

# Center on Community Accessibility

Oregon Office on Disability and Health

## Disability in Oregon



2009 Annual Report on the Health of  
Oregonians with Disabilities



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## Executive Summary

One in four adults in Oregon has a disability, according to 2007 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

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

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.





## **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 in time, 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. Most of the information used for this book was collected in Oregon in 2007. For the county map on page 2, information from 2004-2007 was combined to provide a big enough sample size to estimate the percent of disability in each county. The multi-year dataset was developed specifically for comparisons between counties, so it was not used for any of the statewide information in this book.

### **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:

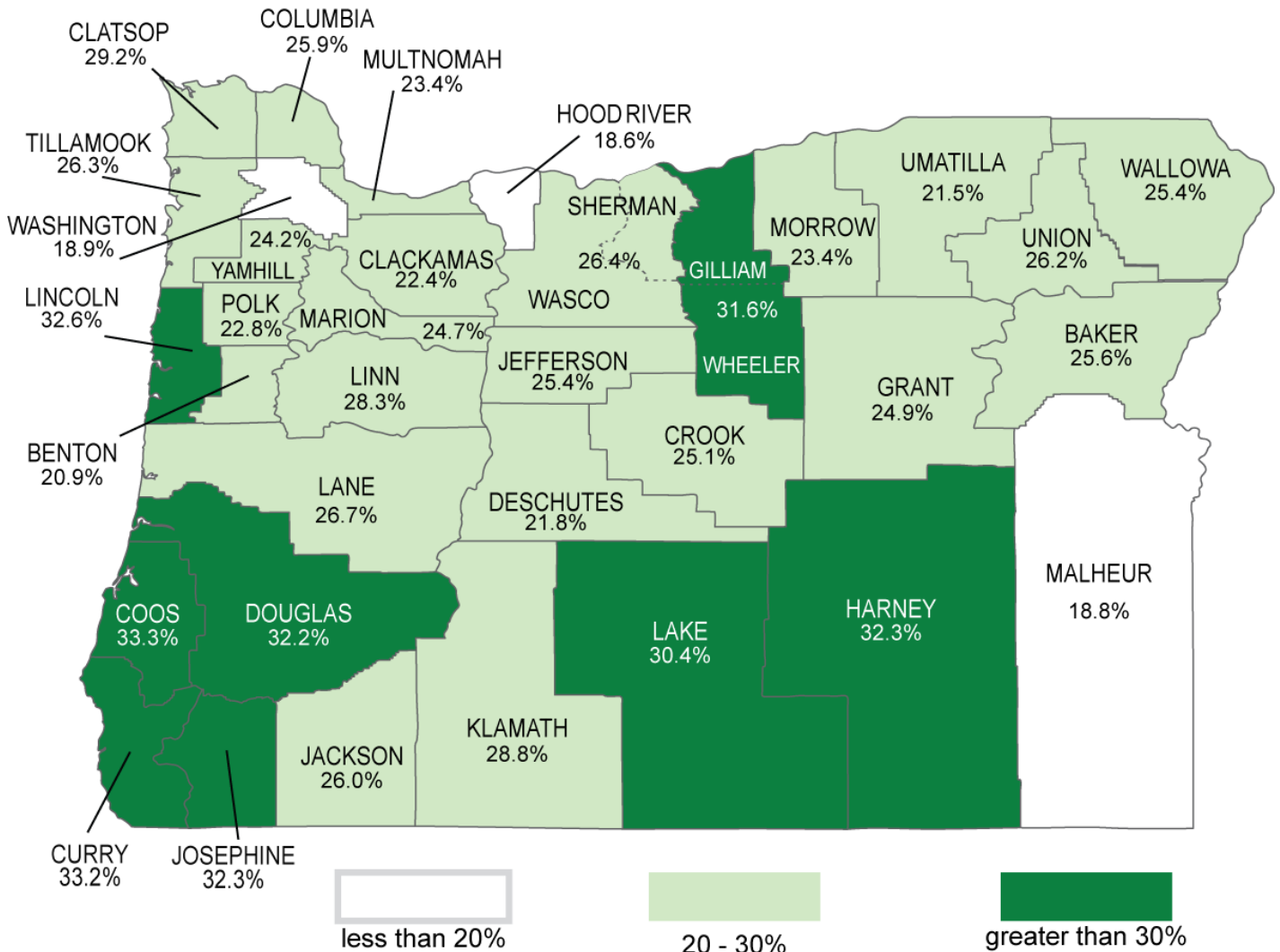
1. Are you limited in any way in any activities because of physical, mental, or emotional problems?
2. Do you now have any health problem that requires you to use special equipment, such as a cane, a wheelchair, a special bed, or a special telephone?

# Disability in Oregon

## How many people in Oregon have a disability?

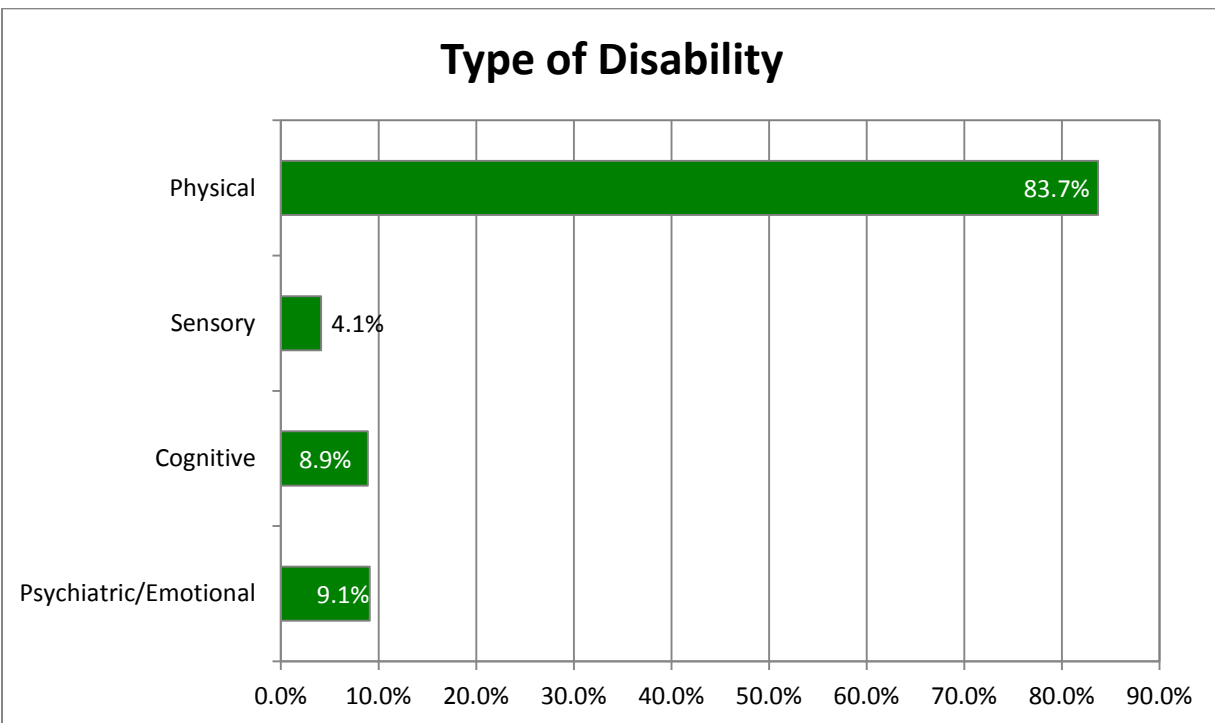
About 703,141 Oregon adults age 18 and older have a disability. This is one quarter (24.9%) of the adult population of Oregon.

When looking at specific counties, the percent of disability ranges from a low of 18.6% in Hood River County to a high of 33.3% in Coos County.



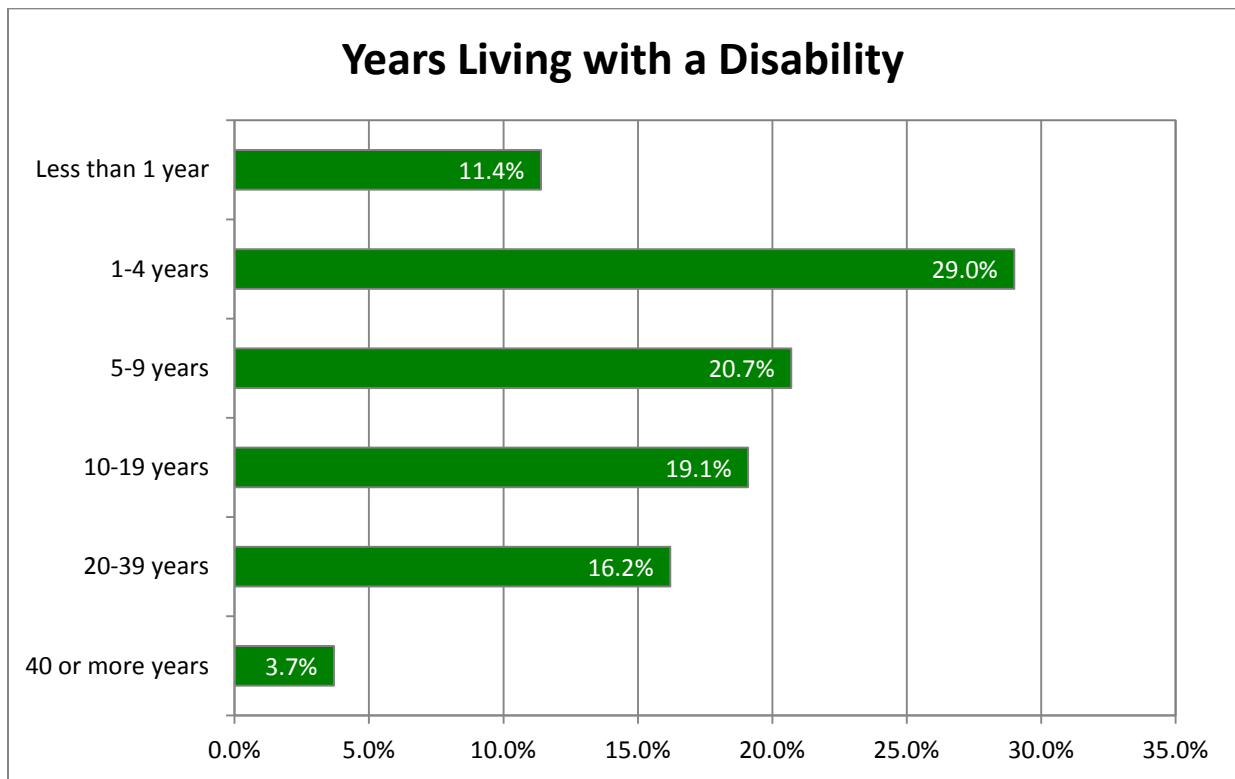
## What types of disabilities do people have?

Among people with disabilities, 83.7% have a physical disability, 4.1% have a sensory disability (vision or hearing impairment), 8.9% have a cognitive disability, and 9.1% have a psychiatric or emotional disability. Survey respondents can have multiple types of disabilities, so the total equals more than 100%.



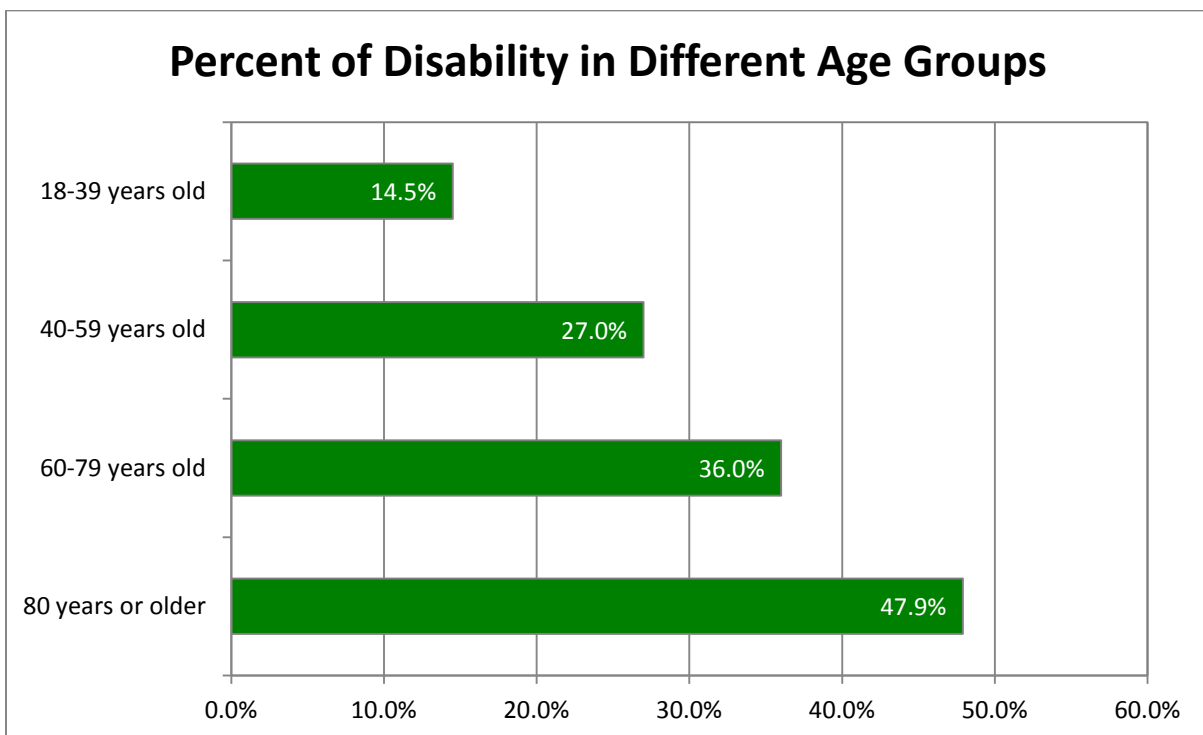
## How long have people had their disabilities?

About eleven percent (11.4%) of Oregonians with disabilities have had their disability less than one year, 29.0% have had a disability for 1-4 years, 20.7% have had a disability 5-9 years, 19.1% have had a disability 10-19 years, 16.2% have had a disability 20-39 years, and 3.7% have had a disability for 40 or more years.



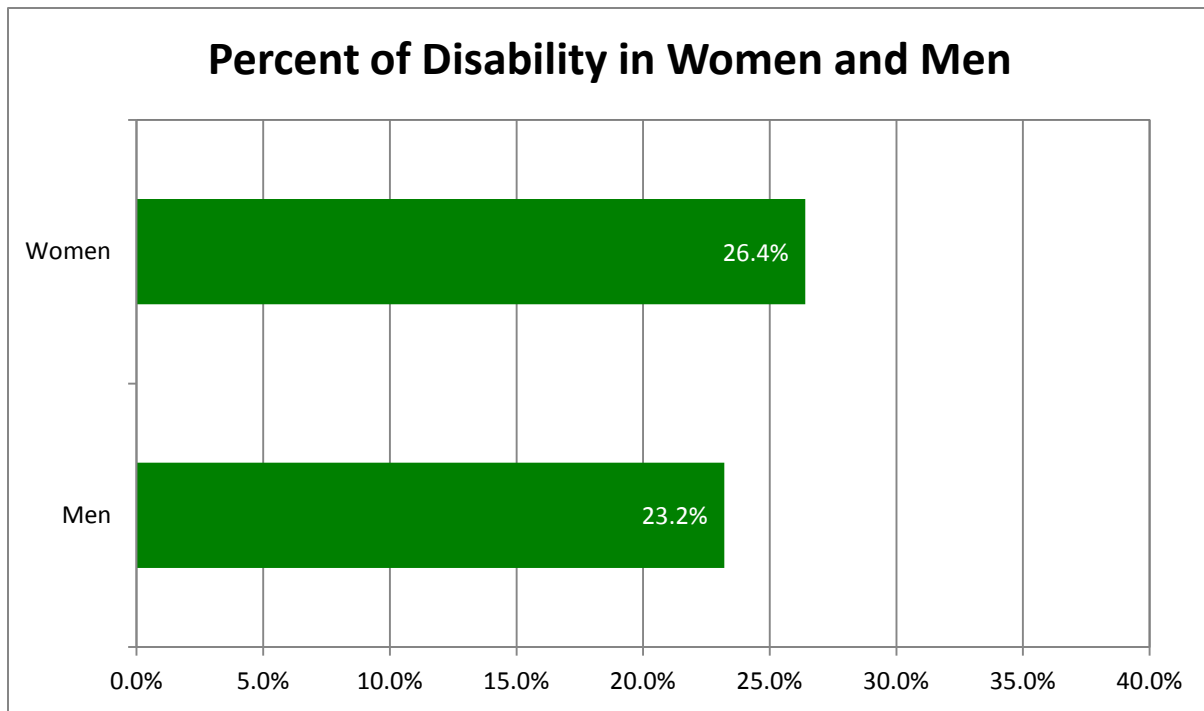
## What age groups are most impacted by disability?

Disability becomes more common as people age. In the 18-39 age range, 14.5% of Oregon adults have a disability. Among 40-59 year olds, 27.0% have a disability and among 60-79 year olds, 36.0% have a disability. Among Oregon adults age 80 or older, 47.9% have a disability.



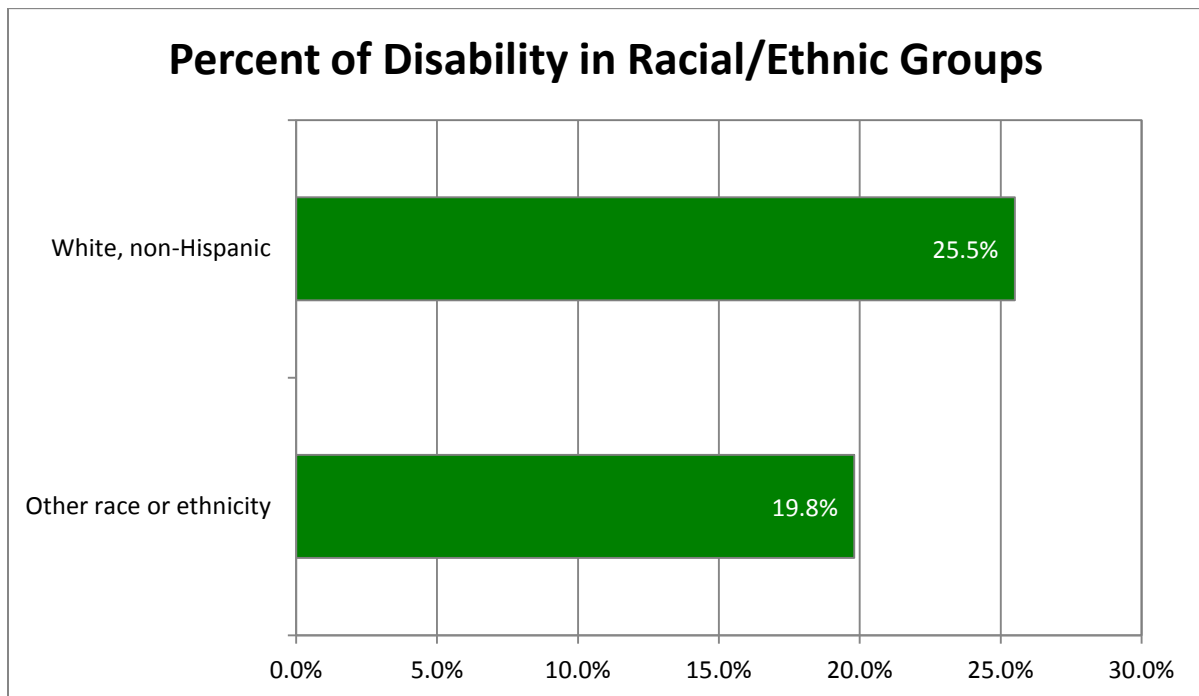
## What proportions of men and women have a disability?

Women in Oregon are slightly more likely than men to have a disability. A little more than one quarter (26.4%) of women have a disability; 23.2% of men have a disability.



## How common is disability in different racial and ethnic groups?

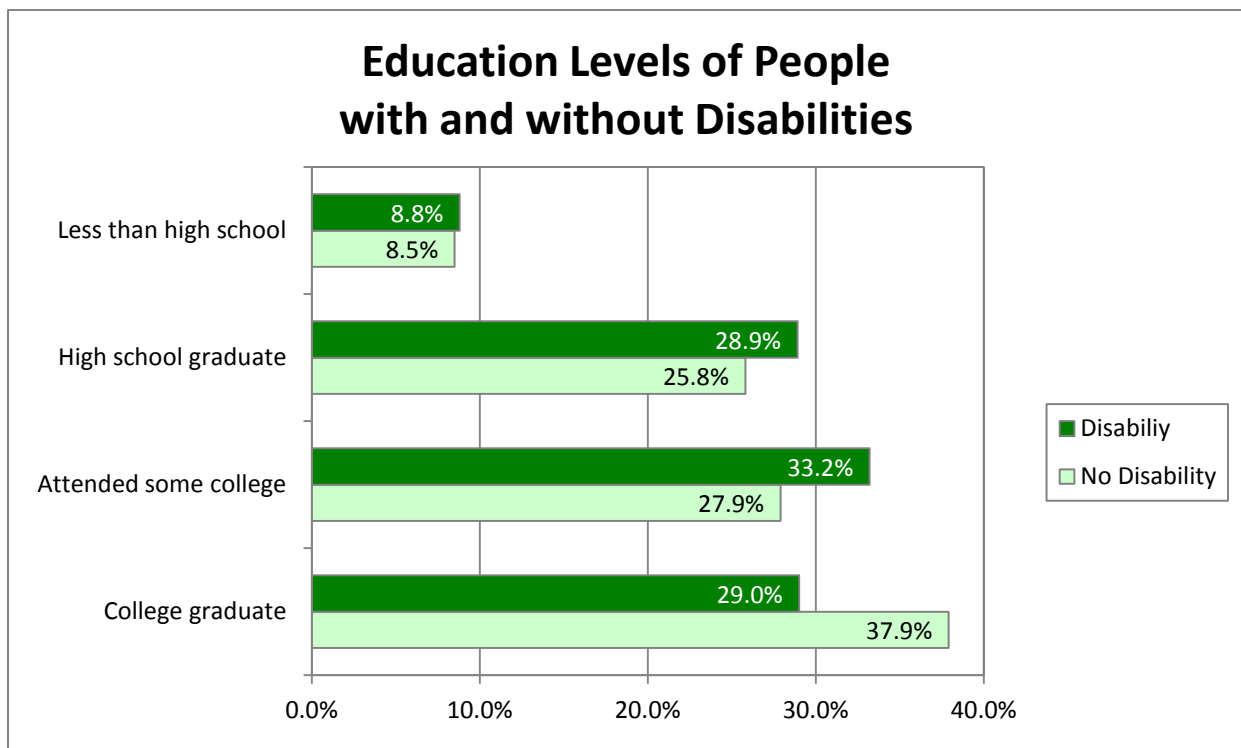
Among White, non-Hispanic adults, 25.5% have a disability. In Oregon, the number of respondents with disabilities in other racial and ethnic groups is too small to provide information for individual groups. Overall, 19.8% of non-White adults and Hispanic or Latino/a adults in Oregon have a disability. 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 nine percent (8.8%) of people with disabilities have less than a high school education, 28.9% have a high school education only, 33.2% have attended some college or technical school, and 29.0% of people with disabilities are college graduates.

Of people without disabilities, 8.5% have less than a high school education, 28.9% have a high school education only, 27.9% have attended some college or technical school, and 37.9% are college graduates.

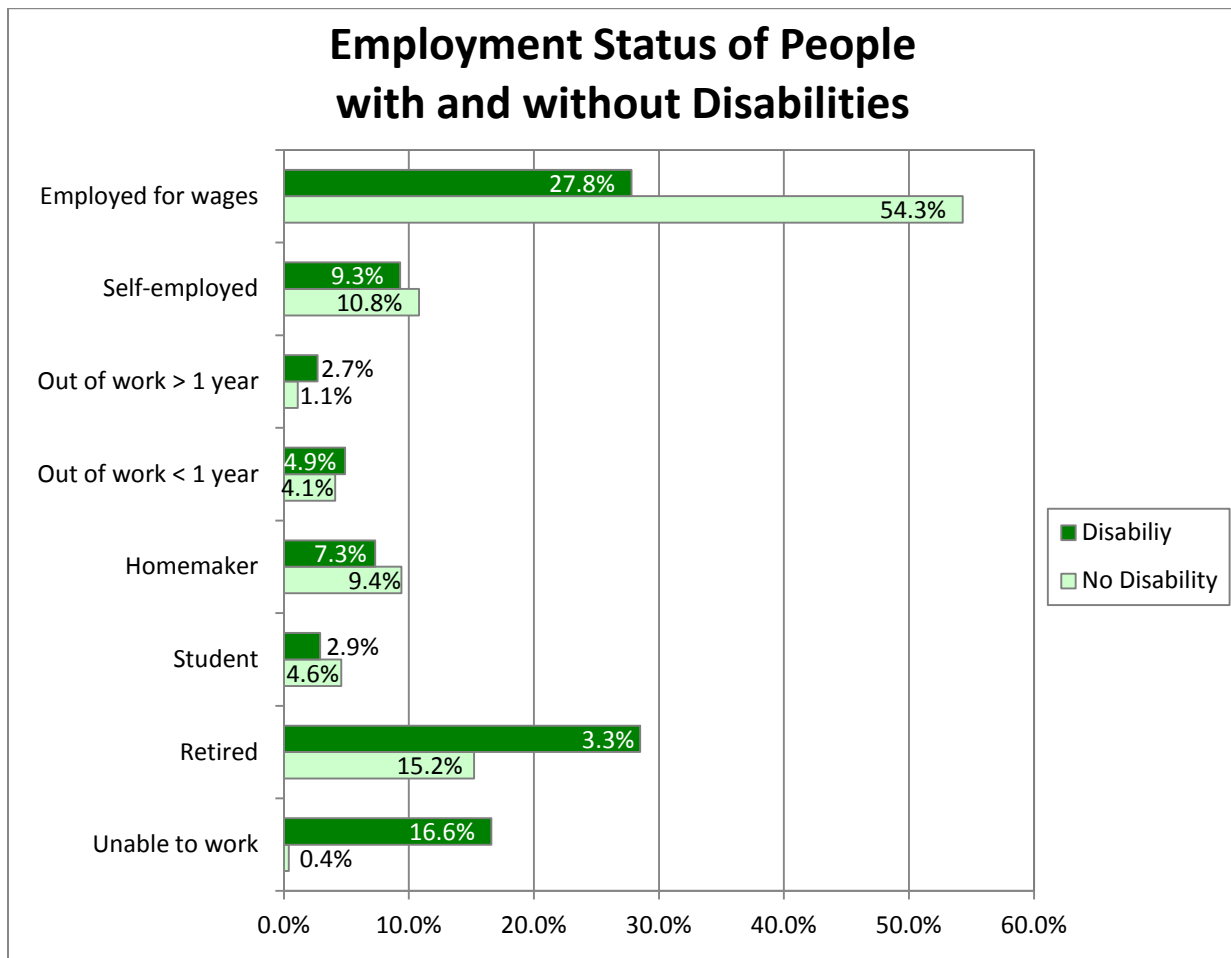




## How many people with disabilities are employed?

Among people with disabilities, 27.8% are employed for wages, 9.3% are self-employed, 2.7% have been out of work for more than a year, 4.9% have been out of work for less than a year, 7.3% are homemakers, 2.9% are students, 28.5% are retired, and 16.6% are unable to work.

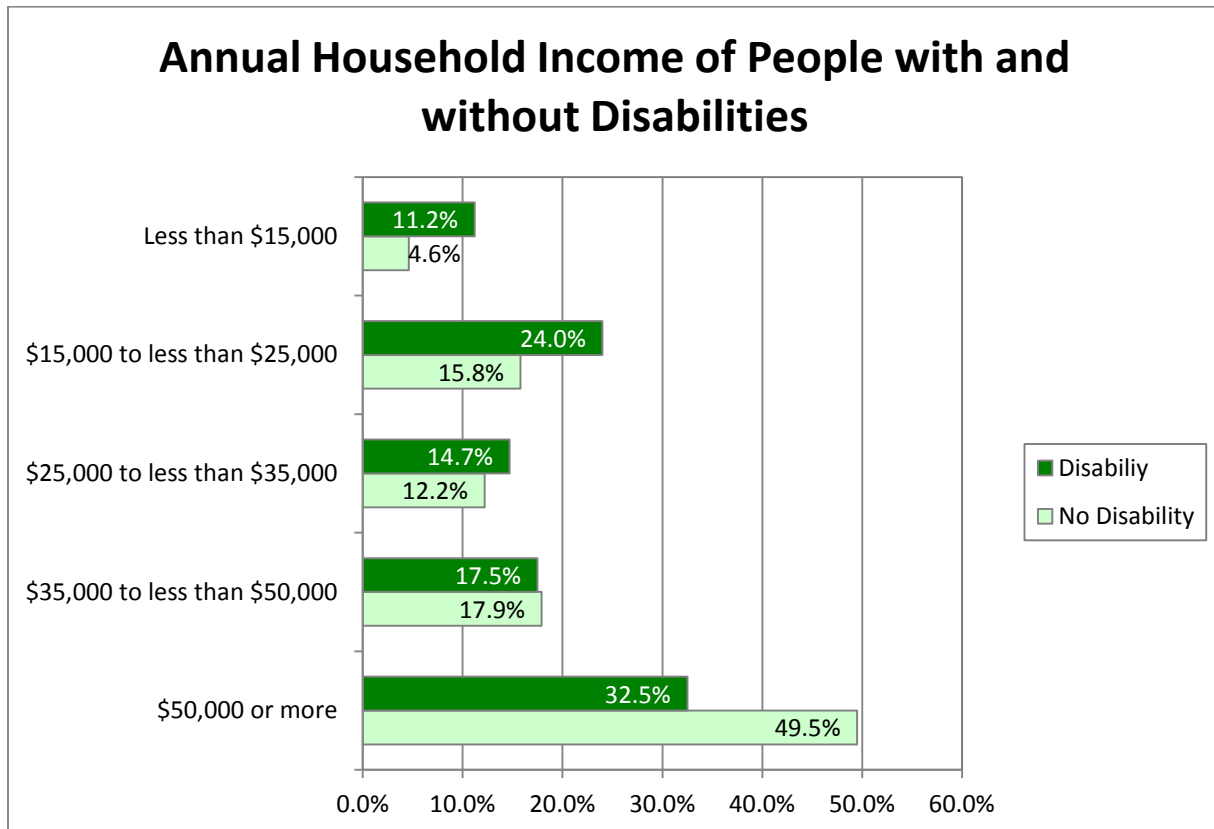
In contrast, 54.3% of people without disabilities are employed for wages, 10.8% are self-employed, 1.1% have been out of work for more than a year, 4.1% have been out of work for less than a year, 9.4% are homemakers, 4.6% are students, 15.2% are retired, and 0.4% are unable to work.



## What is the annual household income of people with disabilities?

About eleven percent (11.2%) of people with disabilities have a household income of less than \$15,000 per year, 24.0% have an income between \$15,000 and \$25,000, 14.7% have an income between \$25,000 and \$35,000, 17.5% have an income between \$35,000 and \$50,000, and 32.5% have an annual income of \$50,000 or more.

Only 4.6% of people without disabilities have a household income of less than \$15,000 per year, 15.8% have an income between \$15,000 and \$25,000, 12.2% have an income between \$25,000 and \$35,000, 17.9% have an income between \$35,000 and \$50,000, and half (49.5%) have an annual income of \$50,000 or more.

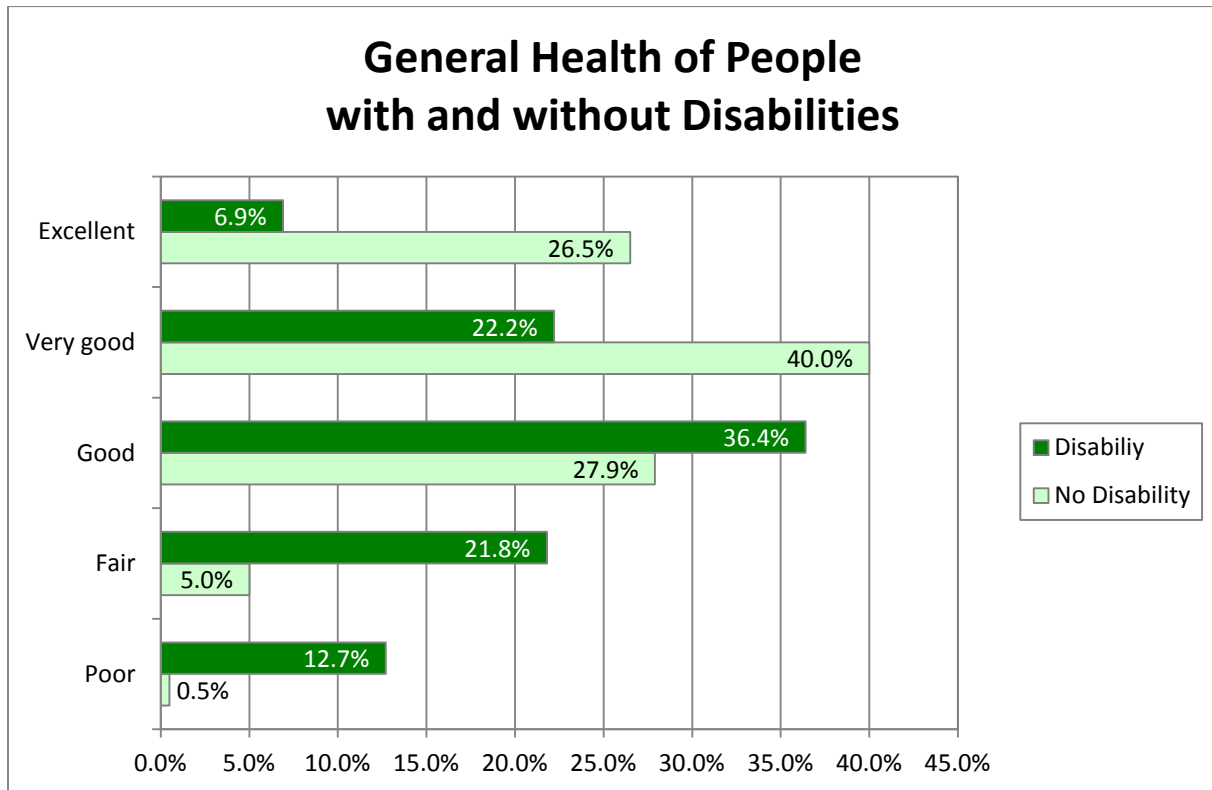


## Health of People with Disabilities

### How do people with disabilities describe their general health?

About 6.9% of people with disabilities describe their health as excellent, 22.2% say their health is very good, 36.4% say it is good, 21.8% say their health is fair, and 12.7% describe their health as poor.

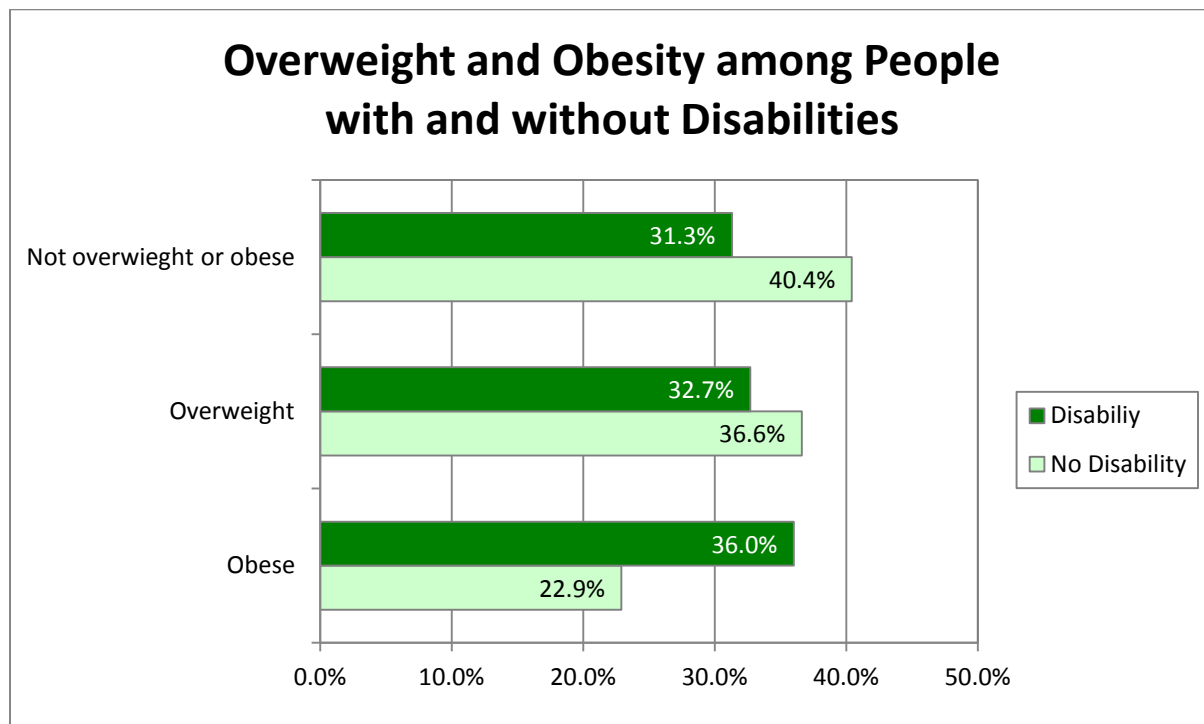
In comparison, 26.5% of people without disabilities describe their health as excellent, 40.0% say their health is very good, 27.9% say it is good, 5.0% say their health is fair, and 0.5% describe their health as poor.



## How many people with disabilities are overweight or obese?

Almost one third (32.7%) of people with disabilities are overweight and 36.0% are obese. Only 31.3% are not considered overweight or obese.

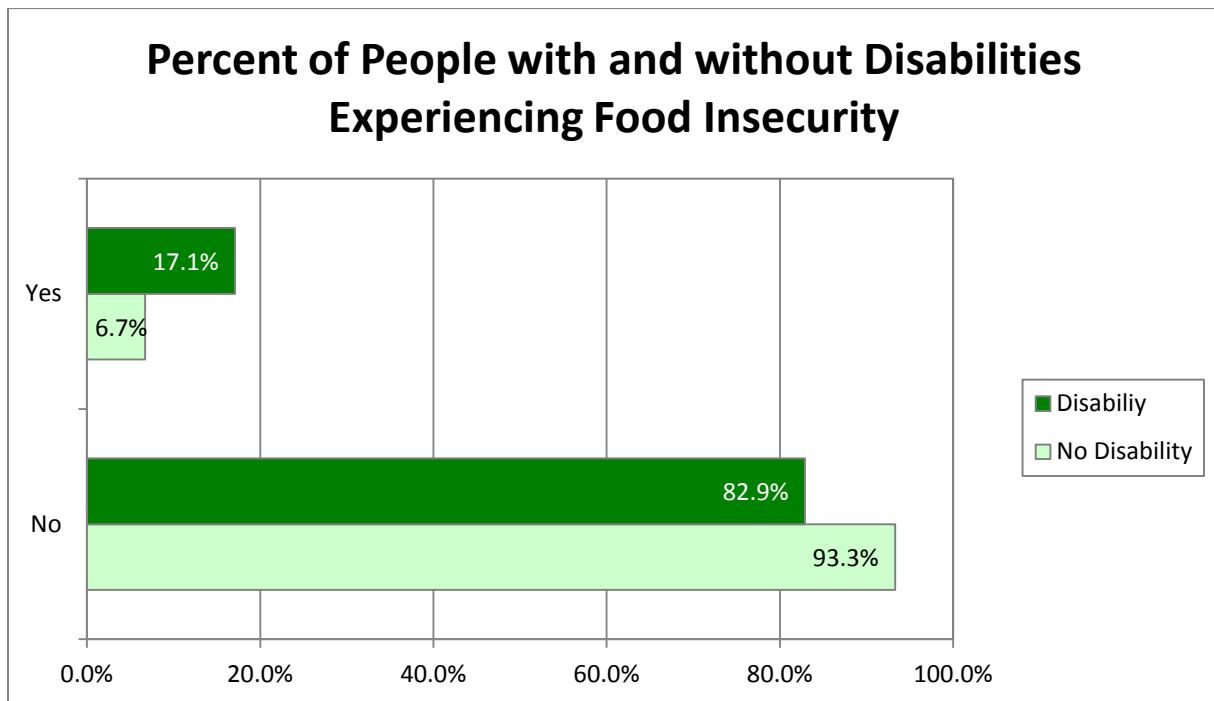
Among people without disabilities, 36.6% are overweight, 22.9% are obese, and 40.4% are not overweight or obese.



## Do people with disabilities experience food insecurity?

Food insecurity refers to limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food. Food insecurity is associated with poor nutritional status, obesity, and other health problems.

In Oregon, 17.1% of people with disabilities and 6.7% of people without disabilities have experienced food insecurity in their household in the past year.

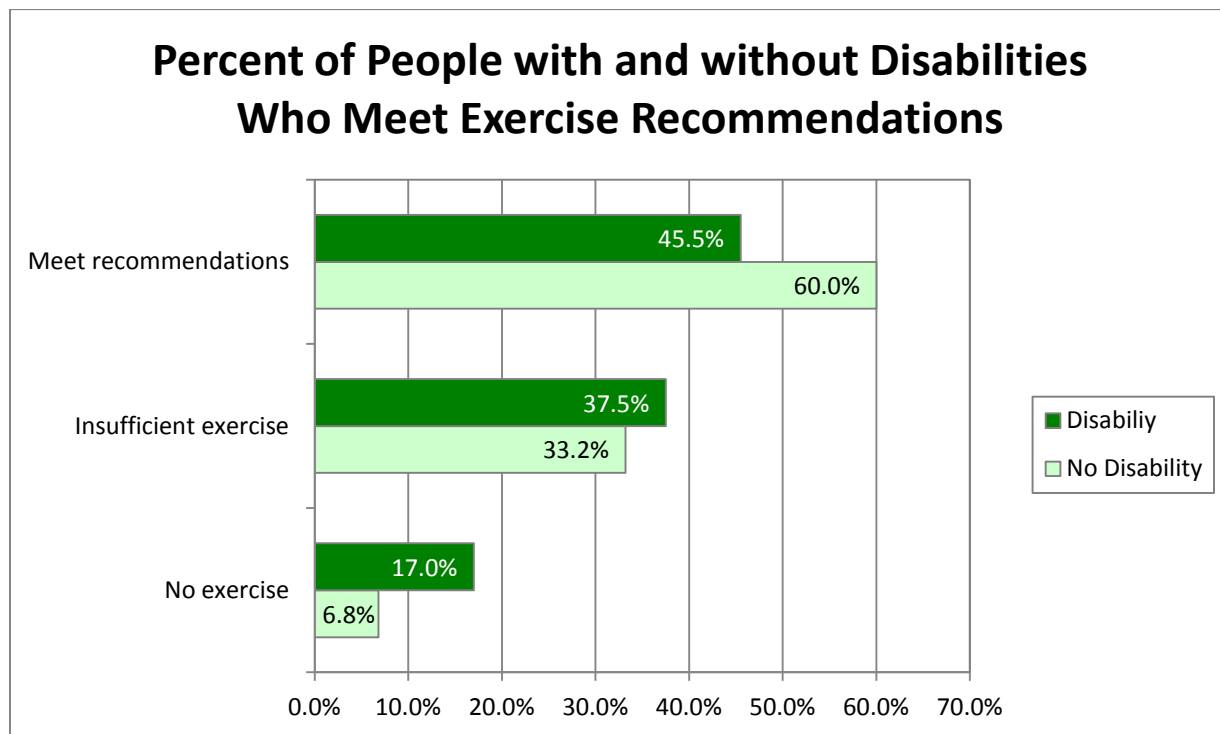


## Do people with disabilities get enough exercise?

Healthy People 2010 recommends that adults get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day for at least five days per week, and at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise per day for at least three days per week.

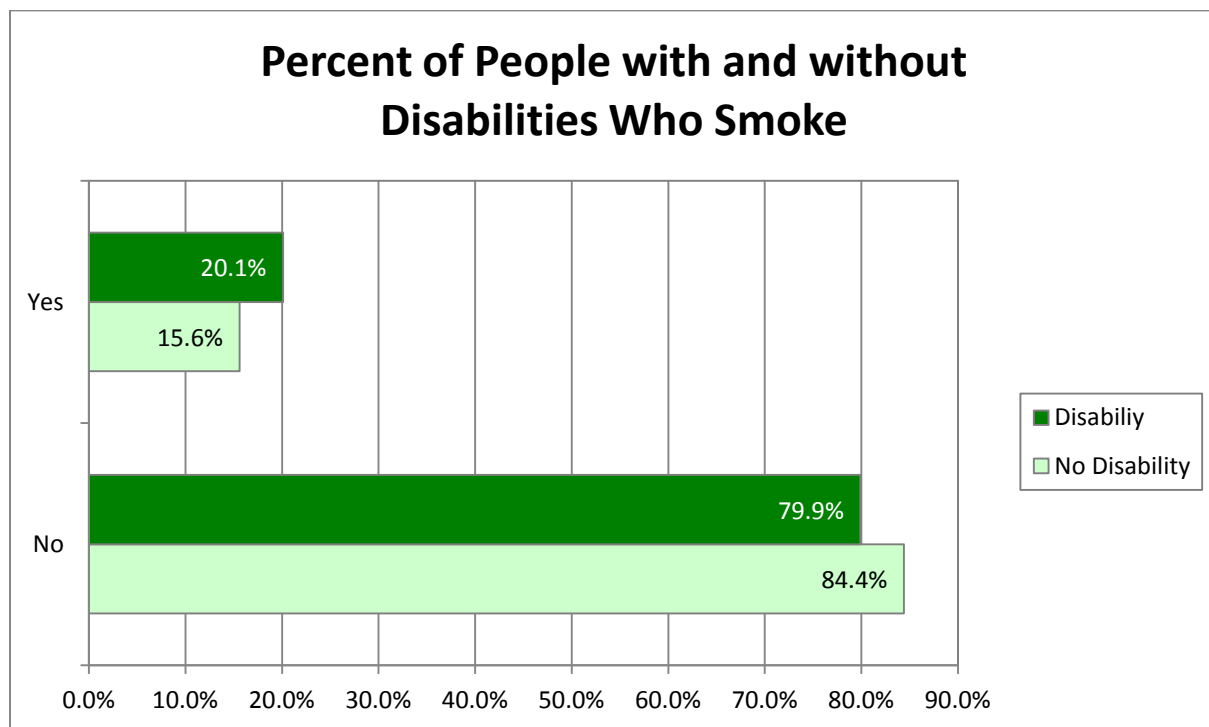
About 45.5% of people with disabilities meet the recommendations for moderate or vigorous exercise, 37.5% get some exercise but not enough to meet the recommendations, and 17.0% do not get any exercise.

Among people without disabilities, 60.0% meet the recommendations, 33.2% get insufficient exercise, and 6.8% get no exercise.



## How many people with disabilities smoke?

About 20.1% of people with disabilities have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime and are current smokers. In comparison, 15.6% of people without disabilities have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their life and are current smokers.

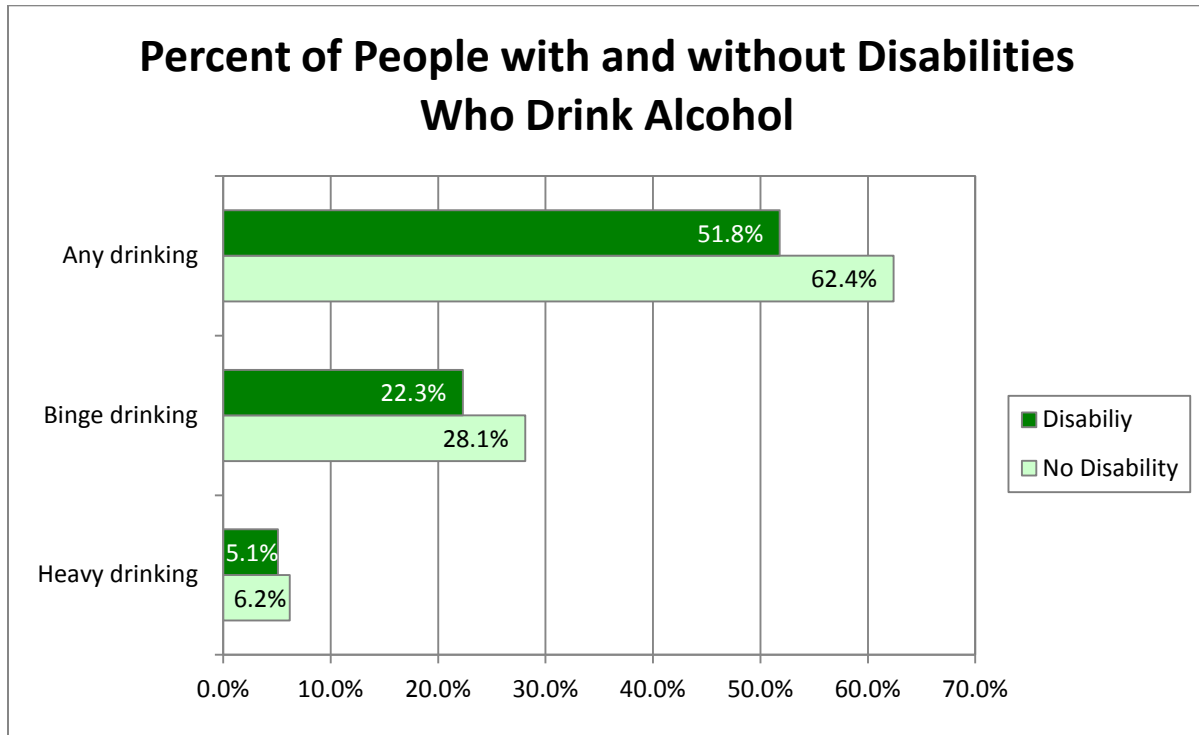


## How many people with disabilities drink alcohol?

About 51.8% of people with disabilities and 62.4% 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, 22.3% of people with disabilities and 28.1% 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, 5.1% of people with disabilities and 6.2% 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.



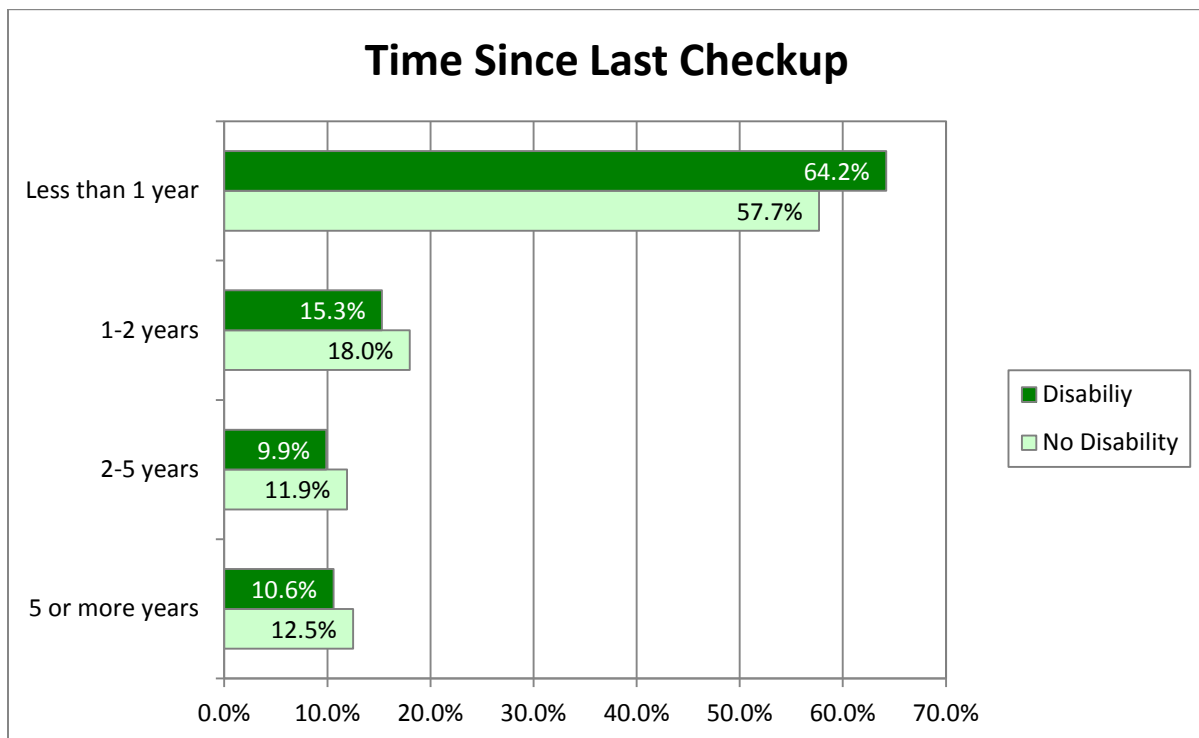


## Health Care and Insurance

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

Of people with disabilities, 64.2% had a checkup less than a year ago, 15.3% had a checkup between one and two years ago, 9.9% had a checkup between two and five years ago, and 10.6% have not had a checkup in five or more years.

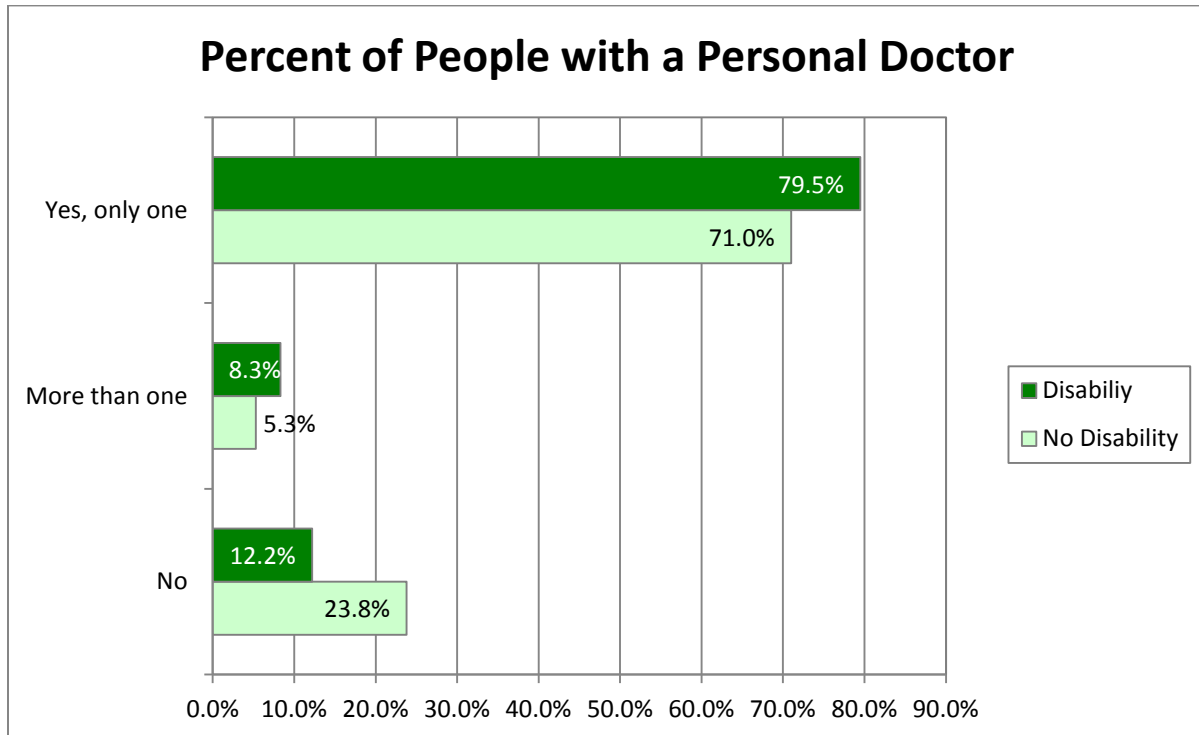
For people without disabilities, the last checkup was less than a year ago for 57.7%, between one and two years ago for 18.0%, between two and five years ago for 11.9%, and five or more years ago for 12.5%.



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

Of people with disabilities, 79.5% have one person they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider, 8.3% have more than one, and 12.2% do not have a personal doctor or health care provider.

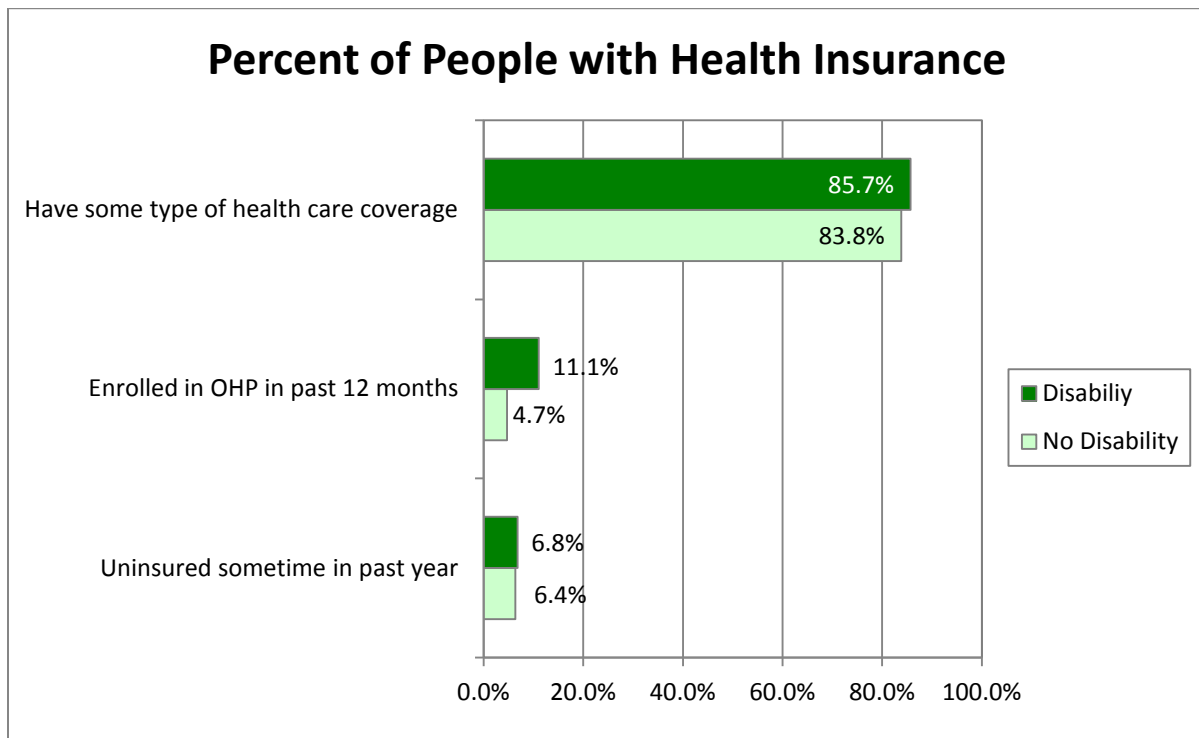
Seventy-one percent of people without disabilities have a personal doctor, 5.3% have more than one, and 23.8% do not have anyone they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider.



## Do people with disabilities have health insurance?

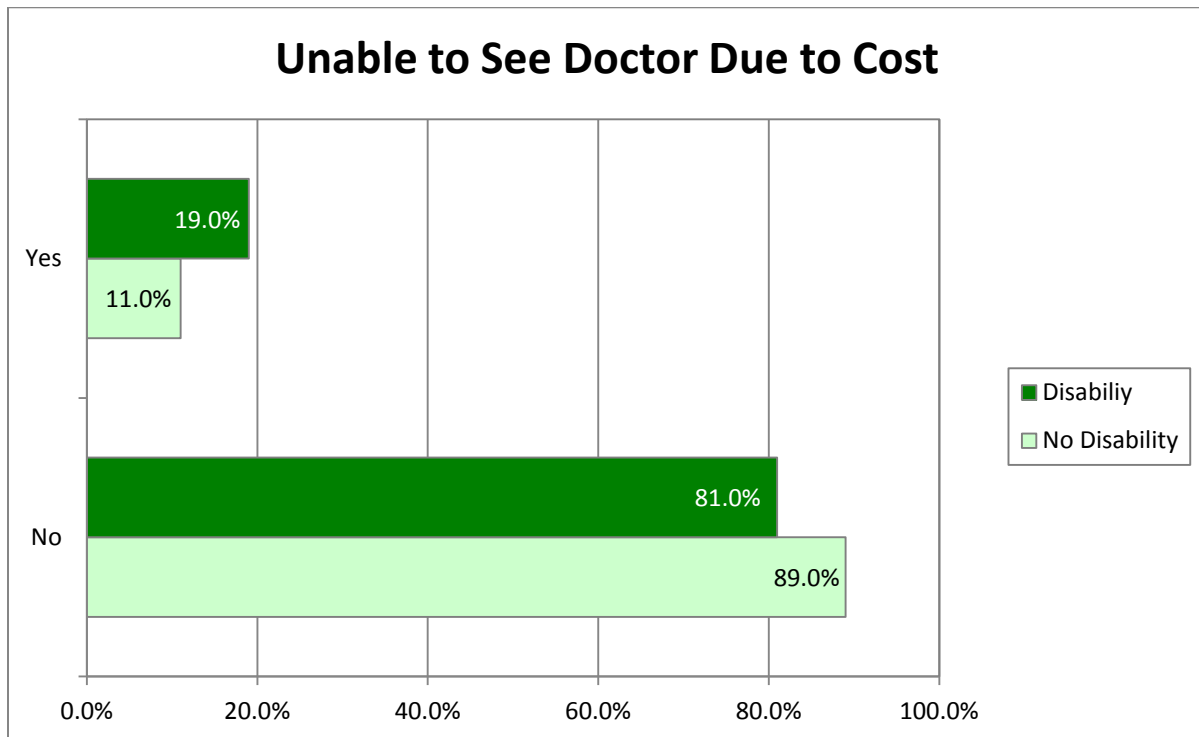
Among people with disabilities, 85.7% say they have some kind of health care coverage, and 11.1% have been enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan (Oregon's Medicaid program) during the past 12 months. Of people without disabilities, 83.8% have some type of health coverage and 4.7% have been enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan in the past 12 months.

For 6.8% of people with disabilities and 6.4% of people without disabilities, there was a time in the past year when they did not have any health insurance or health care coverage.



## Can people with disabilities afford needed health care?

For 19.0% of people with disabilities and 11.0% 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.

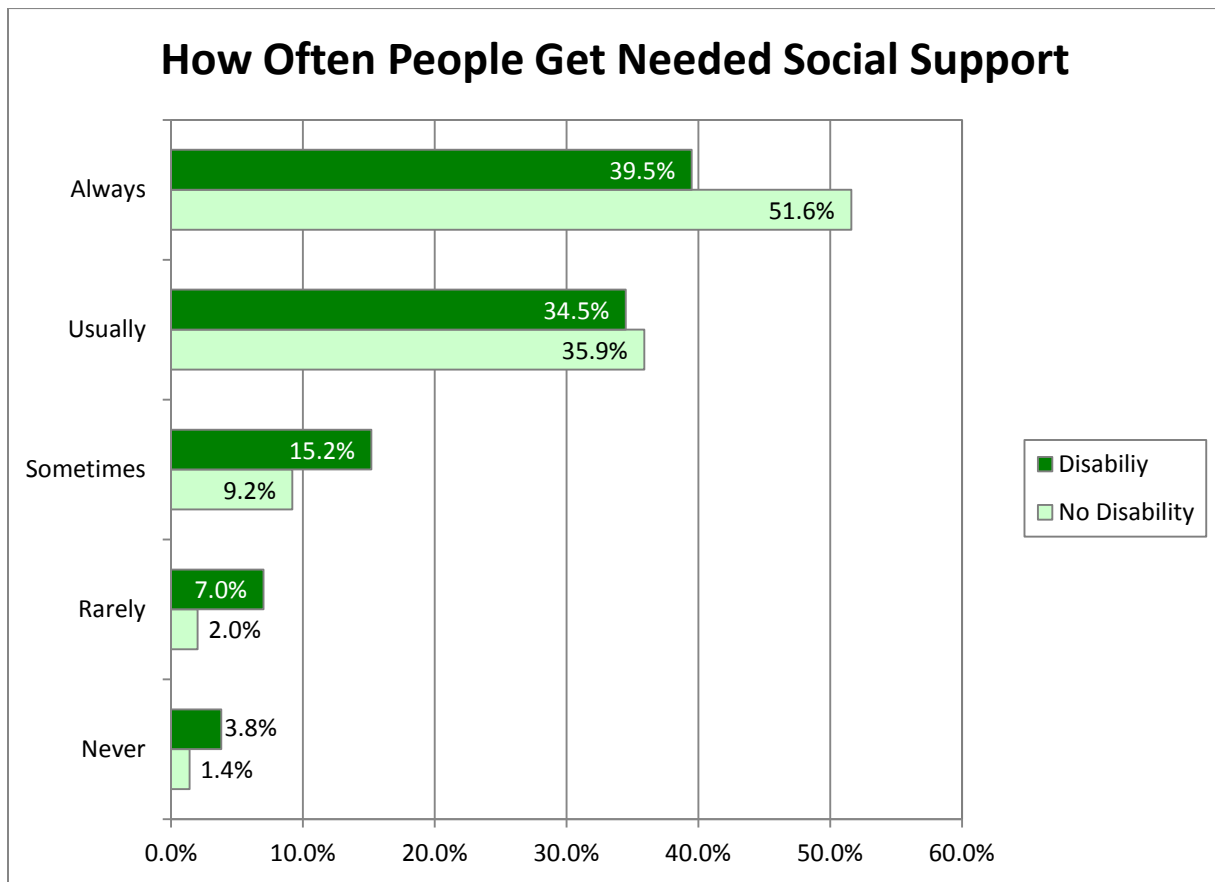


## Social Support and Life Satisfaction

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

Among people with disabilities, 39.5% always get the social and emotional support they need, 34.5% usually do, 15.2% sometimes do, 7.0% rarely do, and 3.8% never receive the support they need.

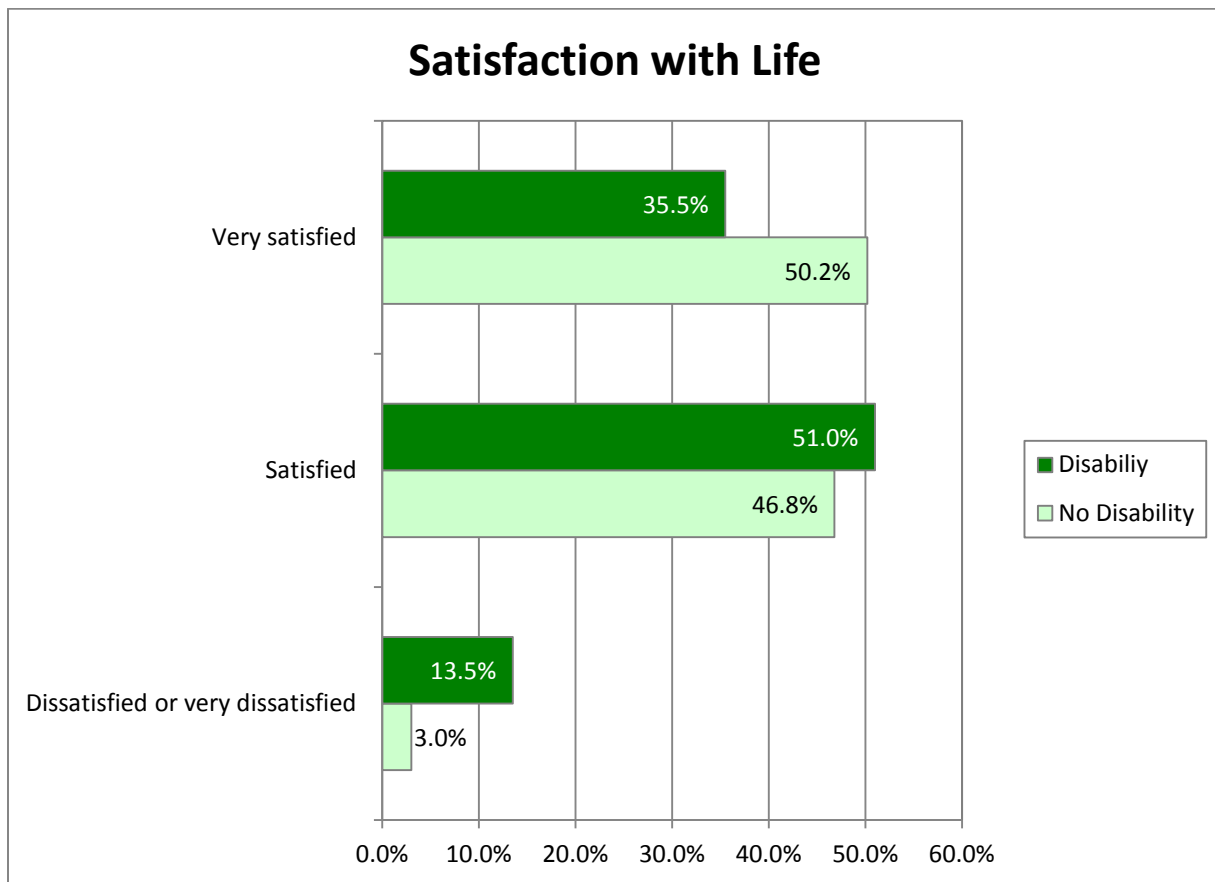
Of people without disabilities, 51.6% always get the social and emotional support they need, 35.9% usually do, 9.2% sometimes do, 2.0% rarely do, and 1.4% never do.



## How satisfied are people with their lives?

About 35.5% of people with disabilities are very satisfied with their lives, 51.0% are satisfied, and 13.5% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Among people without disabilities, 50.2% are very satisfied, 46.8% are satisfied, and 3.0% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.



## **About 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. OODH has been funded since 1994 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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 recommendations, and dissemination of materials and information.

Specific activities of OODH include:

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, providing training and information to people with disabilities on preparing themselves for an emergency, and educating 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, especially 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 more information about OODH activities, please e-mail [voltolin@ohsu.edu](mailto:voltolin@ohsu.edu) or call 503-494-3331





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