

BRFSS Brief

Number 1406

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual statewide telephone survey of adults developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by the New York State Department of Health. The BRFSS is designed to provide information on behaviors, risk factors, and utilization of preventive services related to the leading causes of chronic and infectious diseases, disability, injury, and death among the noninstitutionalized, civilian population aged 18 years and older.

Disability

New York State Adults, 2012

Introduction and Key Findings

Persons with disabilities experience significant limitations in hearing, vision, mobility, or cognition that may impede their ability to participate in major life roles or activities of daily living. These limitations may also influence their participation in health promoting behaviors and/or access to health care. Public health is currently focused on improving population health through changing the environment in which we live, work and play. As these efforts continue, societal and environmental barriers need to be identified and eliminated if persons with disabilities are to participate in public health programs that prevent disease and promote health.¹

Persons with disabilities represent a significant proportion of the New York State (NYS) adult population. When considering individuals with activity limitations due to a physical, mental, or emotional problem, approximately 3.2 million or 21.1 percent of New York adults report having a disability. To advance the recognition of persons with disabilities as a demographic group experiencing health disparities, persons with disabilities are identified as a population of focus throughout the NYS Prevention Agenda. Specifically, within the Chronic Disease Action Plan, targeted strategies are recommended to reduce obesity and increase physical activity by 10% among persons with disabilities. To achieve these goals, public health professionals must ensure that the design and implementation of health improvement programs are relevant and inclusive of those living with disabilities.

An estimated one in five adults in New York State is living with a disability. The prevalence of disability is significantly higher among certain populations including adults with annual incomes of less than \$15,000 (37.7%), adults with less than a high school education (34.1%), adults who are obese (32.8%), and adults who do not participate in regular leisure-time physical activity (34.0%).

BRFSS questions

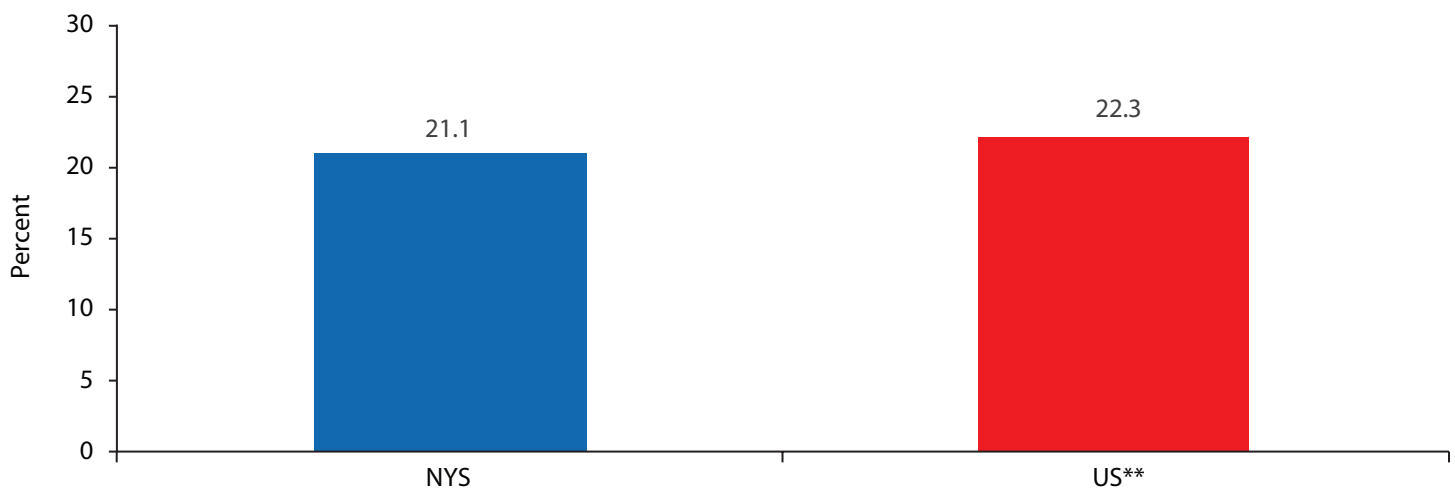
Disability is defined as a “yes” response to either question #1 or #2.

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?

Changes to BRFSS Methodology

Beginning in 2011, BRFSS data includes data from interviews completed by people with cell phones in addition to interviews completed by people with landlines. The data also reflect changes in how the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) weight the data. Weighting ensures that the data collected are as representative of New York's population as possible. The new method of weighting enables more demographic information about the respondents to be incorporated into the weighting. While these two changes improve the accuracy of the BRFSS, they may result in prevalence estimates that are significantly different from those previously calculated. **Because of the differences in data collection, it is not appropriate to compare 2011 data to prior years and the BRFSS 2011 prevalence data should be considered a baseline year for data analysis.**

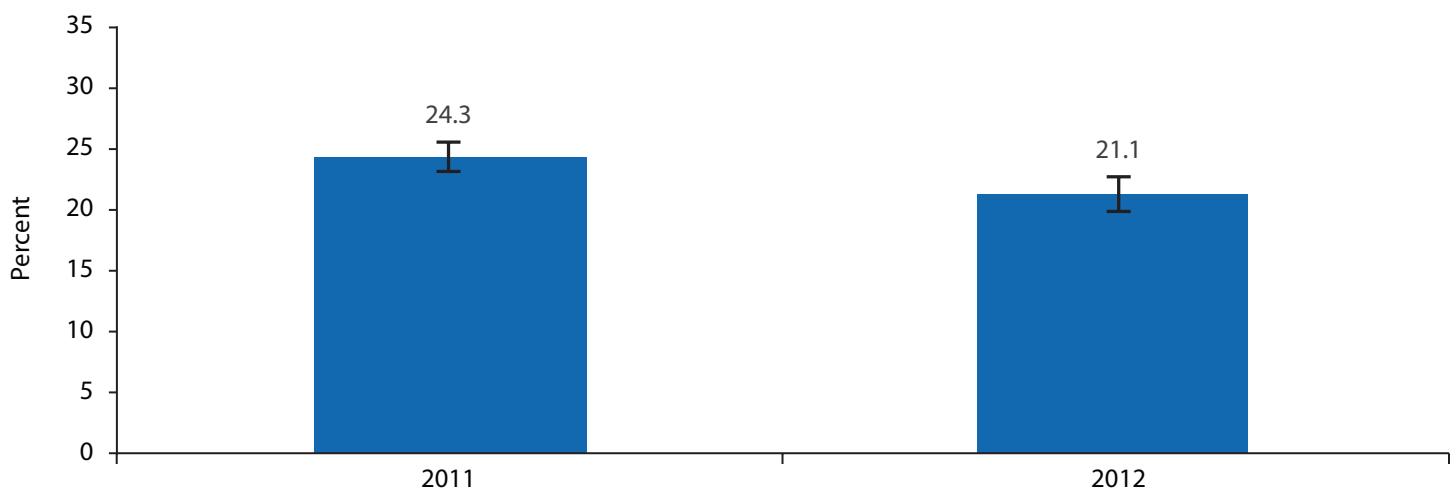
Figure 1. Disability* among New York State and US adults, BRFSS 2012



* All respondents who report activity limitations due to physical, mental, or emotional problems OR have health problems that require the use of special equipment.

**Median percent; includes data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Figure 2. Disability* among New York State adults, by BRFSS survey year, 2011 to 2012



*All respondents who report activity limitations due to physical, mental, or emotional problems OR have health problems that require the use of special equipment.

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Disability among New York State adults , 2012 BRFSS

	Disability ^a 2012 [n=6,060]	
	% ^b	95% CI ^b
New York State (NYS)	21.1	19.7-22.6
Sex		
Male	20.9	18.6-23.1
Female	21.4	19.5-23.3
Age (years)		
18-24	10.2	6.7-13.7
25-34	7.9	5.7-10.1
35-44	14.4	11.0-17.9
45-54	23.3	19.8-26.8
55-64	32.6	28.4-36.7
≥ 65	35.1	31.6-38.6
Race/ethnicity		
White non-Hispanic	21.5	20.0-23.1
Black non-Hispanic	22.8	17.9-27.7
Hispanic	21.4	17.4-25.4
Other non-Hispanic	18.3	11.5-25.0
Annual household income		
<\$15,000	37.7	32.6-42.9
\$15,000-\$24,999	26.1	22.2-30.0
\$25,000-\$34,999	24.3	18.6-30.0
\$35,000-\$49,999	17.9	13.8-21.9
\$50,000-\$74,999	15.7	12.5-18.8
≥\$75,000	13.1	10.9-15.3
Missing ^c	23.6	19.0-28.3
Educational attainment		
Less than high school	34.1	28.6-39.6
High school or GED	22.5	19.7-25.3
Some post-high school	19.6	16.9-22.3
College graduate	14.6	12.7-16.4
Body Mass Index (BMI) category		
Neither overweight nor obese	15.8	13.8-17.8
Overweight	19.8	17.1-22.4
Obese	32.8	29.3-36.3
Leisure-time physical activity^d		
Yes	17.0	15.4-18.6
No	34.0	30.6-37.5
Region		
New York City (NYC)	20.2	17.5-22.9
NYS exclusive of NYC	21.9	20.3-23.5

^a All respondents who report activity limitations due to physical, mental, or emotional problems OR have health problems that require the use of special equipment.

^b % = weighted percentage; CI = confidence interval

^c "Missing" category included because more than 10% of the sample did not report income.

^d Leisure-time physical activity during the past month.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Grand Rounds: Public Health Practices to Include Persons with Disabilities. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 62(34), 697-701.

Program Contributions

New York State Department of Health
Bureau of Chronic Disease Evaluation and Research
Bureau of Community Chronic Disease Prevention

Order Information

Copies may be obtained by contacting:

BRFSS Coordinator
New York State Department of Health
Bureau of Chronic Disease Evaluation and Research
Empire State Plaza
Corning Tower, Rm. 1070
Albany, NY 12237-0679

Or by phone or electronic mail:

(518) 473-0673
or
BRFSS@health.ny.gov
or
www.health.ny.gov

