

Family Configurations of Disability in the 2000 Census

Roger Avery and Dennis Hogan
Population Studies and Training Center
Brown University

Objective

Previous research has shown that children with disabilities more often live in families which are headed by single parents, in which the parents have less than a high school education, and that are in poverty (Hogan, Rogers, Msall 2003). Children who do not have disabilities but live in families in which a sibling has a disability experience the same family disadvantage. They also experience somewhat poorer health, access to health services, and health outcomes (Park, Goldscheider, Hogan 2002). Families in which parents are disabled are less likely to work and earn sufficient resources to keep a family out of poverty. Other research on welfare dependence has shown that single mothers are equally less likely to exit welfare if they are disabled or they have a child with a disability (Brandon and Hogan 2005).

Based on this prior research, we hypothesize that the family configuration of disability may affect a child's well-being, independently of the child's own disability status. For children who themselves have a disability, we hypothesize that the disability of other members of the household will have especially deleterious effects.

Data

We use data from the 2000 U.S. Census PUMS Merged 1% and 5% files. Every child ages 5-17 living in a non-institutional household in the United States is examined in terms of their family configuration of disability by their own disability status, and associated family outcomes. The Census 2000 was the first to include measures of disability among children, with disabilities

measured in terms of functional limitations which is the most appropriate measure of disability in population surveys or censuses (Hogan et al 2003; Hogan and Msall 2006; Msall et al 2004). The poster will describe these measures and indicate the ways in which we characterize the type and implied severity of disability. We compare family patterns of disability to results from the National Health Interview Survey in order to validate the quality of the census data on disability.

Results

Preliminary data from this analysis, for children ages 5-10 are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 demonstrates that children with disabilities are far more likely to live with other family members who have a disability (47% compared to 11% of children without disabilities). The likelihood of having an adult or another child in the family with a disability is higher for children with disabilities than those without disabilities. The differences are particularly large in terms of children living in families where at least one adult and one other child have a disability. Table 2 indicates that children with disabilities fare worse than children without disabilities even if no other members of their household have a disability. For those children with a disability having other members of the family with disabilities considerably increases the chances of deleterious family origins. These measures of disadvantage are especially high when one or more adults in the household are disadvantaged, and even greater when both an adult and another child have a disability.

In further analysis we will include children ages 5-17, and estimate multivariate models of an expanded variety of measures of family well-being, examining differences associated with the effects of disability status on of the children themselves, the disability status of adults in the family,

and the disability status of other children in the family, and interactions among these disability statuses. The models will be estimated with controls for the number of adult and the number of children in the household and introduce additional variables implicit in family well-being such as parental education, urban central city, suburban, and non-metropolitan status.

Table 1. Prevalence of Disability of Other Family Members for Children Age 5-10 by Disability Status, 2000

DISABILITY STATUS OF INDEX CHILD	PATTERN OF DISABILITY IN THE FAMILY (%)			
	Any Disability in the Family	Adult with Disability	Other Child with Disability	Both Adult and Other Child with Disability
No Disability	16.3	11.7	3.3	1.3
With Disability	47.2	20.6	14.3	12.2

Table 2. Measures of the Family Well-Being of Children Age 5-10 Who Are Disabled, by the Disability Status of Other Family Members, 2000

	NO DISABILITY IN FAMILY (INDEX CHILD WITHOUT DISABILITY)	PATTERN OF DISABILITY IN THE FAMILY (INDEX CHILD WITH DISABILITY)			
		No Other Disability	Adult with Disability	Other Child with Disability	Both Adult and Other Child with Disability
Measures of Family Well-Being					
Income under \$20,000	23.0	30.4	50.9	37.7	57.8
Not Two Parent	29.3	40.8	54.1	45.1	52.8
Poor Housing Quality	8.6	7.5	11.1	11.3	20.6
Poor Access	6.9	10.9	18.3	15.2	22.7