

# SSDAN Module

## Activity Title

Analysis of Disability for Non-institutionalized Older Adults by Age and Race

## Author Information

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## Short Description

Utilizing the SSDAN WebCHIP software, students will explore different disability types for older adults in the United States from the 2008 and 2012 American Community Surveys. Understanding the different types of disability and trends by age and race can help policy-makers decide how to allocate resources to improve population health.

## Summary

In this applied demography and policy lab, students examine how disability varies by age and race for older adults from the 2008 and 2012 American Community Surveys. Students obtain a better understanding of population health by learning about different types of disabilities. Students also write a full policy report with the goal of informing health policy-makers about recent trends and areas of concern. Students with advanced training in statistics and social sciences should utilize library sources to access peer-reviewed articles which examine disability among older adults.

## Goals

After completing this module, students will be able to:

- Access data from the American Community Survey.
- Examine health attributes based on demographic characteristics (i.e., disability by age and race).
- Use this information to understand older adult population health trends.
- Apply quantitative data analysis to write a short policy report with recommendations.

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### Context for Use

This assignment is suitable for courses in demography, health economics, and public health. The class size is approximately 20 students. Students work individually on all portions of the assignment. Students must integrate descriptive results from the module into a short policy report which addresses (1) why disability is important from a population health perspective, (2) how disability rates vary by age, (3) how disability rates differ across race, and (4) how this information is useful for policy. For (4), students will need to utilize library sources to obtain peer-reviewed articles which expand upon disability, population health, and policy.

### Grade Level

Upper undergraduate and first-year graduate courses.

### Activity Description and Teaching Materials

#### Instructions for Data

1. Go to <http://www.ssdan.net/datacounts/webchip>
2. Explore the DataCounts! webpage and the WebCHIP 4.0 workbook area.
3. Navigate to the Select Collection tab and enable acs2008.
4. Navigate to the Dataset tab and enable EldrDisab.
5. Now go to Choose Variables and select RaceEth for Row and IndLvLmt for Column and AgeEldr for Control.
6. Under Generate Table select percent across.

#### Questions

Provide written answers for each of the questions. Responses should be in an essay format.

1. What trends are shown by the different age brackets?
2. Why might this occur? Support your response with evidence from external research.
3. What trends are shown by the different race/ethnic groups?
4. What could explain the differences? Support your response with evidence from external research.

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5. Repeat the Instructions for Data section but now select **Selfcare** for the column for Step 6.
6. What trends exist by age and race and how do they compare with IndLvLmt?
7. Now, repeat the same process but select the **acs2012** collection.
8. What trends exist by age and race and how do they compare from 2008 to 2012 for the different types of disability?
9. If you were a policy analyst with training in population health/health policy, what descriptive statements could you make for disability by age, race/ethnicity, selfcare vs individual limitations, and across time?
10. Based on these tabulations, what recommendations would you offer with respect to the health needs for older adults?

## Resources

The following articles can be used to complement this module:

Chatterji, S., Byles, J., Cutler, D., Seeman, T., & Verdes, E. (2015). Health, functioning, and disability in older adults—present status and future implications. *The Lancet*, 385(9967), 563-575.

Dunlop, D. D., Song, J., Arntson, E. K., Semanik, P. A., Lee, J., Chang, R. W., & Hootman, J. M. (2015). Sedentary time in US older adults associated with disability in activities of daily living independent of physical activity. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 12(1), 93-101.

Montez, J. K., Hayward, M. D., & Wolf, D. A. (2017). Do US states' socioeconomic and policy contexts shape adult disability?. *Social Science & Medicine*, 178, 115-126.

Sharma, A. (2016). Assessing the Risk of Institutional Entry: A Semi-nonparametric Framework Using a Population-based Sample of Older Women. *Women's Health Issues*, 26(5), 564-573.