

# Health Surveillance of People with Intellectual Disability (ID):

## Fact sheet

### **Occurrence:**

- Available data indicate prevalence rates of 1.0-1.5% for intellectual disability/mental retardation in the non-institutionalized U.S. population. In other words, it is estimated that nearly 4 million non-institutionalized Americans have mental retardation or developmental disability or both. (1)

### **Health:**

Adults with intellectual disabilities (ID) experience poorer access to quality health care and poorer health outcomes than people without ID (2).

People with ID are more likely to: (3)

- Live with complex health conditions
- Have poorly managed chronic conditions, such as epilepsy
- Have limited access to quality health care and health promotion programs
- Receive some cancer screenings at lower rates than the general population.
- Be obese.
- Have undetected vision and hearing problems.
- Have mental health problems and potential over-use of psychotropic medications

### **Cost:**

Health care costs for the 4.9% of the Medicaid population with ID account for 15.7% of total Medicaid expenditures (4).

### **Surveillance Gap: (5)**

- Population rates for persons with intellectual disability fall dramatically from school-age to post-school age young adults.
- Institutionalized populations are not usually included in national surveys. People with ID who live in larger group settings or in prisons are therefore not included.
- Information on ID is not systematically collected in United States health surveys. When people with ID live in the community, they are not identifiable in the population. Specific disparities they experience cannot be detected.
- People with mild ID (IQ, 50-70) may be underestimated because they receive services outside of traditional monitoring systems.
- Operational definition for ID varies among researchers and data systems
- People with ID may be reluctant to self-identify as having ID.

### **Resources:**

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Center for Disease Prevention and Control -

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/index.html>

Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD):- <http://www.aucd.org/template/index.cfm>

Pomona Project: - Health Indicator for People with Intellectual Disabilities - <http://www.pomonaproject.org/report.php>

Special Olympics: - <http://www.specialolympics.org/>

Surgeon General Report: - Closing the Gap: A National Blueprint to Improve the Health of Persons with Mental Retardation -

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/bookshelf/br.fcgi?book=hssurggen&part=A3384>

## References

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