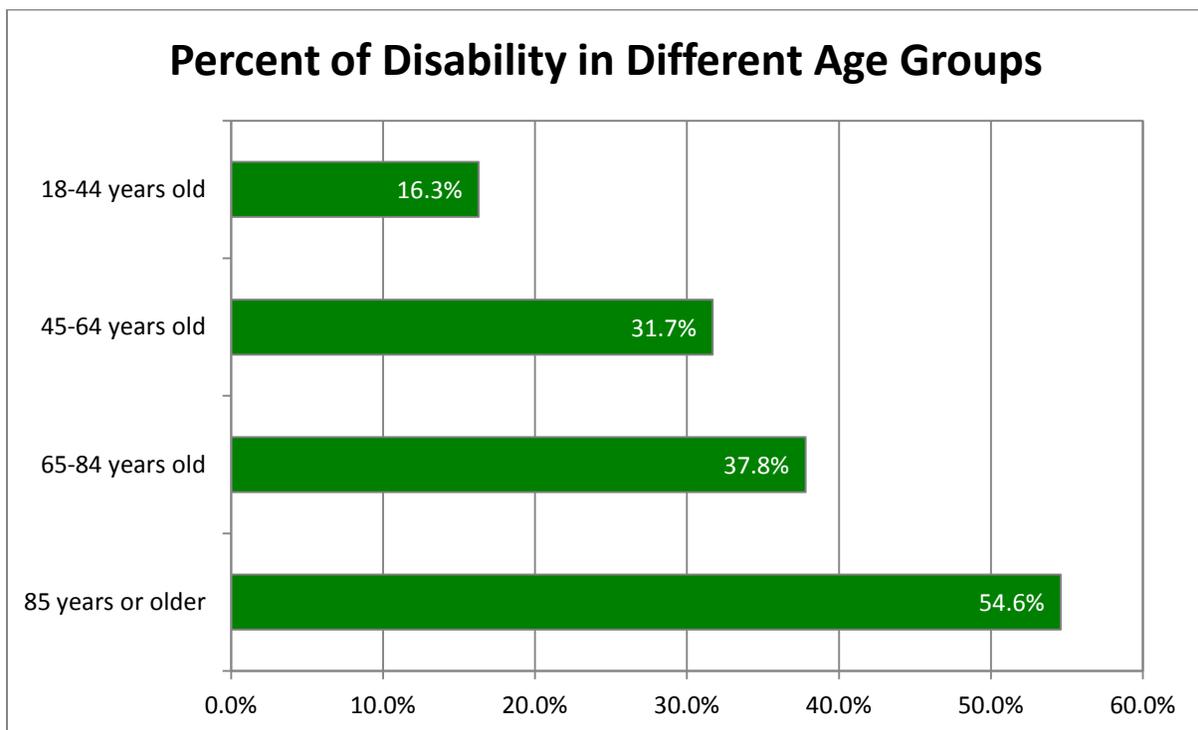
How long have people had their disabilities?

Almost eleven percent (10.9%) of Oregonians with disabilities have had their disability less than one year, 30.9% have had a disability for 1-4 years, 20.3% have had a disability 5-9 years, 21.0% have had a disability 10-19 years, 11.8% have had a disability 20-39 years, and 5.1% have had a disability for 40 or more years.



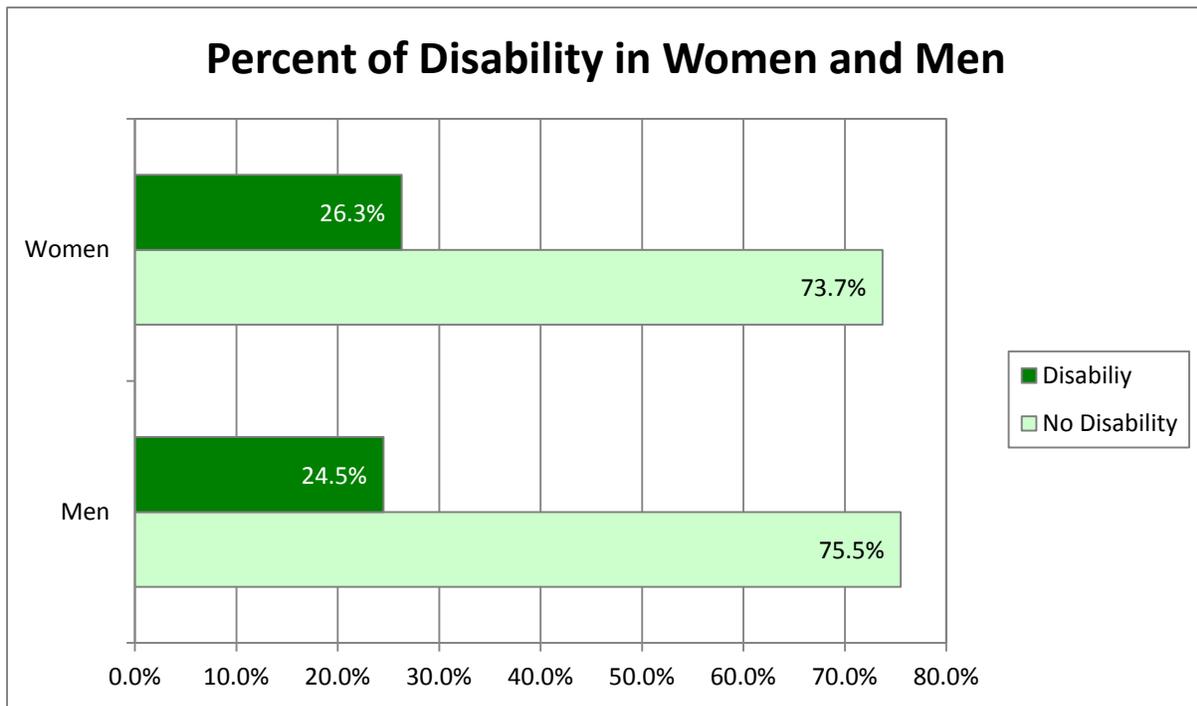
What age groups are most impacted by disability?

Disability becomes more common as people age. In the 18-44 age range, 16.3% of Oregon adults have a disability. Among 45-64 year olds, 31.7% have a disability, while 37.8% of 65-85 year olds have a disability. More than half (54.6%) of Oregonians over the age of 85 have a disability.



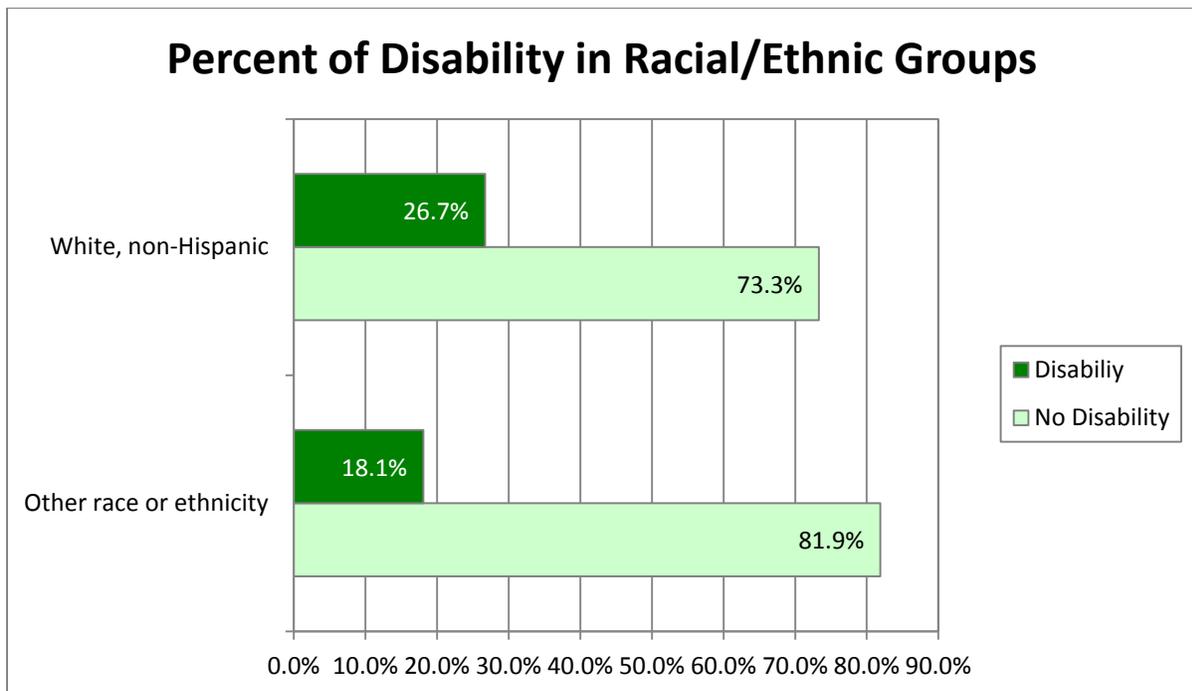
What proportions of men and women have a disability?

Women and men in Oregon are about equally likely to have a disability. A little more than one quarter (26.3%) of women have a disability; 24.5% of men have a disability.



How common is disability in different racial and ethnic groups?

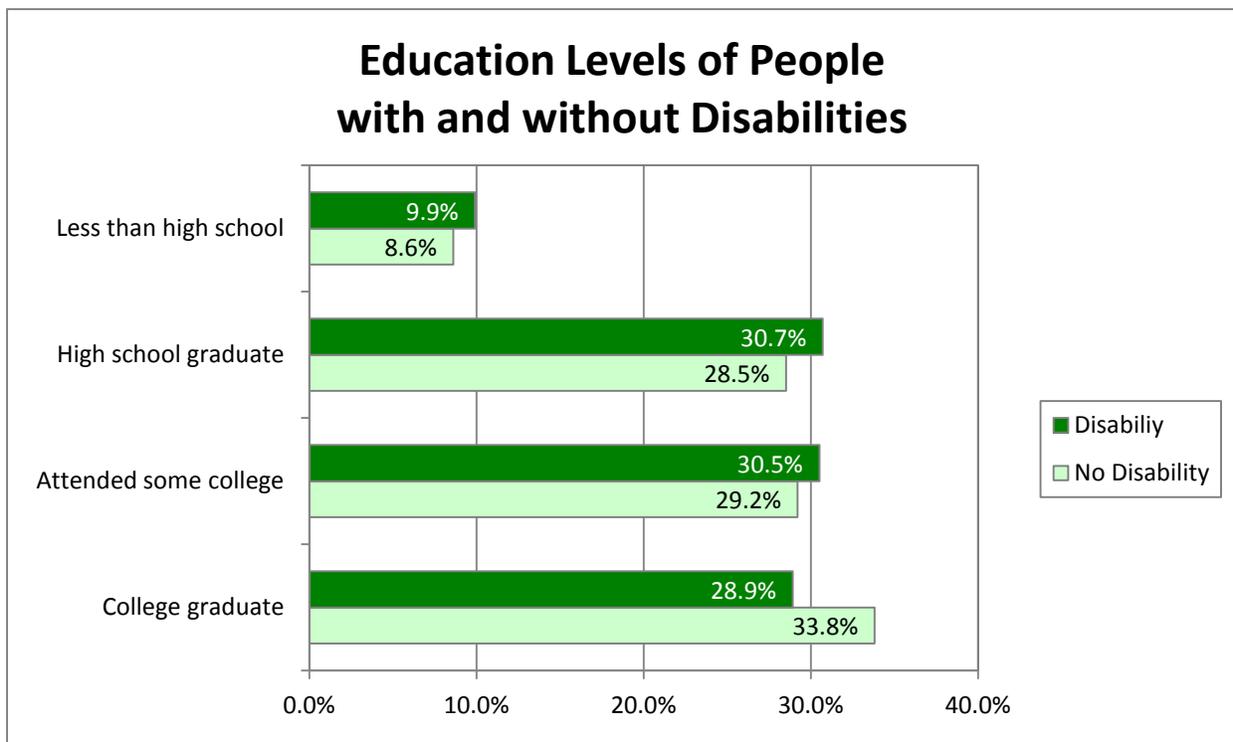
Among White, non-Hispanic adults, 26.7% have a disability. In Oregon, the number of respondents with disabilities in other racial and ethnic groups is too small to provide information for individual groups. Overall, 18.1% of non-White adults and Hispanic or Latino/a adults in Oregon have a disability. However disability may actually be much more common or less common in specific minority race/ethnicity groups.



How much education do people with disabilities have?

About ten percent (9.9%) of people with disabilities have less than a high school education, 30.7% have a high school education only, 30.5% have attended college or technical school but not graduated, and 28.9% of people with disabilities are graduates of college or technical school.

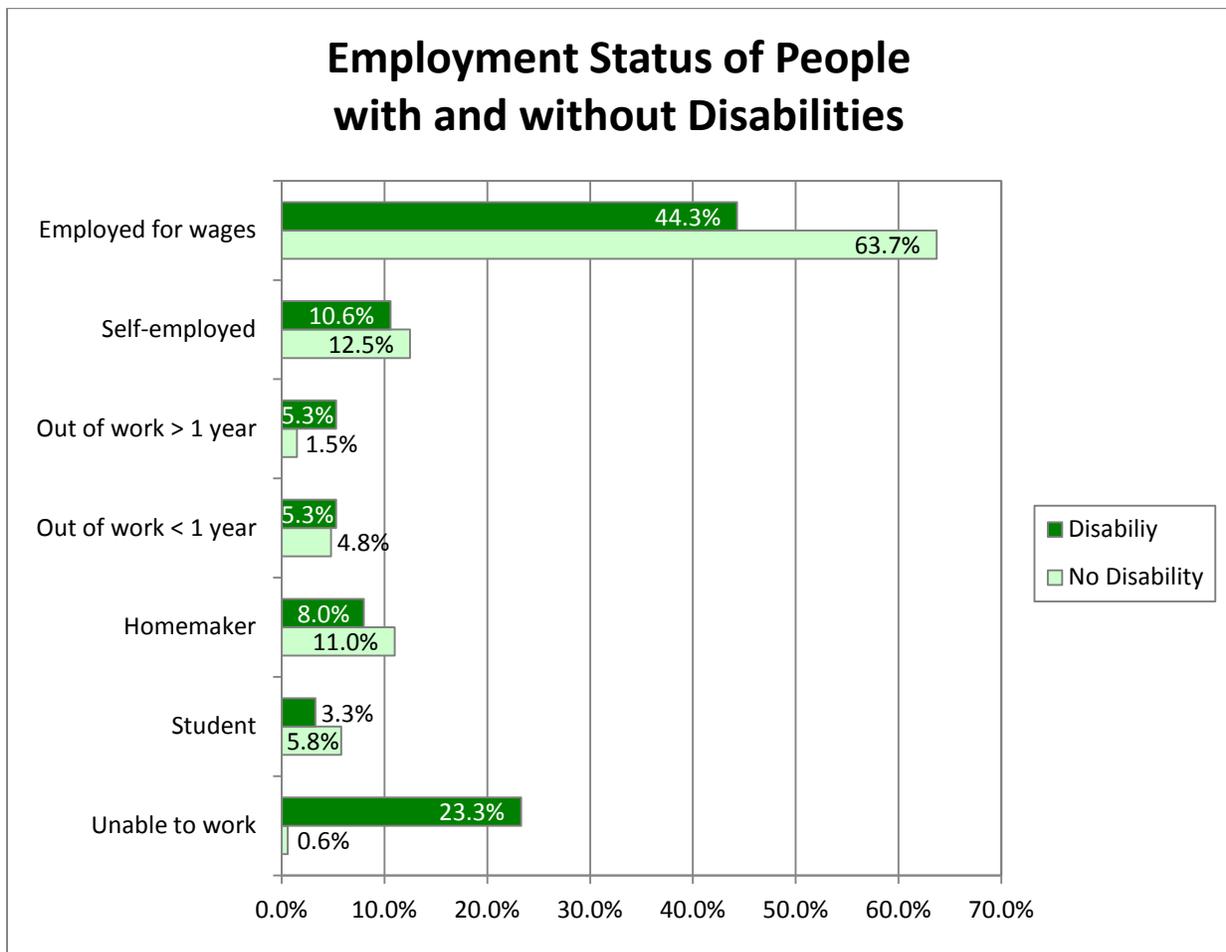
Of people without disabilities, 8.6% have less than a high school education, 28.5% have a high school education only, 29.2% have attended college or technical school but not graduated, and 33.8% are graduates of college or technical school.



How many people with disabilities are employed?

Among people with disabilities, 44.3% are employed for wages, 10.6% are self-employed, 5.3% have been out of work for more than a year, 5.3% have been out of work for less than a year, 8.0% are homemakers, 3.3% are students, and 23.3% are unable to work.

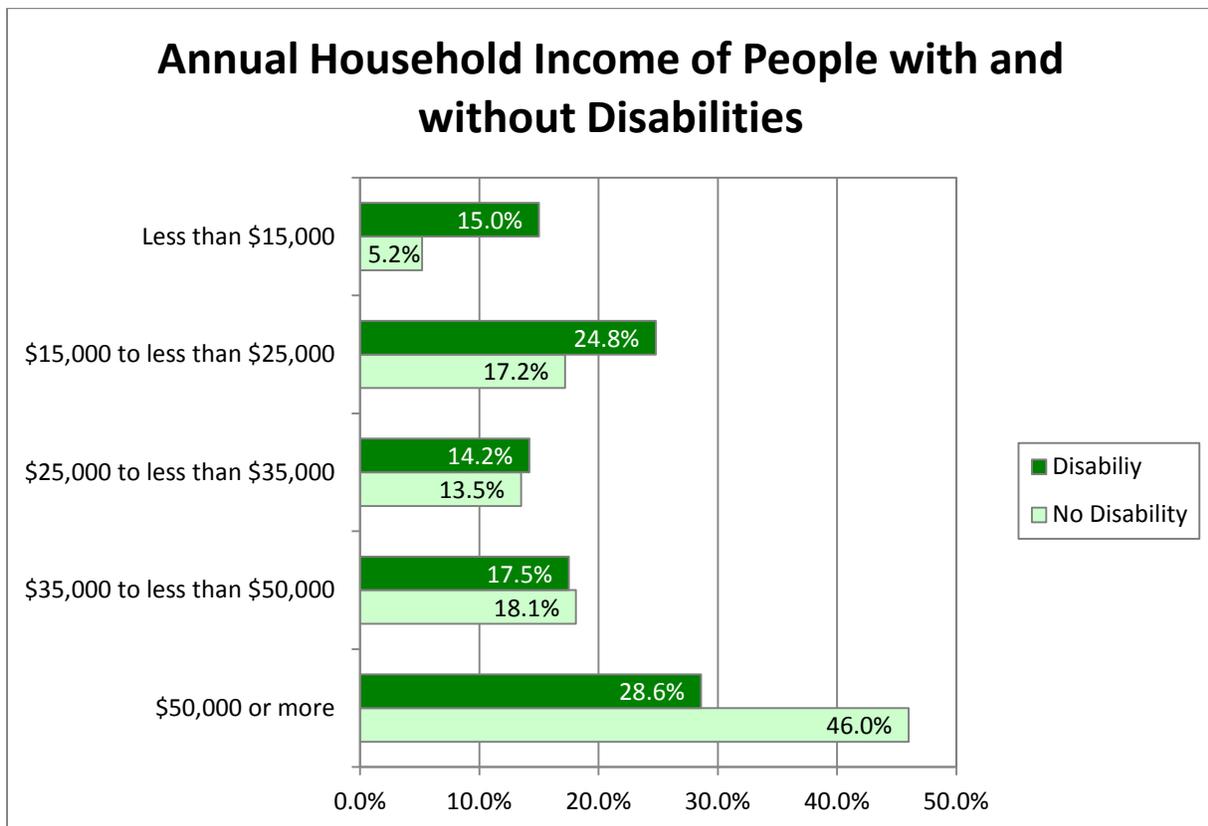
In contrast, 63.7% of people without disabilities are employed for wages, 12.5% are self-employed, 1.5% have been out of work for more than a year, 4.8% have been out of work for less than a year, 11.0% are homemakers, 5.8% are students, and 0.6% are unable to work.



What is the annual household income of people with disabilities?

Fifteen percent of people with disabilities have a household income of less than \$15,000 per year, 24.8% have an income between \$15,000 and \$25,000, 14.2% have an income between \$25,000 and \$35,000, 17.5% have an income between \$35,000 and \$50,000, and 28.6% have an annual income of \$50,000 or more.

Only 5.2% of people without disabilities have a household income of less than \$15,000 per year, 17.2% have an income between \$15,000 and \$25,000, 13.5% have an income between \$25,000 and \$35,000, 18.1% have an income between \$35,000 and \$50,000, and 46.0% have an annual income of \$50,000 or more.

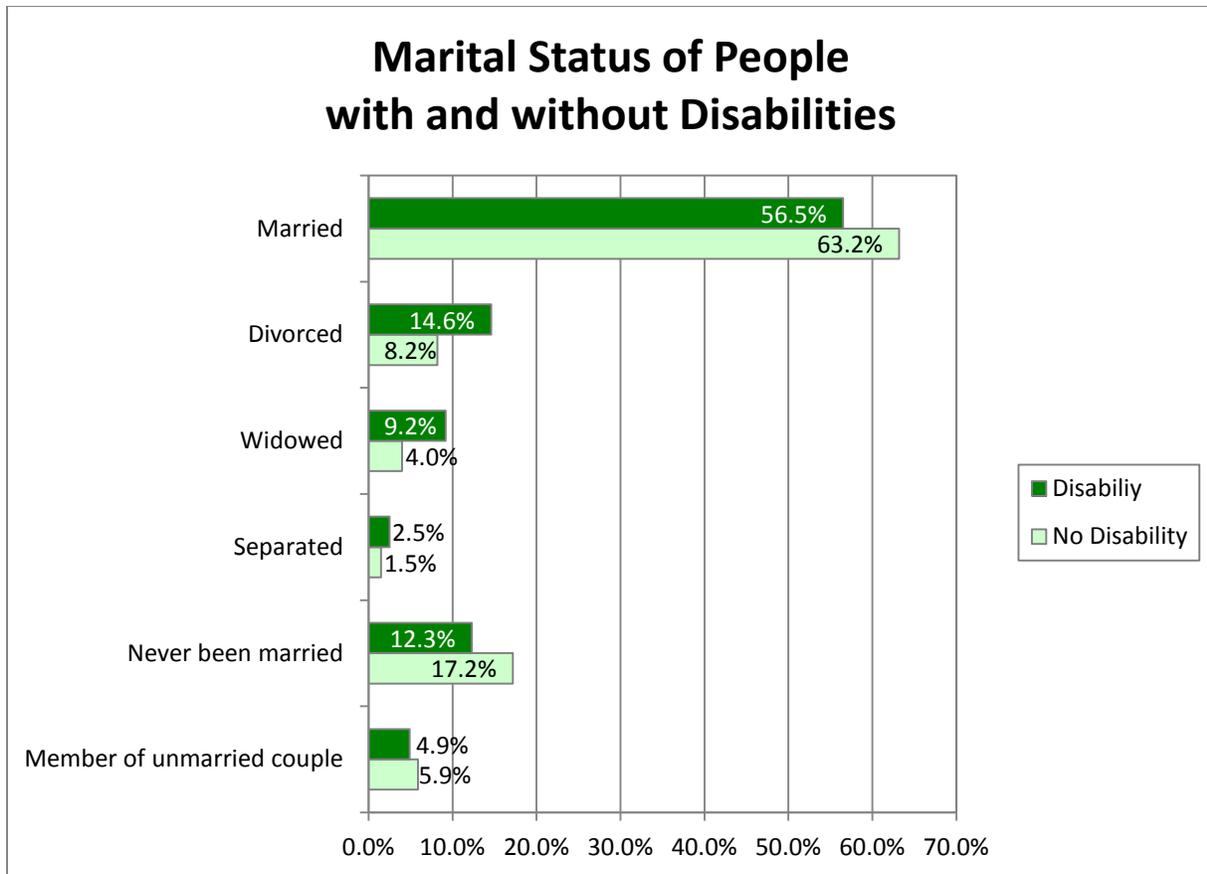


Social Support and Life Satisfaction

How many people with disabilities are married?

Among people with disabilities, 56.5% are married, 14.6% are divorced, 9.2% are widowed, 2.5% are separated, 12.3% have never been married, and 4.9% are members of unmarried couples.

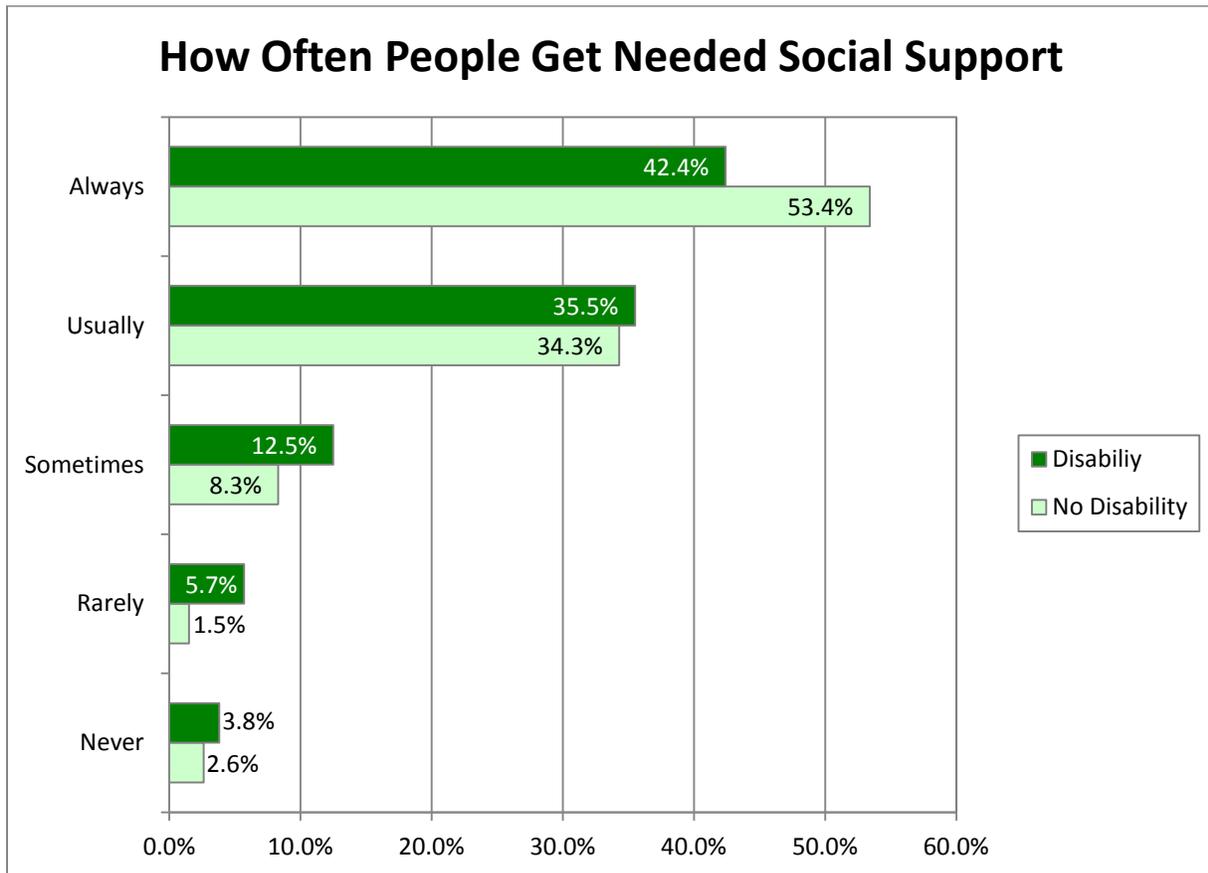
Among people without disabilities, 63.2% are married, 8.2% are divorced, 4.0% are widowed, 1.5% are separated, 17.2% have never been married, and 5.9% are members of unmarried couples.



How often do people with disabilities get the social support they need?

Among people with disabilities, 42.4% always get the social and emotional support they need, 35.5% usually do, 12.5% sometimes do, 5.7% rarely do, and 3.8% never receive the support they need.

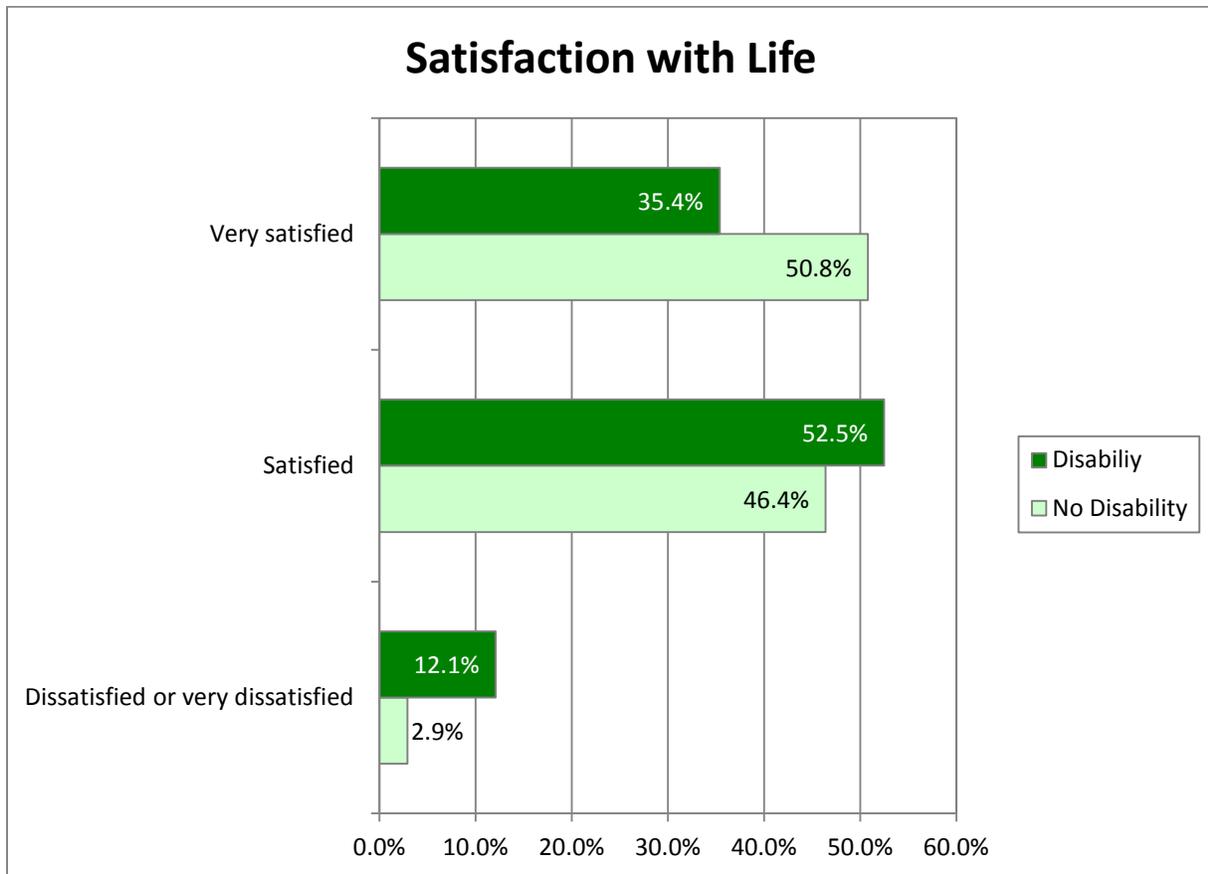
Of people without disabilities, 53.4% always get the social and emotional support they need, 34.3% usually do, 8.3% sometimes do, 1.5% rarely do, and 2.6% never do.



How satisfied are people with their lives?

About 35.4% of people with disabilities are very satisfied with their lives, 52.5% are satisfied, and 12.1% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Among people without disabilities, 50.8% are very satisfied, 46.4% are satisfied, and 2.9% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

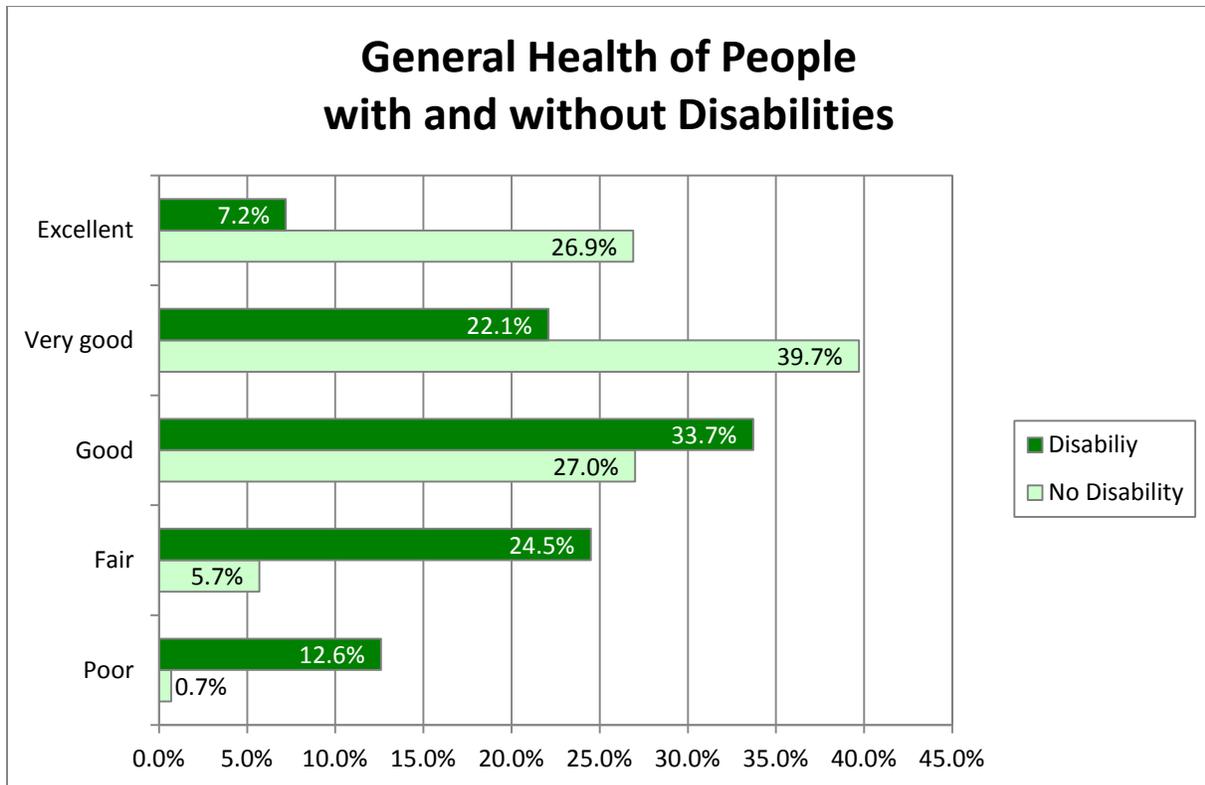


Overall Health

How do people with disabilities describe their general health?

About 7.2% of people with disabilities describe their health as excellent, 22.1% say their health is very good, 33.7% say it is good, 24.5% say their health is fair, and 12.6% describe their health as poor.

In comparison, 26.9% of people without disabilities describe their health as excellent, 39.7% say their health is very good, 27.0% say it is good, 5.7% say their health is fair, and 0.7% describe their health as poor.

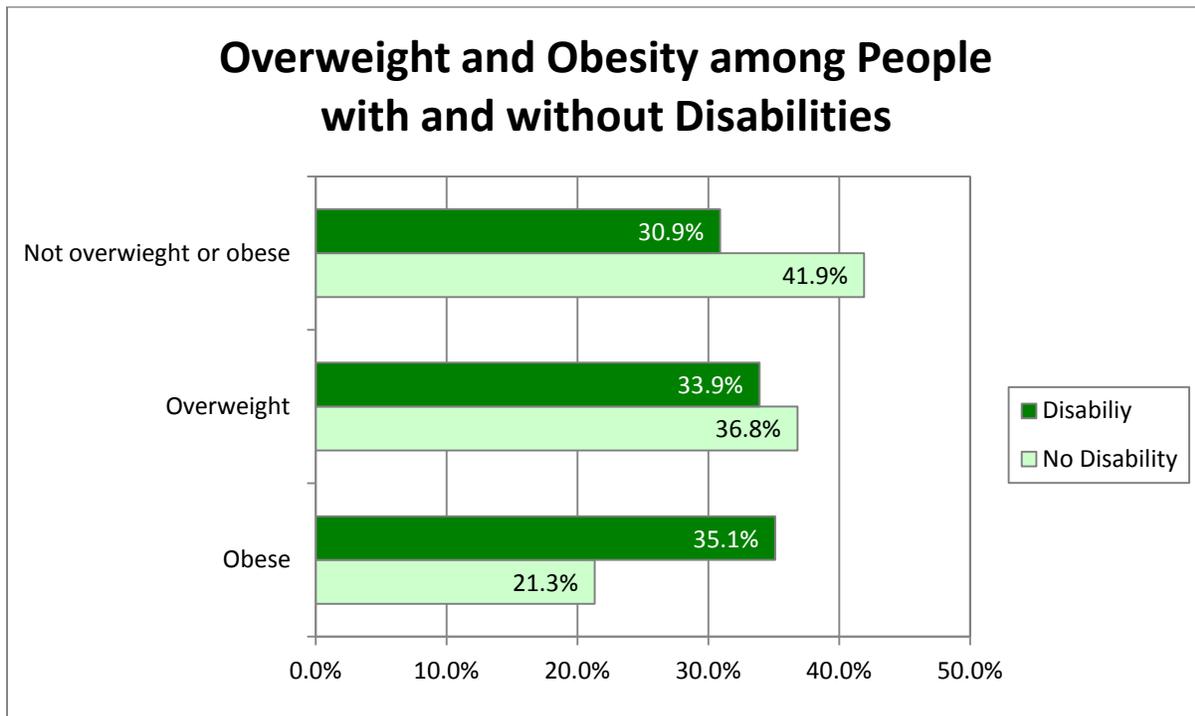


Obesity and Food Insecurity

How many people with disabilities are overweight or obese?

About one third (33.9%) of people with disabilities are overweight and 35.1% are obese. Only 30.9% are not considered overweight or obese.

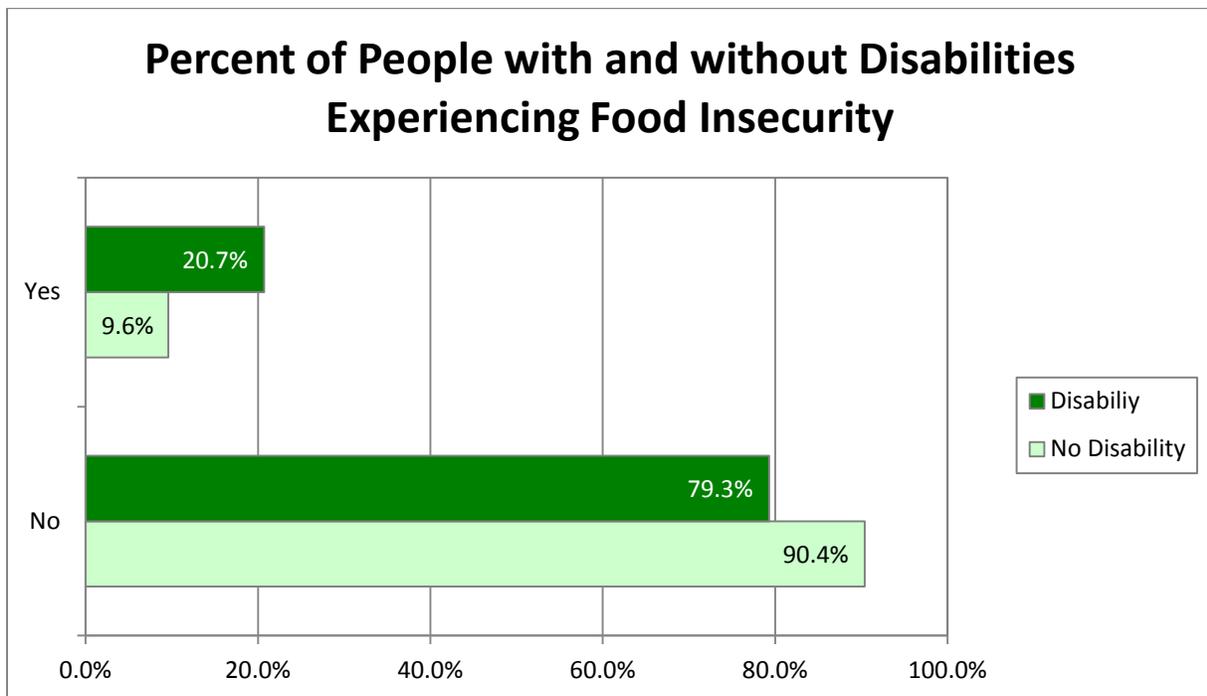
Among people without disabilities, 36.8% are overweight, 21.3% are obese, and 41.9% are not overweight or obese.



Do people with disabilities experience food insecurity?

Food insecurity refers to limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food. People who experience food insecurity may not know where their next meal is coming from, or may skip meals because they cannot afford food. They may also eat less nutritious foods because they are cheaper or easier to obtain. Food insecurity is associated with poor nutritional status, obesity, and other health problems.

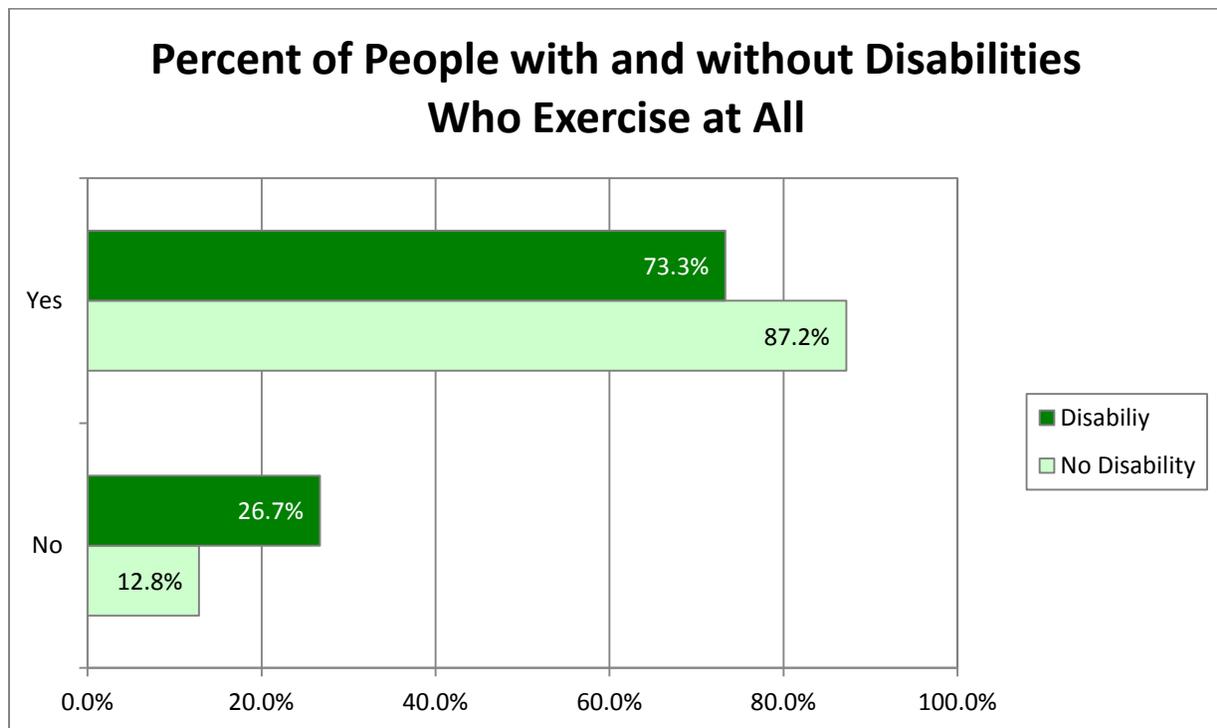
In Oregon, 20.7% of people with disabilities and 9.6% of people without disabilities have experienced food insecurity in their household in the past year.



Health Behaviors

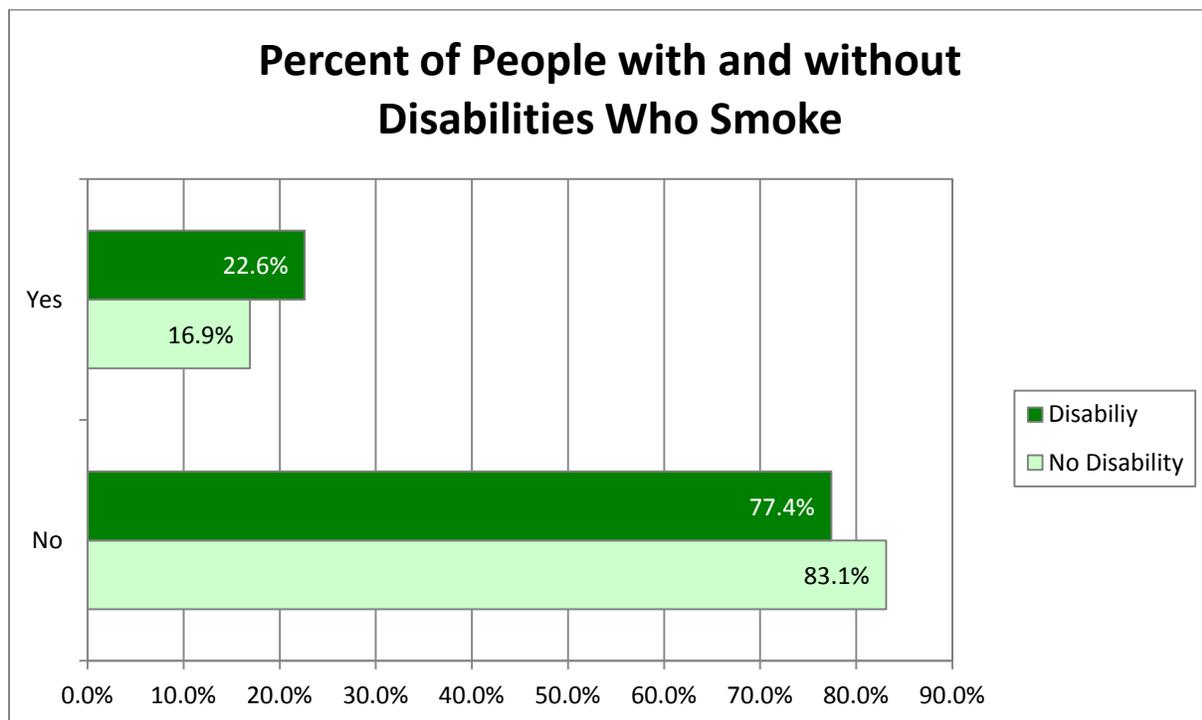
How many people with disabilities have exercised in the past month?

In the past month, 73.3% of people with disabilities have participated in some type of physical activity or exercise other than their regular job. Among people without disabilities, 87.2% have participated in any exercise other than their regular job.



How many people with disabilities smoke?

About 22.6% of people with disabilities have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime and are current smokers. In comparison, 16.9% of people without disabilities have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their life and are current smokers.

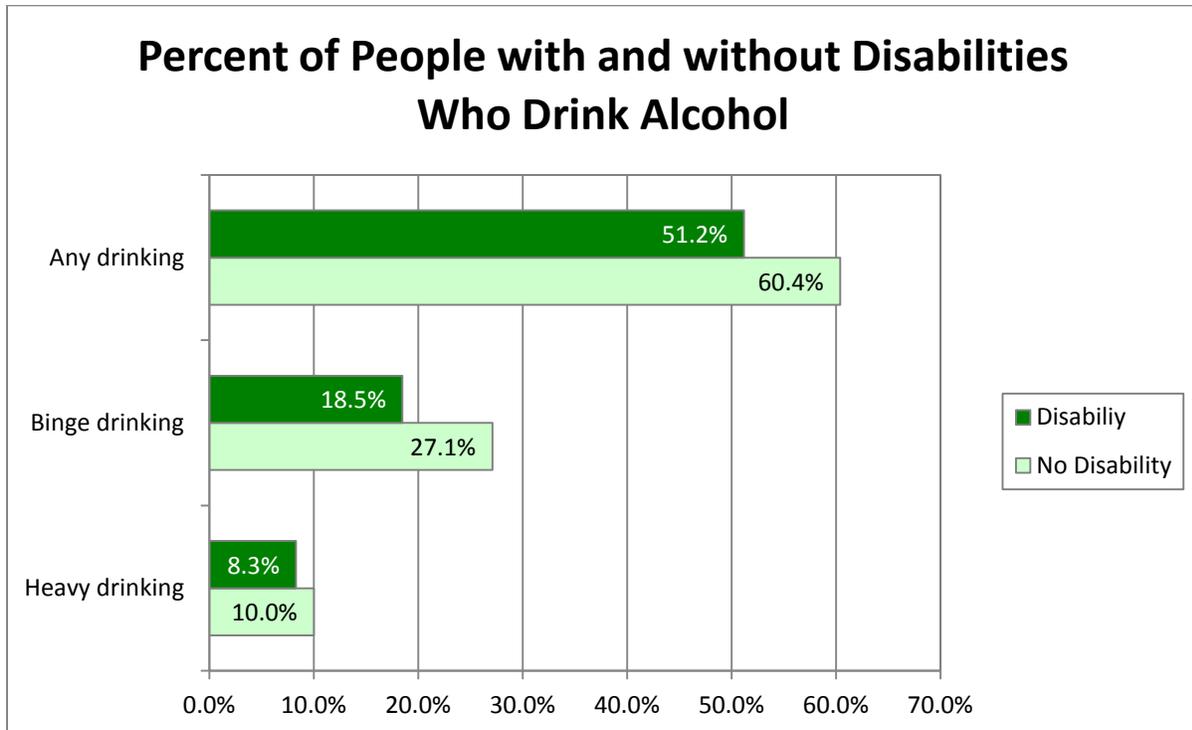


How many people with disabilities drink alcohol?

About half (51.2%) of people with disabilities and 60.4% of people without disabilities have had at least one drink of alcohol in the past month.

Among those who have had alcohol in the last month, 18.5% of people with disabilities and 27.1% of people without disabilities have engaged in binge drinking. Binge drinking means consuming four or more drinks (for women) or five or more drinks (for men) on a single occasion.

Of people who have had alcohol in the past month, 8.3% of people with disabilities and 10.0% of people without disabilities are considered heavy drinkers. Heavy drinking is defined as more than two drinks per day for men and more than one drink per day for women.

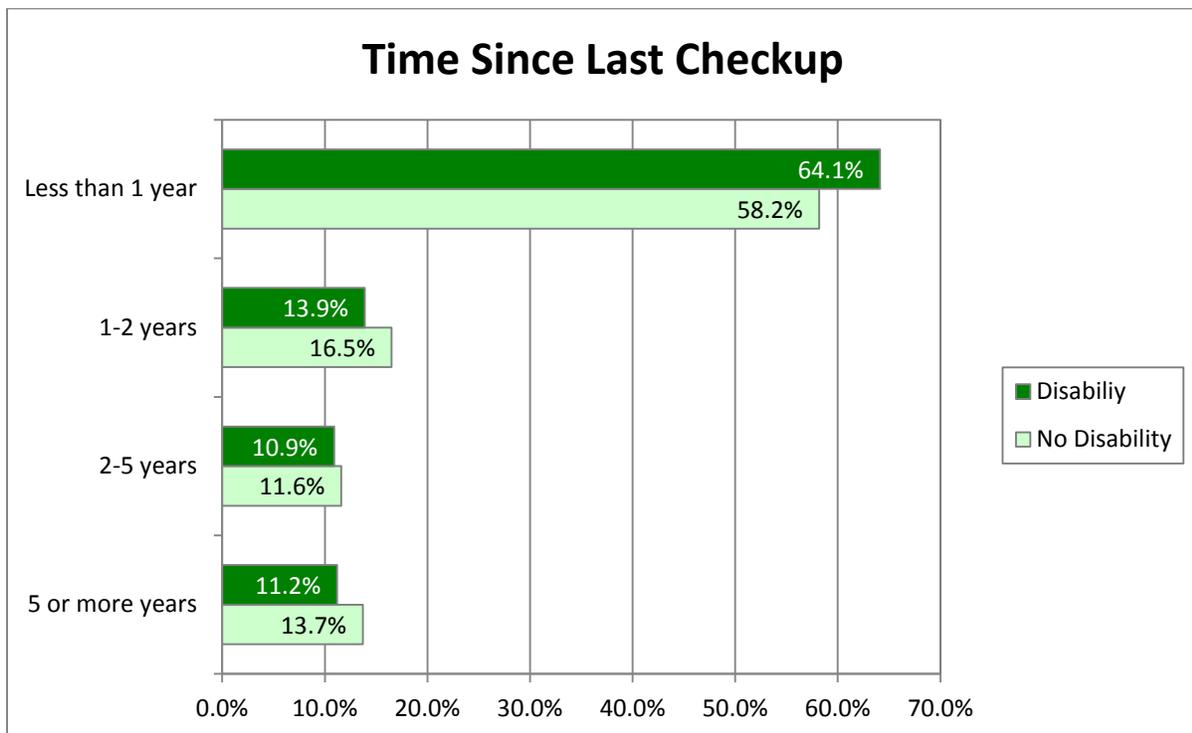


Health Care and Insurance

How long has it been since adults with disabilities last visited a doctor for a routine checkup?

Of people with disabilities, 64.1% had a checkup less than a year ago, 13.9% had a checkup between one and two years ago, 10.9% had a checkup between two and five years ago, and 11.2% have not had a checkup in five or more years.

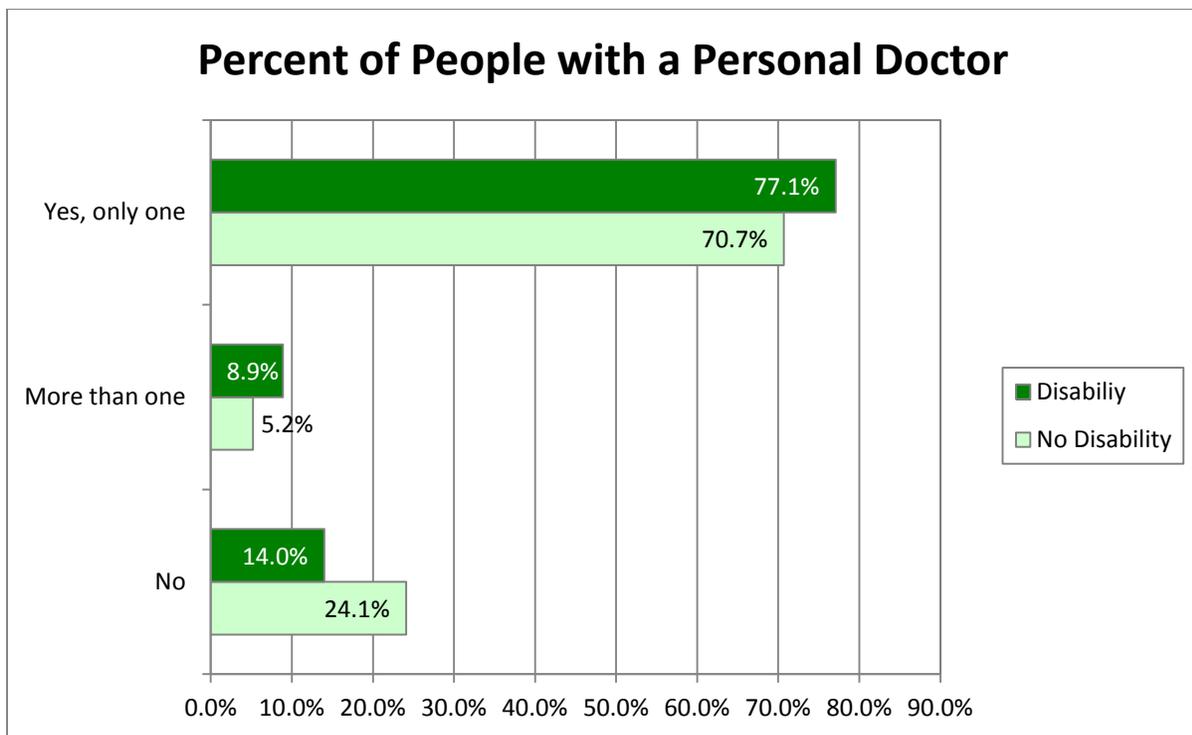
For people without disabilities, the last checkup was less than a year ago for 58.2%, between one and two years ago for 16.5%, between two and five years ago for 11.6%, and five or more years ago for 13.7%.



Do people with disabilities have a personal doctor or health care provider?

Of people with disabilities, 77.1% have one person they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider, 8.9% have more than one, and 14.0% do not have a personal doctor or health care provider.

About 70.7% of people without disabilities have a personal doctor, 5.2% have more than one, and 24.1% have none.

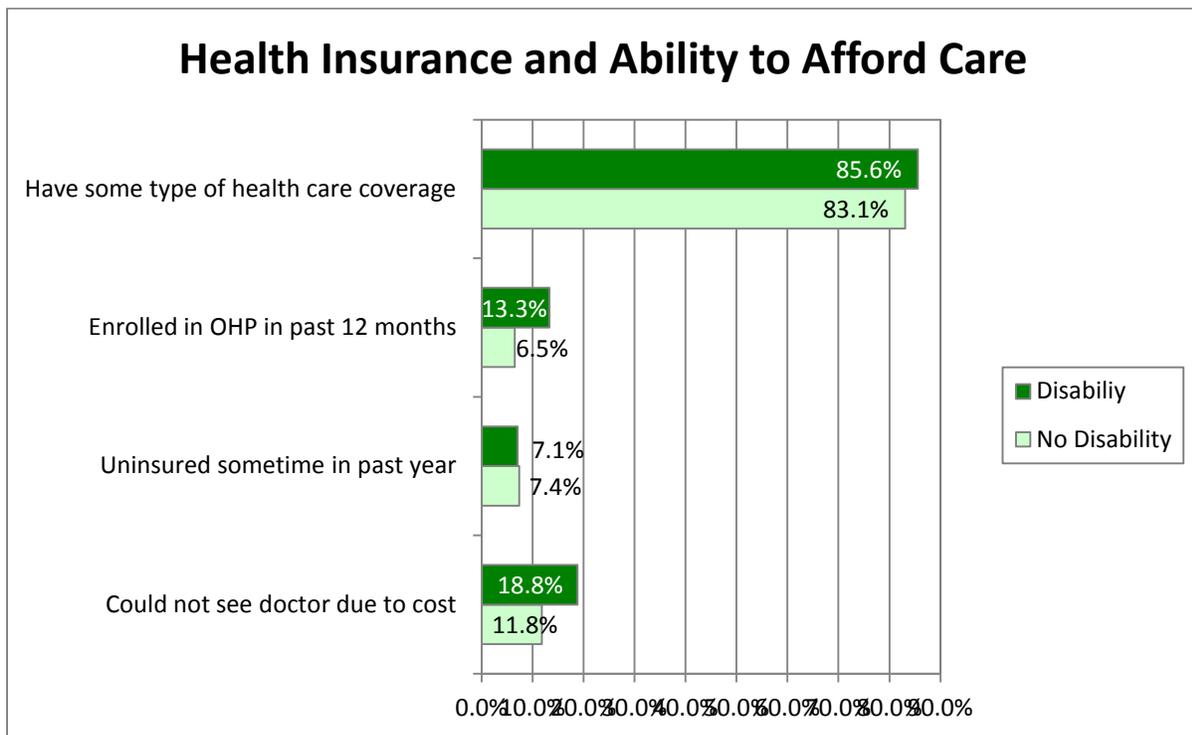


Do people with disabilities have access to affordable health care?

Among people with disabilities, 85.6% have some kind of health care coverage and 13.3% have been enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan (Oregon’s Medicaid program) in the past 12 months. Of people without disabilities, 83.1% have some type of health coverage and 6.5% have been enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan in the past 12 months.

For 7.1% of people with disabilities and 7.4% of people without disabilities, there was a time in the past year when they did not have any health insurance or health care coverage.

For 18.8% of people with disabilities and 11.8% of people without disabilities, there was a time in the past year when they needed to see a doctor but could not because of cost.

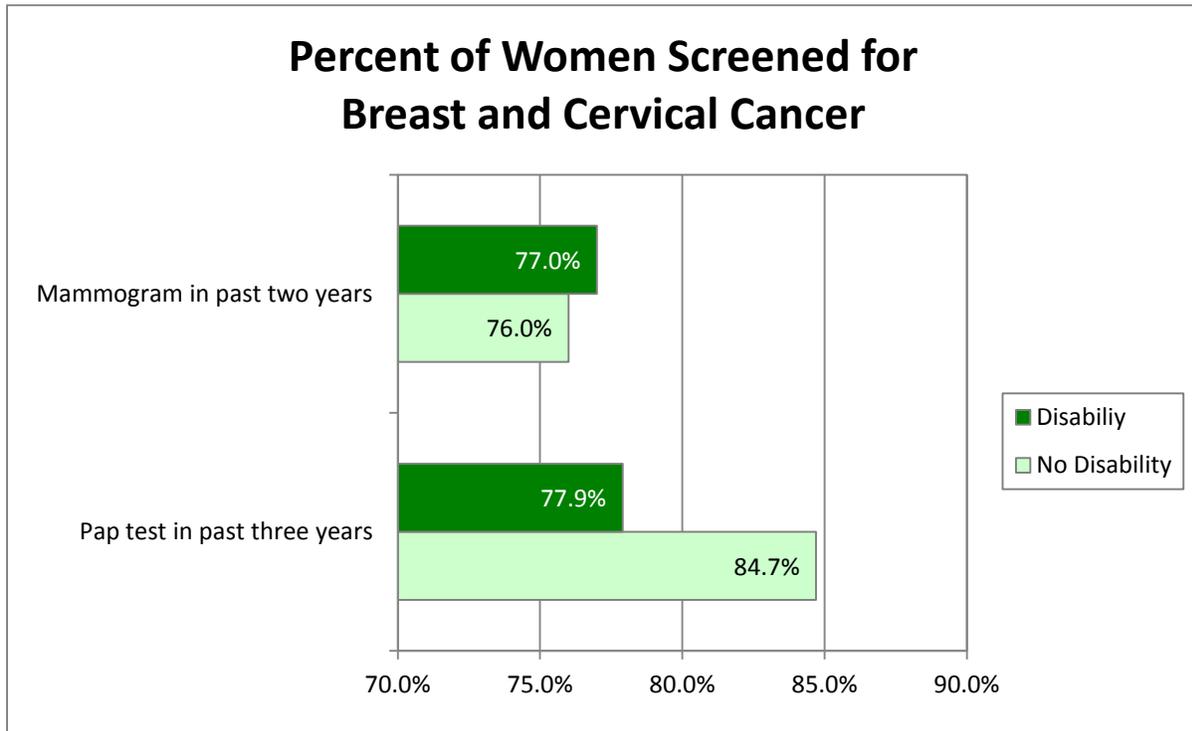


Cancer Screening

How many women with disabilities have received breast and cervical cancer screening within the recommended timeframe?

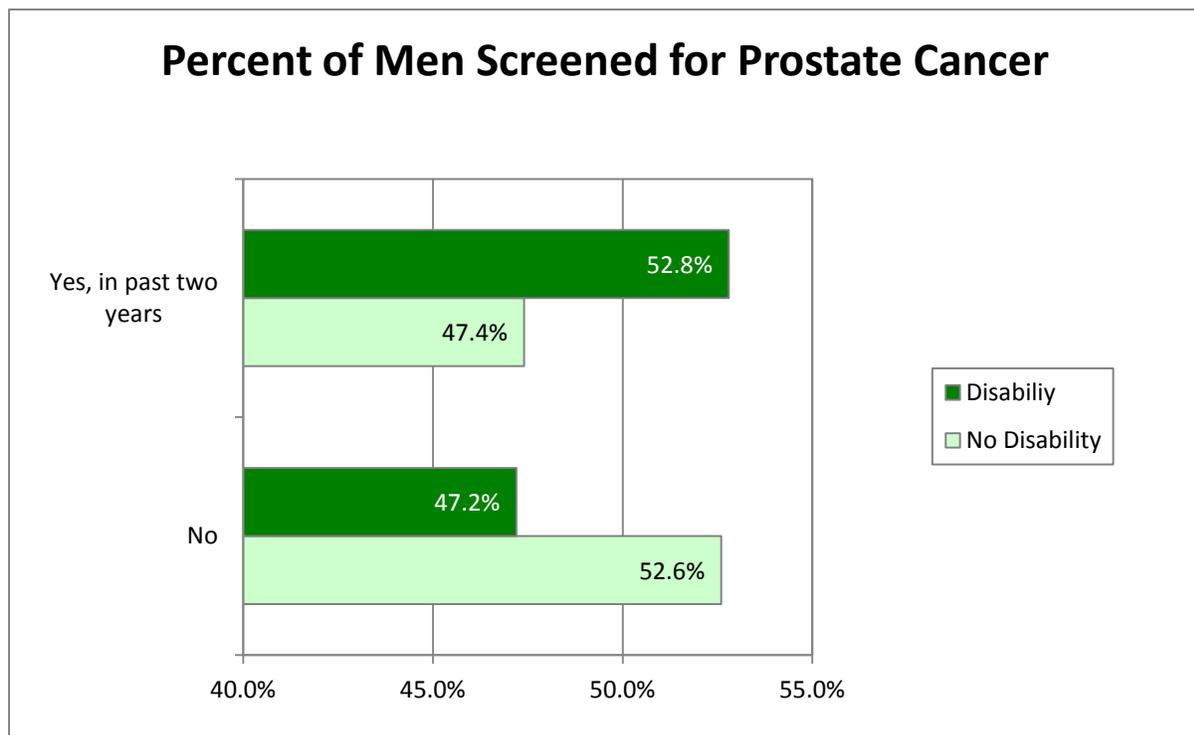
Among women age 40 years and older, 77.0% of women with disabilities and 76.0% of women without disabilities have received a mammogram to screen for breast cancer within the past two years.

Among women age 18 years and older, 77.9% of women with disabilities and 84.7% of women without disabilities have received a Pap test to screen for cervical cancer within the past three years.



How many men with disabilities have received a recent PSA test?

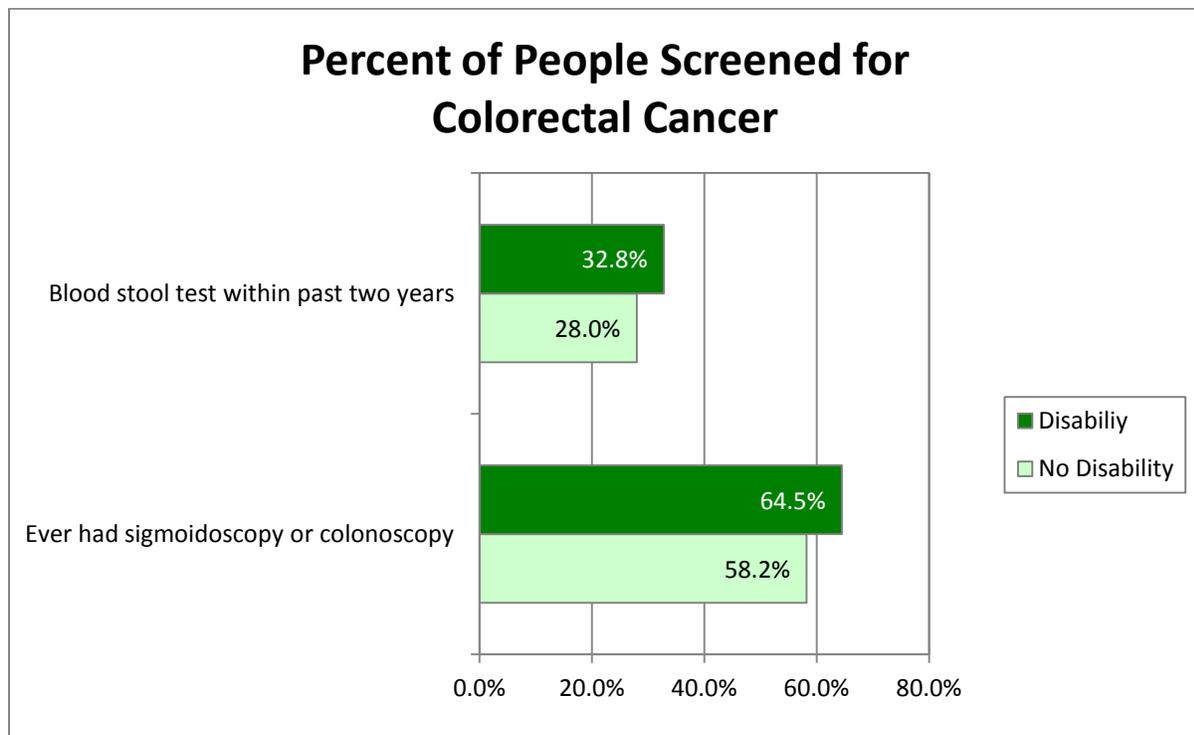
Among men age 40 years and older, 52.8% of men with disabilities and 47.4% of men without disabilities have received a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test in the past two years to screen for prostate cancer.



How many people with disabilities have been screened for colorectal cancer?

Among adults age 50 years and older, 32.8% of people with disabilities and 28.0% of people without disabilities have had a blood stool test within the past two years.

In the same age range, 64.5% of people with disabilities and 58.2% of people without disabilities have ever had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy.

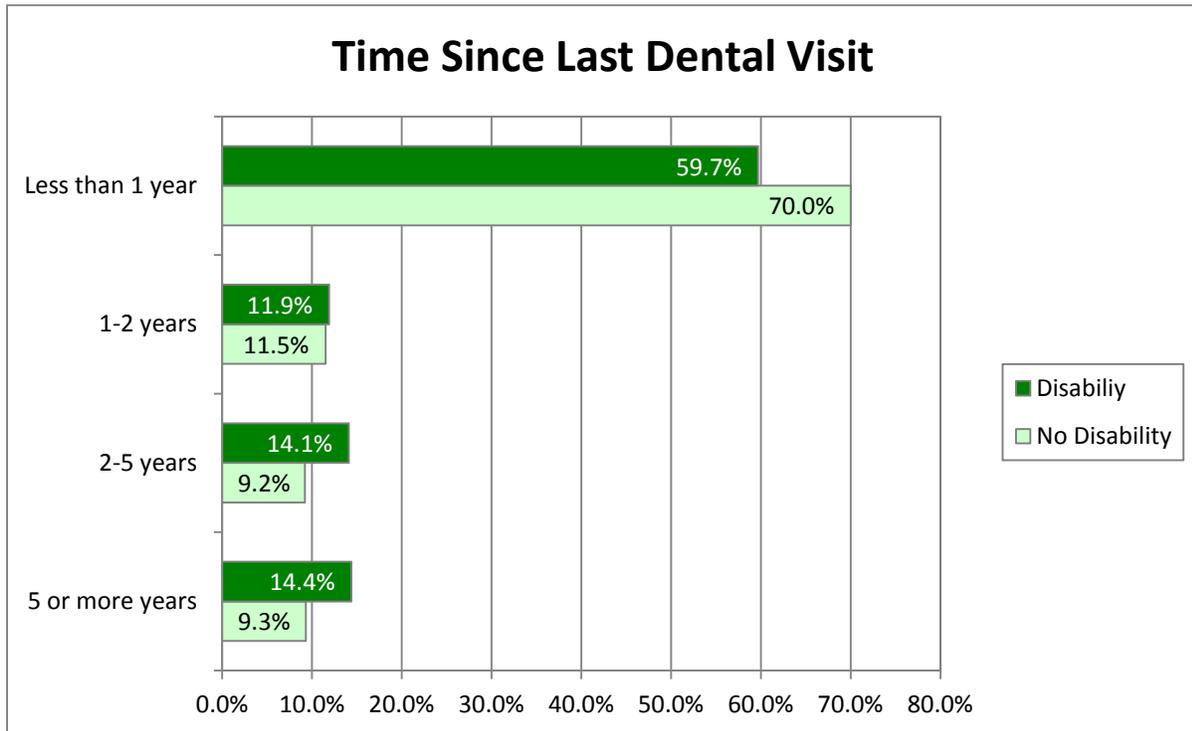


Oral Health

How long has it been since people with disabilities last visited a dentist or dental clinic for any reason?

Of people with disabilities, 59.7% have been to a dentist within the past year, 11.9% last went to a dentist between one and two years ago, 14.1% between two and five years ago, and 14.4% have not been to a dentist for five or more years.

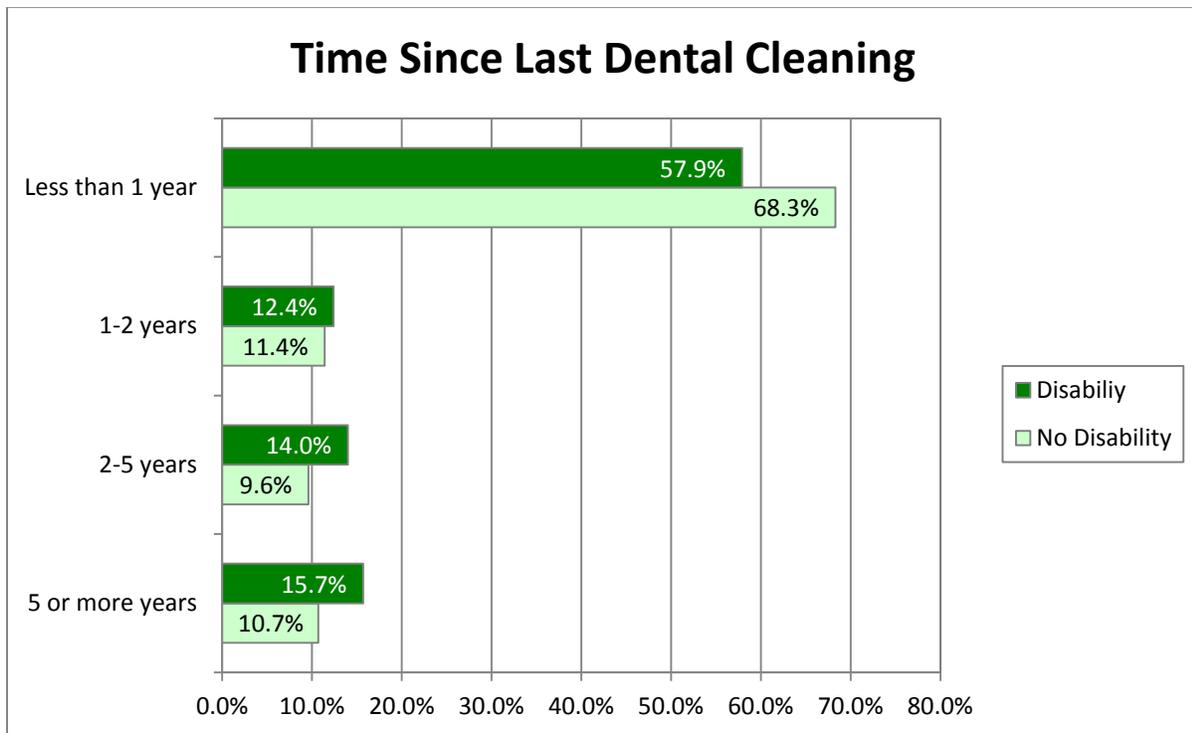
Seventy percent of people without disabilities have been to a dentist within the past year, 11.5% between one and two years ago, 9.2% between two and five years ago, and 9.3% five or more years ago.



How long has it been since people with disabilities last had their teeth cleaned by a dentist or dental hygienist?

The last professional dental cleaning received by people with disabilities was less than one year ago for 57.9%, between one and two years ago for 12.4%, between two and five years ago for 14.0%, and five or more years ago for 15.7%.

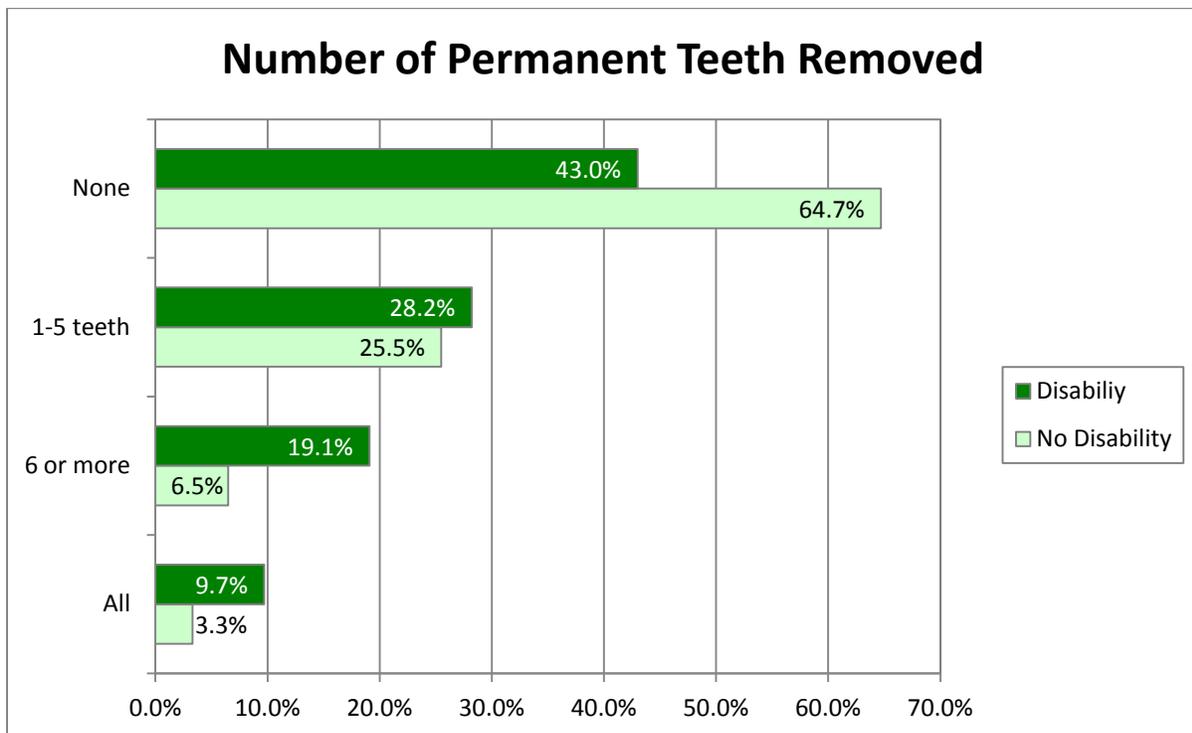
For people without disabilities, the last dental cleaning was less than one year ago for 68.3%, between one and two years ago for 11.4%, between two and five years ago for 9.6%, and five or more years ago for 10.7%.



How many permanent teeth have people with disabilities had removed?

Forty-three percent of people with disabilities have had none of their permanent teeth removed because of tooth decay or gum disease, 28.2% have had one to five teeth removed, 19.1% have had six or more but not all of their teeth removed, and 9.7% have had all of their teeth removed.

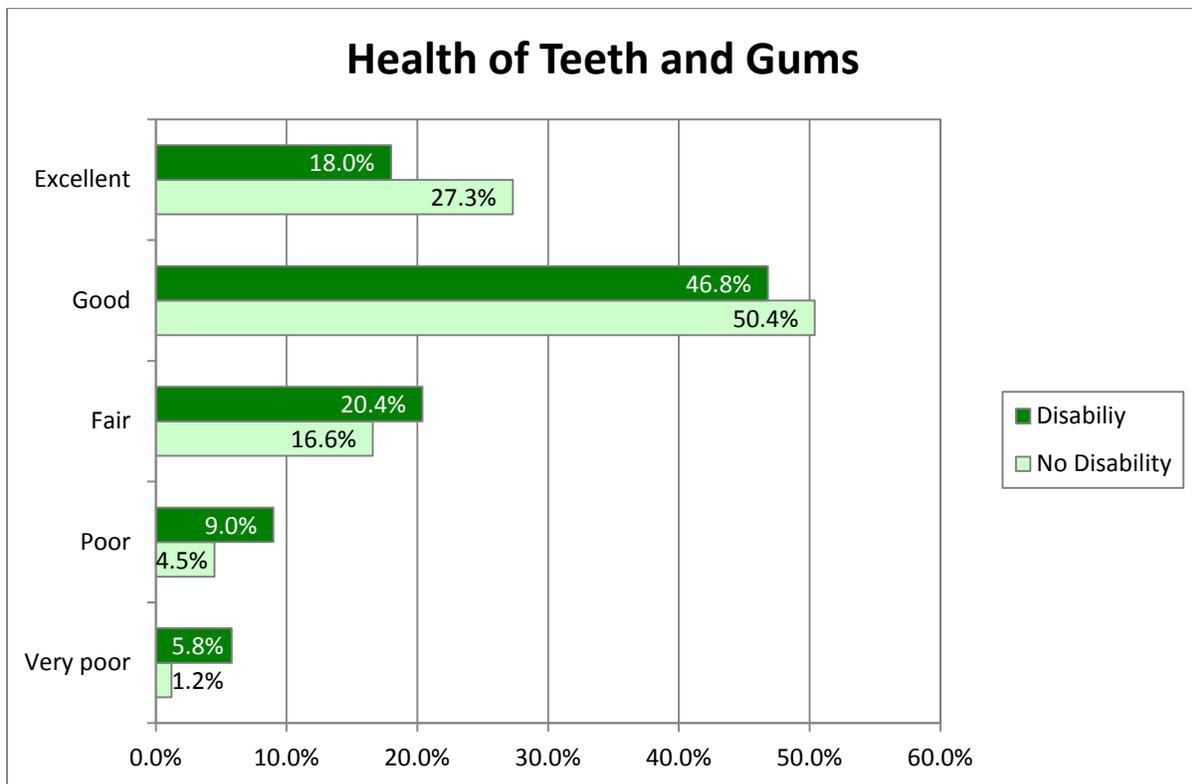
Among people without disabilities, 64.7% have not had any permanent teeth removed due to decay or disease, 25.5% have had one to five teeth removed, 6.5% have had six or more but not all of their teeth removed, and 3.3% have had all of their teeth removed.



How do people with disabilities describe the health of their teeth and gums?

Eighteen percent of people with disabilities describe the health of their teeth and gums as excellent, 46.8% describe it as good, 20.4% describe it as fair, 9.0% describe it as poor, and 5.8% describe the health of their teeth and gums as very poor.

In comparison, 27.3% of people without disabilities describe the health of their teeth and gums as excellent, 50.4% describe it as good, 16.6% describe it as fair, 4.5% describe it as poor, and 1.2% describe the health of their teeth and gums as very poor.

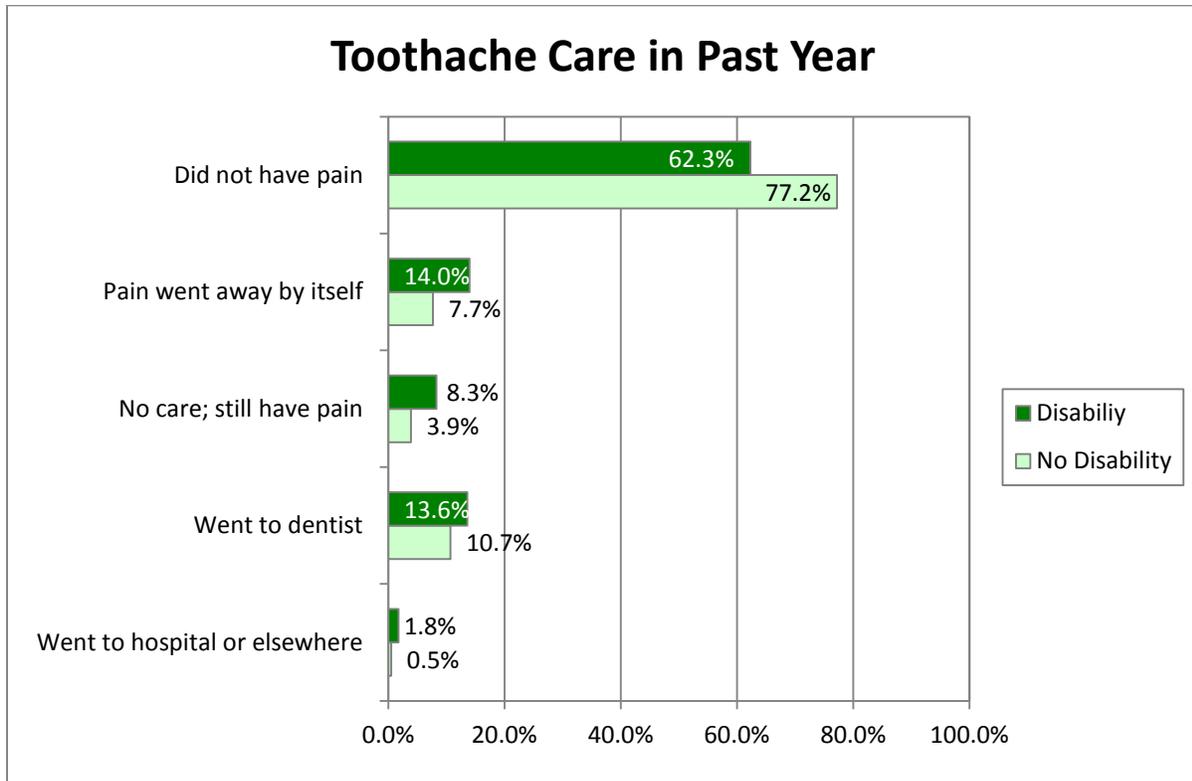


How many people with disabilities have had a toothache in the past year?

When asked whether they had a toothache or pain when biting or chewing during the past year, 62.3% of people with disabilities and 77.2% of people without disabilities said no.

Of those who did have a toothache, 14.0% of people with disabilities said the pain went away by itself, 8.3% had not received care and still had pain, 13.6% had it taken care of at a dentist's office, and 1.8% had it taken care of at a hospital emergency room or somewhere else.

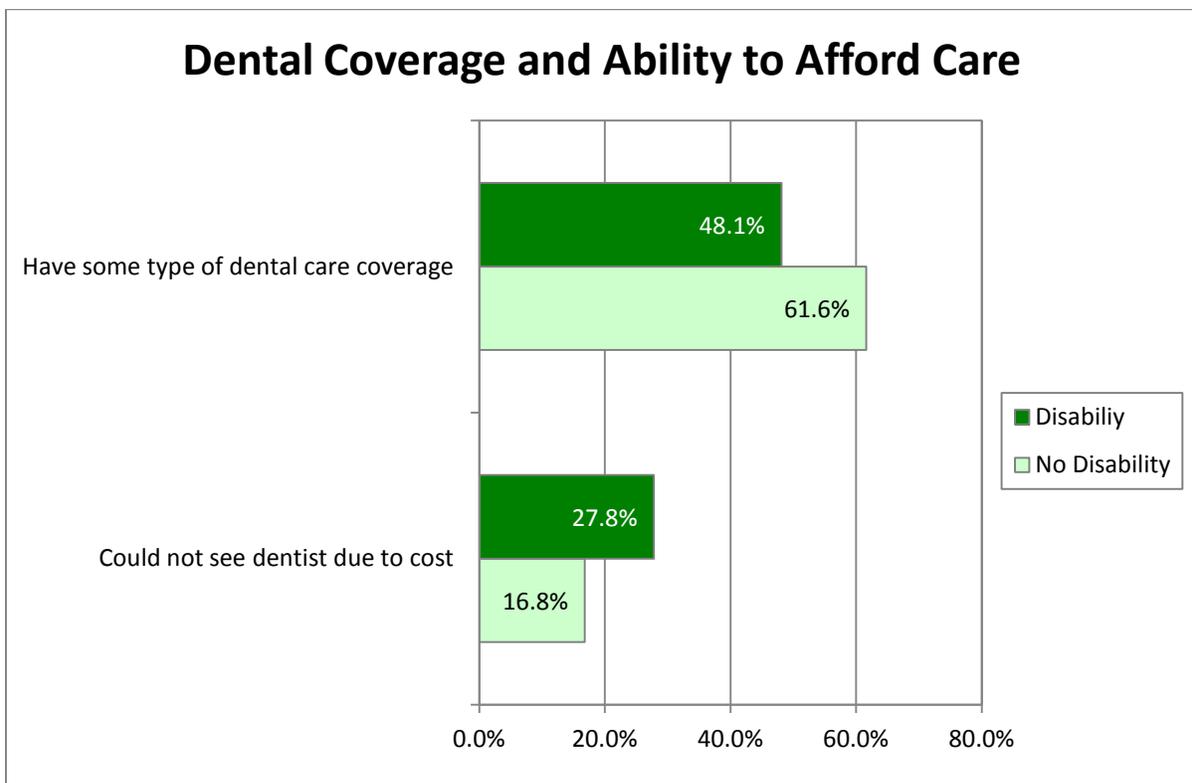
For people without disabilities who had a toothache, 7.7% said the pain went away by itself, 3.9% received no care and still had pain, 10.7% had it taken care of at a dentist's office, and 0.5% went to a hospital or somewhere else for the tooth pain.



How many people with disabilities have dental coverage and access to affordable dental care?

Among people with disabilities, 48.1% have some kind of dental insurance or coverage for dental care. In contrast, 61.6% of people without disabilities have dental coverage.

Cost was a barrier to receiving needed dental care in the past year for 27.8% of people with disabilities. In comparison, 16.8% of people without disabilities said there was a time in the past year when they needed to see a dentist but could not because of the cost.



OODH Efforts

What is OODH doing to help address the issues identified in this book? We have a number of activities focused on improving the health and wellness of Oregonians with disabilities, including:

1. Implementing *Healthy Lifestyles*, an evidence-based health promotion program providing people with disabilities with the knowledge and skills to live a healthy life. Healthy Lifestyles workshops will soon be offered in Spanish too.
2. Implementing the “Right to Know” Campaign, a health communication program developed by the CDC to promote breast cancer screening for women 40 years of age and older with physical disabilities.
3. Participating in state emergency preparedness efforts and providing training and education to first responders on the needs of people with disabilities in emergency situations.
4. Conducting community engagement activities to improve the physical and social accessibility of community environments, with an emphasis on improving accessibility of healthcare settings.
5. Teaching current and future public health and healthcare professionals about the care and health promotion of people with disabilities through graduate courses and training seminars.
6. Tracking the health of Oregonians with disabilities through analysis of BRFSS and other data to help inform programs and policies related to the health and well-being of individuals with disabilities in our state.
7. Hosting *Celebrate Wellness*, an annual conference promoting the health and wellness of Oregonians with disabilities.

If you would like to receive this report in an alternate format, please contact:

Oregon Office on Disability and Health
Center on Community Accessibility
Oregon Institute on Disability & Development
Child Development and Rehabilitation Center
Oregon Health & Science University

CDRC - PO Box 574
Portland, OR 97207-0574
(503) 494-3331
(503) 494-0931 Fax
voltolin@ohsu.edu

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