



Prevalence of Disability in Iran

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

Disability is a part of human life. Almost all people temporarily or permanently will be impaired at some point in their life. Disability is a universal experience with economic and social costs to individuals, families, communities and nations (1). Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (2). According to Global Burden of Disease (GBD) around 975 million people (19.4%) people 15 yr and older live with a disability. Of these, GBD estimates that 190 million (3.8%) have sever disability (1). Despite the magnitude of the issue, awareness of and scientific information on disability prevalence and other related issues are limited in Iran.

In this study, data were extracted from Statistical Center of Iran (3). According to census results in 2011, disability prevalence is around 13 per 10000 populations in Iran. In Table 1, disability prevalence is showed according to age, gender and type of disability. In general, prevalence of physical and intellectual disability is more than of others. Disability prevalence is more among men and increases at older ages.

Prevalence and disability trend is increasing in the world because population are aging, health services have promoted and prevalence of chronic

health condition like diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and mental illness has increased (2, 4-8). Furthermore, pattern of disability can be affected by trends in health condition and trends in environmental and other factors such as road traffic crashes, diet, natural disasters, substance abuse and conflict (1, 9-11). In addition, these people experience poorer levels of health than general population but they use health services disproportionately affected by existing access barriers (12). Unfortunately there is not international agreement on definitions and categorization of disability, thus prevalence rates are different in Iran and other countries (1, 5). Considerable efforts must be done in Iran to improve disability data. We not only need information about number of disability in Iran but also need information about their needs and required services. Nevertheless, data quality requires further collaborative effort and there is an urgent need for more robust, comparable, and complete data collection especially in developing countries. Improving disability data may be a long-term project, but it will provide essential underpinning for enhanced functioning of individuals, communities and nations.

In conclusion, the prevalence of disability is increasing in the country. Therefore, the plan for the control and prevention of disability must be a high priority for health policy makers.

Table 1: Disability prevalence according to age, gender and type of disability

Age (yr)	Prevalence per 10000 population (men/women)	Seeing (men/women)	Hearing (men/women)	Physical (men/women)	Intellectual (men/women)
0-4	35(39/31)	3(3/3)	3(4/3)	19(20/17)	12(14/11)
5-9	83(95/70)	5(5/5)	8(8/7)	36(41/31)	38(44/32)
10-14	100(116/83)	6(7/6)	9(10/8)	41(47/34)	52(61/43)
15-19	112(138/85)	7(8/6)	11(13/10)	47(60/33)	58(70/46)
20-24	118(151/85)	7(8/5)	11(13/10)	53(73/33)	59(72/45)
25-29	120(154/85)	7(8/5)	11(12/10)	59(83/36)	54(66/43)
30-34	129(166/91)	7(9/5)	11(11/10)	71(99/43)	51(61/41)
35-39	134(173/94)	8(11/6)	11(11/10)	83(115/49)	44(53/35)
40-44	155(214/96)	10(13/7)	13(15/10)	104(154/53)	42(53/31)
45-49	171(247/95)	13(18/9)	14(18/11)	123(191/55)	39(52/26)
50-54	160(218/101)	16(21/12)	15(18/12)	112(162/62)	32(41/23)
55-59	162(211/115)	21(26/16)	14(17/12)	117(157/78)	27(34/19)
60-64	187(233/146)	31(35/26)	16(19/13)	135(173/102)	25(30/21)
65-69	247(268/227)	41(48/35)	23(24/22)	199(198/200)	25(32/19)
70-74	321(345/297)	57(65/50)	29(34/25)	245(255/235)	32(33/31)
75 <	529(539/519)	116(127/105)	76(85/67)	374(362/387)	54(53/55)
missing	98(114/73)	4(3/6)	5(3/8)	34(39/26)	70(88/42)
Total	135(168/102)	13(15/10)	13(14/11)	80(103/56)	44(53/35)

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