

Collecting Disability Data: Issues of Translation



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The Challenge

How to measure the broad experience of disability through:

- a limited number of questions,
 - a consistent manner,
 - a cross-culturally comparable way?
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What works and what does not...

Even the best questions...

- 1) Do you have difficulty **seeing** even if wearing glasses?
- 2) Do you have difficulty **hearing** even if using a hearing aid?
- 3) Do you have difficulty **walking** or **climbing** stairs?
- 4) Do you have difficulty **remembering** or **concentrating**?
- 5) Do you have difficulty with (**self-care** such as) washing all over or dressing?
- 6) Using your usual language, do you have difficulty **communicating** (for example understanding or being understood by others)?

Response categories:

No difficulty; Some difficulty; A lot of difficulty; Cannot do at all

...will fail if a Screener is added

Does [*NAME*] have a disability?

Resulting prevalence will be very low:
3.2%

...or if Negative Wording is used

Terms such as *disabilities* and *handicaps* are viewed as negative and tend to underreport disabilities.

Suffering may be associated with disease or illness but not necessarily with the life experiences of a person with disability. This language may also negatively influence the self-reporting of functional difficulties.

...or if the Responses are changed

Avoid response dichotomies:

Yes / No

They tend to force the respondent into a category they may not want to self-identify with.

Given the option, respondents may choose **No**.

Scaled responses are preferable:

No / Yes, a little / Yes, a lot / Cannot do

It has been shown that scaled responses improve the respondents' ability to report.

Adopting Existing Tools: Translation

Translation is often required and ensures:

- Cultural appropriateness
- Question constructs are adequately captured

Proper translation into the primary language(s) of the country:

- Reduces differences in question interpretation
 - Increases reliability and validity of data collected
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Adopting Existing Tools: Translation (continued)

Methods of translation:

- Literal: word-for-word
(forward/back translation)
 - Non-literal: concept based
(team translation)
 - Computer based: **No!**
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Adopting Existing Tools: Translation (continued)

Team translation (by consensus):

- Translation to new language by two or more translators
 - Translators and an independent reviewer meet to review and comment on issues or changes to recommend
 - An adjudicator ultimately will decide on changes and make recommendations for adoption
 - The reviewed translated version is pretested
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Adopting Existing Tools: Translation (continued)

Translators require:

- Very good knowledge of the *source language*
- An excellent command of the *target language*
- Familiarity with the *subject matter* and the *intent* of the questions
- A sense of when to translate *literally* and when to *translate* conceptually

A competent translator is not only bilingual but bicultural.

Using Existing Tools: Translation

Questions AND answer categories need to be carefully translated.

Discussion
